CONGREGATIONAL SINGING IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH: AN EXAMINATION OF ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally, Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) congregations are known for a rich history of worship music. However, the 21st century has introduced an expanded variety of worship music to reflect a number of musical genres found in American culture. SDA worship leaders face the challenge of engaging their congregations with songs that are reflective of the diverse cultures and ages represented, as well as achieving a balance of newer music and music from the historical SDA tradition. Nevertheless, without intuitive song selection, worship leaders may encounter disengagement among congregants during the time of congregational singing. This quantitative descriptive study measured which elements of congregational singing, melodic familiarity, lyrical content, and instrumental usage, engage congregants within urban SDA congregations. The results from the study supported the first hypothesis, that melodic familiarity engaged the most participants in the five songs examined. The second hypothesis which stated that, the musical element of instrumental usage will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age, was not supported by this research. Instrumental usage held the largest variation in one song, whereas melodic familiarity and lyrical content had much greater variance in 4 other songs. This information would allow SDA worship leaders to understand the impact various elements of music has on congregational engagement during the time of congregational singing. It would also provide an understanding of how to integrate these musical elements during the time of congregational singing, to engage the culturally and generationally diverse demographics of their congregants.

Keywords: engagement, Seventh-day Adventist, congregational singing, diversity, worship,
I dedicate this research to my heavenly Father. It has become more apparent that the pathway you have chosen for me includes this study and leading others to you through music. To my wife Sharlene, your constant encouragement and sacrifice along this journey is cherished. To my parents and sister, your continued support in each of my endeavors has been invaluable to my professional career and throughout this program. Lastly, I am deeply appreciative to my Takoma Park Church family, for assisting me in completing this degree and allowing me space and time to grow as your worship pastor over the last decade.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Each week Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) congregations gather to sing corporately in churches across America. SDA worship leaders are often challenged in leading and engaging culturally diverse and intergenerational congregants in meaningful worship during the time of congregational singing. This chapter provides a background of the history of SDA congregational singing, the intent church leaders have behind congregational music shared in their hymnody, the potential challenges SDA worship leaders today face in engaging congregants during the time of congregational singing, while also introducing the research questions, hypothesis and method of analysis.

Congregational Singing Through the Ages

When a congregation joins together in congregational singing, it not only functions as a time of communal fellowship, but a moment that has theological implications for the construct of worship that may not be recognized by congregants. The scriptures reference communal singing from nature before the creation of Earth, as well as singing that surrounds the throne of God in Revelation. For example, the Lord referenced singing prior to the creation of the world in his address to Job: “Where were you…when the morning stars sang together and all the heavenly beings shouted for joy…”\(^1\) This passage implied that nature has a voice or a song, which was offered up in worship to its Creator.

Congregational singing as a human activity, extends to 1000 B.C. where this activity served as an integral portion of the Judaic culture.\(^2\) The organization of the Tabernacle and

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\(^1\) Job 38:7

Levitical leadership under the rule of King David gave insight as to how corporate music was structured and implemented.³ In 1 Chronicles, David appointed Chenaniah as the leader of the song (Chr. 15:16). David saw fit to have an individual dedicated to leading the congregation in song. Chenaniah was then appointed as the first chorister or cantor. Heman was appointed the leader of all singers (1Chr. 15:19). This made Heman the first choir director. Heman had the responsibility to leading and training all of the temple singers in united song. Lastly, Jeduthun was appointed the leader of all those who played the instruments (1 Chr. 25:1-7). He brought together and coordinated the accompaniment and the use of instruments in worship.⁴ King David organized the temple musicians in an efficient hierarchy to lead the congregational singing of psalms.

One of the reasons congregational music exists is to provide worshippers with songs they need to continue their growth in Christ along the Christian journey.⁵ David was aware of this principle and wrote psalms to reflect the broad range of experiences of Israel’s pursuit of a relationship with God. Scholars view the psalms as the hymnal of Israel.⁶ When experiencing loss or distress, they sang Psalm 13 where David wrote, “How long, O Lord will Thou forget me, How long will you hide your face from me?” When entering into battle or a challenging situation they sang of their confidence in the Lord in Psalm 27, “The Lord is my Light and My salvation, the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” At the time of repentance and

³ Ibid.


⁵ Brian Hehn and Jonathan Hehn “Naming our Concern for Congregational Song ‘The Questions We Ask: Like or Need’” The Stanza, vol. 37, no.2 (2003): 2.

humility, Israel sang Psalm 51, “Create in me a clean heart, and purify me…”, and in times of praise they sang Psalm 95, “O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation”.

While David was credited for authoring nearly half of the psalms, he was not the earliest contributor.\(^7\) Centuries earlier, Moses was considered, by many scholars, to be an early writer of the psalms.\(^8\) He was credited for the composition of Psalm 90, which speaks to the majesty and grandeur of God, “Lord Thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another; before the Lord, You have been our dwelling place from generation to generation. Before the mountains were born, you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are God”. The sons of Korah were also credited with composing 12 of the 150 Psalms.\(^9\) These Psalms speak of deep humility and intimacy with God.\(^10\) The Sons of Korah were ashamed of their forefather, and his rebellion against Moses that led to his death (Numbers 19). The nature of their psalms contrasted with the arrogance and rebellious spirit of their forefather, Korah. There were a number of other musicians and predominantly anonymous contributors who wrote the rest of the books within the Psalms.\(^11\) These songs of worship by multiple contributing authors, sustained the congregation of Israel for centuries.\(^12\)


\(^9\) Whaley, 74-80.

\(^10\) Ibid.


\(^12\) Alter, xv.
The New Testament offered some insight regarding congregational singing. The apostle Paul offered words regarding what congregants should sing within the corporate setting, “…speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” These words instructed the reader on the types of songs to sing and how singing together was to coincide with the sincerity of the heart. However, while these instructions referenced lyrical content, as implied by psalms and hymns, they did not offer information on instrumentation or the source of the melodic content. This was contrasting the psalms of the Old Testament that instruct the reader to “Sing a new song unto God” (Psalm 96:1) and “Praise Him with the timbral…trumpets, cymbals, organs, etc…” (Psalm 150). In particular, the apostle Paul doesn’t offer any guidance on which components constitute a spiritual song. Perhaps the lack of clarity in regards to instrumentation in this area, coupled with little to no mention of music in the New Testament, was due to the association of music and instrumental accompaniment with the Jewish tradition that was left behind by the apostles and leaders of the early church as they chose to follow Jesus.14

The music of the early church were a cappella psalms and scriptural songs.15 This new form of unaccompanied hymnody was a standard for believers. As this the church continued to grow throughout the third and fourth century, outside influences such as Gnostics and Marcionites began writing music for congregational worship that promoted false theology.16 To counter these efforts, Ambrose of Milan wrote new hymns with familiar melodies to gain

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13 Ephesians 5:19-20


15 Ibid.

16 Towns and Whaley, 77-78.
acceptance, and also composed “doctrinally pure hymns developed a simple, rhythmic, and
syllabic chant that had strong appeal to the common person.”

In the Middle Ages, Christianity was made the official religion of the Constantinian
empire, making music in worship, specifically congregational music, more valuable. This
value was seen by political and religious leaders who began to push their agendas and new ideas
into worship, specifically congregational singing and preaching. A significant event, came
about in this era—the development of musical notation. Musical notation allowed for songs to
be documented and performed at various places of worship. Prior to musical notation, songs
for worship were passed down orally. This laid the framework for chants to be documented and
for instruments to be used in worship. Instruments such as the organ were introduced into
church in the late 7th century but were included or accepted in worship until the 9th century.
While the musical notation system provided many benefits to the field of music, it allowed only
those with musical literacy to participate in worship. Thus, trained choirs or cantors were the
only people able to participate in congregational worship. Additionally, the lyrical content of

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid. 86.
19 Ibid. 93.
20 Andrew Wilson-Dickerson, The Story of Christian Music: From Gregorian Chant to Black Gospel an
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid. 48.
24 Wilson-Dickerson, 49.
worship was shared in Latin, a language not used by the common congregant. Based on these two factors, the congregation became what Towns and Whaley refer to as “a passive observer.”

During the Protestant Reformation, congregational singing returned to the people. Reformers such as Luther and Calvin, focused their efforts on giving the congregation a voice during worship, specifically during the congregational singing. Luther was known to use familiar texts and simple tunes of the people—deriving from plainsong and folksongs and songs to engage congregants. While he was a skilled musician and instrumentalist, the focus of his music was the message. The lyrical content of his hymns was three-fold: theological, pedagogical, and ecclesiastical. Calvin’s music, for congregational singing, was set exclusively to psalms or specific passages such as the Ten Commandments. To remain as close to the scriptures, his lyrical content did not to deviate from the Bible. These were sung unaccompanied with every voice singing the melody, known as metrical psalms. The metrical structure of his music in his publication of the Genevan Psalter followed the structure of popular and folk music, with four-line stanzas, all sung in unison.

It was during this time that instrumental music began its slow return to the worship setting. Leading up to this reacquaintance with instrumental music in worship, church leadership was adamantly reluctant to include instrumentation in worship. In the 1400s, protestant

25 Towns and Whaley, 107.
26 Hustad, 186.
27 Wilson-Dickerson, 62.
28 Towns and Whaley, 108.
29 Hustad, 186-188
reformer John Hus complained when congregants came to church to enjoy the instrumental music: “Their ears are filled with the sound of the bells, organs, and small belly by frivolous singing which incites to dance rather than piety.”

“Huss and his followers reformed worship by forbidding the use of musical instruments and returning to primitive simplicity with unison congregational singing.” Nearly 500 years later, in 1889, the sentiment was still the same. Robert L. Dabney saw that the increased use of musical instruments was part of the darkness descending over the church of his day. However, despite these convictions, the use of instruments in worship was steadily growing through the Reformation. Starting with notable 17th century classical composers such as Johann S. Bach and George F. Handel, these composers held positions in churches and wrote music for the worship, featuring chamber orchestras and various assortments of instrumentation.

Simultaneously, congregational song continued to develop over the next few centuries with contributors expanding the lyrical content of the songs to include a catalog of songs that encompass the whole of scripture and the Christian experience. As Christianity was embraced around Europe and in early American colonies, congregational songs were translated to fit the language of the people. Lyrical content was key to emerging hymnwriters as they strove to


34 Price, 144.


create a picture of a God who was able to identify with singing congregants.\textsuperscript{37} Familiar melodies were used to teach new songs and a larger assortment of instruments were incorporated within the church accompanying congregational singing.\textsuperscript{38}

In America, settlers found themselves without the immediate resources to have an organ accompany congregational singing. Small orchestral instruments such as wind and stringed instruments gradually were incorporated to accompany congregational singing.\textsuperscript{39} While many desired to have an organ accompany worship, it was met with resistance by some Protestants.\textsuperscript{40}

During the Camp Meetings and Great Awakenings, congregational music was primarily used as an evangelistic tool.\textsuperscript{41} With new music being written for congregants to sing after a sermon, participation was integral for ministers in order to win new converts to the faith.\textsuperscript{42} Charles Finney, a noteworthy evangelist of this time, was credited for inventing and establishing the alter call after a message and using congregational music to assist in this activity.\textsuperscript{43} Therefore the emphasis on these songs continued to be the lyrical content with a combination of simple melodies that were both new others were familiar. Gifted instrumentalists accompanied evangelists that led choirs of hundreds in singing the congregational music during these revivals and evangelistic series.\textsuperscript{44} Finney was also a forerunner in employing a full-time worship leader in

\textsuperscript{37} Towns and Whaley, 126.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. 126-159.
\textsuperscript{39} Price, 126.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 106-137.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid. 174.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
Thomas Hastings who accompanied Finney in all of his evangelistic endeavors.\textsuperscript{45} This heightened the importance of a worship or song leader in evangelistic or worship gatherings and laid the groundwork for evangelist-musician teams to come in the next century including Dwight Moody and Ira B. Sankey, Billy Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver.\textsuperscript{46}

These events led to the incorporation of the piano in many American congregations. Some desired to utilize the organ, but the convenience of the piano, being portable and accessible became the staple in most American congregations to accompany the congregational singing.\textsuperscript{47} Additionally, congregations in the 1900s witnessed the birth of musical genres such as rock and roll, gospel, blues, and jazz outside of the church.\textsuperscript{48} While the instruments associated with these genres were not used in worship initially, over time they were incorporated into Christian worship to accompany congregational singing:

The instruments used in these new genres initially were not used for worship. These included the guitar, drums, and saxophone. Additionally, the development of technology allowed for the electronic keyboard and synthesizer along with amplification to be included.\textsuperscript{49}

The instruments associated with rock and roll were featured and associated with what was considered to be the most recent and major revival in America—the Jesus Movement.\textsuperscript{50} Naturally, the new assortment of diverse instrumentation in worship brought forth congregational songs to match the associated genres.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{45} Towns and Whaley, 174.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 182-188, 239-242.
\textsuperscript{47} David W. Music, 	extit{Instruments in Church} (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1998), 165.
\textsuperscript{48} Wilson-Dickerson, 200-212.
\textsuperscript{49} Price, 138-139.
\textsuperscript{50} Towns and Whaley, 293-365.
\textsuperscript{51} Music, 175-193.
Communal singing was also seen in the book of Revelation as John described the worship scene in heaven around the throne, with “…every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them…” singing to the Lamb on the throne. This activity foreshadowed what is to come in the new heaven and new earth.\textsuperscript{52} Thus, it can be concluded that congregational singing serves as an element of worship that was present from the beginning of time through the end of time, and each week, congregations are able to take part in continuing that story.

A Brief History of Seventh-day Adventist Congregational Singing

The origins of Seventh-day Adventist hymnody and congregational singing can be traced to the Great Awakening that took place in America in the 1800’s. The first hymnal of the SDA movement was published in 1849 with the intention to provide congregational song for worship, teach doctrines, and to distinguish SDAs from other denominations.\textsuperscript{53} In publishing their first hymnal, the movement leaders incorporated the practice of joining new texts to pre-existing melodies, as this was a common practice among other protestant denominations.\textsuperscript{54} Church leaders saw the benefit of a recognizable melody, as it enabled the participants an opportunity to focus on the lyrical content of the song.\textsuperscript{55}

Over the next 150 years, the SDA movement evolved into a denomination that published a total of three hymnals. With each hymnal came changes. In order to keep up with the growing cultural diversity in America, and the SDA churches, the denomination sought to provide “music

\textsuperscript{52} Revelation 5:13


\textsuperscript{54} Land, 141.

\textsuperscript{55} M.A. Morris, \textit{A Practical Theology of Congregational Song: Developing a Wholesome “Song of the People”}, (Doctoral dissertation, University of Chester, UK, 2016).
that would be attractive to both old and young worshipers, and texts that recognized the diversity of cultures among the English-speaking church members…They [also] sought hymns that affirm the distinctive belief of the SDA church as well as those that express points of faith [held] in common with other Christian bodies.”56 This provision and other measures were set in place to augment participation during the congregational singing.57

However, after the most recent hymnal was published in 1985, the SDA church did not release another hymnal. The gap between the publication of the 1985 hymnal and the present-day spans over 35 years, leaving a void of new music reflective of the evolving American culture. Within that time, the birth and surgency of the Jesus Movement affected Christian worship music across protestant denominations, including the SDA denomination.58 The Jesus Movement brought the introduction of popular music genre as a primary tool for communication…that infiltrated the [Christian] community.59 Elmer Towns noted,

“Most of the music in this movement was derived from a form of folk music—primarily because that was the popular genre of the broad culture…what emerged was a mixture of pop, folk, soft rock, country and rock-n-roll.”60

It was an amalgamation of scripture songs and choruses aimed primarily at creating a corporate worship experience.61 With the evolution of a new style of worship music through the Jesus Movement, musical elements that were once denominationally distinct began to overlap with

57 “The Church Hymnal”, 5.
59 Towns and Whaley, 322.
60 Ibid., 323.
The overlap was seen in the selection of songs among SDA congregations. Occasionally, contemporary songs containing doctrines and teachings associated with other Christian denominations were used in SDA worship. A primary example is “Lord I Lift Your Name on High”, whose lyrics in the chorus are not only incongruent with the account of Jesus’ resurrection, but strongly allude to a common belief among many protestant Christians that conflict with the SDA doctrine on the Death and Resurrection. Disagreement emerged among some SDA congregations, with some viewing this mixture as a step towards the loss of denominational distinctiveness and a display of congregational song considered too ecumenical. Therefore, some congregations engaged with music that contained characteristics specific to traditional SDA hymnody while others engaged in music that contained musical characteristics reflective of 21st century American worship culture. Because the SDA denomination had no doctrine of music, individual congregations decided which type of music for which they would like to engage.

