MULTIGENERATIONAL WORSHIP: LITURGICAL DANCE AND MIME WITHIN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCH

By

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A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF WORSHIP STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the African American Church has utilized movement to express personal faith. As attitudes towards movement changed, many churches limited or banned the use of dance in worship. Currently, many African American Baptist Churches have developed liturgical dance teams, providing a ministry for a variety of generations. These lyrical movements are danced to live or recorded music, usually contemporary Gospel music. Popularity of the liturgical dance teams has expanded to include mime, also known as Gospel mime. Many churches that worship in a multigenerational model provide relevant and transformational opportunities for all ages. Incorporating liturgical dance and mime as worship elements within worship has encouraged youth and young adults to be active participants in the worship experience. The Historic First Baptist Church (FBC) is an example of a traditional African American Baptist Church that has integrated liturgical dance and mime to the order of worship. Multiple generations are represented in worship; each generation possessing diverse characteristics and tendencies. In this qualitative historical study, FBC members representing the generations were surveyed to discover perceptions regarding the integration of liturgical dance and mime in worship. In addition, interviews of liturgical dance and mime ministry members and leaders discovered the preparation for ministry offerings, specifically through music choice, attire, choreography and facial expression. This research found that liturgical dance and gospel mime ministry offerings engage multigenerational worshipers.

Keywords: multigenerational worship, intergenerational worship, liturgical dance, sacred dance, praise dance, gospel mime

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Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

This chapter discusses a brief background of past and current trends in multigenerational worship arts to increase participation within the traditional African American Baptist Church. The use of arts as a response to God reach back to Biblical times. The Word of God "is inspired by God and is useful for teaching truth, rebuking, correcting and for providing instruction on how to live right."[1] To engage in the discussion of the history of sacred dance and understand its usage in today's church, the origin will begin with the creation of mankind since the body is so important to dance movement.

In the New Testament, Paul intently poses the question, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body."[2] Glorifying the Lord with your body addresses the use of movement to express faith, thanksgiving and joy to the Creator. Bishop Albert Rouet in *Liturgy and the Arts* explains this as "the fluidity of a disciplined body….it speaks conscious truth. It touches unconscious sources."[3] W.O.E. Oesterley's research of Old Testament dance finds "that the sacred dance was among the Israelites, as among all other peoples, one of the means whereby these emotions and aspirations were expressed."[4]

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[1] 2 Timothy 3:16 NASB

[2] 1 Corinthians 6: 19 – 20

[3] Albert Rouet, Translated by Paul Philibert, O.P., *Liturgy and the Arts* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 132 – 133.

[4] W. O. E. Oesterley, D.D., *The Sacred Dance: A Study in Comparative Folklore* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1923), 33.

Oesterley's study of the spontaneous and planned sacred dance of the Israelites, reveal a commonality of theme and purpose specifically, "the sacred processional dance among the Israelites was always performed in honor of Yahweh."[5] In one example, David assembled the Israelites to celebrate the return of the Ark of the Covenant, after years of captivity by the Philistines in battle as noted in I Samuel 4. King David enlisted Levitical priestly musicians, numbering in the thousands, to celebrate the Ark's return. Scripture says that 'Michal the daughter of Saul looked out at the window and saw David dancing and playing."[6] Specifically, the Hebrew word for dancing, *Chiyl,* לִרְקוֹד "is used; but presently it takes on the character of a rotating dance, then there is jumping followed by something in the nature of skipping, and it is also spoken of as a whirling movement."[7]

Movement to music, as it expresses joy or victory, is mentioned a few times in the Old Testament. When the Lord delivered the Israelites from Pharoah's army crossing the Red Sea "Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing."[8] It is not by chance that Miriam's joy was so great that she began to celebrate by dancing and playing the timbrel. Miriam and the women of Israel used their bodies in glorification and thanksgiving to the Creator. The term "*rakâdu*" used by the Assyrians means both "to rejoice" and "to dance; where there was rejoicing, whether of a secular or religious kind, there was dancing."[9]

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[5] Ibid., 36.

[6] 1 Chronicles 15: 29 ASV

[7] Oesterley, 26

[8] Exodus 15:20

[9] Oesterely, 82.

Different cultures also employ dance for various purposes including celebratory expressions of rejoicing. This is not to speak of attitudes towards dance but to focus on the performed movement of dance. In terms of sacred dances, purposeful origins, it was primarily "a response to his 'god,' and the obtaining of food."[10] To explore the ideas of sacred dance as a provision for food in essence embodies the belief that a supernatural power is at work. The purpose of dance by ancient man for procuring food; therefore, leads to the belief that "the dance in its origin was sacred, and that every other subsequent form of dance was ultimately derived from this."[11]

Despite the demonstration of dance as a sacred act in the Word of God, many have historically denounced its sacredness. Bishop Rouet explains that the problem of dance is "the human body. It exposes the body."[12] He quotes St. John Chrysostom in his 4th century homily, "There is nothing that predisposes people to scorn the oracles of God like the excitement which is found in theatrical spectacles (1.3)."[13] This attitude condemns the use of any artistic expression within the church or even one who may seek entertainment from theater. Such positions on dance existed for hundreds of years in various council texts and continue to exist among many. "St. Augustine stated, "it is better to work than to dance" and later "in 1617 the Archbishop of Cologne qualifies dance as dishonest and contrary to the dignity of the Church."[14] Although such condemnation of dance existed in the church, there have been proponents of sacred dance and other artistic expressions in the Christian Church, specifically the African American Baptist Church.

[10] Ibid., 3.

[11] Ibid., 4.

[12] Rouet, 124.

[13] Ibid., 127.

[14] Ibid., 122.

Historical Influences of Liturgical Dance

Sacred dance, also known as *liturgical dance* in the African American Christian Church has influences from different cultures dating back to the fifteenth century.[15] Willysann Gaines and Frank Russel Ross state, "Africans used songs and dances to recite history and demonstrate feelings about each other, as a way to tie together all aspects of life."[16] Africans thrust into new cultures through slavery during the seventeenth century did not abandon their rituals and responses but found ways to repurpose and recreate their cultures into their new setting. Despite being taken from various tribe, belief, cultures, and regions of Africa, specifically West Africa, bonds of commonality were forged through the development of faith communities, sacred dance, and shared experiences in America. Noted author of *African American Christian Worship,* Melva Wilson Costen states that, "many African societies shared certain virtues, ideals, cultural expressions, and outlooks on past, present, and future, which provided spiritual armor capable of surviving the impact of slavery."[17] Exposure to Christianity initially for many West Coast Africans, occurred through baptisms that took place prior to enslavement and transport as cargo from their native land to various locations in the Americas. Although slaveowners utilized Scripture to "control" Africans, many developed an understanding of the Gospel message and, in many situations, converted to the Christian faith. Costen notes, "The slaves' reception of the gospel message and their understanding of worship were not as the colonists presumed they would be. The liberating Word of God freed the slaves to respond in new and creative ways in the midst of their

[15] The use of the term *sacred dance* is utilized as referenced biblically; however, the researcher chooses to use *liturgical dance* to express the work of believers who express their faith through body movement.

[16] Willysann Gaines and Frank Russel Ross, "Gospel Music and Dance Within the Spirit of America" from *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance:* September 2009, Volume 80 No. 7: ProQuest, 6.

[17] Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Christian Worship,* Second Edition (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 1.

human bondage."[18] Gaines and Ross share that "singing, calling out praises (shouting), "getting the spirit;" these were the basic elements of the sacred dances on the plantation in the American antebellum South."[19]

As the population of enslaved Africans grew through slave trade and births, the more political and social practices were changed to relegate Blacks to a "marginalized societal position."[20] By 1630, "many rituals connected with the African religious practices were declared illegal. Among the practices…the use of drums and dancing or excessive physical movement, and the rite of passage at death – funerals."[21] Although the Euro-Americans permitted slaves to worship with limitations in visible places, the "invisible communities of faith" allowed enslaved blacks to find freedom in "communicating with God and with one another" in ways that were unique, yet authentic.[22] In various ways including storytelling, singing, movement and spontaneous preaching, African slaves responded to God's love. Costen explains, "The outward expressions of feelings, and emotions, the tendency to "move with the beat," the similarity of music for worship and music for entertainment all speak to the functioning of an underlying belief system."[23]

Accounts of the first visible Church for African people, called "Praise houses" developed on the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, the Sea Islands, in 1861.[24] One of the elements practiced in praise houses was the "Ring Shout." Gaines and Ross describe the "Ring Shout" as "a

[18] Ibid., 16.

[19] Gaines and Ross, 6.

[20] Ibid., 19.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 2.

[23] Ibid., 7.

[24] Ibid., 39.

shuffling circle dance that involves clapping, often performed in lively spirituals that related to worship practices in West Africa."[25] As stated earlier, the African traditions varied from tribe to tribe, yet there were shared or familiar traditions that continued in the New World. One such dance was the "circle dance" which preceded the "ring shout."

Historian Katrina Hazzard-Donald explains the concept of the circle dance, "Within the circle, the interaction between the individual and the community was mediated by sacred spiritual forces evidenced in the spirit possession."[26] The African American Ring Shout dance, also known as "The Shout," took on the same circle dance formation accompanied by "Shouters." The accompaniment of the Shouters included "singing, tapping sticks, hand claps and foot stomps."[27] Because of the space needed for the Ring Shout, it was necessary for the praise house or other location to not have fixed pews. However, controversy, pertaining to the Ring Shout, it has been evident culturally since its introduction in the New World. Some accept this practice as sacred while others consider this process idol worship. Hazzard-Donald explains that "The Ring Shout was imported from an intermediary religious form, the old Hoodoo religion: an early Americanization of a number of different African traditional religions."[28] Although the Hoodoo religion was short-lived in America, the "Ring Shout" is believed to be "the mother of Afro-North American dance forms."[29] Costen concludes that the "Ring Shout" was purposed in the following ways:[30]

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[25] Gaines and Ross, 6.