Potential Challenges in Leadership among SDA Congregations

Because membership of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Washington metropolitan-D.C. area is diverse in both ethnicity and age, SDA worship leaders are expected to embrace, not simply tolerate, new methods of ministering to each demographic in their

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63 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Beliefs. Seventh-day Adventist Church. Retrieved from https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/


This is demonstrated in congregational singing—an activity that since its inception in the SDA faith was characterized as being at the heart of American religious experience. A 2015 Pew Research Center study revealed the SDA denomination to be the most culturally diverse denomination in America. The findings included urban SDA churches in the Washington DC area. Because cultural and intergenerational diversity is shared among these congregations, worship leaders are tasked with selecting congregational music appropriate for their respective congregants.

SDA worship leaders struggle with the balance between remaining musically relevant to today’s diverse culture within the body of believers and using music in worship that retains doctrinal distinctiveness. This challenge is new to SDA congregations, as the first Adventists in the late 1800s did not reflect cultural diversity within the body of believers as the culture consisted of one cultural and racial demographic, and distinct efforts were made towards exclusivity as opposed to integration and inclusivity. Today, many worship leaders have resorted to the popular practice of using contemporary worship music written by composers outside of the SDA denomination, which has the strong potential to present lyrical content that

may not align with denominational beliefs. Therefore, it becomes difficult for a worship leader to lead their members in congregational songs that align with doctrinal beliefs and relevance to the present-day culture.

Levitin’s study on the impact that music has on the brain found that music has the power to teach the individual, shift an individual’s mood, bring new thoughts or revive old memories. Further, Balz’s study examined the connection between music and emotion and found that music aroused emotion and was linked to behaviors within cultures or such as dance, religious practices and social interactions. Music can be correlated to situations, events, and experiences that shaping a person’s perception of the meaning of music and its context. These things bring challenges and hurdles to leading the music in worship. When congregants arrive into a worship setting, they bring with them a cumulative yet infinite amount of perceptions, understandings and life experiences, which directly influence how they interact with the music.

These factors play into the differing opinions of musical style appropriate for worship. The astute worship leader understands that many see and understand Christ through the lens of their culture, and primary identifiers of culture are found in art—namely, music. Music is not

72 Page and Gray, 123-140.
76 Ibid.
simply art or ornamental to worship, but also conveys meaning. Worship theologian Kenneth Hull further elaborates,

The style of a piece of music, its tempo, melodic shape, harmonic rhythm, timbre, all of these are constituent parts of the meaning music conveys. What is more, music not only expresses meaning, it forms the listener and participant over time. The ‘how’ of our worship…shapes our image of who God is, of who we are, and who we seek to become. What many people understand intuitively about this issue is that the style of our worship and its music cannot be changed without the meaning and direction of our worship being changed as well.78

Each congregation brings a diverse assortment of preconceived ideas, assumptions, and experiences to the time of congregational singing. These variables determine how each person interacts with the music and how the music in worship is understood and perceived. Leaders face the unique challenge of shepherding a congregation in the time of congregational singing with these things in mind. If leaders are to use a specific type of music for the congregational song, they must understand that the meaning of the music affects the meaning of the worship.

**Problem Statement**

Many SDA worship leaders may not fully understand which elements of worship music facilitate an engaging worship during the time of congregational singing. These musical elements include melodic familiarity, lyrical content, and instrumental usage. With the cultural and generational diversity represented among the SDA population in the United States, worship leaders are tasked with, stimulating engagement among congregants during the time of congregational singing. As with many denominations, the hymnal is no longer the primary source of congregational singing for every congregation.79

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Within many SDA congregations, various demographics of people seek engagement with song lyrics reflecting the experience of the singer, in particular their emotional connection to God, rather than ascribing praise to Him directly.\textsuperscript{80} The subject of these songs is often the singer or performer.\textsuperscript{81} However, other demographics within those same SDA congregations may petition for songs that communicate traditional values, such as loyalty and dedication to religious institutions.\textsuperscript{82} This is reflected in their engagement with lyrics that are tied to doctrinal beliefs and denominational heritage.\textsuperscript{83} The subject matter of these songs is often directed at God and not the singer.\textsuperscript{84} Thus, worship leaders may be confused as to the most engaging lyrics to utilize during the time of congregational singing.

Melodic familiarity is also an important element within SDA congregational music. Research revealed that if the melody is recognizable to the listener, it can motivate the individual to make music.\textsuperscript{85} Because of this, worship leaders may struggle with the balance of incorporating new melodies while continuing to sing songs of the past. For individuals who attended church from their youth, their preferences for music tend to reflect the music they experienced during that time.\textsuperscript{86} If a specific type of instrument or melody was repeated in a

\textsuperscript{80} Hull, Kenneth. \textit{The Challenge with the Praise Chorus}, The Hymn; vol. 55. no. 3. (2004): 18.

\textsuperscript{81} Hull, 18.

\textsuperscript{82} Edward H. Hammet. \textit{Reaching People Under 40 while Keeping People over 60: Being a church for all Generations} (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2007), 37.

\textsuperscript{83} Campbell, \textit{Holy Spell}. https://www.adventistreview.org/2009-1530-26

\textsuperscript{84} Hull, 18.


\textsuperscript{86} Levitin, 232.
context, both entities began to shape meaning based on that context: Researchers point to the teen years as the turning point for musical preferences. It’s is around the age of ten or eleven that most children take on music as a real interest, even those children who didn’t express such an interest in music earlier. As adults, the music we tend to be nostalgic for, the music that feels like it is “our” music, corresponds to the music we heard during those years. There doesn’t seem to be a cutoff point for acquiring new tastes in music, but most people have formed their musical tastes (and associations) by the age of eighteen or twenty...this ties into the idea of music as a vehicle for social bonding and societal cohesion. Music and musical preferences become a mark of personal and group identity and of distinction.

Because music that is repeated in a specific context takes on meaning of that context, it is clear why congregants lean towards their preferred groupings of instruments in worship. In both cases, each group sees their preferred instrument grouping as the instruments most appropriate for congregational singing. For each group, it is viewed, whether consciously or subconsciously, as being within the fabric, or DNA of Christian worship.

Research in this paper is aimed at discovering the most engaging elements of music during the time of congregational singing, specifically familiar melodies, lyrical content, or the use of instrumentation. This would aid worship leaders in being intentional with the selection of congregational songs. Over the course of church music history, there has been reluctance to accept instrumentation in worship. That reluctance lessened with the growth of music technology in America, leading to various genres of worship music being incorporated into Christian worship, accompanied by a host of new instruments. Some congregants have morally conflicting associations with various instruments and music in worship which can leave a congregation in sharp dispute. However, congregants in current society are comfortable reusing

87 Best, 55.
88 Levitin, 231-232.
preexisting sacred melodies for new songs, but not secular melodies, despite the frequent use of the practice in the preceding hymnals. Lastly, SDA congregants place a high value on Christ-centered lyrics. A challenge arises because some congregants prefer the old English poetry in the SDA hymnody, while others prefer songs in the everyday language of the people found in more contemporary music. Thus, this research is necessary to aid worship leaders in selection the most engaging songs for their respective congregations.

**Significance of the Study**

When crafting music for worship in an SDA Church, the worship leadership is responsible for ministering to all who are gathered. Diversity in each congregation can consist of race, age, gender, education and more. While worship leaders are often not equipped to deal with issues of such diversity, they are expected to be skilled in their musical vocation and ministry.\(^\text{89}\)

The significance of this study should be of interest to SDA leadership and congregants as it would help SDA worship leaders to have an enhanced understanding of how to plan and integrate specific musical elements to engage the broad demographics of their congregants during the congregational singing. As the SDA denomination does not have doctrine on music, the acquisition of this information would allow worship leaders to adapt the provided musical guidelines through the lens of the cultural and generational diversity represented in their congregation.

This study will also help congregants realize the various levels of engagement among others within the church family. Congregations decide which type of music they wish to engage based on the collective preference of the predominant culture represented. Fisher noted,

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“Individuals make congregations, which make decisions that reflect community values rather than church-adopted moral absolutes.”^90 It less likely for a congregant to be mindful of his or her neighbor’s engagement during the time of congregational singing. The tendency is for the focus of one’s worship to be on his or her preferences and needs. However, the implementation of the suggested methods could make congregants aware of other levels of engagement among the congregation.^91 Congregations, regardless of which style of worship with which they identify, would learn to broaden their vocabulary of congregational song.

Lastly, this study provides research to support the need to emphasize worship training in SDA churches and schools. Having an understanding of how worshipers engage across the spectrum of musical-style and genre will allow church leaders and congregants to “see God through the eyes of others, unifying their efforts.”^92 It is easy to bring in the consumerism of society into the worship space. Without awareness and consideration for how fellow worshipers experience the presence of God through the time of congregational singing, worship becomes selfish, and not a part of what God intends for His people to experience.

**Primary Research Questions**

When planning worship music for an SDA congregation in the Washington D.C. area, great consideration goes into the type of music selected. One of the goals of the worship pastor or minister of music, is to provide ministry to the congregation through the medium of music.

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^92^David and Lerner, 91-99.
This is a task that increases with difficulty due to the generational and cultural diversity in the congregation. Thus, two research questions were crafted to spearhead this research:

RQ 1: Which elements of music best affect engagement in the congregational singing among urban SDA worship experiences?

RQ 2: Which musical element will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age?

An understanding of these musical elements embodied in congregational singing would help a worship pastor or minister of music of an urban SDA church navigate the selection of congregational song best suited for their congregation.

**Working Hypotheses**

The working hypotheses for this study are:

H1: The most engaging element of music within congregational singing in an urban SDA congregation is the familiarity of the melody.

H2: The musical element of instrumental usage will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age.

It is reasonable to expect the element of melodic familiarity to facilitate a congregant’s engagement during the time of congregational singing. The attachment of recognizable or popular melodies to new lyrical content is a common practice dating back to the Middle Ages. This practice is regularly implemented in SDA hymnody, with multiple hymns sharing the same tune. Because melodic familiarity has been an engaging musical element frequently utilized in the past, it is logical to assume that it is currently the most engaging element in the time of congregational singing.

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93 Wilson-Dickerson, 62.
It is also reasonable to expect that the element of instrumentation would produce the most engagement differences among age groups within the congregation. Like melody, instruments carry meaning for the context in which they are used. Older congregants may engage with acoustic orchestral instruments often associated with classical music—piano, organ, violin, etc. Younger congregants may engage with electronic instrumentation—electronic guitars, keyboards and synthesizers. Therefore, instrumentation associated with accompanying the respective genres are key in a congregant’s engagement during the time of congregational singing.

While it is reasonable to have these expectations is regard to both hypotheses, it is unclear what the research findings will reveal. Within the cultural and age demographics of a congregation, there are a number of variables that may differ from the expectations. For example, assumptions can be made regarding the engagement of an age or cultural group within a congregation, however due to the cultural diversity in urban SDA congregations, a shared view on the use of instrumentation or familiarity with the melody, will vary based on musical education, exposure, experience, and context. Prior to an individual arriving to and identifying with a congregation, that individual brings with them a body of experiences and contexts that impact their interaction with the elements of music being examined within this study.

Core Concepts

It is necessary to understand key concepts and terminology. This section will cover the terms relevant to this study. The core concepts include congregational singing, engagement, new, old and hybrid.

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95 Best, 40-62.
Congregational Singing

Congregational singing, in this research, refers to the time in a worship service allocated for the congregation to sing together. However, it does not only refer to the action of singing together. Participation in the congregational singing can be defined by outward gestures such as singing, standing, shouting, clapping, or waving a hand, and inward gestures of meditation, reflection, or stillness.

Engagement

Merriam Webster defined engagement as “being greatly interested and involved in an activity”. Terms such as “engage” and “participate” can be challenging to define as they are subjective in nature, and difficult to measure. In the context of worship, participation and engagement is often associated with visible outward demonstration. However, participation and engagement could also take place through quiet introspection, with no outward demonstration from the individual. A display or lack of display of engagement is often a cultural matter, with some culture promoting extroverted gestures of worship and some culture preferring introverted contemplation. Conversely, outward gestures cannot confirm engagement or participation as humans have an ability to participate in activities while remaining mentally disengaged with what is taking place. In the context of this research, engagement refers to an individual’s attention and interest being captured by the activity taking place, moving them to participate.

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Old, New and Hybrid

For the purposes of this research, lyrics and melodies were divided into categories of old and new. Lyrics and melodies written before 1900 and instruments invented before 1900 were classified as old. Many of the melodies and tunes used for this study were repeatedly represented in each of the SDA denominational hymnals that span 150 years, were written prior to the year 1900.\textsuperscript{99} This classification of old would also include orchestral instruments but primarily the piano and pipe organ, as they were the most common instruments associated with melodies and lyrics written before 1900. This research also acknowledged their representation as primary elements of church music continuing into the 1970s. Although there were significant developments and innovations in the greater world of worship music between 1900 and 1960\textsuperscript{100}, those instrument additions were not incorporated into the SDA church until the 1970s.\textsuperscript{101}

Lyrics and melodies written after 1900 and instruments invented after 1900 were classified as new. Between 1900 and 1950, America saw a great increase in technology and music which eventually influenced congregational singing in the church in the 1970s. Instrumentation created during this period included electronic keyboards, synthesizers, electronic guitars, the drum set, and the Hammond organ. In this period, melodies became simpler in musical complexity, making the songs more appealing to the congregant.\textsuperscript{102} Lyrics were written

\textsuperscript{100} Towns and Whaley, 293-336.  
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 341-362.  
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.}
for congregational singing that contained less doctrinal significance and more expressions of the Christian journey, making the songs more appealing to the non-churchgoer.\textsuperscript{103}

The term hybrid, referenced in this research, indicated a song that contains any combination of the examined musical elements that are both old and new. As shared earlier, the practice of placing new lyrics with existing melodies, or creating new melodies for old lyrics for congregational singing dates back to the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{104} Similarly, hybrid instrumental usage focused on instrumentation used outside of its traditional context to accompany congregational singing. The invention of new instruments in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century led to the natural crossover of new instrumentation used for old melodies or lyrics within SDA worship. Old, new and hybrid aspects of the three elements will be examined in this study.

\textbf{Definition of Terms}

While there are many elements of music that may affect engagement, this research will examine three areas. Melodic familiarity, lyrical content and instrumental usage are the elements that will be examined for evoking engagement during the time of congregational singing within a worship experience. The following are definitions to the major terminology utilized in this study.

\textbf{Melodic Familiarity:} The definition of this term is the hybrid meaning of the two words melody and familiar. Melody is defined as an agreeable succession of arranged sounds.\textsuperscript{105} Familiar is defined as something which one is closely acquainted.\textsuperscript{106} The combination of the each term

\begin{flushleft}
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\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Wilson-Dickerson, 139.
\textsuperscript{105} Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, s.b. “melody,” accessed February 2, 2020, \url{https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/melody}
\end{flushleft}
results in melodic familiarity which can be defined as the close acquaintance of a sequence of notes within a song, or an recognition with the tune.

**Lyrical content:** Lyrics are defined as the words of a song. Some songs incorporate older forms of English and others use standard English of today.

**Instrument Usage:** Instrument usage refers to the instruments used in the song including but not limited to organ, piano, brass instruments, string instruments, and drums.

**Research Plan**

A quantitative descriptive study was employed to survey SDA congregations in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Congregants from three congregations were invited to participate in a one-hour research-based worship service, which included 5 sound and video clips of various styles of congregational worship music. Each clip was strategically selected and varied in combination of old, new, and hybrid melodies, lyrics and instrumentation. After each clip, survey participants were given the opportunity to reflect and complete a survey indicating which elements of music would most likely lead them to engagement—melodic familiarity, lyrical content, instrumental usage, none of these, or other. Data from these findings will assist in SDA worship leaders being more intentional and targeted in their selection of music and to engage congregants in participation during the time of congregational singing.

**Summary**

Because SDA congregations are diverse, both in the cultures and generations represented, worship leaders are tasked with ministering to a unique pool of congregants each week. This can propose challenges for the worship leader as many are not trained in addressing cultural or generational diversity in addition to worship leadership. The theological significance of music in

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worship makes the selection of congregational song vital to a church’s growth. SDA worship leaders have a plethora of modern worship music and SDA hymnody suitable for the task, however, they ought to be strategic in how music is selected. This research is a quantitative descriptive study that examines the elements of melodic familiarity, lyrical content, and instrumental usage and the effect on SDA worshipers’ engagement during the time of congregational singing. The results of this study will provide additional insight into how their congregation may engage with the time of congregational singing within their respective churches. Additionally, the results would allow worship leaders insight into selecting music, re-arranging pre-existing music, or creating new music with the elements that facilitate engagement during the time of congregational singing, specific to their congregants.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Over recent decades, protestant churches have engaged in debates surrounding revitalization in worship, worship methodology, and music in worship amidst the 21st century culture.\(^{108}\) However, less consideration has been given as to how worshiping congregations engage with music and if musical elements of various genres or styles are related to congregant engagement in worship. The purpose and function of congregational singing in worship is two-fold. It expresses and helps to form the faith of the worshipers and it provides a pathway of expression between the human spirit and God the Creator.\(^{109}\) While these two aspects of expression are interconnected, worship expressions vary from culture to culture and from congregation to congregation.\(^{110}\) It is essential for SDA worship leaders of culturally and generationally diverse congregations to be educated on how to lead. In addition to musical and theological training, the leader should become a student of the culture of the people they lead. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on cultural diversity, generational diversity, engagement in worship, and three elements of congregational music: melodic familiarity, instrumental usage and lyrical content.


Conflicts with Cultural Diversity and Integration

SDA Views on Diversity: From Segregation to Integration

In the mid 1840s, William Miller, a Baptist preacher, had a following across the United States, known as the Millerites, who later evolved in the Seventh-day Adventist movement.\(^1\) The first Adventists did not wrestle with cultural diversity within the body of believers as the culture consisted of one racial demographic—white Europeans;\(^2\) distinct efforts were made toward uniformity as opposed to inclusiveness.\(^3\) For over a century, racial segregation was a part of American culture as well as SDA worship culture.\(^4\)

Ellen White, one of the founders and revered prophet of the Seventh-day Adventist church, \(^5\) initially shared the position of racial segregation, saying, “The colored people should not urge that they be placed on an equality with white people.”\(^6\) She also encouraged, “Let the white believers and the colored believers assemble in separate places of worship”\(^7\) However, later in her life she changed her position and openly defied and confronted the denomination on the issue of racial segregation, charging, “Your views of slavery cannot harmonize with the


sacred, important truths for this time. You must yield to your views or the Truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other…”\textsuperscript{118} He latter views did not yield immediate change but were among the earliest of SDA influencers supporting desegregation.

Another one of the initial attempts to desegregate SDA congregations arose from an issue in the SDA educational system.\textsuperscript{119} In 1965, the South-Central Conference, a sub-division of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, sued the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for denying African Americans admittance into one of their academies:

The United States Attorney General, Nicholas Katzenbach and the Meridian, Mississippi branch of the NAACP joined the suit. Katzenbach phones the General Conference and expressed his dismay that eleven years after the Brown vs. Board of Education ruling, a supposedly Christian denomination, like the Seventh-day Adventist church, still practiced racial segregation in its educational facilities. Then he bluntly asked the General Conference leaders if they planned on integrating their facilities. Following a lengthy silence on the other end, Katzenbach told them that they did not have to desegregate, but if that was their decision, they would no longer enjoy certain forms of federal assistance like tax exemptions. A General Conference official told Katzenbach they needed time to confer with the Alabama-Mississippi Conference…[Later], the General Conference told Katzenbach that they had decided to desegregate.\textsuperscript{120}

Charles Dudley, a key SDA administrator and social activist pointed to this lawsuit as one of the events that began the gradual desegregation of the SDA church and their congregations.\textsuperscript{121}

After the Civil rights movement, the SDA General Conference Sessions in 1965 and 1970 institutionalized racial integration within the denomination.\textsuperscript{122} However, by that time, regional

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ellen White, \textit{Testimonies of the Church}, vol. 1, (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1868), 359-360.
\item \textsuperscript{119} London, 121–135.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 125.
\item \textsuperscript{122} D. F. Neufeld (Ed.), \textit{Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia} (Revised ed.), (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1996), 725. (Neufeld 1996)
\end{thebibliography}
conferences were established, and neither black nor white leaders were willing to change due to the organizational segregation that now existed in the creation of regional conferences. In an article by the *Adventist Review*, William Johnsson wrote,

> An attempt was made in October of 1999 in the North American Division to foster ethnic harmony. That year the division hosted a three-and-a-half-day Race Relations Summit. The published goals of the Summit can be summarized as a desire to identify racism and racial barriers in the division and to recommend methods and strategies to address these issues. The hope was that an ongoing effort could be sustained that would reach down to the local congregations in the division to bring about racial harmony and unity.

A highlight of the Summit was when then president of the North American Division Al McClure apologized to the African-American members for the way you’ve been treated by our church, almost from the time of its birth.” In particular, he apologized for the failure of church leaders in response to the death of Lucille Byard—a pivotal figure in SDA history who, was a SDA member but died because she was denied treatment at an SDA hospital due to her race.

In his commentary on the race relations Summit to be conducted by SDA leaders, Osborn documented that the SDA leaders had intentions of unity and integration among its SDA constituents:

> The delegates to the Race Relations Summit approved certain recommendations for the North American Division that included the planning of a second Summit in 2001, the creation of a vision for the church of integration and harmony, and the creation of a strategic plan to implement the vision, based on the moral imperative of Jesus for unity.

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123 Ibid.


Author David Penno of the SDA publication *Compass Magazine*, commented on discussion on the Race Relations Summit, saying, “Unfortunately, as of this writing (2016), it seems that a second Summit has never been scheduled, nor have the vision and implementation strategy been born.”

However, despite the absence of a second Race Relations Summit diversity among American congregations continued to rise. According to the 2014 American Community Survey, approximately one in eight people in the United States are now foreign born. Another study outlining cultural trends in religion shared that immigration increased [diversity] in congregations by bringing more people from Central and South America, Asia, and Africa. Consequently, congregations became more ethnically and racially diverse. This same study showed that congregations that were previously 90% white in demographics experienced a 36% increase in African American congregants, which was an increase from 27% in 1998. Additionally, these churches experienced an 30% increase in Latino representation, which was an increase from 24% in 1998, and a 23% increase in Asian representation, up from 17% in 1998.

Thus, the cultural diversity of congregations in America steadily increased. However, immigration was not the sole reason for cultural diversity among congregations. Increased

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129 The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey of American population conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. ACS results can be found at http://factfinder.census.gov


131 Chaves, 19-25.

132 Chaves, 25.
interracial marriage and access to quality education also contributed to the increased cultural diversity among congregations.\textsuperscript{133} Author Mark Chaves shared,

In 1961, fewer than 1 of every 1000 new marriages was between a black person and white person, rising to 1 in 150 by 1980 and 1 in 60 by interracial families still are relatively rare, but there are more now than there once were, and they have helped make congregations somewhat more ethnically diverse. Increasing educational attainment among African Americans also contributes to this trend, because highly educated people are more likely to be attracted to the worship styles (and shorter services) more typically found in predominantly white churches.\textsuperscript{134}

In summary, cultural diversity is more widely accepted now than it was when the SDA church began. When the denomination began, congregations were monoethnic. Through tense social changes and shifts in perceptions of others from different backgrounds, the cultural make up of the SDA church began to change. Factors such as immigration and intermarriage within American society contributed to the cultural diversity represented in SDA church pews. A Pew Research study was completed in 2015 that supported the notion of diversity in SDA congregations.

The study confirmed that the nation’s population growth is increasingly more racially and ethnically diverse within U.S. religious groups.\textsuperscript{135} Thirty Protestant denominations were examined as well as five racial and ethnic groups: Hispanics, as well as non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Asians and an umbrella category of other races and mixed-race Americans. Research found that the SDA congregational population in America was broken down to 37% of white adults, 32% black adults, 15% Hispanic adults, 8% Asian adults and another 8% from another

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid. 26.

race or mixed race. From this the Pew Research Group concluded that the SDA denomination was the most culturally diverse protestant denomination in America.\textsuperscript{137}

Theological Views on Cultural Diversity in Worship

Key personnel in the SDA denomination shared their theological views on diversity within worship—views that changed as the decades passed on. Currently, as represented by regional and state conferences in the United States, “…the Seventh-day Adventist church is structured unambiguously along racial lines, a reality that eloquently tells that in the Seventh-day Adventist church race matters.”\textsuperscript{138} This understanding of race, was not only societal, as slavery existed in America during the inception of the SDA denomination, but was understood as theological.\textsuperscript{139} Today, slavery has been abolished and pre-existing theological perspectives have been minimized.\textsuperscript{140} This section explores the views on cultural diversity among church leaders in the early years of the SDA denominational formation and modern theologians of the 21st century. In the early stages of the SDA denomination, theologians defended slavery by denying that it was sinful:

The Church had ‘no authority to declare slavery to be sinful,’ they said, as nowhere did the Bible, ‘either directly or indirectly, condemn the relation of master and servant as incompatible with the will of God.’ To argue the opposite was to hold in contempt the ‘naked testimony of God.’\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{138} Clifford Jones, \textit{James K. Humphrey and the Sabbath-Day Adventists} (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), 82.


\textsuperscript{141} Thornwell, 384.
SDA theologians who were pro-slavery continued to argue that Jesus had opportunities to condemn slavery, but did not.\textsuperscript{142} In explaining these mindsets, Jankiewicz said,

\begin{quote}
In Matthew 8:10, for example, instead of challenging slavery, Jesus healed the slave and commended the centurion’s faith: ‘Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.’ Furthermore, He often used slavery to illustrate His teachings. For example, in Luke 17:7, ‘Suppose one of you has a slave plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’?’\textsuperscript{143}
\end{quote}

Author and Abolitionist Solomon Northup supported this by sharing, “Considering Jesus’ failure to condemn slavery, it is not surprising that slave owners who equated non-condemnation with approval, sometimes used Jesus’ own words to instruct their slaves on obedience to their masters.”\textsuperscript{144} For example, Charles Hodge, one of the most distinguished Evangelical theologians argued, “that Christ did give a new law on [polygamy], it is abundantly evident however, this certainly was not the case with slavery.”\textsuperscript{145}

There were other New Testament references that pro-slavery theologians of the past, both SDA and of other protestant faiths, used to defend this position in efforts to retain racial segregation among congregants.\textsuperscript{146} Twisting the words of the Apostle Paul, pro-slavery theologians used verses such as, “each person should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him” (1 Corinthians 7:17). Paul also instructed slaves to not “let it trouble” them if they were slaves “called” by God (verse 21). “Slaves were to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[Ibid.]
\item[143] Solomon Northup, \textit{Twelve Years a Slave} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 94.
\item[146] Jankiewicz, \textit{Hermeneutics and Slavery}. https://www.adventistreview.org/hermeneutics-and-slavery#_end7
\end{footnotes}
“obey [their] earthly masters…and serve them wholeheartedly” (Ephesians 6:5-9); to “consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God’s name and our teaching may not be slandered” (1 Timothy 6:1-2); and to “be subject to their masters…so that in every way they [would] make the teaching about God our Savior attractive” (Titus 2:9-10). These passages were utilized to perpetuate the practice of slavery within the SDA denomination.

Modern scholarship contrasted earlier views on cultural diversity. A forerunner in this area was Frank J. Matera who argued that New Testament theology on diversity called for more unity than separation. Matera argued that:

…despite the obvious diversities, there is an underlying unity, based on the experience of salvation by earthly Christians, which grounds the master story of the New Testament, in which all books share: 1) the human need for salvation, 2) God’s response in the person of Christ, and 3) the church as the community of the sanctified…

Other leaders such as Michael Curry, affirmed diversity among the congregation gathered to worship, noting Christ’s teachings, “‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest’ (Matthew 11:28) and ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’ (Mark 11:28).” Further, he noted, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32). Curry would sum up his teaching of Christ’s universality to the church’s diversity by saying, “All really means all. There is no footnote qualifying it, no parenthesis circumcising it, no asterisk mitigating it. All really means all. All are welcome!”

Thus he advocated for cultural and racial integration of the church.

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Cultural integration is important because unity among diversity reflects the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:24b-27 says, “…but God has put the body together…so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other…Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” Further arguments can be made that a collective diverse congregation worshiping in song was always God’s intention, as reflected in the Revelation account. Revelation 7:9-11 says, “After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Jesus desired His people from all over the world to worship Him together.

Further, God is the embodiment of diversity, as it is reflected in all of his creation. According to David and Lerner, when a congregation embraces cultural diversity in worship, they are closer to reflecting the image of Christ. Duane Elmer in the book Cross-Cultural Conflict writes,

Diversity is rooted in the creative activity of God. But one wonders why? For what reason did God display such variety in his [creation]? …only in this immense and grand variety could we begin to capture the character, grace and glory of God. Put another way, God cannot adequately be revealed in a creation of similarities.

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151 David and Lerner, 21.

152 Ibid.

Similar to American society, SDA congregations are still far from a place in which color is irrelevant, but there has been change in a positive direction. Edwards, Christianson and Emerson noted, “There is an increased minority presence in predominantly white congregations which represents some progress in a society where cultural backgrounds still divide us.”

**Generational Diversity**

A congregation can be comprised of various generations. Each generation is associated with significant events in society that shape who these individuals are, their perspectives, and how they operate within each congregation. Understanding the differences between each generation begins with a proper knowledge of their characteristics and the events in history that shaped their existence. Research showed that a church needs the presence of at least three generations to retain a healthy balance of the past and future. Researcher Linda Inlow explained that, “this interaction of generations guarantees the mixing of needs and gifts, as well as promotes the sharing of tradition and vision vital to the growth of Christian heritage.”

This subsection of the chapter will identify and discuss the following groups found in SDA congregations—the Builders, Boomers, Generation X’ers, Millennials and Generation Z’ers. Pew Research Center added that, “generational start and cutoff points aren’t an exact science.

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157 Ibid., 13.
They should be viewed primarily as tools, allowing for the kinds of analyses detailed above. But their boundaries are not arbitrary.”

Generations

The Builder generation, more accurately described as the combination of the GI Generation (1900-1924) and the Silent Generation (1925-1942), were born before 1942, which makes people in this age group 78 years old or older in 2020. In his analysis of each generation represented within the church pews of American culture, author Edward Hammett expounded on the Builder generation:

This generation was influenced by the Great Depression, World Wars I and II, Pearl Harbor, the automobile, radio and big band music. Born before 1942, this group physically and organizationally shaped the church. Loyalty is a defining characteristic of this group and this is reflected in the solidity of their families. They supported the development and growth of the church financially. They get frustrated when they see younger generations not supporting the church with similar determination and loyalty. This generation would prefer to stick with “tried-and-true methods that have worked in the past.

Due to their life experiences and contributions to the church, the Builders are steadfast in their beliefs and values. Scholar Peter Rehwaldt continued this thought that, “As senior citizens, they safeguarded their own ‘entitlements’ but had little influence over culture and values [in

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160 Ibid.

161 Ibid., 37.

162 Ibid., 37.

In his book about ministry towards seniors within congregations, Richard Gentzler asserted that this group has a lot to offer a multigenerational congregation, stating “Like all people, they want to be needed and loved and often seek out opportunities to be in service to others.” Bill Bytheway continued the position of Gentzler in an article entitled *Ageism and Age Categorization* stating that,

> The unfortunate perception of this generation is that they are old and unwilling to compromise, thus prohibiting them to be the most effective in church ministry. “However, older adults are often so marginalized on our society that they have little opportunity to bless those coming behind them. Pervasive segregation of the elderly has yielded negative stereotyping and discrimination against the older population, which is known as ageism. They can be perceived as inflexible, depressing, less competent, passive and senile.”

The generation following the Builders are called Baby Boomers, a group born between 1943 and 1965, which makes people in this age group between the age of 55 and 77 in 2020. These individuals emerged as a result of the end of World War II. Hammett notes,

> They are also concerned with traditional values, however they are a bit more laid back than their predecessors, the Builders. They were made to go to church as children, and some abandoned it at their first opportunity, only to return to it when their children were born. Into health and fitness, they are also seekers, looking to fulfill what works for them in life.

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164 Peter Walter Rehwaldt, "Let the People Say “Amen.”: A Multigenerational Understanding of Rite, Hymnody, and Preaching." (Graduate Theological Union, 2005), 53. In ProQuest.