[26] Katrina Hazzard-Donald, "Hoodoo Religion and American Dance Traditions: Rethinking the Ring Shout," *The Journal of Pan African Studies,* vol. 6, no. 4, September 2011, 196.

[27] Ibid., 197.

[28] Ibid., 199.

[29] Ibid., 200.

(1) Shouters used dance as a means of communication with God in the same way that song and prayer are used, and

(2) Shouters reached the highest level of worship when the Holy Spirit entered their bodies and took possession of their souls.

In the context of Christianity, the circle may have been utilized as a space for conversion.[31] According to Hazzard-Donald, those who were converted "the circle would be meaningless and unnecessary."[32] Nonetheless the Ring Shout possessed the themes of "competitive dancing, social commentary, spirit possession, community solidarity, individual and group identity, and ritualized courtship" would still exist in African American dance forms, both sacred and secular, and has crossed all racial and social boundaries in America.[33]

As the eighteenth century was coming to a close, the second Great Awakening was sweeping across the United States. Many African American worship experiences were directly influenced by the spiritual migrant camp meetings associated with this Second Great Awakening. In addition, the worship of all Americans began to accept some of the practices introduced in these camp-meeting camp meetings from the African community. Elmer L. Towns and Vernon M. Whaley note some of these innovations, "through the influence of African Americans attending camp meetings and services at Cane Ridge, shouting, clapping, dancing and a variety of physical expressions of worship were permitted and even encouraged…camp meetings provided opportunities for multiethnic worship. Large numbers of African Americans (slaves at the time)

[30] Costen, 42.

[31] Hazzard-Donald, 200. The author quotes a passage from Bishop Daniel Payne's recorded account of a young man insisting that sinners must enter the ring to be converted.

[32] Ibid., 201.

[33] Ibid., 208.

attended these meetings and testified of conversion experiences." [34] Eileen Southern reiterates, "The camp meeting was an interracial institution, usually with more blacks in attendance;" the impression on foreign visitors and ex-slaves has led to many recorded descriptions.[35]

The African American Spiritual was also utilized as a substantive element of worship during this period. C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya provide this insight, "through the singing of spirituals the enslaved were able to release their repressed emotions and anxieties and simultaneously experience the exhilaration of being creative under circumstances of unbelievable stress. They sang, hummed, clapped, moaned, stomped, and swayed themselves into a remarkable transcendence over their oppressive condition…"[36] The hope of spiritual freedom, sung about in the African American Spirituals, shared the meaning of physical freedom from the plight of slavery. The Spiritual has since become useful across denominations, cultures, societies, and regions: "African Americans find these songs as a source of inspiration and a natural means of responding to and communicating with the Almighty. Spirituals are a pastoral liturgical resource for any community of worshipers."[37] Lincoln and Mamiya site the origin of "a substantial number of spirituals….composed by black preachers specifically for liturgical use."[38] African American Spirituals were born out of a people's struggle, yet the message of hope in these songs has become significant element of worship expressions throughout the world.

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[34] Elmer L. Towns and Vernon M. Whaley, *Worship Through the Ages: How the Great Awakenings Shape Evangelical Worship* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Company, 2012), 150-151.

[35] Eileen Southern, *The Religious Occasion* from *The Black Experience in Religion: A Book of Readings* edited by C. Eric Lincoln, (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1974), 53.

[36] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 352.

[37] Costen, 85.

[38] Lincoln and Mamiya, 350.

The nineteenth century saw the emergence of African American churches of varying denominations (Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostalism, etc.); though often led by white pastors. This was the case of The Historic First Baptist Church in Norfolk, VA organized in 1800, where the research for this study was held. The history of this church will be discussed later as a foundation for the study of liturgical dance and gospel mime in present-day worship service. Like many churches of the early 1800s, body movement was discouraged in the First Baptist Church. Lincoln and Mamiya explain that for the African, "All forms of music involved bodily movement. For the Africans who converted to evangelical Christianity, the prohibition against dancing had to be respected."[39] The Ring Shout and other "holy dances" were denounced by black critics as well. Lincoln and Mamiya quote John Work, who is noted for his work with the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the performance of the spiritual, "Naturally enough when the Negro found himself free, he literally put his past behind him. It was his determination that as far as within him lay, not one single reminder of the black past should mar his future."[40] They further state that "the spiritual, the ring dance or the shout has been largely abandoned, except in the black Holiness and Pentecostal sects."[41] With the emphasis of congregational singing through hymn singing, hymn-lining, and metered music, body movement was all but abandoned in worship.

African expressions shared in the early years continued to shape worship of African American worship throughout the twentieth century. With the dawn of the twentieth century, music stylings and worship experiences began to develop in the African American church. Thomas A. Dorsey, a jazz and blues musician was influenced by the music of a Black Methodist

[39] Ibid., 353.

[40] Ibid., 354.

[41] Ibid.

minister born in Maryland, Charles Albert Tindley. Tindley "settled in Philadelphia where he founded the church which now bears the name Tindley Temple United Methodist Church."[42] The Gospel music of Tindley, Dorsey and others that followed integrated texts of "personal religious experiences" with "rhythmic, bluesy, highly syncopated, and intricately necessary as a vehicle of support for properly communicating the message of the text."[43] Towns and Whaley position that African American Gospel music "was influenced by spirituals, jazz, rhythm and blues, and the singing associated with the Pentecostal Holiness tradition. The music was based on the gospel song tradition of Sankey and Bliss but was performed with hand clapping, bodily movement, shouts, and ornamentation of the melody."[44] As gospel music emerged and the choir became the main source of music, "worshipers became bystanders who witnessed the preaching and personal testimonies of singers."[45] Nonetheless, spontaneous body movement, swaying, clapping and singing with the choir remains in the African American worship experience.

The latter half of the 20th century saw the development of a new style of Gospel music. In the 1960s, the civil rights movement ignited a new focus in society, new technology and new musical instruments became a catalyst for the evolution of gospel music. The electronic organ and microphones "invaded the worship space expanding the quality of sound, style, and mechanics of delivery."[46] The popularity of this music continued to build and helped to ease the tensions of societal change.

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[42] Ibid., 360.

[43] Costen, 90.

[44] Towns and Whaley, 258.

[45] Lincoln and Mamiya, 362.

[46] Costen, 91.

The Concert Spiritual and Concert Dance

The spiritual that reflected the life of those enslaved and marginalized developed as composers began to arrange these songs to accommodate concert choirs, thus the concert spiritual was born. Concert spirituals became popular throughout the United States and beyond as choirs directed by James B. Weldon Johnson of the Fisk Jubilee Singers and R. Nathaniel Dett of the Hampton Institute Singers became the backdrop for another key expression in African American life. The Historical Black Colleges raised many buildings as their concert choirs toured America, Europe and Canada singing classical repertoire and concert spirituals.

As Concert spirituals gained popularity across America, newly formed African American dance troupes in the 1920s and 1930s performed to recordings of the famed college choirs. Choreographers such as Charlotte Moten, Kathleen Dunham, Helmsley Winfield and Erin Guy staged virtuosic dance expressions to the choral settings of what was then known as the Negro Spiritual. These performances, known as concert dance, were on the concert stage with the emphasis was on entertainment much like the choirs who performed the arrangements around the world.

Choreography of Alvin Ailey in 1960 and his self-named professional dance theater transformed the concert dance of spirituals to tell the story of personal experiences. The overview of *Revelations* describes this poignant dance as "an intimate reflection inspired by childhood memories of attending services at Mount Olive Baptist Church in Texas, and by the work of writers James Baldwin and Langston Hughes. Set to a suite of traditional spirituals, *Revelations* explores the emotional spectrum of the human condition, from the deepest of grief to the holiest joy."[47] This dance is still performed worldwide today because of its impact on diverse audiences.

[47] "Revelations," Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, September 17, 2019, accessed October 5, 2019, https://www.alvinailey.org/performances/repertory/revelations.

The depth to which *Revelations* has impacted liturgical dance within African American churches is only speculative; however, considering the timeline and the emphasis on expressing faith and experiences through modern dance lends one to see the correlation between the dances.

Liturgical dance, also known as "praise dance," combines choreography with personal faith expressions of the dancers involved. Liturgical dancers in the African American worship have been "encouraged to work for their salvation and be able to dance their own testimony of God's intervention in their lives, rather than singularly working toward virtuosity."[48] Stephanie S. Scott reiterates, "the dance is liturgical because it gives testimony to God's work in the life of the dancer and the dancer's work in service to God."[49] The entry of liturgical dance in African American worship services is generally believed to have begun during the 1970s. Over the past forty years, many African American churches have integrated praise dance ministries that regularly participate in the worship experience. Most liturgical dance ministries attract female participants; however, another dance form has swept the African American worship experience that attracts mostly young males, known as Gospel mime.

Mime in Sacred Spaces

Although masked pantomime can be traced to Greco-Roman history, theologian and mime performer, Todd Farley argues that Biblical Prophets performed mime, or mimetic gestures throughout the Bible. Used as a tool to communicate "a thought, story, truth, or prophecy,"[50] mimetic gestures were used readily in the Jewish culture.