167 Hammett and Pierce, 38.

168 Ibid., 38-40.
Of all the generations represented in the church, the Boomers are credited to have had the most significant impact on American religion than the Boomers.\textsuperscript{169} The heights of membership and church attendance were achieved in the 1950s and early '60s when baby boomers were children. Their participation and involvement in worship is so integral that some scholars impose that overall religious participation within worship may suffer for years to come. David Briggs wrote on this issue,

If baby boomers continue the pattern of an on-again, off-again relationship with organized religion, the inevitable and relatively massive transition of the boomers out of active parenting roles should exert considerable downward pressure on overall levels of religious participation for at least the next 20 years.\textsuperscript{170}

A 2000 study on Boomers in congregations revealed that they approach worship differently than the Builder generation. They enjoy fellowshipping in the worship space before service starts instead of sitting in silence during the prelude. They prefer participation rather than being a spectator and enjoy praise and worship music led by a praise band. Boomers are drawn to the type of preaching which instructs them how to get through life’s challenges, instead of doctrine or heavy theology.\textsuperscript{171}

Generation X’ers refers to those who are born between 1966 and 1984, and are between the ages of 36 and 54 in 2020.\textsuperscript{172} Hammett wrote that, “they have been shaped by AIDS, legalized abortion, technology, a varying economy, video games and television, the Challenger disaster, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the communist threat, and music.” Thomas


\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{171} Randy H. Rowlan, \textit{Contemporary Worship as a Tool for Deepening Baby Boomers' Spiritual Well-being}. (Ph.D., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2000). \textit{In ProQuest Dissertations & Theses}

\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 41.
Rainer asserted a description of this group by sharing that they are unsettled regarding matters of faith and absolutes; this mindset is reflected in their workplace and the church they worship. According to Strauss and Howe, this generation was the first to witness two income families. They were often accompanied by a babysitter as children or youth and left to the television for interaction instead of a family environment. They started working earlier and developed more responsibility at a younger age similar to the Builders, (two generations prior). They learned to get by on their own and to rely on themselves. Most Generation X’ers are not a part of the church. Those who have experience with church as children often return later in life for the sake of their children, as they too search for spirituality of their own. Churches have endeavored to attract and retain Generation X’ers, mainly through musical styles that appeal to them. Herb Miller suggested that upbeat music styles are key, even though they are not enough by themselves.

Millennials are a group born between 1985 to 2000, making people in this age group between the ages of 20-35 in 2020. When discussing Millennials, it is appropriate to begin by

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175 Ibid.


178 Gilbert, 23


180 Hammett and Pierce, 42.
stating that affirmation and having a place in life are priorities of the group.\(^{181}\) These two traits form their perspective on work ethic, work endeavors and personal goals. Richard Waters claimed, “the Millennial generation has emerged as a force that is shaping the social and economic dynamics of the next decade.”\(^{182}\) According to Alexander Houston research, Millennials value the balance between work and life and attain a strong propensity towards entrepreneurship: “They are not hesitant in striking out on their own and seeking to take ownership of their careers and outcomes and financial success.”\(^{183}\) Houston continues, “[Millennials] are choosing convenience instead of dreams and goals that were established by previous generations. [They] prefer to be closer to work, social settings, and…church.”\(^{184}\) Like every generation, Millennials have needs to be met that the church should hold in consideration. Catherine Newhouse affirmed Houston’s position by sharing that, “[Millennials] are crying out for someone to pour into their life, especially those who don’t have much parental support…they need guidance that is much more direct and personal.”\(^{185}\) They are not adverse to relationships or the need for a church community, however that is a tender issue because, as Jim Henderson writes, “human beings resist being preached at or talked down to. We’re most open when we’re treated with dignity and respect.”\(^{186}\)

\(^{181}\) Ibid.

\(^{182}\) Richard D. Waters, “Can We Talk About the Direction of this Church?”, *Journal of Media and Religion*, vol. 11, no. 4, (2012): 200.


\(^{184}\) Ibid.

\(^{185}\) Catherine Newhouse, “The Forgotten Millennials,” *Christianity Today*, vol. 57, no. 5 (June 2013), 17.

In his book on the Millennial generation, Thom Rainer summarized and confirmed Newhouse and Henderson sharing that,

This group is spiritual but not religious. They are truth seekers but generally determine for themselves what is true. They see the family as redefined—no longer whole and healthy, but single parent homes, same sex parents, etc. They are generally materialistic and want the best of everything as influenced by the culture they live in. They are media consumers, but they need unconditional love. They are the most educated generation and are marrying much later than previous generations.187

Generation Z is a group born after 2000188 and at the time of this study, the oldest of the group is 20 years old. This generation was raised by technology, specifically accessible devices such as the iPhone and iPad which affect person to person interaction. The continued expansion of the internet and WiFi provided this generation with seemingly unlimited access to information.189 Social media, on-demand entertainment, and constant communication shaped the way this generation connected with society.190 The summation of this generation and their characteristics are not yet complete as they are the youngest and most recent generation at the time of this research. Candace Steele Flippin, author of Generation Z in the Workplace, found that Generation Z’s in her study self-described themselves as eager, hardworking, creative and motivated.191 They are open minded and less judgmental, allowing them to approach situations from multiple perspectives and in unconventional ways.192


190 Ibid.

191 Candace Steele Flippin, Generation Z in the Workplace (Candace Steele Flippin, 2017).
racially diverse generation to date.\textsuperscript{193} According to a Vespa, Armstrong and Medina study, 49% identify as non-white, consisting of a number of multiracial youth; that number is steadily increasing.\textsuperscript{194} This generation grew up in a world where diversity was in the forefront, witnessing the election of Barak Obama as the first black President of the United States, followed by the 2016 democratic presidential nomination of Hillary Clinton. This showed Generation Z that people of color and women can serve in leadership roles at all levels, something older generations had not witnessed when they were young.\textsuperscript{195} This has led this generation to be accepting of people from backgrounds different from their own, develop open-mindedness, and cultivate a strong desire for inclusion and equality\textsuperscript{196}, all of which, in their minds, are fundamental to making the world a better place.\textsuperscript{197} Seemiller and Grace also found that 47% of Generation Z’ers consider themselves a part of organized religion, with 41% saying that they attend weekly services.\textsuperscript{198} They continue, “…and given the number who identify with religious, this is a substantial portion. Compared to other generations when they were younger, these rates of attendance are considerably higher than Millennials at 18%, Generation X’ers at 21%, and


\textsuperscript{193} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{195} Seemiller, 31.

\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 43.
Baby Boomers at 26%"  

As more data is collected over the years, clear and specific characteristics will become more apparent for this generation.

The church is a unique collection of generations who have been shaped by life experiences. When coming to worship, each generation has views and methods for which things should be done. These are some of the barriers worship leaders face when leading an intergenerational congregation in worship.

SDA Views on Generational Diversity

The SDA church is a proponent for intergenerational worship. While the average age of the SDA congregant is 45, the denomination makes conscious efforts to include younger generations in their development. Even though specific correlations are not made regarding the connection of children, youth and seniors in worship, they are indirectly implied through the SDA philosophies of the Adventurers and Pathfinders, and educational systems. Through this philosophy, it is apparent that the SDA church values children and youth, seeing them as integral members to a multigenerational church family.

According to a Lipka study, the average age of congregants in protestant churches is 49. In the same study, the average age of SDA congregants is slightly younger at 45. In each of these cases, the main attendees are adults. Many churches are geared toward the adults present, often leaving children out of consideration. They are known to “…pour the bulk of their resources in to trying to affect the lives of adults and are often disappointed to find the

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199 Ibid., 43.

200 Lipka (2016).

201 Ibid.

202 Barna, George. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children’s Should be your Church’s #1 Priority* (Peabody, MA: George Light Publications, 2003), 47.
return on investment to be minimal, at best.”\(^{203}\) To counter a monogenerational tendency, the SDA denomination placed a pointed emphasis on the SDA education system. Ellen White shared:

> In all our churches there should be schools, and teachers in those schools who are missionaries. It is essential that teachers be educated to act their important part in educating the children of Sabbath-keepers, not only in the sciences, but in the Scriptures. These schools, established in different localities, and conducted by God-fearing men and women…should be built upon the same principles as were the schools of the prophets.\(^{204}\)

From the denominational beginnings, Christian education has been a focus of the SDA faith\(^{205}\), not only for the sake of education, but for the inclusion and generational diversity within the church body. Today, the SDA educational system has grown to one of the largest in the world.\(^{206}\) SDA church leaders are aware that the formative years of a child’s education are pivotal for spiritual development. A 2004 Barna study funded by the SDA denomination confirmed this:

> The current Barna study indicates that nearly half of all Americans who accept Jesus Christ as their savior do so before reaching the age of 13 (43%), and that two out of three born again Christians (64%) made that commitment to Christ before their 18th birthday.\(^{207}\)

\(^{203}\) Ibid.

\(^{204}\) Ellen White, *Special Testimonies on Church Schools* (Silver Spring: General Conference Estate, 2018), iv.

\(^{205}\) General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Department of Education. *Philosophy of Adventist Education*. Seventh-day Adventist Church. Retrieved from [https://adventisteducation.org/abt.html](https://adventisteducation.org/abt.html)

\(^{206}\) Ibid.

SDA churches continue the weekly curriculum of Christian education on the weekend with two organizations created for children and youth—Adventurers and Pathfinders. The Adventurer program is designed to strengthen the family bond through child’s spiritual development fostered through the parent: “Through the Adventurer Program, the church, home, and school can work together with the parent to develop a mature, happy child (from grades 1-4).” The Pathfinder club, is a “church-centered recreational and spiritual program is designed for both boys and girls, grades 5 through 10. The program offers action, adventure, challenge and group activities that produce team spirit and loyalty to the church.” These two organizations were designed to minister to the youth and child demographics within the SDA congregation.

With these models in place, parents work with children to build an environment of trust and stability that expands from each generation to the next. Similar to other denominations, the majority of SDA worship services are directed towards adults, however with the SDA education system and the implementation of Adventurers and Pathfinders, the SDA church is able to retain a balance of intergenerational worship with one another.

Research from Smith and Denton indicated that within the religious setting, there may be a felt separation between generations, that can have negative outcomes for Millennial participation. They further elaborated on the outcome of that environment: “The detachment that

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208 North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. *Philosophy of Adventurers.* Seventh-day Adventist Church. Retrieved from [https://adventisteducation.org/abt.html](https://adventisteducation.org/abt.html)

209 North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. *Philosophy of Pathfinders.* Seventh-day Adventist Church. Retrieved from [https://www.pathfindersonline.org/philosophy-objectives](https://www.pathfindersonline.org/philosophy-objectives)

210 North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. *Philosophy of Adventurers.* Seventh-day Adventist Church. Retrieved from [https://adventisteducation.org/abt.html](https://adventisteducation.org/abt.html)

211 North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. *Philosophy of Pathfinders.* Seventh-day Adventist Church. Retrieved from [https://www.pathfindersonline.org/philosophy-objectives](https://www.pathfindersonline.org/philosophy-objectives)
many teens experience from adults creates a structural paradigm for adolescent religious involvement and later religious involvement as emerging adults. If religion is perceived as an adult matter, then teens are likely to disregard religion and carry this attitude into adulthood. Barna found that another predictor for retention among Adventist Millennials were positive experiences with other Adventist members and church leadership, particularly as children and teens, and sense of acceptance within the church environment. While research exists on the varying participation levels of each generational group, there is a need to study how the various generations interact with each other during SDA worship services.

Theological Views on Generational Diversity

The bible suggests that multigenerational diversity was a part of God’s plan for his people. In the Old Testament book of Genesis, God said, “Be fruitful and increase in number” (Genesis 1:28), which required family unity and a multigenerational commitment of nurturing. The family unit sought the Lord together and stories of His faithfulness were passed down from the parents to the children. The multigenerational pattern of communion in worship was a God-established precedent repeated in the Passover observance. In the Exodus account, God made it clear that, “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance.” (Exodus 12:17-19). This multigenerational gathering to worship also took place at Sinai, outlined in Exodus 19. In this chapter, God instructed Moses to assemble and consecrate the entire camp (men, women, and

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children), before He addressed them in the first corporate worship setting. Additionally, there are numerous references in the Old Testament which speak to the complete family coming together in an act of worship, including the Jewish tradition of Passover which is still celebrated today, as families pass the worship tradition from generation to generation.\textsuperscript{215} Another reference linking the Jewish tradition to multigenerational diversity was expressed Deuteronomy 6:1-12 serves as a manual for how parents are to teach their children, the next generation, saying,

“\textbf{These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.}”\textsuperscript{216}

Theologian C.F. Keil shares that, “\textbf{the goal of Moses’ instruction to parents was, to awaken in the younger generation, love to the Lord and to his commandments}”.\textsuperscript{217} This example revealed the continuous pattern of education to younger generations in the corporate worship settings of Israel.

Though Jesus did not directly address multigenerational worship in the New Testament, his actions in ministry reflected his position.\textsuperscript{218} Jesus often engaged in multigenerational ministry as indicated by each of his sermons to large crowds. One sermon, documented in Matthew 15:29-39, was given 4,000 men, in addition to women and children. Another sermon, documented in Mark 6:30-44, was delivered to 5,000 men, plus women and children. In each of the sermons, Jesus did not segment the message for various demographics, but shared a message

\textsuperscript{215}Numbers 8, 2 Chronicles 6; 2 Chronicles 35.

\textsuperscript{216}Deuteronomy 6:6-9 N


\textsuperscript{218}Kimberly Anne Martin, “Contextualizing Worship and Music in a Multicultural Church: A Case Study at Christ Fellowship Miami.” Doctoral Dissertation, (Liberty University, 2018).
that was applicable to all, modeling a multigenerational method to worship. In another instance documented in Luke 18, Jesus was preaching to a crowd and was interrupted by parents and children. Against the wishes of the disciples Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” This demonstrated that everyone, regardless of age, is welcome in the presence and worship of Jesus.

In the book of Acts, the early church embodied the concept of multigenerational community and fellowship. On the day of Pentecost, they were all together in one place and were “filled with the Holy Spirit”, “young and old”, “sons and daughters.” (Acts 2:1, 17). The New Testament continues to reference different generations in the church body. First John 2:13-14 acknowledges three generations—fathers, young men, and children:

I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, dear children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Commentators Marianne Thompson and Gary Burge interpreted John to be referencing age groups, while others such as theologian Charles Spurgeon identified these generations as being one large group—“...the blending all the spiritual generations and chronological generations within one church body.”

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219 Luke 18:16

220 1 John 2:13-14.


Perhaps the strongest argument from the New Testament for multigenerational worship comes from 1 Corinthians 12:12-27:

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many… Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.\textsuperscript{225}

This passage demonstrated that diversity among members of the body of Christ was necessary and important.\textsuperscript{226} Each member is important regardless of the significance of their role. This is reflected in each grouping within the congregation—from children to the elderly.

Multigenerational worship was modeled in the Old Testament through the instructions God gave to Moses. When He had something important to share, a principle or practice to implement that had generational effects, He instructed the whole family to be present to receive the directives. In the New Testament, Jesus spent time with each generational demographic as a corporate group, indicating that intergenerational interaction is important. Paul supported the intergenerational gatherings in the Old Testament and New Testament practices of Jesus by using the analogy of the body of Christ, where each member of the Christian family and worshiping community is important and valued. Therefore, it can be surmised that there is a Biblical precedent for intergenerational worship.

**Engagement, Participation, and Gestures in Worship**

This section discusses the response of the congregant during the time of congregational singing. The concept of engagement is examined as it relates to cultural relevance and

\textsuperscript{224} Davis, 2006.

\textsuperscript{225} 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

understanding. Elements such as cultural familiarity and education play factors in one’s engagement. Engagement is manifested in what is labeled as either active or passive participation. Both forms of participation will be discussed along with the gestures that are associated with passive and active participation. Each of these areas are addressed in their relationship to the time of congregational singing during an SDA worship service.

Engagement

Merriam Webster defined engagement as “being greatly interested and involved in an activity”. In the context of this research, engagement refers to an individual’s attention and interest being captured by the activity taking place, moving them to participate. SDA worship leaders strive to engage congregations in this way. Research offers little information regarding SDA worship and engagement, however studies on congregational singing within the Christian community give insight regarding engagement.

Yang’s study on engagement and participation during the time of congregational singing revealed that active participation increased when worship met the needs and reflected the culture of the people. In the study, the concepts measured were popularity of the music, the congruency of expression with the congregational culture, and the mode of the congregational expression. While the general scope of congregational singing with a congregation in America was examined, specific musical elements such as melody, lyrics or instrumentation were not examined in this study.