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[48] P. Kimberley Jordan, "My Flesh Shall Live in Hope: Power and the Black Body Moving in Sacred Space." (New York University, 2009), 185.

[49] Stephanie S. Scott, "The Language of Liturgical Dance in African American Christian Worship," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 27, no. 1-2 (1999)-2000): 250..

[50] Todd Farley, "Mime in Worship," *Music and Arts in Christian Worship* Book 2, Robert E. Webber, ed. (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 769.

Farley notes that "Eighty percent of human communication is nonverbal."[51] Prophets such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel are examples of prophets who delivered messages through mime to get the attention of the Israelites. In Ezekiel 3: 26, God made his prophet a mute while in captivity.[52] Farley observes, "The only time Ezekiel was able to speak during the early years of his ministry was when God spoke through him…the rest of the time he was silent and mimed his prophecies."[53] In Ezekiel 4, the Prophet is "commanded by God to enact the capture and defeat of Jerusalem,"[54] without words. Farley notes that mime was not only used for prophecy, but also for praise as seen in the following Biblical references:[55]

> Mimetic gestures include clapping the hands (Ezek. 25:13; Ps. 47:1) to represent triumph; lifting the hands (Ps. 23:2; 63:4; 119:48; 134:2; 141:2; 143:6) to show praise and surrender; bowing (Ps. 72:9; 95:6) to show the humbling of our human stature; lifting our head (Ps 24:7) to give total attention to God; kneeling (Ps. 95:6 – *barak*; to kneel expectantly and quietly before Him, to bless the Lord; Ps. 145:21; 34:1; 63:4; 72:15) to humble ourselves…

During the time of the Early Church, "mime communicated in the international, multilingual art of gesture, which everyone could understand."[56] The miming character was far from a prophet, but one who mimicked life. Farley states, "The mimes, being true to life, imitated and mocked" Christians and Christianity. The secular view of mime as entertainment grew and replaced religion.[57] Pantomime had evolved to be a simple form of portraying human gestures

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[51]Ibid., 770.

[52] *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.* Ezekiel 3:26 (NKJV)

[53] Farley, 770.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., 772 – 773. Additional examples are listed.

[56] Ibid, 773.

[57] Ibid., 774.

without spoken word while wearing a mask, yet this art would eventually "return to the church in the twentieth century."[58]

In the Contemporary church, a form of mime known as Gospel mime, derived from the French pantomime made popular by Marcel Marceau (1923 – 2007). Marceau helped to introduce and develop this theatrical art form. Marceau built on this means of art by portraying stories and characters, his most famous character being "Bip," while wearing white paint on the face to bring attention to facial expressions. Marceau defined mime as "the art of expressing feelings by attitudes and not a means of expressing words through gestures."[59] Gospel mime is also non-verbal, using silent gestures and movement with facial expressions that portray the meaning of the lyrics of the pre-recorded music that accompanies it. Introduced in various churches in Pittsburgh, PA during the 1990s, the use of this form quickly spread across the United States. Danielle Maggio notes that "the Black church has taken up the art from reinterpreting mime and combining it with a Christian message."[60] As mime has gained popularity among the youth and young adults, multigenerational churches desiring to include younger generations in worship, have commenced mime ministries. Despite its popularity, there is skepticism among those who find mime too worldly for sacred spaces. The art form focuses more on rhythm and gestures than the lyrical movement of liturgical dance. Maggio explains, "Gospel Mime blends non-verbal communication with pre-recorded gospel music. The rhythm, within the configuration, is articulated primarily through the bodies of the mimes, who punctuate the melodies of songs

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[58] Webber, 782. Robert E. Webber prefaces Todd Farley's article on the "Mime in the Contemporary Church."

[59] Robert Lewis, "Mime and Pantomime*," Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.*, January 29, 2008, accessed October 5, 2019, https.//www.britannica.com/art/mime-and-pantomime

[60] Danielle Maggio, "Gospel Mime: Anointed Ministry, Afrocentrism, and Gender in Black Gospel Performance (Master's Thesis, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 2017), 2.

through expressive silent gestures that are both inspired by and distanced from the physical "language" of French pantomime."[61]

Problem Statement

Many African American Baptist Churches may be skeptical concerning the use of liturgical dance and mime in the worship service; however, it is possible that the African American Baptist Church experience may be enriched by the incorporation of liturgical dance and gospel mime. This study has focused on the shared characteristics of attire, music choice, choreography, gestures and facial expressions of liturgical dance and mime to determine what qualities are appreciated across the generations of the Historic First Baptist Church (FBC). Although the attire of the mime ministry does not change from black pants, black long-sleeved shirts and black socks with white-painted faces and white gloves, the attire of the praise dance ministries changes based on the occasion and/ or musical context. Generally, the dancers wear palazzo pants or long skirts and long-sleeved body suit tops in either all black or all white with flowing overlays of designated colors. The dancers of FBC are females whose ages range from Generation Z to Baby Boomers while the mime ministry is all male ranging from Generation Z to Millennials. There are times that the teenage dancers will wear stretch pants and t-shirts when the rhythm of the music is more hip-hop in style, yet still sacred in lyrics.

Contemporary and Traditional Gospel music have been used as the backdrop for these art forms prompting this study to inquire about music choice for those who dance and mime. Although the lyrics of the music are vetted for appropriate doctrine and theology, the style of the music sometimes encourages the use of choreography that crosses into secular dances. This study investigated the responses of worshipers and participants in the aforementioned

[61] Ibid., 2.

characteristics as well as the total experience of liturgical dance and gospel mime in worship in a traditional African American Baptist church.

Statement of the Purpose

This qualitative historical study examined the engagement of generations when liturgical dance and mime are integrated into the liturgy of a traditional African American Baptist Church. This research explored the following factors of liturgical dance and mime ministry leaders to determine music, gestures, choreography and attire. In the context of worship, the researcher also investigated the participant's and the worshiper's overall evaluation of the experience.

This research sought to reveal concerns among members of FBC since the inclusion of liturgical dance and mime as a regular worship expression. Liturgical dance and mime have been increasingly practiced in the African American Church to heighten the participation and spiritual growth of the younger generations.[62] The main emphasis of this research is to explore the coexistence of body movement in a multigenerational worship experience. Worship planners may want to consider the placement of these ministry offerings. In addition, ministry leaders of liturgical dance and gospel mime may desire to examine their approach to preparing their members to express their Christian faith and edify the Church through their ministry offerings.

Significance of the Study

This study investigated the qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated by the multigenerational African American worshipers of The Historic First Baptist Church (FBC) of Norfolk, VA. As worship planners of multigenerational churches seeking to engage the generations, this study will provide considerations for integrating liturgical dance and/or gospel mime. This area of research will assist with

[62] Tammy L. Kernodle, "Worship and Arts Sunday," *The African American Lectionary – Cultural Resources,* (September 22, 2013): 1, accessed July 24, 2018.
http: //www.theafricanamericanlectionary.org/PopupCulturalaAid.asp?LRID=426

recognizing generational differences through appreciated qualities as well as areas of concern. It is the hope of the researcher that churches beyond the scope of African American Baptist Churches will gain insight into considering the use of these artistic expressions to benefit the worship experience.

Research Question

Many African American Churches are integrating liturgical dance and mime ministry seemingly to increase participation and engagement among youth and young adults. In multi-generational worship experiences, like FBC, there is a need to investigate how such creative expressions are affecting the worshiper of each generation. Thus, the following questions are considered for this research:

RQ1: What are the qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated by congregation members in the traditional African American Baptist Church?

RQ2: In what ways do the most appreciated qualities of liturgical dance and mime differ within the traditional African American Baptist Church according to age?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are specified:

H1**:** The qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated are music choice, choreography, and spiritual engagement.

H2: The qualities of liturgical dance and mime differ within the traditional African American Baptist Church according to age are attire, music choice, and choreography.

The integration of liturgical dance and gospel mime has become a staple in many African American Churches. Many churches worship with multiple generations represented as a community of faith. In many worship settings, skeptical views and apparent theological, doctrinal issues may prevent the inclusion of mime and dance in services. However, the practice of these artforms can be traced to scriptural references, doctrinal practices, and historical activities

that support the usage of mime and dance in the modern church. God delights in the praises of His people, "Let them praise His name with dancing, making melody to Him with tambourine and lyre!"[63]

Historically, the development of African American worship has included the use of spontaneous movement influenced by Africans who integrated their artistic expressions in shared experiences. God provided His children with gifts and talents to use for His glory. Expressing faith and love in the Almighty God through artistic means engages the heart and illuminates the truth. Albert Rouet supported this perspective stating, "Faith asks dance to translate into art those spaces where our words cannot reach, but where the human spirit moves forward and where Christ himself ventured ahead of us."[64] The aspects studied in this research include extrinsic and intrinsic qualities of dance and mime. Choreography, gestures, music choice, facial expressions and attire are observed by worshipers and affect the engagement of the community of faith, either positively or negatively.

Definition of Terms

Liturgical Dance

To understand liturgical dance, one must understand the term liturgy is from the Greek word *leitourgia*, which literally means "the work of the people." Words, songs, prayers, and other expressions provide the elements that engage the body of Christ in spiritual worship. Liturgical dance, also known as "praise dancing," is an expressive choreographed movement that may be used as a call to worship, as a specific expression within the worship service, or to supplement other elements of worship (e.g. live music or spoken word). Usually a choreographed dance,

[63] Ps. 149: 3 ESV

[64] Rouet, 149.

liturgical dance uses body movement and facial expressions to illuminate the faith of the dancer and the meaning of the music. In worship, the liturgical dance can be an expressive opportunity for engaging with the presence of God within the community of faith.

Gospel Mime

Gospel miming, also known as ministry through mime is a form of dance that uses hand gestures, facial expressions and body movement to express the meanings of the music accompanying it. Influenced by the French tradition of mime, participants in mime wear black attire, white gloves, and paint their faces white to emphasize the eyes, eyebrows and mouth for expressions. Gospel miming is most identified with African American worship usually using recorded popular worship music as a backdrop. Danielle Maggio states, "As a ministry, Gospel Mime expands the line of liturgical song and dance."[65]

Multigenerational worship

Multigenerational worship places emphasis on worship with members of different generations of the body of Christ in the same sacred space.

Intergenerational worship

Intergenerational worship is described by Allen and Ross as a community of faith that will "bring together the young, fresh thinkers with the older, wiser veterans, creating an integrated profusion of resources."[66] Intergenerational communities of faith intentionally include the generations in the liturgy through opportunities for youth and young adult generations to be utilized in the worship experience. Intergenerational worship challenges each generation to reconnect to the worship experience with creative worship practices that bring vitality to worship.

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[65] Maggio, 1.

[66] Allen and Ross, 51.

Summary

In the African American church, integrating liturgical dance and mime provides benefits within the congregation, student ministry, and young adult age groups. Extensive research, focused on liturgical dance is available. However, little research that investigating the response of worshipers across various generational age specific groups through the use of choreographed dance is accessible. In addition, there is limited research on the use of gospel mime within the African American worship experience and the response of worshipers across the generations and corresponding reactions of generational worshipers can be accessed. This qualitative research examines the reaction of multigenerational worshipers, as well as the feedback from participants of liturgical dance and gospel mime. To understand background of dance in African American worship, this research will explore the biblical and historical use of movement as an expression of worship.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to the biblical and historical study of liturgical dance and mime, the historical study of African American worship and the use of body movement in sacred spaces as an expression of faith in a multigenerational worship experience. Consistent with this historical qualitative study, section one of this chapter will focus on literature that explores the historical and theological background of sacred dance from the context of the Bible to the influences of African dance in the development of African American Christian worship in the New World. In section two, the focus will be on studies of the historical background of dance as well as the traditional African American Baptist church as the site for the subject of this research, the 219-year old Historic First Baptist Church (FBC) located in Norfolk, Virginia. The background and beliefs of this traditional church will provide the framework for this study. Section three will review recent studies in the area of African American musical expressions including the development and impressions of choreographed movement within the liturgy. Biblical studies that discuss God's creativity and mankind's creative response to God is the focus of the fourth section. The fifth section will explore recent research findings that focus on multiple generations participating in the worship experience. The final section will conclude this chapter and the basis for this qualitative study which encompasses liturgical dance and gospel mime in the context of FBC.

Theological and Historical Foundations

Twentieth century author, Bishop Albert Rouet wrote an important treatise on the use of artistic expression in liturgy. Rouet states, "Dance is an *indwelling* within the body, the witness

of an Other."[67] Rouet's inference that "the body is…where the covenant is sealed" with God,[68] stems from Byzantine theologian St. Gregory Palamas acknowledgement that "the soul becomes itself the home and dwelling place of God."[69]

In his text, Rouet presents the basis of biblical dance as well as the controversy surrounding body movement in theological beliefs throughout the ages. Despite biblical examples of ecstatic sacred dance, noted church leaders have denounced dance as a worship expression for reasons surrounding the seemingly uncontrollable use of the body in ecclesial spaces. Rouet's position encourages artistic expressions in liturgy that move people to realize the person of God within their being. He further illuminates, "The real question is not if this liturgy pleases you, nor even if you find it beautiful. The real question is whether the liturgical rites move people forward to walk with God and to move toward God."[70] Rouet's study of ideas surrounding artistic expressions in liturgy is not confined to Catholicism; it speaks directly to the heart of transformational worship.

W.O.E. Oesterley delineates categories and purposes of sacred dance as storied in the Bible. Through his descriptions in *Sacred Dance in the Ancient World*, this researcher discovers that the ecstatic dance among the prophets "was the means whereby the divine spirit came upon them; this belief they shared with others; but they rose to the higher belief that this means was not necessary for achieving the purpose of which it was used."[71] Yet, for the "very human

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[67] Rouet, 142.

[68] Ibid., 143.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 19.

[71] W.O.E. Oesterley, *Sacred Dance in the Ancient World* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 33.

Israelite…like innumerable men and women of other races…the sacred dance was one of the means whereby these emotions and aspirations were expressed."[72] Among biblical examples of static dance, Oesterley speaks of the sacred processional dance that honored God as directed by King David in 2 Samuel 6. King David led the Israelites in a great celebration before the ark of the Lord, "Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets."[73] He suggests that "the incidental way in which the dancing is mentioned [in the Bible] that the rite was usual."[74]

Further biblical and historical resources on liturgical dance are compiled and edited by Robert E. Webber in *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship*. Theologians note that the Old Testament contains many examples of dance to honor God.[75] Patti Amsden observes that dance in worship continued in the New Testament, "The epistles and the book of Acts outline the forms and ceremonies of Judaic worship that would be eliminated in the church…there is no commentary about discontinuing the use of music instruments, singing, and dancing."[76] Yet, many historical liturgical practices, including dance, became unacceptable in many sacred settings. These foundational studies aid in investigating the change in the polarizing perceptions of dance as a worship expression.

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[72] Ibid.

[73] 2 Samuel 6:14 - 15

[74] Ibid., 36.

[75] Old Testament Scripture accounts dancing as a pattern of worshiping Yahweh: Ex. 15, Judg. 21:21 – 23, 2 Sam.20:5; Song 2:8; Song 6:13; and commands to dance found in Ps. 149:3; Ps. 150:4.

[76] Patti Amsden, "Dance, Movement, and Posture in Worship" from *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship Book Two* edited by Robert E. Webber (Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 720.

In writing the history of dance, Rouet, Amsden, and others account the attitudes towards dance in the church throughout the fourth century. St. John Chrysostum (A.D. 386) urged the church to not confuse worldly theatrics with sacred liturgy:[77]

> We are not prohibiting liturgical acclamations, but only confusing outcries; we are not prohibiting the speaking of praise, but speaking in disorder, mutual rivalries, arms waving in the air pointlessly, stampedes, unworthy behavior, the entertainment of people who waste their time at the theater or the hippodrome…There is nothing that predisposes people to scorn the oracles of God like the excitement which is found in theatrical spectacles (1,3).

Ambrose (A.D. 390) posits:[78]

> Everything is right when it springs from the fear of the Lord. Let's dance as David did. Let's not be ashamed to show adoration of God. Dance uplifts the body above the earth into the heavenlies. Dance bound up with faith is a testimony to the living grace of God. He who dances as David dances, dances in grace.

Augustine (A.D. 394) admonishes: "To keep the sacred dances, discipline is most severe."[79]

Increased concern for heresy in the church led to a decline and eventual removal of dance from worship. However, Amsden notes, "Though the worship form of dance was removed from the people and repressed in the priesthood, the basic element of dance found its expression in the Mass."[80] Amsden's position broadens the definition of dance supported by the aforementioned literature that liturgical dance is "any expressive movement of our bodies within worship."[81]

Theologians of the Reformation often show the conflict that still exists in today's approach to acceptable liturgy. Ideology of worship asserted by Protestant reformers since the

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[77] Rouet, 121.

[78] Amsden, 721.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid., 722.

[81] Deena Borchers, "A Case for Dance in Worship" from *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship,* Book Two, edited by Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 728.

sixteenth century can be categorized as "essentially word-oriented and plain (clear and simple)."[82] Whether it is architectural in nature or in the presence of dance, drama, and other artistic expressions, the worshiper's attention can be directed to God. The sixteenth century brought teachings of noted Reformation leader, Martin Luther (1483-1546) who "stressed the priesthood of all believers. This preeminent step released the people to express their worship unto God, eventually releasing all the Davidic expressions of praise, including dance."[83] Protestant Reformation leader in Switzerland, John Calvin (1509 – 1564) distinguished his principles of the Reformed Church from Luther's teachings:[84]

> The Reformed Churches do not view this world as a vale of tears, but as the vineyard of the Lord, which is to be cultivated. They do not shun the world, but meet it, accepting the danger of becoming secularized in order to magnify God's name within it and by its means. Thus in the last analysis they subject nothing to a judgement of absolute condemnation. Everything must and can serve to the glorification of God, even art. We may recall the thought of the Neo-Calvinist Abraham Kuyper. Basically, the art of the dance should also be capable of being incorporated into the service of God.

While this research focuses on aspects of choreographed movement appreciated in liturgy, it is the impact it has on the worshiper that is truly in question. This draws the attention back to Rouet's focus on the heart of the worshiper. Theological and historical studies provide accounts of the decline and rise of sacred dance as an expression of worship. German Theologian and Philosopher Paul Tillich recognized the value of dance in his significant work, *The Religious Situation*, written in the early 1930's. Tillich observed, "this art has experienced a complete renaissance…[it] is recognized again as an independent form of spiritual expression."[85]

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[82] Robin M. Jensen, "The Arts in Protestant Worship." *Theology Today* (Vol. 58. Issue 3, 2001), 361.