229 Ibid.
Another study, by William Willamon, explored the role liturgical education played in a congregant’s engagement and participation with the singing during the worship service. This study showed that the worship education of lay-personnel made a difference in their ability to involve themselves in worship and accept new worship practices, which included the singing of new songs.²³⁰ Participation and engagement to an item or time in the worship service was tied to the “degree of personal meaning one finds in a given experience, a sense of personal relevance in which the worshipper finds something within worship that meets a personal need.”²³¹

Lastly, a study by Miller and Strongman was completed on a group of Pentecostals, measuring the emotional effects experienced with congregational music. This study found that familiarity with the music significantly increased the enjoyment and participation of the music among worshippers.²³² Miller and Strongman attributed a portion of this outcome to a Krumhansl study that revealed that each culture was conditioned to respond to music differently and that it is possible that the participation of a group is linked to the setting, the activity, and the expectations of the culture.²³³

Each of these studies measured participation and engagement within specific worshipping communities. Yet none of the studies addressed the SDA congregation. Additionally, the studies by Williamson and Yang did not measure musical elements in connection with engagement, but rather other elements related to congregational singing such as education and


²³¹ Ibid.


expression. Thus, more research is needed to understand congregational engagement within the SDA worship service.

Participation

When striving to identify how congregants display their engagement, participation is a determining factor of activity. This section explores the various ways participation can be manifested during the time of congregational singing. Inlow’s study on participation in worship revealed that participation can be categorized as either “passive” or “active”\(^{234}\). In the study, worship was defined as the participation of a gathered congregation in the creation of non-discursive symbolic forms that expressed the patterns and rhythms of the Gospel. Therefore, a way to measure participation was by the outward display of gestures. Inlow based the theoretical framework of her argument on the ideologies of John Westerhoff. Westerhoff was cited in this study due to his experience and extensive work on the relationship between ecclesiology and worship.\(^{235}\) In referencing “passive worship”, Inlow described a type of interaction reflected in a congregation that simply shows up to observe worship:

They accept their role in observing the pastor, musicians, or other officers serving. The usual basis of evaluating worship is to ask how powerful the sermon was, how grand the choir anthem, and how many people attended. This audience/performer model of worship is labeled as passive worship, where involvement is minimal.\(^{236}\)

True passive participation is far from the ideal of any worship setting; however it is common among many congregations. In his examination of participation over the course of church

\(^{234}\) Inlow, 7.

\(^{235}\) Inlow, 12.

\(^{236}\) Ibid.
history, Gregory Dix attested that the decline in congregational participation and involvement was not a recent occurrence, but a practice dating back to the Middle Ages.  

Prior to [the dominance of the Catholic Church], the doing of liturgy required the active participation of all members of the church. As an example, the orders or roles, included the high priest or celebrant-bishop, priests or presbyters, Levites or deacons, and the laity.

Theologian John Davis argued that the primary reason passive participation is prevalent in American worship is due to the consumerist American society. Additionally, he asserted that American congregants arrive to the worship setting with a fundamental misunderstanding of worship practices and theological convictions, enabling this passive approach. He explained, “the embedded reasoning behind our thinking deals with a me-first or an individualistic (spectator) approach, which is enhanced by the general culture that surrounds and shapes us in our country”. Consequently, many are not expecting to engage with and respond to the presence of God in worship, rather, the tendency is to engage with our personal needs and wants in worship.

Active worship participation is essential as it impacts people on all levels and areas of the worshiping community. Linda Inlow shared that this active participation, “… insists on an intimate relationship between our personal Christian experience, the Gospel as the center of our faith, and what we do in corporate worship.” Inlow continued, “…Congregations [today] have

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238 Ibid., 1.


240 Inlow, 10.
their own list [of active participants]—ushers, greeters, collectors, prayer [warriors], singers, preachers, and the like…. Each participant should have at least one role in worship…”

In the context of congregational singing, active participation can also be displayed through bodily gestures commonly associated with worship. Bodily gestures, during the time of congregational singing in an SDA worship experience, are broad and can be identified most commonly by singing, standing, clapping, sitting, stillness and reflection. When the time of congregational singing in the SDA worship experience is examined by worship leadership, active participation from the congregation is important. A study by Fuller and Montgomery showed that participation through bodily gestures in religious services helped to create a sense of connection with others and that this shared movement among those assembled generated a greater social bond.

Additionally, a study by Wiltermuth and Heath comparing cooperative behavior in persons who had or hadn't engaged in shared body movement in religious settings, concluded that “acting in synchrony with others can increase cooperation by strengthening social attachment among group members (e.g., music, singing).” Based on their research, the use of gestures in the time of congregational singing engaged congregants to participate, and facilitated community and oneness in worship.

While research is available as to how worshipers can engage and participate with religious services through the display of gestures deemed appropriate for the relevant activity, there is missing data regarding how SDA worshipers engage and participate in the various

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241 Inlow, 9.


gestures during the time of congregational singing. Studies related to SDA congregations and any of these areas would be beneficial. Additionally, active and passive participation have been measured on non-SDA congregations but there is currently no information on SDA participation during the time of congregational singing.

Gestures in Worship

Gestures were not only a part of worship expression but were also incorporated into the everyday life of the Old Testament Hebrews. In the book Whole Body Gestures by Melak Tsegaw, the author shared, “These include cultural gestures, religious ceremonial gestures, and prophetic symbolic gestures.” The Zondervan Encyclopedia defined the term gesture as, “Any movement of head, hand, or other part of the body to convey meaning to an observer, as to secure their attention or to guide their action; to emphasize what is being said or is about to be said; or to express strong feeling.” Other scholars, such as David Block, agreed that the term “gesture” is broad enough to include dispositional expressions—where the gesture displayed is an attitude or a mindset, not only a physical movement.

Gestures most often used in an urban SDA worship service, during the time of congregational singing, span the range of outward and inward forms of expression including meditation, stillness, swaying, clapping and standing. The SDA denomination published Guidelines Toward an SDA Philosophy of Music, however there was no mention of gestures

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246 Ibid.


that are appropriate or inappropriate for worship. Rather the philosophy was based on scripture and writings from the denominational prophet, Ellen White that speak to the character of the music. For example, two of the philosophies stated that, “The music should: 1) Bring glory to God and assist us in acceptably worshiping Him. (1 Cor 10:31). 2) Uplift and purify the Christian's thoughts, etc...”  

Yet there was no mention regarding appropriate gestures and participation in the guidelines. There is a void in available research that indicates where urban multicultural and multigenerational congregations lie on the spectrum of worship gestures practiced by the greater SDA worshiping community.

Melody, Lyrical Content, and Instrumentation

There are various complexities that can make leading a diverse group of congregants in singing challenging—age, education, culture and context. The two complexities most pertinent to this study are culture and age. Scholars agree that art forms such as paintings, sculptures, music, dance, and architecture in and of themselves are devoid of meaning. Art can shift in meaning based on the context it takes place. Because music is the most fluid of artforms, and most relevant to this study, the three musical elements of melody, lyrical content and instrumentation are examined among SDA congregations during the time of congregational singing.

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250 Ellen White, Patriarchs and Prophets (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1890), 594.


253 Best, 44.
Melodic Familiarity and Engagement

The definition of melodic familiarity is the combined meaning of two words: melody and familiar. Melody is defined as an agreeable succession of arranged sounds.\textsuperscript{254} Familiar is defined as something which one is closely acquainted.\textsuperscript{255} The combination of the each term results in melodic familiarity which can be defined as the close acquaintance of a sequence of notes within a song, or an recognition with the tune. A number of studies discussed melodic familiarity and engagement, making the connection between childhood exposure and subsequent adult behavior. A study by Zakaras and Lowell indicated that early exposure to art forms had long term repercussions on their engagement with the music in adult years.\textsuperscript{256} In their study on \textit{Enabling Individual Engagement}, they shared, “positive experiences with [music] in the home, community and school build a child’s interest in the [music] and a propensity to seek [familiar] experiences as an adult.”\textsuperscript{257} A 1987 study by Kelly confirmed the findings of Zakaras and Lowell, by showing that an individual’s capacity for enjoyment and engagement in an experience was linked to how much was learned about the activity.\textsuperscript{258} This included singing songs and making music in various settings. Based on these studies, if a child engaged in singing songs regularly, he or she would be likely to engage with those songs/melodies in adulthood.


\textsuperscript{257} Ibid. 17.

An additional portion of the same study by Strongman and Miller assessed the engagement of Pentecostal congregants on two religious musical selections and two secular selections.\(^{259}\) The data in the study confirmed that familiarity exercised a prominent role in the participant engagement:

It became very clear across this investigation that level of enjoyment of the music relies heavily upon familiarity with a song…for example, two religious songs embodied deep personal beliefs, social connectedness with others, and personal relationship with a commitment to God.\(^{260}\)

The findings of Strongman and Miller coincided the research of Kelly, with individuals displaying a connection with familiar elements of the music and the effect it has on participation.

In summary, the research of Zakaras and Lowell pointed to early exposure as a factor that determined engagement with music or any art form in adult years. Kelly supported their findings, sharing that an individual’s engagement in an activity is connected to their learned knowledge of the activity. These two studies offered insight as to why individuals engaged with music, however, information specific to the context of the time of congregational singing within the SDA worship service could not be confirmed. The last body of research by Miller and Strongman offered an assessment closer to the nature of this research, as the examination of Pentecostal congregants engaged with music used in their worship service. This study concluded that the familiarity of the music, and all of the corresponding elements within, served as the basis for engagement and participation. Findings from this research explored the broader scope of music within a different denomination. Similar results from this research cannot be assumed regarding SDA congregations due to the differences worship practices and expressions between Pentecostals and SDAs.

\(^{259}\) Miller & Strongman, 8-27.

\(^{260}\) Ibid. 20.
Lyrical Content and Engagement

For the purposes of this research, lyrics are defined as words that are set to or placed with music.261 Research by Patricia Ransom explored the connection between lyrics and a listeners well-being, sharing that while lyrics and music were independent components of a larger picture, they “support each other and work together to create one experience, an experience that would not be the same with one aspect missing.”262 This “one experience” shared by Ransom is unique to each individual. She shared that, “[musical] preference and engagement differ from person to person, season to season, or perhaps day to day…lyrics add something powerful to the songs we listen to…”263 This would also resonate with a congregation gathered together and singing during the time of congregational singing. As the time of congregational singing takes place, multiple experiences occur simultaneously.

Most research that studies music with lyrics is generally confined to investigating how music and lyrics are processed in the brain, rather than how they interact with the individual, or result in human behavior.264 For example, a study by Gordon et al. investigated how music and lyrics were processed in the brain by asking participants to focus on either the melody or the lyrics of a recognizable song. Within the portion of the study examining lyrics, participants were asked to focus on the lyrics of a familiar song. However, the musical accompaniment was altered in the familiar songs to examine the brains response. The results showed that this encounter elicited a certain response in the brain that gave the lyrics new meaning, even though

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262 Ibid., 11.

263 Ibid., 3.

the lyrics did not change. This suggested that accompanying music can alter the way lyrics are processed, even when attention is directed towards the lyrics.\textsuperscript{265}

In another study on the relationship of melody and lyrics on emotion, Ali and Peynircioglu found that melody was more dominant than lyrics in the perception of emotion and that emotions were rated as more intense when the music and lyrics were congruent.\textsuperscript{266} The study suggested that both music and lyrics played an integral role in an individual’s emotion engagement.\textsuperscript{267} Emotional engagement was defined as a state of being that “involves interest, boredom, happiness, anxiety, and other affective states, any of which factors could affect [an individual’s] involvement with [activity].”\textsuperscript{268}

Lastly, Hull’s study on emotional engagement discussed how congregants ascribed meaning to what is being sung in worship and how the singer interacted with that meaning. Through the lyrical comparison of contemporary praise music and hymnody, Hull examined the dimensions of emotion, feeling, and mood.\textsuperscript{269}

While worship songs are intended to create very particular experiences of mood through their music, hymns seem to be concerned more with conveying the ideas expressed by a text, which may evoke a variety of emotional experiences in the listener or singer.\textsuperscript{270}

Hull continued by explaining research by Kohut; he stated that the lyrical content should meet the needs of congregation, enabling the participant to obtain a healthy sense of self-esteem and


\textsuperscript{267} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{268} Xun Ge and Dirk Ifenthaler, \textit{Designing Engaging Educational Games and Assessing Engagement in Game-Based Learning} (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, 2017), 253-270.

\textsuperscript{269} Hull, 27-28.

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
value which is critical for a sense of belonging and acceptance in a worship setting between God and humanity.\textsuperscript{271} Indirectly, Hull asserted that without a sense of self-esteem and value experienced from a connection with the lyrical content, if these needs are not met, the psychological result is disengagement.

In summary, Rasmon’s research connected how the brain processes lyrics and music but did not offer insight as to how it connects lyrics to an individual’s behavior within the worship setting. Both Gordon’s study and the second study by Ali and Peynircioglu revealed that musical accompaniment can alter the way lyrics are processed, even when attention was directed towards the lyrics. Additionally, the Ali and Peynircioglu research discussed the relationship of melody and lyrics and their impact on emotional engagement. The third study by Hull examined the lyrical comparison of contemporary praise music and hymnody, and the effect on emotion, feeling, and mood. This study indirectly suggested that the self-esteem of a participant is a factor in engagement with the lyrics. While close to the research questions, none of these studies addressed how or if the lyrical content of music in urban SDA churches engaged congregants to participate.

Instrumental Usage and Engagement

Instrument usage refers to the instruments used in the song including but not limited to organ, piano, brass instruments, string instruments, drums, and others. The discussion revolving around the use of instruments in worship is closely intertwined with the effect instrumental music has on emotion. John Price, an expert on the history of instruments used in worship, shared that it is essential that emotions be a part of the experience in worship and warned that anything that has the power to bypass logic and directly affect the emotions should be carefully

handled in worship. He continued “Musical instruments...have this power. They can easily affect the emotions so as to divert the mind from the true objects of worship, which are spiritual and unseen. When this occurs, musical instruments come into direct conflict with the goals of spiritual worship.”

Julius Portnor shared similar thoughts on the influence instruments can have in the worship setting stating that the poets of the hymns [also] recognized this danger and sought “…to restrict music to its place of serving poetry.” He suggests that those same poets “have also admitted that the effect of tones are incomparably more powerful, more infallible, and quicker than that of words.” The influence of instruments in worship to sunde emotional responses are found in the evangelistic crusades of the Great Awakenings in America. However, because of the perceived positive effect associated with instrumental use during the evangelistic crusades, the practice became more popular among the local congregation. David Music confirmed this, in his book *Instruments in Church*, by adding, that the piano played a vital role in many American congregational worship and later revivals due to its frequent use in the evangelistic meetings of Moody and Sankey.

As American culture continued to evolve, the development of technology in society played a part to the sharing of the gospel as well as instrumental usage within worship. Price contributed to this, sharing,

After World War II, the expanding radio and recording industries fueled the spread of popular music styles such as jazz, folk, and country and western in the 1950s and 60s.

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272 Price, 154.
273 Ibid.
276 Music, 165.
the western world was shocked by the rapid popular success of rock-and-roll music along young people. Many instruments that had rarely, if ever, been used in worship before, such as the guitar, drums, saxophone, etc. began to find acceptance in many churches. With the development of technology, the electronic keyboard and synthesizer, along with amplification, were also added. By the end of the 20th century, the entire ethos of the world had found its way into worship.\footnote{277 Price, 139.}

While American society witnessed the birth and integration of these instruments into popular culture, the association of these new instruments with secular genres made it difficult for conservative congregants to accept their use in the worship setting. Harold Best suggests that this occurrence is deeper than subjective perspectives by differing groups in the church, but the result of learned associations.