[83] Amsden, 723.

[84] Ibid., quoted from Geraradus Van Der Leeuw, *Religion in Essence and Manifestation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 51- 52.

[85] Paul Tillich, *The Religious Situation* translated by H. Richard Niebuhr (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 36.

Studies discussing the theological beliefs regarding the use of the Arts, specifically body movement in worship provide insight to some of the historical controversies and skepticism surrounding this subject despite its biblical background.

Historical Studies of African American Worship

Historically the African American worship experience, born out of enslavement and a society that attempted to squelch the very soul of the African's spirit, this study argues that the ritual expressions of the African Diaspora have impacted Christian worship today. This impact has not only influenced expressions but the ideological approach of the worshiper who experiences it. Historical studies of the development of Christianity in the Africans brought to the New World implicate a direct correlation of social injustice and the human spirit seeking liberation and enablement. In reference to the secret worship experiences of the African slave, Melva Wilson Costen characterizes this important gathering known as the Invisible Institution.[86]

> Separate and apart from those who denied them freedom on earth, slaves were free in worship to hear and respond to the Word of God. They could hear and recall this message of salvation and deliverance and increase their faith in God, whose Son, Jesus, had overcome earthly suffering. They could find mental and emotional release in spite of their physical enslavement. They could experience the freedom of verbal and nonverbal expression. They could worship God with their whole being. They dared to risk the punishment they would surely receive if their Invisible Institution became visible to the slave masters.

Historic studies of African American worship have provided texts that give informative writings that support the influence of African rituals that remain the basis for elements of worship present in predominantly African American churches. Lincoln and Mamiya's exhaustive study of the Black Church contains a chapter entitled, "The Performed Word: Music and the Black Church," in which the authors provide detailed information on the historical development of music within the African American worship experience. The background of dance and

[86] Costen, 37.

movement as a part of spirit-filled worship are from African influences, both sacred and secular. The authors write, "There was no distinction between the sacred and the secular, and music, whether vocal or instrumental, was an integral aspect of the celebration of the life, as indeed was the dance which the music inspired in consequence of its evocation of the human spirit."[87] Costen posits that "primal expressions that are unique to African people in the Diaspora: praise, prayer, shouting, dancing, singing and playing instruments."[88] In light of this realization, the cultural influences of African heritage do not simply indicate that only African American churches are including choreographed movement in the worship experience. The historical writers of African American worship account for the African cultural expressions that have influenced the development of worship practices; however, the presence of differing views of such practices are recorded as well providing grounds for tension and disillusionment.

Written in two volumes, *A Documented History of the First Baptist Church, Bute Street, Norfolk, Virginia, 1800 – 1988*, provided a record of the historical evidence of changes that occurred in the liturgy, providing evidence of the importance of dance and mime in the local church. Although presently a predominantly African American congregation, First Baptist Church began as a church "composed of whites, free Negros and slaves coming from Europe, Africa, the West Indies and America's Eastern Seaboard Indians."[89] The historical background of this church investigates its foundation and the development of its present expressions of worship.

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[87] Lincoln and Mamiya, 246.

[88] Melva Wilson Costen, *In Spirit and in Truth: The Music of African American Worship* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 6.

[89] Margaret L. Gordon, *A Documented History of the First Baptist Church, Bute Street, Norfolk, Virginia, 1800-1988: Rev. Dr. R. G. Murray, Pastor* (Virginia Beach: Hill's Printing Co, 1988).

Historical books chronicle the development of African American Christian worship in early America providing a foundation for the study of worship practices that were influenced by the many cultures embodied in the African Diaspora. Such practices as dancing, handclapping, swaying, shouting and the like were present in the charismatic nature of worship discovered in the Invisible Institution. Historical lessons consider the state of the African enslaved physically yet spiritually freed through Christianity. It is important to note that the context of the slave's plight is not alienated from the content of his or her worship. Clearly accounted in the development of worship practices has been the divergent views that have influence liturgical practices past and present. Historical texts provide useful discussion of the development of worship practices as well as the current views of certain worship practices across denominations.

Liturgical Dance Research

Research, related to liturgical dance in worship, spans denominations. While not always accepted, the benefits of body movement to liturgy and the worshiping community is obvious in educational, historical, theological, and biblical development of the congregation. Khalia Jelks Williams explores the use of the female body within worship as a liturgical practice, endeavoring to exhibit African American women "as an important consideration in liturgical reflection on ritual practice" and "highlights both the African American worship tradition and the bodies of African American women as fruitful locations for theological and ritual analysis."[90] Williams' research discovered the marginalization and oppression within the worship experience. This community, in need of expression within authentic worship, is identifiable with the community of faith. Williams reflects on the function of dance within the sacred space bringing identity to African American women.

[90] Khalia Jelks Williams, "Flesh that Dances: Constructing a Womanist Liturgical Theology of Embodiment." (Doctoral Dissertation, Berkeley, CA: Graduate Theological Union, 2017), 165.

Kathleen S. Turner's dissertation discusses liturgical dance in worship as an educational tool for participants. She contends, "The arts are inspirational as educational resources for the religious educator to explore, to awaken the voice of the artistic within every individual in learning about a God who is also artistic."[91] Turner's historical perspectives include the dance of the Shakers. Therese Blanc states that, "the dance of the shakers," clearly is a "demonstration that express, define, and clarify not only beauty but also the understanding of how one receives blessings and how one renders prayer through the act of grace."[92] Turner found the observations of Blanc to be similar to the experiences of liturgical dance within the African American worship experience. According to Turner, the forms of music, dance and the spoken word of African American worship continue to be utilized in "new and refreshing ways within their worship practices."[93] However, the Shaker community's "order declined in numbers after the Civil War."[94]

In keeping with her argument that liturgical dance is a point of instruction for those who participate, Turner states, "When incorporating the artistic in instructional teaching, the educative relationship between the lesson and the learner is incorporated, comprehended, and implemented. The artistic is solely a tool to experience for learning and instruction to transpire between teacher and learner."[95] Turner's research provides grounds for artistic expressions to be a spiritual learning ground for participants and summarizes that the visual, auditory and physical

[91] Kathleen S. Turner, "And We Shall Learn Through the Dance: Liturgical Dance as Religious Education," (Doctoral Dissertation, New York: Fordham University, 2012), 131.

[92] Ibid., 54.

[93] Ibid., 58.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 131.

responses become the "expression that communicates the depths of the inner soul and summons the whole self to respond." [96]

Anne Wimberly's research, in keeping with Turner's findings, acknowledges the worshiper's spiritual and educational benefit from integrating movement into the worship experience while focusing on the nurturing nature of music in worship. Wimberly suggests that education in the African American church is evident through preaching, music and prayer.[97] The author discusses the effects of music making in the worship experience in chapter ten of *Nurturing Faith and Hope*. According to Wimberly's research, "the black worshiping congregation does not ordinarily happen without bodily responses such as clapping, swaying, tapping the feet, drumming or dancing."[98] This idea of music being beneficial to nurturing the congregation helps to correlate how liturgical dance and gospel mime provide kinesthetic identification to worshipers. In addition, Wimberly discusses the past and present effectiveness of sensory worship in the African American church.

To study the music practiced in an African American Pentecostal Church, Will Boone applies his experiences at Faith Assembly in a case study. While studying such music practices as song, mime, and liturgical dance, Boone focuses on the "pure sonics" that encompass the deeper meanings significant within the worship moments studied. He explores the sounds in worship as "an attempt to better understand the depth of meaning that emerges in Spirit-filled worship."[99]

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[96] Turner, 143.

[97] Ibid., 137.

[98] Anne E. Streaty Wimberly, "Music Making as a Pathway to Nurture" in *Nurturing Faith and Hope: Black Worship as a Model for Christian Education* (Eugene, OR: Pilgrim Press, 2004), 149.

[99] Will Boone, "Hearing Faith: Musical Practice and Spirit-Filled Worship in a Contemporary African American Church," (Doctoral Dissertation, Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina, 2013), 138.

Boone states, "music and dance are crucial to the processes through which African American Pentecostals strive to directly experience, and to be edified and empowered by an inscrutable God; a God who they believe created, encompasses, and controls all opposing forces."[100] Though focused on Pentecostals, there are similarities of the effects of music and movement in various denominations. The importance of music to the choreographed liturgical dance and mime is furthered examined by Boone.

Boone's multi-layered research explores the effects of dance within the worship experience. He summarizes, "[Liturgical dance] edifies and empowers the community in ways that other forms of expression are not able to do. Dance fosters human connection; it nurtures empathy."[101] In addition to liturgical dance, Boone described a dramatic mime in which the narrative was centered on the "tension between free-will and predestination."[102] The art of mime provided an opportunity to silently narrate the lyrics through gestures and movement. Like dance, mime reaches beyond the physical and touches an "emotional nuance that would be virtually impossible to express with language alone."[103]

Susan Lee Olsen argues that the "dramatic evolution of Modern Dance" is paramount to the development of what she calls "contemporary liturgical dance."[104] Olsen's viewpoint is refers to the historical accounts of the Roman Catholic Church. Although Olsen clearly differentiates the style of contemporary liturgical dance from the style found in African American worship

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[100] Ibid., 13.

[101] Ibid., 238.

[102] Ibid., 213.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Susan Lee Olsen, "If Necessary, Use Words," (Doctoral Dissertation, Berkeley, CA: Graduate Theological Union, 2005), 3.

experiences, there are shared ideas that have developed liturgical dance to its present standing in many churches. Olsen's dissertation provides a reference point for many of these shared historical developments.

Supporting Dance as a worship expression, Deena Borcher points to gestures that occur in most worship experiences as a form of dance. She argues that when our "arms are raised in prayer…or when we kneel to express humility, we are participating in a form of liturgical dance."[105] Borcher considers important questions usable for judging the necessity of the dance practice for Christian worship: "does it enrich our worship, carry spiritual meaning for us today, and reflect the good news of grace and forgiveness we have through Christ?"[106] Liturgical Dancer In support, author Carla De Sola posits, "Practiced by liturgical artists, dance serves and functions as a conduit from the inner workings of the spirit to the outer expression of today's worship…dance makes an indelible impression upon the viewer. Communication is body-to-body with the distance between sanctuary to pew being traversed kinesthetically."[107]

Throughout the review of liturgical dance research, one theme is present, music and body movement have been a part of various denominations throughout history. Whether it is spontaneous or choreographed, there is supported documentation that dance provides a way to respond to God and transcends words. Researchers found that dance can benefit the dancer and the participant when effective integration is utilized. Observations showing the relationship between liturgical dance "with music, spoken word, and silence" engages the "individual dancer and

[105] Borchers, 729.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Carla De Sola, "…And the Word Became Dance: A Theory and Practice of Liturgical Dance" from *Dance as Religious Studies* edited by Doug Adams and Diane Apostolos Cappadona, (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 153-154.

congregant, the church is identified as community through individual and mutual movement…"[108] The expression of the artist also includes the "attitude of the perceiver while the work is being created."[109] Expressions of one's faith through creative means is a biblical principle evident throughout the Bible.

The Nature of Creativity

Due to the artistic nature of dance, mankind's proclivity to be creative and respond to creativity demands further study. The Bible says, "So God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God created him; male and female created He them."[110] Mankind was created to be creative reflecting the very being of a God who is our Creator. In the New Testament, Paul declares that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works…"[111] Worship Leader Mike Cosper concludes from this text, "Creativity, then, is an echo of God's own creative work."[112] Old Testament historians, Andrew Hill and Robert Webber note God's call for man to reflect His creative image. Hill states, "The arts both mirror and convey God's personality and attributes as Creator and Redeemer – His power, wisdom, glory, majesty, honor, holiness, [and] creativity. Thus artistic expression not only affirms the image of God in human beings as creatures but also serves as a mandate for imitating God in creating."[113] Robert Webber grounds the discussion of arts in liturgy with "the basic story line of Scripture: creation, fall, incarnation,

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[108] Turner, 200.

[109] Ibid., 131.

[110] Genesis 1:27 NKJV

[111] Ephesians 2:10

[112] Mike Cosper, "The Worship Leader and Creativity" from *Doxology and Theology* by Matt Boswell (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2013), 140.

[113] Andrew E. Hill, *Enter His Courts with Praise!: Old Testament Worship for the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 215.

redemption, and consummation."[114] Webber's book, *Worship Old and New* was written as dance was being renewed in the liturgy. He notes, "dance in worship is gradually being understood as a movement of praise, a means of setting the body free to worship God."[115]

Bishop Rouet discusses the responsibility for artists to share their renderings so that others may receive and interpret the creativity given by God. He states, "the work of the artist….is not just to believe or to make, but to bear witness to a life of the Spirit that is in touch with God's own reality."[116] In the discussion of expressions through art, Rouet points to the truth linked to engaging art as an expression of the inner being. He states, "…the artist has to marry the marble in order to discover the beauty of a statue. The dancer must espouse the body before it will be able to articulate the inner desire that moves it, the beauty that it seeks to express, and the meaning for which it searches."[117]

The relationship between music and its effect on our minds, emotions, and physiology is explored by John D. Witvelit in *Worship Seeking Understanding* as he discusses the power of music in our worship. He states, "The more our minds are impressed by the pictorial language of the texts we sing, the more the images in these texts shape our souls. Our bodies react to vivid narrative and images, bearing witness to the close relationships among cognition, emotion and physiology."[118] Music, the backdrop to the body movement discussed in this research, develops

[114] Robert E. Webber, rev. and exp. ed., *Worship Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 206.

[115] Ibid., 215.

[116] Rouet, *Liturgy and the Arts,* x.

[117] Ibid., 139.

[118] John D. Witvelit, *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 236.

Witvelit's observations concerning the importance of understanding the responses received from congregants as it pertaining to choreography and gestures of the artists accompanying the music.

Witvelit quotes various authors revealing each researcher's writings embrace of the liturgical arts as a viable expression that "enables personal, relational actions between the gathered community and its Creator."[119] Liturgical composer John Foley states, "We have to understand liturgy itself in order to see how music and the other arts operate within the liturgy, for the purposes of it, rather than outside it for other purposes…Music, dance, homiletics, gesture, and decoration partake of this overarching form, each contributing its own substance to liturgy's semblance…Composers, musicians, choreographers, etc., must be masters first of the liturgy and only then artists of their art form."[120] As more churches consider integrating various artistic expressions into worship, such as dance, drama, mime, etc., Mike Cosper provides this instruction, "Pastors of worship [must be] attentive to how the creative gifts of the church are being nurtured and cultivated, and how opportunities to express those gifts are being stewarded."[121] Webber provides this caution, "The church must recognize that the arts in worship are not performances as such, but vehicles that serve the text of worship."[122]

In support of integrating dance into worship, J. G. Davies provides the framework for meaningful integration. Davies states, "dance…must be integrated with and not just added to the celebration of the liturgy. If it is mere decoration that neither deepens nor focuses devotion at the point where it takes place, then it should be excluded…"[123] Davies warns that no added

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[119] Ibid., 240.

[120] John Foley, *Creativity and the Roots of Liturgy* (Washington, D. C.: Pastoral Press, 1994), 4, 268 as quoted in Witvelit, *Worship Seeking Understanding*, 241.

[121] Cosper, 141.

[122] Webber, 215.

element should invade the significance of the gathered church; all elements must assist in worship as a "place where God can be met."[124] The author suggests that dance be used as a physical expression of Scripture, a sermon or accompany a dramatic Biblical story. Davies calls physical representations of written word or stories, "Narrative dance."[125] Dance is also movement that "expresses something or is simply a kinetic flow that does not "mean" anything."[126] Also known as modern dance, these movements as integrated within liturgy are used to convey feelings unto God from the perspective of the dancer. Davies explains that expressive dance is "inseparable from the dance itself, which in turn is indistinguishable from the dancer who is the instrument of his or her own art."[127] As an offering to God, the use of expressive dance in worship engages the community of faith in a "shared activity of a fellowship."[128]

According to Thomas Kane, there are "five types of liturgical dances that express what is happening in worship." These dances are listed below with brief descriptions summarized by Robert E. Webber:

1. Processional Dance can be used at the gathering as an accompaniment to the reading of the gospel, at the presentation of the gifts of bread and wine, and at the closing.
2. Proclamation Dance adorns the reading of God's Word.
3. Prayer Dance is to be used for special prayers within a service of worship that can be expressed through dance.
4. Meditation Dance is a reflective dance done as a response to a proclamation part of the service of worship. The people are called upon to meditate on the presentation of truth found in the reading of Scripture, in a sermon, or in Communion.

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[123] John G. Davies, "Integrating Dance in the Liturgy" from *Music and the Arts in Christian Worship,* Book Two, edited by Robert E. Webber (Nashville: Star Song Publishing Group, 1994), 732.

[124] Ibid., 733.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid., 734.

[128] Ibid., 736.

5. Celebration Dance is usually used at the prelude and postlude of a service. Often celebration dances involve the entire worshiping community in some simple gestures or in movement such as a circle dance.[129]

The aforementioned studies provide foundational and relational information for artistic expressions as a reflection of a creative God. Integrating creative arts into the liturgy as a worship response provides such a response, yet it must be done with the intention of enhancing the liturgy. God desires for His disciples to celebrate Him and inspire others through the gifts and talents He has given. As Hill states, "The arts permit creatures to explore and express the mystery of divine transcendence and immanence."[130] The creative art is given by God and presented unto Him as an offering.

Dance as a Kinesthetic Art

Much of the research on worshiping through body movement has mentioned the kinesthetic effect it can have on the participant as well as the viewer. Various authors and dancers support the idea of dance as a kinesthetic art; discussing the inner effects of dance on the dancer and the worshiper. The concept that dance can communicate on a level beyond that senses and touch the Spirit has been referred to by authors Wimberly and De Sola. Wimberly notes that "spontaneous bodily responses to music and Spirit-led movement in the black worshiping congregation are not guided in any fashion."[131] The meaning of worshiper's faith in God through such kinesthetic movements as "clapping, swaying, tapping the feet, or dancing have been observed by both Wimberly and De Sola. Stephanie Scott considers dance as having a language of its own allowing the worshiper to engage with the dancer without saying a word. According to Mary M.

[129] Ibid., 756-757.

[130] Hill, 215.

[131] Wimberly, *Nurturing Faith and Hope*, 194.

Smyth whose article, "Kinesthetic Communication in Dance" appeared in *Dance Research Journal*, "The word kinesthesis was coined to refer to the sense of movement (kinein – to move, aesthesis – perception) of one's own body."[132] The physical movement of dance communicates deeper than the five senses.