The more a piece of music is repeated in the same context, the more it will begin to ‘mean’ the context. Music is the most context friendly of all the arts. It detaches itself quickly, sponge-like, to whatever surrounds it. And by repetition, it is eventually perceived to equate with the context. Through its expressive power, it draws the context up into itself to the extent that the meaning, originally generated by the context itself, appears to come directly from the music.\footnote{278 Best, 54.}

Therefore, it could be concluded that a bond between worshipers and the instrumentation used in worship services resulted in the association between those instruments being most appropriate for and congregational singing and worship, for each generational demographic. While witnessing and participating in worship events of their time, it is possible that Builders and Boomers formed a strong association between the instruments used in during worship settings and congregational singing. Similarly, it is possible that Generation X’ers, Millennials and Generation Z’ers formed a strong association between the instruments used in worship settings during the technological surgency. According to the rationale of Best, each group, whether consciously or subconsciously, may view their respective instrument groupings as the
instruments most appropriate for congregational singing, and are represented as being within the very fabric, or DNA of their Christian worship experience.\textsuperscript{279}

These dichotomies are seen in literature surrounding instrumental usage and engagement. In a journal article by Brigitta Johnson entitled \textit{Back to the Heart of Worship}, Johnson explored praise music in a Los Angeles African American megachurch. Johnson delved into worship practices and traditions of the African American culture, which included specific instrumentation and their interaction with cultural engagement:\textsuperscript{280}

The accompaniment for the praise team usually reflects the preferred instrumentation of the congregation. In some churches, amplified acoustic guitars, keyboards, and drums accompany the praise team. In others, especially in churches where gospel music is dominant, electric keyboards, the Hammond organ, electric guitar, electric bass, and drums accompany the praise team…the popularity of this music has been a key element to increased participation in weekly worship over the last thirty years.\textsuperscript{281}

This article addressed one demographic in a congregation that had adopted contemporary praise and worship music as the main genre of worship song. An example of a contrasting mindset was shared by David Music, where elderly members were grossly offended by the use of particular instrumentation in worship. Music goes on to share that the instrumentation was what engaged certain demographics into a mindset of worship:

…it was the [musical instruments] she was having a problem with. Somebody had brought guitars and (horrors!) a drum into the sanctuary, and the music was disturbing to her. For this older saint, such modern music could not glorify God. It was the majestic, awe inspiring chords of the organ…that stirred her soul. Anything ‘less’ disturbed her and, she was sure disturbed God, since it robbed Him of the honor and majesty due to him.\textsuperscript{282}

\textsuperscript{279} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{281} Ibid., 111.

\textsuperscript{282} Music, 176.
In *Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation*, Huron explained why one generation’s attempt to understand another generation’s preferences could be difficult. He noted, “Neural mechanisms exist that help segregate different contexts (cognitive firewalls). Such barriers allow listeners to distinguish various kinds of musical experiences including styles and genres.”  

The barriers Huron referred to also included the instrumentation used during the time of congregational singing. Cynthia Wilson agreed with Huron by continuing, “Hence, persons who have been formed and steeped in music from [one context] attempt to interpret, translate, define, and/or analyze music from other contexts; such attempts have proven to be inadequate.”

According to Wilson, multigenerational congregations naturally have challenges understanding each other. This is due, in part, to what has shaped their realities regarding instruments in worship. Best’s research argued that context gives meaning, explaining that a multigenerational and multicultural congregation is surmised of individuals coming from various contexts and understanding. While these studies generally defined generational practices and preferences with music, they did not confirm whether practices and preferences vary among church denominations.

**Summary**

This chapter covered the challenges of cultural diversity in the SDA church. While currently the most diverse protestant denomination, the SDA journey to diversity began with segregation supported by the theological understandings of its leaders. Perspectives on

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segregation changed, and conformed to integration, coupled immigration, and intermarriage. The SDA church was not credited for intentional intergenerational diversity within its congregations but made efforts to retain and train the children and youth to be future leaders and contributors to the church body. Each generation within the congregation was identified, along with correlating historic events that influenced perspectives and experiences that could affect engagement in worship. Further studies addressed the connection between engagement and participation in worship that manifest in bodily gestures associated with worship. Also discussed were the various impacts melodic familiarity, lyrical content, and instrumental music have on engagement during worship. However, more research is needed to determine the musical elements for effective congregational singing among SDA congregations.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research is lacking in regard to the engagement of SDA congregants during the time of congregational singing. The purpose of this quantitative descriptive study was to determine which elements of music best engage SDA congregants during the time of congregational singing within urban congregations. This chapter explains the methodology used to gather data which includes the research design, those involved in the study, the setting, survey instruments and procedures for analyzing data results.

Research Design

A quantitative descriptive research design was implemented to determine which elements of music best affect engagement during the time of congregational singing. According to Paolo Brandimarte, “a quantitative model can be descriptive, if its purpose is to shed some light on the relationships between two (or more) variables of interest or to predict system performance as a function of some design variable.”285 Therefore, this methodology accounted for attitudes and perceptions of a SDA congregants in association with elements of congregational singing.286 Descriptive research was appropriate for understanding the perceptions of engagement.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The research questions used for this study were:

RQ 1: Which elements of music best affect engagement in the congregational singing among urban SDA worship experiences?

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RQ 2: Which musical element will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age?

The working hypotheses were:

H1: The most engaging element of music within congregational singing in an urban SDA congregation is the familiarity of the melody.

H2: The most engaging element of music within congregational singing in the urban SDA congregation that will differ according to age is the instrumental usage.

Participants

Participants in this study were comprised of attendees from three churches in the Washington D.C. region. The demographic breakdown of the participants indicated that 31% (n=26) of the participants were male, and 64% (n=46) of the participants were female. Participants between the ages of 18-20 represented 15% (n=11) of the responses. Participants between the ages of 21-35 represented 26% (n=19) of the responses. Participants between the ages of 36-54 represented 18% (n=13) of the responses. Participants between the ages of 55-77 represented 36% (n=26) of the responses. Participants over 78 years old represented 4% (n=3) of the responses. See Table 1.
Table 1: Sample Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-35</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-54</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-77</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78 and over</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Setting**

The setting of the study was a multipurpose room in the Takoma Park Church Center called the Keystone Room, located on the campus of the Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, located in Takoma Park, Maryland. The site was a central location between for the participants. This room was selected as it functioned as a space for congregational worship and provided familiarity of a church setting. Participants entered into the room with open seating, which was set up with chairs surrounding round tables. While tables are not often found in a worship setting, they were provided so that participants could document their responses on the survey instrument throughout the meeting. Soft instrumental music played over the sound system to invite an atmosphere of worship. Participants took part in light refreshments while finding a seat and completed the preliminary demographic information of the survey.

**Procedure**

Prior to the recruitment and collecting data, the Institutional Review Board approved the quantitative descriptive study design, survey instrument, research flier, and approval letters from the pastoral leadership of each congregation involved. The following section outlines the recruitment process, song selection, and testing process of the study.
Recruitment

Recruitment for survey participants took place through three avenues—bulletin announcements, flier postings, and in-person announcements. Pastoral leadership from each congregation approved announcements in their church bulletins, as well as flier postings on their church premises and an in-person announcement by the researcher during the normal worship hour. In each of the avenues for recruitment, three ways were provided for participants to register—QR code, keyword texting, and a phone number to call for manual registration. Prior to the survey being conducted, participants agreed to take part in the study by completing the demographics portion of the survey including age, gender, ethnicity, and church affiliation and informed consent. Individuals who wished to decline their participation left the room. Because the survey was anonymous, signatures were not included on the letter of consent.

Testing

At the start of the worship research session, the researcher welcomed and thanked everyone for participating in the survey. Prayer was offered by the researcher. Then instructions were given pertaining to the format of the meeting and how the participants were to be involved, including the completion of the preliminary demographic information. The researcher explained that the survey for the study was provided in two forms, online and hardcopy. For participants who wished to complete the online version, a QR Code was provided that took participants directly to the survey. For participants who wished to complete the survey by hand, paper surveys were provided prior to the start of the study. Five video clips of congregational singing were projected on a large screen and played through a sound system. Participants were also given a lyric sheet with all the lyrics of each song. This sheet enabled the participants to read the
message of the songs and also provided a way for them to participate through singing if they chose to do so.

After each video clip, participants were given 90 seconds to complete the survey question that correlated with the video. During the 90 seconds, no announcements were made, but soft instrumental music played in the room in order to maintain a continuous atmosphere of worship. Each survey question inquired as to which element of music best engaged the participant—melodic familiarity, lyrical content, instrumental usage, none of these, or other. Participants also had the option to write in an answer. At the conclusion of all of the videos, the researcher collected the hard copies of the survey, offered a brief devotional and prayer to conclude the gathering.

Song Selection

The researcher pre-selected 5 YouTube videos that displayed audio and visual representations of congregational singing. The researcher conducted a Fair Use analysis worksheet for each of the YouTube videos and determined that the usage of each video was favored for the Fair use (See Appendix D). These songs were selected based on a range of music genres found in the urban SDA congregations—a range defined as hymns, hybrid, and contemporary Christian worship music (CCWM). The collection of five songs also reflected a blend of old, new, and hybrid representations of melody, lyrics and instrumentation. The balance of this can be seen in the table below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Melody</th>
<th>Lyrics</th>
<th>Instrumentation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Church’s One Foundation</td>
<td>Hymn</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Hideth’ My Soul</td>
<td>Hymn</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To God be the Glory</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Praise</td>
<td>CCWM</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Great Is Our God</td>
<td>CCWM</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Video recordings of each song were played for participants. The visual element of congregational singing was key so that participants could feel a part of the congregational singing being led by the leader on the screen. It was imperative to use songs that included the visual or audio contribution of a singing congregation so that participants felt comfortable participating in the corporate singing. The survey participants were encouraged to sing along and participate in whatever way they felt comfortable. Below are descriptions of each song.

**Song 1: The Church’s One Foundation**

The first video was Dan Forrest’s arrangement of “The Church’s One Foundation,” performed by the Duke Chapel Choir, the Duke Vespers Ensemble, the Evensong Singers, and the Amalgam Brass, at the Duke Chapel in Durham, North Carolina in 2016. The melody of this song was named “Aurelia” and can be found in the hymnbooks of the majority of Protestant faiths including the SDA hymnal. The lyrical content of this hymn came from the poetry and authorship of Samuel John Stone. This arrangement contained old text to accompany the familiar melody. The lyrics are biblically sound and speak to the shared doctrinal belief that Christ is the foundation of the church. The lyrics contain biblical references, including the opening line of the hymn, “The church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord.”

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correlates closely to 1 Corinthians 3:11 which shares, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 289 Other references within the song include 1 Corinthians 6:20; Isaiah 54:5; Ephesians 4:5; and others. The instrumentation used in this recording reflected what this research defines as old, containing pipe organ, brass, orchestral percussion and choir and congregation, and no lead singer. 290

Song 2: He Hideth My Soul

The second video was a clip of a 2014 worship service at the Temple Baptist Church in Powell, Tennessee where a church congregation sang “He Hideth My Soul”. The melody of this hymn was written in 1890 by William Kirkpatrick and gained popularity in SDA congregations in America the 1940s, making its way into the 1941 hymnal. 291 The lyrics were written by Franny Crosby 292 and speak to God’s provision and care for His people. Scriptural references include Isaiah 9:6, 32:2; Exodus 33:22; Psalm 16:8, Deuteronomy 33:25, and others. The instrumentation in this congregational setting resembles what this research defines as old—piano and/or organ accompaniment and a chorister leading a congregation.

Song 3: To God Be the Glory

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289 1 Corinthians 3:11


292 Ibid.
The third clip was an arrangement of “To God Be the Glory” by Tommy Walker. This was performed by the Purpose Driven Worship Conference Mass Choir at the Purpose Driven Worship Conference, Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California in 2005. The melody was written in 1875 by William Howard Doane. This song gained popularity in the early 1900s and found its way into the 1941 SDA hymnal. The text, written by Franny Crosby, included three verses which are aligned with SDA doctrines. The instrumentation in this rendition reflected what this research defined as hybrid—electric and acoustic guitars, electronic keyboard, drum set, electric bass, synthesizers, choir and congregation, and a lead singer as represented in Walker’s Worship C.A. Band.

Song 4: Total Praise

The fourth clip was “Total Praise,” written by Richard Smallwood and performed by the writer and Vision at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Atlanta, Georgia in 1996. This melody is less than 30 years old but has become accepted and used across denominational lines. The lyrical content is a hybrid between portions of Psalm 121 and poetry of the personal Christian experience. The lyrics are simple, repetitive, with one verse and chorus, resembling the form of the contemporary praise chorus. The instrumentation used in this song is considered new according to this research—a small choir, chamber orchestra, a Hammond organ, acoustic piano, drums, electric guitar, and electric bass guitar, with no lead singer.

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293 Ibid., 647.


**Song 5: How Great is Our God**

The final clip was “How Great is Our God”, written by Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves and Ed Cash. It was sung by Judith Christie McCallister at The Greater Allen AME Cathedral in New York, New York in 2011. This song is among the most popular contemporary Christian songs written within the last 20 years. The lyrics of this song acknowledge the greatness of God as the "King of Earth." Other references come from Psalm 145 and Chronicles 16:23. The instrumentation consists of percussion, a host of simulated/synthesized sounds, and a gospel band—Hammond organ, electric piano, drums, electric guitar, and electric bass guitar, percussion, and a host of simulated/synthesized sounds.297

**Data Analysis**

Data from the survey was assembled in an electronic database called Survey Monkey and was stored in a password protected account. Some participants completed the data online in the Survey Monkey portal, while others completed the survey on hard copies of paper, which the researcher manually input to the Survey Monkey portal. The analysis was completed in Survey Monkey to collate the information needed for the research questions and hypothesis relevant to this study.

**Summary**

This chapter addressed the methodology used in this study. An explanation of the quantitative descriptive method was discussed in relation to this study. The restatement of the

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hypothesis and research questions were shared along with a description of the participants.

Recruiting participants along with the purpose behind the song selection was discussed, and a balanced representation of age was revealed in the demographic portion of the survey. Song selection was an integral part of the survey to collect the correct data. The results of this study are discussed in chapter four.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter covers the data collected that tests the research questions, asking (1) Which elements of music best affect engagement in the congregational singing among urban SDA worship experiences? (2) How does the engagement between the specified musical elements and congregational singing differ according to age? Hypothesis 1 stated that the most engaging element of music among the participants would be the familiarity of the melody and hypothesis 2 stated that the most engaging element of music that would differ according to age is the instrumental usage. This chapter examines the collected data and reports the descriptive results for the engagement of the participants and the elements.

Data Analysis: First Hypothesis

The first research question was, “Which elements of music best affect engagement in the congregational singing among urban SDA worship experiences?” Three elements were measured—melodic familiarity, lyrical content and instrumental usage, and participants were able to select multiple elements that they felt led to their engagement. The following sets of data and graphs refer to the first research question.

Song 1

The first song was “The Church’s One Foundation” arranged by Dan Forrest. According to the parameters of this research, this song had an old melody, old lyrics, and used old instrumentation. When asked what musical elements of the song were engaging, 88% (n=63) of participants indicated melodic familiarity, 50% (n=36) reported lyrical content, 76% (n=55) reported instrumental usage, and 1% (n=1) indicated that none of the elements were engaging.
Additionally, 19% (n=14) of participants reported that another element (not listed), was most engaging (see Figure 1).

Figure 1—Song 1: Most Engaging Element

The second song was “He Hideth My Soul” from the Baptist Hymnal. According to the parameters of this research this song had an old melody, old lyrics, and old instrumentation. When asked what musical elements of the song were engaging, 80% (n=58) of participants indicated melodic familiarity, 68% (n=49) reported lyrical content, 33% (n=24) reported instrumental usage, and 11% (n=8) indicated that none of the elements were engaging. Additionally, 19% (n=14) of participants reported that another element (not listed), was most engaging (see Figure 2).
The third song was “To God Be the Glory” arranged by Tommy Walker. According to the parameters of this research, this song had a hybrid melody, hybrid lyrics, and used new instrumentation. When asked what musical elements of the song were engaging, 78% (n=56) of participants indicated melodic familiarity, 69% (n=50) reported lyrical content, 62% (n=45) reported instrumental usage, and 1% (n=1) indicated that none of the elements were engaging. Additionally, 36% (n=36) of participants reported that another element (not listed), was most engaging (see Figure 3).
The fourth song was “Total Praise” by Richard Smallwood and Vision. According to the parameters of this research, this song had a hybrid melody, hybrid lyrics, and used new instrumentation. When asked what musical elements of the song were engaging, 72% (n=52) of participants indicated melodic familiarity, 75% (n=54) reported lyrical content, 83% (n=60) reported instrumental usage, and 4% (n=3) indicated that none of the elements were engaging. Additionally, 33% (n=24) of participants reported that another element (not listed), was most engaging (see Figure 4).
Song 5

The fifth song was “How Great is Our God” arranged by Judith Christie McCallister. According to the parameters of this research, this song had a new melody, new lyrics, and used new instrumentation. When asked what musical elements of the song were engaging, 86% (n=61) of participants indicated melodic familiarity, 77% (n=55) reported lyrical content, 67% (n=48) reported instrumental usage, and 5% (n=4) indicated that none of the elements were engaging. Additionally, 38% (n=27) of participants reported that another element (not listed), was most engaging (see Figure 5).
Discussion: First Hypothesis

The data from this portion of the study revealed that the musical element most engaging among all age groups was melodic familiarity. This element scored the highest levels of engagement in Songs 1, 2, 3, and 5. The results suggested the most engaging element of music within congregational singing in an urban SDA congregation was melodic familiarity. Songs 1, 2, and 3 were in the hymnals published in 1941 and 1985 by the SDA denomination, allowing them nearly 80 years of use among SDA congregations. Additionally, these three songs were a part of a select group of hymns that have ecumenical appeal, being represented in nearly all protestant hymnals written after 1950. Song 4 was written in 1996, and Song 5 in 2004. Both songs were recognizable by most congregations worldwide, but Song 5 was simpler with a melody containing a limited range, making it easier to learn and replicate as a congregational song than Song 4.