Dancer Carla De Sola states that from a "kinesthetic dimension a dancer will connect feelings, body shapes, forms, and rhythms to bring forth a heightened way the spirituality of everyday incarnated life…a mirror that reflects and magnifies what is hidden or not accessible to the eyes alone."[133] The gestures and movements of the dance communicates to the worshiper who, in turn, senses the same movements. Smyth calls this "visual kinesthesis which is the sense of one's own body when movement is seen."[134] Visual kinesthesis is the spiritual communication tool used from dancer to worshiper in the corporate experience.

In opposition, P. Kimberleigh Jordan contradicts Smyth and De Sola pertaining to their position on liturgical dance as kinesthetic movement. Jordan argues, "Shouting and the Holy dance represent ecstatic, kinesthetic responses to a spiritual presence, while liturgical dance is a more static movement structure."[135] According to Jordan, choreographed movement limits while "gesture signifies an ephemeral and spontaneous kinesthetic response that…is in an indicator of the presence of the Spirit."[136] In describing her observations of the dance ministry she observed,

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[132] Mary M. Smyth, "Kinesthetic Communication in Dance" *Dance Research Journal,* Vol. 16, No. 2 (Autumn, 1984), 19.

[133] Carla De Sola, "…And the Word Became Dance: A Theory and Practice of Liturgical Dance" in *Dance as Religious Studies,* Doug Adams and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, eds., (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 156.

[134] Smyth, 19.

[135] P. Kimberleigh Jordan, "My Flesh Shall Live in Hope: Power and the Black Body in Sacred Spaces" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York: New York University, 2009), 17-18.

[136] Ibid.

Jordan refers to their ecstatic dances as "choreography with a message…emphasizing the lyrics to the songs accompanying the dances in very concrete ways."[137] Jordan consistently distinguishes the dance as either improvisational or choreographed throughout her study; although referring to "choreographies as being improvisational" in describing Spirit-filled dances.[138] Jordan is clear to emphasis a focus on the "collective power of corporeality" of black women through liturgical dance performance.[139]

In her journal article, Stephanie S. Scott discusses liturgical dance as a spiritual communication tool stating, "Because spiritual experiences are inclusive of all the meaning of a person's life, it is necessary to express to them through a language that communicates their completeness. The language of liturgical dance has this capacity and allows communication of complex thoughts and feelings through physical expression."[140] Scott recognizes that there are in a faction of the worship community separates "movement and music" in order "to achieve equilibrium, balance, and control."[141] Scott; however, stresses that the language of dance is communicated through "arms, legs, feet and even facial expressions… It is the significance that is given, the meaning attached to movement that makes dance a linguistic expression. This language is capable of "relating spiritual experiences in the Christian worldview."[142] Further illustrating the effects of liturgical dance as a communicative tool in worship, Asha Ragin postulates, "…worship

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[137] Ibid., 205.

[138] Ibid., 173.

[139] Ibid., 191.

[140] Scott, 246.

[141] Ibid., 257.

[142] Ibid, 250.

dance is an intentional movement and an act of worshiping God that leads and exhorts others into worship and into a potentially transformational experience of healing from brokenness."[143] The language of dance can be further seen as it pertains to the effects of dance on the individual dancer.

Jana Élise Taylor studied the effects of Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) on African American youth to his or her emotions through body movement. She states, "The liturgical dancer must develop the skill of letting go, allowing his or her body to submit to the Spirit."[144] Taylor supports the need for the dancer to be 'kinesthetically alive' with movement as described by Carolyn Deitering, "The dancer must let the kinesthetic sense lead the other senses to take their rightful, secondary place."[145] Taylor's research focuses the dancer on releasing self and giving glory and honor to God.

At the heart of this clinical study, Taylor measures the effects of DMT on African American youth who have experienced complex trauma through the following five types of movement themes: "celebration of self, letting go, empowerment, surrendering, and community."[146] Taylor's research connects the liturgical dancer to "their body, mind and spirit, so they can feel refreshed, revived, renewed, and most importantly, free."[147] This research shares the impact of this

[143] Asha Ragin, et. al., "Dance and Transformation," in *Worship That Changes Lives: Multidisciplinary and Congreational Perspectives on Spiritual Transformation* ed. by Alexis Abernathy (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 95.

[144] Jana Élise Taylor, "Liturgical Dance: A Dance Movement Therapy Treatment Modality" (Master's Thesis, Yonkers, NY: Sarah Lawrence College, 2015), 25.

[145] Carolyn Deitering, *The Liturgy as Dance* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 106.

[146] Taylor, 37-38.

[147] Ibid., 40.

freedom of dance on worshipers who engage in the expression of liturgical dance. The aforesaid research supports the impact of dance as a kinesthetic art.

Multigenerational Worship Research

As the congregation ages, multiple generations generally represent the church body of a local congregation. The reality of this truth is found in the generational span of First Baptist Church in Norfolk including Generation Z, born 1997 – 2012, to the Silent Generation, born 1925 – 1942. Ray Crawford Jr. studied how generations can share expressions within the worship experience to break down barriers and intentionally enhance the worship experience. Crawford states, "Not only is worship enriched by the unique expressions of many generations, intergenerational worship is an important tool to helping the church with its sacred quality of transmitting the faith across generational boundaries."[148] The Psalmist instructs, "One generation commends your works to another."[149] Crawford shares that "the worship experience was designed to provide meaningful faith expressions across generational lines, and so encourage faithfulness and generational inclusiveness within the congregation."[150] In the attempt to engage the different generations, Crawford noted that there is "a particular need to explore and discover new expressions of worship which will be respectful of its elders while also connecting with younger generations and reaching out to growing numbers of pre-Christian people."[151] This marks a challenge for worship planners as they attempt to engage the hearts and minds of multiple generations and spiritual maturity.

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[148] Ray Crawford Jr., "For All Generations: The Experience and Expression of Intergenerational Worship," (Doctoral Dissertation, Madison, NJ: Drew University, 2007), Abstract.

[149] Psalm 145: 4 NIV

[150] Crawford, 12.

[151] Ibid., 18.

Thea A. McKee's dissertation addresses the importance of shared experiences that lead to "renewal through intergenerational fellowship and worship, enacted prayers and artistic expressions of the Passion of Christ."[152] Although FBC has been a multigenerational church since its inception in the year eighteen hundred, the idea of including all generations in telling the story of Christ has experienced a resurgence in the past forty years. For a number of years, the limitation of youth inclusion was relegated to one "Youth Sunday" each month that rendered music from a Youth Choir, a Cherub Choir and limited leadership of worship elements, responsive Scripture reading and prayer, led by students. The inclusion of research by McKee and Crawford planted in research by Allen and Ross aid in expressing the intent of intergenerational worship.

Arlys A. Mindt Fogt's research contemplates the focus of the inclusion of children in the worship experience. Fogt states, "People need community for their wholeness – children need community for their wholeness to be all they are created to be. God provided the community for the nurture and care of children, but the relationship with God also needs a faith community."[153] After purposefully integrating children's activities into the worship experience, Fogt concluded, "including children with the congregation in intergenerational worship was and continues to be a commitment worth making. Any church that chooses to do this must be prepared to support that decision with planning, persistence and passion."[154] Additional studies in the area of intergenerational worship explore the necessity of intentionally planning activities that lead to purposeful worship across the generations.

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[152] Thea A. McKee, "A Pilgrimage to Sacred Spaces and Reconciliation: Reclaiming the Awe and Wonder of the Passion of Christ Through Intergenerational Worship and Fellowship," (Doctoral Dissertation, Madison, NJ: Drew University, 2010), Abstract.

[153] Arlys A. Mindt Fogt, "Children in Worship: The Body of Christ; Living our Theology," (Doctoral Dissertation, Trotwood, OH: United Theological Seminary, 2007), 32.

[154] Ibid., 103.

Intergenerational worship research has increased in the past ten years. Many churches, once touting age-segregated worship, have redefined purposeful worship to include shared generational experiences. Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross collaborated on a book that utilized their individual research on intergenerational worship. Allen and Ross show how the generational needs within the body of Christ can be addressed through intergenerational ministry. The authors present the benefits of worshiping together and learning from each other as instructed in the Scriptures. They write, "The excessive individualism of secular Western culture is fundamentally incompatible with the life of community as depicted in Scripture."[155] The worship community "is the place where generational differences are to be transcended rather than reinforced."[156] The challenge is to connect each generation to the worship experience with creative worship practices that encourage participation and engagement.

Ray Crawford Jr. responds to this challenge, "The church needs to recognize that generational diversity necessitates diversity in worship practices if the church is to reach new generations."[157] To bring vitality and reconnect each generation to the worship experience and each other, FBC has incorporated creative experiences such as liturgical dance and the ministry of mime to the liturgy.

Robyn Burns-Marko explains vitality to be "the increased participation in existing ministries, the creation and sustaining of new ministries, sharing of worship opportunities, and involvement in the kingdom work of the church, all the while utilizing all generations and all subgroups working in tandem and unison following the scriptural models of participation and

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[155] Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 43.

[156] Ibid., 155.

[157] Crawford, "For All Generations," 38.

unity."[158] The research of Burns-Marko, noting the writings of Apostle Paul in the Epistles, defines the biblical support found of IM. One example is found in Ephesians 4:15 – 16 (NLT) Paul encourages IM, "…we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of His body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."[159]

Important to the study of Burns-Marko is the distinctive nature found in multigenerationality, cross-generationality and intergenerationality within the framework of ministry by using the analogy of a cheeseburger. When each element of the cheeseburger (i.e. bun, condiments, burger, and cheese) exists together, but not intertwined, intergenerationality is non-existent; however, when "a bite is taken from the sandwich, one can taste the elements in the cheeseburger, and even upon reflection, identify the individual flavors, but the sum of the entire cheeseburger creates its own unique taste."[160] Burns-Marko's research studies the use of intergenerational interaction with the purpose of increasing vitality within the worship of the studied church. The emphasis of intergenerational ministry as researched by Burns-Marko provides the definition that encompasses how FBC integrates liturgical dance and mime ministry as an activity that seeks to engage all ages in the worship experience.