Lyrical content was also prominent, scoring just under melodic familiarity in Songs 2, 3, and 5, and just under instrumental usage in Song 4. This is interesting because of the five songs, Songs 1, 2 and 3 were hymn arrangements, and from those three, Songs 2 and 3 were considered gospel hymns, whose lyrics were considered to have a broader appeal at the time they were
written. The lyrical content of Song 2 celebrated the redemptive actions of Jesus, and the lyrical content of Song 3 embodied a personal relationship with Jesus. However, Song 1 scored the lowest in lyrical content among all five songs. It was written during a controversial time in church history where doctrines and practices were up for debate. The lyrical content takes a defensive tone and poses the church as an organization that will prevail adversity, a trait associated with the Builder generation. While this reflected a noble intent, research shows that Boomers, Gen X’ers, Millennials, and Gen Z’ers are not drawn to the church as an organization, but rather a movement, making the lyrical content of this song a polarizing area for each generational group. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the subject matter of the hymn is the church, not Jesus or God. These reasons may suggest why Songs 2 and 3 engaged participants more than Song 1, even though all three were hymns. Song 5 was the only song that addressed the attributes of God. Taken directly from Psalm 104, the focus of the entire song is on the person of God and his Attributes. Song 4 was similar to Song 5, and functioned as a song of hope and praise based on Psalm 121. The subject of the song was dual—the verses focusing on the worshiper and the choruses on God.

Instrumental usage scored the highest in Song 4 and scored just under melodic familiarity in Song 1. Song 4 included an orchestral prelude to a gospel song. It also blended instrumentation from two genres that up to that point were rarely used together in worship music—classical and gospel. The classical-style orchestral accompaniment was skillfully crafted to accompany the gospel song, so much so, that upon the transition from the instrumental prelude to opening verse, the participants were visually and audibly surprised to hear the song evolve into a gospel song. Song 1 also included an instrumental prelude, bridge, and postlude, contributing to higher levels of engagement with instrumental usage. Songs 2, 3, and 5 featured
various forms of accompaniment, that drew limited attention to musical ornamentation, earning them lower scores. While creative, the accompaniment in these three songs were not highlighted or featured, and simply supported the song.

In summary, the data showed that melodic familiarity was the most engaging element for 4 out of the 5 songs, supporting the first hypothesis. A deeper examination revealed that congregants paid attention to the lyrical content of congregational songs, as this element scored just under melodic familiarity for 4 of the 5 songs. Interestingly, the song that scored the highest for engagement with melodic familiarity also scored the lowest in lyrical content. This suggested that just because a song may be popular or familiar, doesn’t mean that it is lyrically strong or that it will connect with a congregation. With the exception of Song 4, instrumental usage also scored under melodic familiarity, and was under lyrical content in Songs 2, 3 and 5. These scores indicated that out of the three elements examined, the least engaging element of the study was instrumental usage, suggesting that the form of a songs’ accompaniment may have less of an influence than suspected.

**Data Analysis: Second Hypothesis**

The second research question was, “Which musical element will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age?” There were 72 participants and each participant had the option of marking multiple elements which they felt led them to engagement. Therefore, an average was collected from the number of individuals within each age group that indicated the musical elements leading them to engagement. This was done using the mean (M) formula, \( \bar{x} = \frac{\sum x_i}{n} \). Additionally, the standard deviation (SD) was calculated using the formula \( \sqrt{\frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n-1}} \) which identified how responses differed by age group. The following sets of data and graphs refer to the second research question.
Song 1

The first song was “The Church’s One Foundation”. Regarding melodic familiarity, the $SD$ according to age group was $SD = 7.77$ with a $M = 12.6$, lyrical content had a $SD = 6.22$ and a $M = 7.2$, and instrumental usage had a $SD = 7.31$ and a $M = 11$. For the final two options, none of these had a $SD = 0.45$ with the $M = 0.2$, and other had a $SD = 1.30$ with a $M = 2.8$. The element with the largest $SD$ was the melodic familiarity, (see Figure 6).

Figure 6—Song 1: Standard Deviation for All Age Groups

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Song 2

The second song was “He Hideth My Soul”. The responses for all of the age groups indicated that melodic familiarity had a $M = 11.6$ with a $SD = 9.13$, lyrical content had a $M = 9.8$ with a $SD = 8.84$, and instrumental usage had a $M = 4.8$ with a $SD = 3.42$. As the last two options, none of these had a $M = 1.6$ with the $SD = 1.34$ and other had a $M = 2.8$ with $SD = 2.49$. The element with the largest $SD$ was the melodic familiarity, (see Figure 7).
The third song was “To God be the Glory”. The comprehensive response from each age group that indicated melodic familiarity had a $M = 11.2$ with a $SD = 7.05$, lyrical content had a $M = 10.0$ with a $SD = 8.19$, and instrumental usage had a $M = 9.0$ with a $SD = 5.79$. For the final two responses, none of these had a $M = 0.2$ with the $SD = 0.45$ and other had a $M = 5.2$ with $SD = 2.86$. In this song the SD was larger in the lyrical content (see Figure 8).

Figure 8—Song 3: Standard Deviation for All Age Groups
Song 4

The fourth song was “Total Praise”. All of the age groups indicated melodic familiarity had a $M = 10.4$ with a $SD = 5.81$, lyrical content had a $M = 10.8$ with a $SD = 7.76$, and instrumental usage had a $M = 12.0$ with a $SD = 8.34$. The final two responses reflected a $M = 0.6$ with the $SD = 0.89$ for none of these and a $M = 4.8$ with $SD = 2.49$ for other. The largest $SD$ in this song was with the element of instrumental usage (see Figure 9).

Figure 9—Song 4: Standard Deviation for All Age Groups

Song 5

The final song was “How Great is Our God”. All of the participants that indicated melodic familiarity had a $M = 12.2$ with a $SD = 7.68$, lyrical content had a $M = 11.0$ with a $SD = 7.68$, and instrumental usage had a $M = 9.6$ with a $SD = 6.27$. The final two responses reflected a $M = 0.8$ with the $SD = 1.10$ for none of these and a $M = 5.4$ with $SD = 3.58$ for other. The larger $SD$ in this song was the lyrical content (Figure 10).

Figure 10—Song 5: Standard Deviation for All Age Groups
Discussion: Second Hypothesis

The standard deviation for instrumental usage according to age group was largest in Songs 1 and 4, likely because those songs included instrumental introductions, interludes, or postludes. However, the element of instrumentation did have the most difference according to age in Song 4 possibly due to the seamless merging of two contrasting genres—classical and gospel. The instrumental usage in Song 4 featured the most variety out of all 5 songs, and the composer found a way to merge the musical styles without compromising qualities from either genre.

Song 1 featured a number of instruments within a specific genre. Emphasis was brought to the use of those instruments throughout the piece in an instrumental introduction, interlude and coda, but the genre in which they functioned may have been less engaging to a contemporary SDA urban congregation. Song 2 featured the least instrumentation out of the five songs—only a piano and organ, with a spirited chorister. This configuration suggested that the lyrical content was the intended focus of the activity. Song 3 featured a familiar melody accompanied by a variety of contemporary instruments, however, the leader frequently referred to the meaning of the lyrics during the song, possibly making the instrumental usage less significant. While the
instruments used in Song 5 were new instruments, the artist briefly interwove familiar poetry from an old hymn to give the song deeper meaning, which likely resulted in lyrical content having the highest deviation. Based on the analysis, the results of this portion of the study were inconclusive and did not support the second hypothesis.

**Summary**

The results of this study supported the first hypothesis. The most engaging element of music within congregational singing in an urban SDA congregation was the familiarity of the melody. Melodic familiarity was indicated as the element that engaged the highest percentage of participants from each age demographic and across all five song selections. However, the results of this study did not support the second hypothesis. Based on the standard deviation of each element by age, the data revealed the standard deviation to be the highest for melodic familiarity in Song 1 and Song 2, the highest in lyrical content for Song 3 and Song 5, and the highest in instrumental usage for Song 4.
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief summary of the study and make application to literature discussed in the literature review. The limitations of the study are also discussed along with implications associated with those limitations. Finally, recommendations are offered to give direction for future study.

Summary of the Findings

This quantitative descriptive study measured which elements of congregational singing engaged worshippers within urban SDA congregations among culturally and generationally diverse congregants. The results from the study gave strong support for the first hypothesis. In the study, five songs that represented the genres frequently used within congregational singing in Washington D.C. SDA congregations were examined. One of the examined elements of engagement, melodic familiarity, scored the highest in 4 out of 5 songs among this demographic. While all of the songs were somewhat familiar to all of the participants, each song represented various genres and forms of delivery, such as instrumentation and personnel. However, the familiarity of melody engaged participants regardless of delivery, and more than the other examined elements—lyrical content and instrumental usage.

This suggests that the familiarity of a melody is more valuable than a worship leader may realize. These findings are supported by author Calvin Johansson, who is a strong proponent of church leadership being relevant concerning music in worship. In his book *Music Ministry*, Johansson shared that people are likely to participate and engage with music that is both relevant
and familiar to the gathered body of worshipers.\textsuperscript{298} An intriguing study by Pereira et. al. on Music and Emotion in the Brain also supported these findings. This study found that melodic familiarity was a crucial factor in making listeners more emotionally engaged with the music. Additionally, they found that this engagement takes place irrespective of musical preferences: “In our study, we found that most emotion-related brain activity was triggered by familiar (liked or disliked) music rather than liked (familiar or unfamiliar) music.\textsuperscript{299}

These findings also explain why hymn writers of the past valued and reused folk and popular melodies for new lyrical content.\textsuperscript{300} They were aware of the positive affects a familiar melody had on teaching doctrine or beliefs. A study by Rainey and Larson revealed the vitality of melodic familiarity by measuring its impact on participants in relation to lyrical content. This study concluded that over the course of time, lyrical content was retained slightly better among participants who learned it with a familiar melody than participants who learned it through oral recitation or without music altogether.\textsuperscript{301} Therefore, the impact of a familiar melody on a congregational song has greater influence on engagement than the lyrical content or the instrumental music used, regardless of its delivery or genre. To a lesser degree, this may also explain why some contemporary songwriters aim to create melodies that are memorable in their


\textsuperscript{300} Wilson-Dickerson, 62.

pursuit of popularity and ratings. According to Gary Ewer, creating a melody that easily becomes familiar among listeners is a goal among many songwriters.

The second hypothesis which stated that, the musical element of instrumental usage will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age, was not supported by this research. Songs 1 and 2 reflected the biggest difference for melodic familiarity. Songs 1 and 2 were both found in the current SDA hymnal and were two of the oldest melodies in the study. The melody of Song 1, “The Church’s One Foundation” was written in 1866, and the melody for Song 2, “He Hideth My Soul” was written in 1890. Additionally, while the participant pool of this study was relatively diverse according to age, one age group, the Baby Boomers (55-77 years old), represented 36% (n = 26) of the total amount of participant, and was the largest group within the participant pool. The Baby Boomer participants of the study were likely to have had more exposure to these songs than younger demographics such as Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, leading to a larger difference in melodic familiarity among all the age groups. This is partially because contemporary praise and worship music came about in the childhood and teenage years of Generation X’ers in the 1970s and, according to Whitesel and Hunter, has remained a part of their musical preference in worship. Prior to the development of the praise

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and worship movement, Boomers were only exposed to worship songs from the hymn canon. It is reasonable to deduce that the Boomer demographic had more interaction with the melodies of Songs 1 and 2, leading to a higher $SD$ with melodic familiarity among the complete pool of participants.

Songs 3 and 5, “To God Be the Glory” and “How Great is Our God”, had the largest difference for lyrical content among all the participants. This is possibly due to the element of a worship leader or lead singer in both of these songs. The leader in each song led the congregation by singing the melody, making musical ornaments over the melody, and occasionally took time to talk between verses or during the song to draw attention to the message of the song embodied in the lyrical content.

Song 4, “Total Praise” was the only song that contained the largest difference according to age group for instrumental usage. Song 4 was also the only song that utilized the largest span of instrumentation, containing what this research refers to as hybrid instrumentation. The composer skillfully incorporated contrasting genres—classical and gospel—which use a large span of instrumentation, into a song of worship notoriety. The findings of this study stand in congruence with studies dealing with the challenges associated with blending musical genres for congregational singing. According to Wilson, one reason blending genres can be challenging is because congregants have associations with instruments and their use, associations that are challenging to overlook particularly in a worship setting. David Music documented an experience that supports this idea; older members within a congregation associated drums and guitars with a disturbance in worship, whereas the pipe organ was viewed as majestic and soul stirring.\footnote{Music, 176.} Blending genres might also pose an issue for some congregations because some
congregants have may difficulty broadening their instrumental associations, confining a particular instrument to a specific genre.\textsuperscript{308} Therefore, it is proper to conclude that due to the widest variety of instruments used and genres combined out of all five songs, Song 4 had the widest standard deviation for instrumental usage.

Perhaps an overarching reason instrumental usage did not have the largest among all of the age groups, is because congregational music functions primarily as a communication method. When discussing the relationship between lyrics and music, Ransom says, “Music has long been an effective way to communicate to the masses, and lyrics have played a massive role [in that regard].”\textsuperscript{309} Additionally, church leaders recognized the influence a familiar melody has in teaching songs with new lyrical content, leading to the continuation of multiple familiar or favorite melodies in hymnbooks for centuries. Lastly, for various reasons, the use of instruments in worship has been controversial and discouraged since the beginnings of the early church.\textsuperscript{310} Other factors such as a lack of musical education among congregants may contribute to a lack of understanding or appreciation regarding instrumental usage during congregational singing.

 Limitations

The purpose of the current study was to identify which musical elements most engaged SDA congregations during the time of congregational singing. As stated earlier, very little research on the subject of the SDA congregation and engagement during the time of corporate

\textsuperscript{308} Wilson, (2013).

\textsuperscript{309} Ransom, 11.

singing was found in the literature. Although this study contributed to that area in a small way, the results of this study should be understood with caution for the following reasons:

1. This study would have been best conducted during the normal time of corporate worship for each congregation. The study took place on a Sabbath afternoon, still during the Sabbath hours, but outside the normal time for corporate worship. Traditionally, Sabbath afternoon is still an acceptable window used for corporate gatherings for SDAs, and a suitable secondary option. However, the number of participants would have undoubtedly been higher and a more accurate representation for SDA congregants in the Washington DC area if it was conducted during normal corporate worship times.

2. While the survey was anonymous, it may have yielded more honest feedback if it was conducted at various church locations. The current survey utilized members from various congregations but was conducted in a familiar and neutral location to many churches. Conducting the survey in a setting that congregants have psychologically associated with their corporate worship experience may have yielded results more reflective of the diversity represented in the participant pool. Additionally, participants may have been more likely to participate if the study was conducted in their normal place of worship, instead of a neutral location, as was done in this study.

3. The room in which the survey was conducted was not set up like a typical worship setting, with seating in rows. Seating for the study involved round tables and chairs for the participants to occupy as they completed the survey. Seating formation plays a part in the phycological association with worship and it informs the participant of
the activity and expectation of the gathering. While this particular aspect did not seem to hinder participation during the study, it is possible that the seating formation used in the study hindered some participants from experiencing the context of the video/audio clips in a way that would yield more accurate results.

4. This study used video and audio clips of each of the songs used in the survey. For heightened engagement, the songs could have been performed live, as is regularly experienced in the worship settings of participants represented in the study. However, financial resources and timing would not allow for live renditions of the examined songs to take place.

5. The style or method of congregational leadership in each of the songs is a limitation. Each song reflected a different style of leadership appropriately suited to the genre of the song. It is possible that a participant’s perception of the worship leader influenced their engagement with the music.

6. Participants were familiar with the songs (a necessity for this study so they could respond to the element of melodic familiarity). Therefore, they may have had an preexisting positive or negative association with a particular song which would influence their answers.

7. Due to the limited number participants, the sample size is a limitation. While this study measured the responses of 72 participants, a true sample size would have been 1,235 participants.

8. Each of the songs were strategically chosen by the researcher to correlate with the musical elements measured in this study among SDA congregations in a specific region. While chosen with intent, the selections process is often subjective.
9. This study highlights findings from the survey which is based on the engagement of congregants. Because engagement can change over the course of time, the responses received at the time of the survey serve as a source of data. As participants age and as music in church changes, the understanding and context of Christian worship music changes as well. Therefore, this research is best considered as a snapshot in the evolving story of Christian worship music.

10. Many of the participants knew the researcher which could have consciously or unconsciously influenced their responses to the survey. Had the study been conducted by a researcher that the participants did not know, the responses would not have been influenced by any preconceived understandings of the researchers preferences, what the researcher is looking for in the responses, or any other information that would intentionally or unintentionally skew the results to aid the researcher.

**Recommendations for Future Study**

The current research was a quantitative descriptive study which examined three musical elements—melodic familiarity, lyrical content, and instrumental usage, and the connection to congregants during the time of congregational singing. However, other elements could be examined to further determine the effectiveness of the time of congregational singing. Corporate connectedness would examine the valued importance of a congregation singing together. In a society where individuals can isolate their worship by plugging in earbuds and tuning in to whatever worship artist they desire, evaluating this element from that context sheds light on how much the desire of singing together or worshipping alone impacts the time of congregational singing.
Another element to be examined is the duration of congregational singing. Some hymns are two verses, others are up to seven, and singing one hymn with four verses at a comfortable singing tempo could take about three to four minutes. Conversely, contemporary praise songs could have as little as one verse and one chorus but last up to 10 minutes with planned variations, repetitions, and modulations. Individual SDA churches reserve varying amounts of time in the service for congregational singing. Within each congregational context there may be some who think that this time is too long, or not long enough. Future study on the duration of time needed for engagement would add to this study by allowing worship leaders to select music for the proper duration according to the congregation they serve.

A final element that could be examined is the impact music education or training has on engagement during music rendered in the time of congregational singing. Students studying music on the secondary and undergraduate levels of schooling are taught to listen to music. They learn how to interpret music with words as well as instrumental music, understanding the construction, composition, performance and art of the music. In doing so, an individual gains further insight to the significance of various musical elements— the shape of the melody, choice on instrumentation, or poetry (lyrical structure)—and how they all work together to bring about a masterpiece. Similar to how pastors tailor their sermons to the educational medium of their congregation, determining how engagement differs according to musical training would provide worship leaders with an idea of how congregants are hearing and interpreting the music.

Implications for Worship Leaders

This information is essential for worship leaders of any denominational congregation. The worship leader is an individual who is directly linked to the spiritual growth of a congregation. Music is often unintentionally relegated to a form of entertainment in the worship
setting, something for the viewing and listening pleasure that is hopefully connected to the
greater context of worship. Other times it serves as a familiar intellectual stimuli or emotional
fix that dulls the senses from life’s challenges, fills the time in the service, or adds variety to the
monotony of speaking and presentations. The time of congregational singing should be a time
where everyone assembled to worship, collectively lifts their voices in songs that span the human
worship expression—from sorrow to joy, lament to gratitude, intercession to affirmation. In
addition to these songs reflecting the expressions and experiences specific to the assembled
body, they should remind the people why they worship, and teach the people more about who
they worship. The best person to carry out this responsibility is a worship leader who
understands the type of congregational song that their congregation sings and best understands.

The Christian music industry strives to attain a specific sound that sells records. This
specific sound is a combination of particular musical elements intentionally arranged to engage
and sustain a listening audience. Unfortunately, worship leaders can be tempted to misinterpret
the industry sound and standards as guidelines that should be adhered to their local congregation.
On the contrary, despite the industry standards, a worship leader should discover and filter their
worship leadership through the musical language that best speaks to their congregation. It is
likely for there to be similarities between congregations regarding this musical language, but
upon closer examination, each congregation is unique to themselves, unlike any other.

When worship leaders discover the combination of musical elements that engage their
congregation, it allows the congregation to be unique and grow into the body of believers God
has called them to be in their neighborhood. The standard of musical excellence is discovering
and implementing the unique language of congregational song that fosters connection,
engagement and growth each week the church assembles to worship. Embracing this notion
makes room for various types of worship leadership styles to flourish—the charismatic and the reserved, the emotional intellectual and the animated extrovert.

As shared earlier in the study, God is the embodiment of diversity as it is reflected in all of his creation.311 Adding to this, Duane Elmer says that “God cannot adequately be revealed in a creation of similarities.”312 Therefore, when various worship leaders intuitively lead their congregations to a clearer understanding of their unique musical language and identity among other congregations, the world-wide church becomes closer to reflecting the image of Christ.

Summary

This was a quantitative descriptive study that measured musical elements of congregational singing and how they engage SDA congregations in the Washington, D.C. area during the time of congregational singing. The results from the study provided strong support for the first hypothesis, indicating that melodic familiarity engaged congregants more than lyrical content and instrumental usage. Melodic familiarity was the element with the most engagement for 4 out of the 5 songs examined. The second hypothesis which stated that, the musical element of instrumental usage will vary the most in levels of engagement according to age, was not supported by this research. There was no element that had the biggest difference among the three examined. Songs 1 and 2 reflected the biggest difference for melodic familiarity, Songs 3 and 5 reflected the biggest difference for lyrical content and Song 4 reflected the biggest difference for instrumental usage. The results from this research showed that worship leaders are able to use familiar melodies as an entry way of incorporating new lyrical content or

311 David and Lerner, 21.

312 Elmer, 23-24.
instrumental combinations. The research also shows that the disagreements over instrumentation (the organ versus the drums) among urban SDA congregations is of lesser importance than disagreements over lyrical content or new melodies. Worship leaders would be wise to plan the musical diet of congregational song wisely, using an intuitive combination of new, old and hybrid melodies, lyrics, and instrumentation.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey

Please mark the items that best describe you

Are you 18 years of age or older?
___ Yes
___ No

What is your gender?
___ Male
___ Female

What is your age?
___ 18-20
___ 21-35
___ 36-54
___ 55-77
___ Other

What is your race or ethnicity?
___ Black/African American
___ White/Caucasian
___ Hispanic or Latino
___ Native American or American Indian
___ Asian or Pacific Islander
___ Other

Which of the following Washington D.C. area churches do you attend?
___ Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church
___ Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church
___ Takoma Park Seventh-day Adventist Church

What type(s) of music does your church most frequently utilize during the time of congregational singing? (circle all that apply)
___ Traditional Hymns
___ Traditional or Contemporary Gospel
___ Christian Contemporary Music
___ Blended
___ Other:_____________
___ Other

Instructions

A series of video clips will be played for you. After each clip, use the definitions below to help you answer the question.

Definitions

- **Engage**—interest in the activity taking place, leading to participation through singing, clapping, contemplation, meditation, or other forms of involvement.

- **Melodic Familiarity**—recognizing a sequence of notes within the song, or an acquaintance with the tune.

- **Lyrical Content**—the words or message of the song.

- **Instrumentation Used**—the instruments used in the song (organ, piano, brass instruments, string instruments, drums, etc.)
**Question 1:**
After listening to song #1, circle which musical element(s) of this song would best help you to engage in the time of congregational singing during an SDA worship experience? (Circle all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melodic Familiarity</th>
<th>Lyrical Content</th>
<th>Instrumentation Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>Other: ___________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 2:**
After listening to song #2, circle which musical element(s) of this song would best help you to engage in the time of congregational singing during an SDA worship experience? (Circle all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melodic Familiarity</th>
<th>Lyrical Content</th>
<th>Instrumentation Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>Other: ___________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 3:**
After listening to song #3, circle which musical element(s) of this song would best help you to engage in the time of congregational singing during an SDA worship experience? (Circle all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melodic Familiarity</th>
<th>Lyrical Content</th>
<th>Instrumentation Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>Other: ___________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 4:**
After listening to song #4, circle which musical element(s) of this song would best help you to engage in the time of congregational singing during an SDA worship experience? (Circle all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melodic Familiarity</th>
<th>Lyrical Content</th>
<th>Instrumentation Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>Other: ___________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 5:**
After listening to song #5, circle which musical element(s) of this song would best help you to engage in the time of congregational singing during an SDA worship experience? (Circle all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Melodic Familiarity</th>
<th>Lyrical Content</th>
<th>Instrumentation Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>Other: ___________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Consent Form

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 12/31/2019 to --
Protocol # 3982.123119

CONSENT FORM

Congregational Singing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church: An Examination of Engagement
Anwar Ottley
Liberty University
School of Music

You are invited to be in a research study examining congregational singing and engagement. You were selected as a possible participant because you are over the age of 18 and have been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist faith for at least 5 years. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Anwar Ottley, a doctoral candidate in the School of Music at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: Many believe that when it comes to music in worship, there is a right way and a wrong way for it to be conducted, understood, and expressed. However, those methods become increasingly difficult when factoring in variables such as education, context, and culture. The purpose of this study is to discover which elements of music engage a congregation and incline them to participate. When worship leaders (pastors, ministers of music, or music directors) discover the elements of congregational singing that engage their congregation, their selection of music is more informed, allowing their ministry to be targeted to a specific group of people, and more effective in the process. This study analyses three elements of congregational song—melodic familiarity, lyrical content, and instrumentation.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1. Arrive at the site of the Worship Research Service on the designated time for your group/church.
2. Participate in the one-hour worship research service and document your level of engagement on the provided paper survey after listening to or watching each of the audio/video clips.

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to Society include an awareness of fundamental practices to be employed by worship leadership in urban Seventh-day Adventist congregations, that would facilitate engagement during congregational singing.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, light refreshments will be provided prior to the start of the worship research session.
December 31, 2019

Anwar Ottley
IRB Exemption 3982.123119: Congregational Singing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church: An Examination of Engagement

Dear Anwar Ottley,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

(i) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects;

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971
Appendix D: Fair Use Forms

CHECKLIST FOR CONDUCTING A FAIR USE ANALYSIS BEFORE USING COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

This checklist is a tool to assist you in applying the balancing test for determining whether you may make or distribute copies of works protected by copyright without having to obtain the permission of the copyright holder. It is recommended that you complete and retain a copy of this form in connection with each "fair use" of a copyrighted work.

Name: Anwar Ottley
Class or Project: Doctoral Research
Title of Copyrighted Work: The Church’s One Foundation, performed by the Duke Chapel Choir, etc.
Portion to be used (e.g. pages): Entire Video Clip

Date: March 17, 2020

Directions
Check all boxes that apply. For each of the four sections below, determine whether the factor favors or disfavors a finding of fair use. Where the factors favoring "fair use" outnumber the factors weighing against a finding of "fair use," reliance on the fair use exception is likely justified. Where less than half of the factors favor "fair use" or if they are evenly split, permission should be obtained before copying or disseminating copies of the work. Please feel free to contact Scholarly Communications at scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu if you have questions.

PURPOSE OF THE USE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Favoring Fair Use</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bad-faith behavior</td>
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<td>Criticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative or productive use (changes the work to serve a new purpose)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Parody</td>
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NATURE OF THE COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

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Appendix E: Checklist for Conducting a Fair Use Analysis Before Using Copyrighted Materials
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<td>of the copyrighted work</td>
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<tr>
<td>work</td>
<td>□ Numerous copies made and/or distributed</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ No longer in print; absence of licensing mechanism</td>
<td>□ Reasonably available licensing mechanism for obtaining permission</td>
</tr>
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<td>□ Restricted access (limited to students in a class or other appropriate group)</td>
<td>□ Will be making it publicly available on the Web or using other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ One-time use, spontaneous use (no time to obtain permission)</td>
<td>means of broad dissemination</td>
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Name: Anwar Ottley  
Date: March 17, 2020  
Class or Project: Doctoral Research  
Title of Copyrighted Work: He Hideth My Soul, performed by the Temple Baptist Church Congreg  
Portion to be used (e.g. pages): Entire Video Clip

Directions
Check all boxes that apply. For each of the eight sections below, determine whether the factor favors or disfavors a finding of fair use. Where the factors favoring “fair use” outnumber the factors weighing against a finding of “fair use,” reliance on the fair use exception is likely justified. Where less than half of the factors favor “fair use” or if they are evenly split, permission should be obtained before copying or disseminating copies of the work. Please feel free to contact Scholarly Communications at scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu if you have questions.

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<tr>
<td>☐ Comment</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ News reporting</td>
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<td>☐ Transformative or productive use (changes the work to serve a new purpose)</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Parody</td>
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### NATURE OF THE COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

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AMOUNT Copied

Favoring Fair Use
☐ Small quantity (e.g., a single chapter or journal article or other excerpt consisting of less than 10% of the work)
☐ Portion used is not central or significant to entire work as a whole
☐ Amount is appropriate to educational purpose

Disfavoring Fair Use
☑ Large portion or entire work is used
☐ Portion used is central or the "heart" of the work
☐ Includes more than necessary for educational purpose

EFFECT on THE MARKET FOR ORIGINAL

Favoring Fair Use
☐ One or few copies made and/or distributed
☐ No significant effect on the market or potential market for the copyrighted work
☐ No longer in print; absence of licensing mechanism
☑ Restricted access (limited to students in a class or other appropriate group)
☑ One-time use, spontaneous use (no time to obtain permission)

Disfavoring Fair Use
☐ Cumulative effect of copying would be to substitute for purchase of the copyrighted work
☐ Numerous copies made and/or distributed
☐ Reasonably available licensing mechanism for obtaining permission to use the copyrighted work
☐ Will be making it publicly available on the Web or using other means of broad dissemination
☐ Repeated or long-term use

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Name: Anwar Ottley

Date: March 17, 2020

Class or Project: Doctoral Research

Title of Copyrighted Work: To God be the Glory by Tommy Walker and Purpose Driven Mass Chic

Portion to be used (e.g. pages): Entire Video Clip

Directions
Check all boxes that apply. For each of the four sections below, determine whether the factor favors or disfavors a finding of fair use. Where the factors favoring "fair use" outnumber the factors weighing against a finding of "fair use," reliance on the fair use exception is likely justified. Where less than half of the factors favor "fair use" or if they are evenly split, permission should be obtained before copying or disseminating copies of the work. Please feel free to contact Scholarly Communications at scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu if you have questions.

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Name: Anwar Ottley
Date: March 17, 2020
Class or Project: Doctoral Research
Title of Copyrighted Work: Total Praise by Richard Smallwood and Vision
Portion to be used (e.g. pages): Entire Video Clip

Directions
Check all boxes that apply. For each of the four sections below, determine whether the factor favors or disfavors a finding of fair use. Where the factors favoring “fair use” outnumber the factors weighing against a finding of “fair use,” reliance on the fair use exception is likely justified. Where less than half of the factors favor “fair use” or if they are evenly split, permission should be obtained before copying or disseminating copies of the work. Please feel free to contact Scholarly Communications at scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu if you have questions.

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☐ Criticism
☐ Comment
☐ News reporting
☐ Transformative or productive use (changes the work to serve a new purpose)
☑ Restricted access (to students or other appropriate group)
☐ Parody

Disfavoring Fair Use
☐ Commercial activity
☐ Profiting from the use
☐ Entertainment
☐ Bad-faith behavior
☐ Denying credit to the original author

NATURE OF THE COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

Favoring Fair Use
☑ Published work
☐ Factual or nonfiction based

Disfavoring Fair Use
☐ Unpublished work
☐ Creative (art, music, novels, films, plays) or consumable (workbooks, tests) work

Appendix E: Checklist for Conducting a Fair Use Analysis Before Using Copyrighted Materials
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Date: March 17, 2020
Class or Project: Doctoral Research
Title of Copyrighted Work: How Great is Our God by Judith Christie McCallister
Portion to be used (e.g. pages): Entire Video Clip

Directions
Check all boxes that apply. For each of the four sections below, determine whether the factor favors or disfavors a finding of fair use. Where the factors favoring “fair use” outnumber the factors weighing against a finding of “fair use,” reliance on the fair use exception is likely justified. Where less than half of the factors favor “fair use” or if they are evenly split, permission should be obtained before copying or disseminating copies of the work. Please feel free to contact Scholarly Communications at scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu if you have questions.

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