In a quantitative analysis of practices within predominately African American churches published in the *Sociological Spectrum* in 2009, Sandra L. Barnes provided a tangible resource to the premise of utilizing various expressions such as liturgical dance and mime ministry to

[158] Robyn Burns-Marko, "Intergenerational Ministry: Bringing the Generations Back Together," (PH.D. diss., Azusa Pacific University, 2017), 11.

[159] Ephesians 4:15 – 16 NLT

[160] Ibid., 10.

increase participation within multigenerational church settings. The author's research included current trends influenced by various aspects of the African American church including, but not limited to demographics and "programmatic efforts."[161]

Barnes studied a model that examined the relationship between adult participation and independent variables across denominations, such as dance or drama. This research found that "although nontraditional music worship expressions such a gospel rap do not help explain differences in participation levels, churches that include dance or drama more regularly in their Sunday worship services tend to note increased adult participation."[162] Considering the effects of dance and drama in the worship experience, Barnes theorizes that the research "may suggest the growing acceptance and increased usage in sacred arena of activities that may be associated with secular society and popular culture (and their potential benefits)."[163]

In addition, Barnes touches on the benefit of African American churches that "address generational cultural differences" finding increased participation when intentionally providing youth and young adult programs which include "music and dance expressions germane to a diverse cultural base."[164] In conclusion, Barnes uncovers that in addition to dance and drama "many Blacks who are affiliated with mainline religion still require priestly programs such as Bible studies that provide religious education and support."[165] Barnes presents evidence that there

[161] Sandra L. Barnes, "Enter into His Gates: An Analysis of Black Church Participation Patterns," *Sociological Spectrum* 29, no. 2 (March 2009), 173.

[162] Ibid., 190.

[163] Ibid., 193.

[164] Ibid., 179.

[165] Ibid., 194.

is a relationship between intergenerational participation in creative worship expressions and the possible significant benefits to congregant engagement.

Summary

The varied research on dance as an expression of worship examines the benefits to the liturgy, the participant and the worshiper. In addition, research supports evidence of expression through movement and gestures through biblical and historical studies. History displays the differing attitudes towards dance in worship as well as usage in various denominations in addition to African American worship. With these positions in mind, the former research does not explore the qualities of liturgical dance and mime as an expression of worship that are most appreciated across generations in a multigenerational church. The current study aims to address the gap in literature through discovering the generational responses to the integration of liturgical dance and gospel mime as an expression of worship in a traditional African American Baptist church.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Liturgical dance and gospel mime as expressions of worship, are frequently used in many congregations. In particular, the Historic First Baptist Church (FBC) of Norfolk, Virginia experiences multiple generations being impacted by the integration of liturgical dance and gospel. This qualitative historical study explored what qualities are appreciated across generations when adding such creative elements to the liturgy. Investigating the background of music and movement, particularly in the development of African American worship, presents a context for the effects of such elements in worship today. Additionally, history underlies the controversies surrounding the inclusion of static and ecstatic body movement and the current change of viewpoints in many local churches.

Design

Worshipers across generations at FBC completed open-ended surveys following four worship services in which either liturgical dance or gospel mime was integrated within the worship experience. Volunteer participants across generations were encouraged to share their personal perceptions of these elements. Also, liturgical dance and gospel mime ministry leaders and members participated in audio-recorded interviews with the researcher. Each interview was conducted in confidence to gain insight to the origin and preparation of each dance and mime presentation. The Qualitative research design was chosen to discover what the participant's views are regarding the integration of liturgical dance and gospel mime as a worship element.[166]

[166] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc., 2009), 26.

Research Questions and Hypothesis

The research question for this study were:

RQ1: What are the qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated by congregation members in the traditional African American Baptist Church?

RQ2: In what ways do the most appreciated qualities of liturgical dance and mime differ within the traditional African American Baptist Church according to age?

The following hypotheses are specified:

The hypotheses for this study were:

H1**:** The qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated are music choice, choreography, and spiritual engagement.

H2: The qualities of liturgical dance and mime differ within the traditional African American Baptist Church according to age are attire, music choice, and choreography.

Participants

Research for this study was gained from two specific sources: a structured open-ended survey completed via SurveyMonkey or paper and audio-recorded interviews of those affiliated with the FBC liturgical dance and mime ministries. Survey and interview participants were recruited through quota sampling. The basis for the quota were age and current church membership. Members of FBC from eighteen to eighty-nine years of age were given the opportunity to participate in the surveys. Sixty-eight members volunteered to submit survey documents and participate in interviews. Audio-recorded interviews of five liturgical dance and mime participants, thirteen to sixty-five years of age, were sampled following the collection of surveys. Also, three leaders of the mime and dance ministries, including the choreographer and spiritual leader, were included in the interviews. The interview questions were semi-structured.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	14	23%
Female	46	77%
Age Groups		
18-24	2	3%
25-34	2	3%
35-44	4	7%
45-54	7	12%
55-64	18	30%
65-74	19	32%
75-89	8	13%
Length of FBC membership		
1-10 years	9	15%
11-19 years	9	15%
20-29 years	16	27%
30+ years	26	43%

Setting

While many churches could be considered for this study, the historic tradition and national influence of FBC was chosen for this study. Specifically, FBC provided the 219 years of African American Baptist Church influence, consistent integration of liturgical dance and gospel mime and generational involvement within its worship. There are two multi-generational worship services each Sunday. The youth and young adult mime and liturgical dance groups alternate ministry presentations on the second and fourth Sundays at both services while the women's praise dance team present on fifth Sundays and special services. There are three liturgical all-female dance groups segregated by age, they are: Joyful Angels, Joyful Expressions, and Exalted Praise. The mime ministry of FBC, known as ACTS Mime Ministry, consists of young adult males.

Procedure

Due to the nature of the study, permission from the university to conduct the surveys and interviews was secured. Approval was granted by the Liberty University Institutional Review

Board (IRB) to conduct the qualitative research utilizing adults and minors for surveys and interviews (see Appendix A). All supporting documents were approved including the gatekeeper of FBC where the research was conducted (see Appendix B). The completed surveys provided demographics for each member including age range, gender, ethnicity, and membership at FBC. Demographics for the interviews were limited to age range and membership role in specified dance team and/or mime group.

Recruitment

Following a successful approval process, participants were recruited through email, phone call, church bulletin announcements and opportunities after worship service with the researcher over four weeks. Liturgical dance and mime ministry leaders received a packet of letters and consent forms requesting volunteers for the audio-recorded interviews with the researcher following the two-month survey period. The leaders distributed the information to interested members and parents of minors. Leaders and ministry members interested in participating in the interviews returned the signed forms to the researcher within two weeks. Minors, not younger than thirteen, acquired parental consent prior to volunteering. Interview appointments were set based on the availability of each participant. No more than eight interviews were conducted over a two-week period. Interviews ranged from six minutes to fourteen minutes; although, each interviewee was allotted thirty minutes. Transcribed recordings were given pseudonyms and saved on a password locked computer for three years. Only the researcher has knowledge of the interviewee's identities.

Interested survey participants were given consent letters following worship services over a month period. Forms were provided for information only; signatures were not acquired in keeping with the anonymity of the research. All survey participants had to be eighteen years of

age or older. Surveys contained demographic information regarding age group, ethnic group, and years of membership at the site. The Survey Monkey link was made available through mass email, church bulletin, and the church website. Participants were encouraged to complete the online survey following the designated worship services listed in the bulletin, email and the church website. Paper surveys were also available for distribution and collection in a marked box following the designated worship services integrating either liturgical dance or mime over a two-month period.

Survey Instrument

This research included a survey that was available through the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey, with a paper option (see Appendix C). The researcher acquired a yearlong membership to Survey Monkey in order to form an open-ended survey instrument that included demographic information and open-ended questions. The purpose of this survey instrument was to collect information and perceptions from the members of FBC on the integration of liturgical dance and gospel mime within the worship service. According to Creswell, "The more open-ended the questioning, the better…"[167] Generational responses pertaining specific to attire, music choice, choreography and the overall impact on the worship experience, was gained and evaluated. Paper surveys were provided as an alternative format. Responses from paper surveys were transcribed verbatim to the online survey service. All paper surveys were stored in a locked file cabinet following transcription.

Interview Questions

The researcher conducted "face-to-face interviews with participants. These interviews involve unstructured open-ended questions specifically designed to elicit views and opinions of

[167] Creswell, 26.

participants."[168] Interviews were scheduled within two weeks following the final Sunday of conducting the surveys. Six of the eight interviews were conducted face-to-face in a private, windowless room at the research site on three weekdays between 5:00 p.m.– 6:30 p.m. One interview was conducted on a Sunday following worship service at 1:30 pm in a private office and the final interview was conducted over the phone while the interviewee was out of town. Each interview was semi-structured, described by H. Russell Bernard as interviews that "follow a general script and cover a list of topics, but are also open ended."[169] Interviews of dance and mime participants were guided by the following set of questions:

1. What age group do you belong to?

____ 13-17 ____ 31-45 ___ 56-65
____ 18-30 ____ 46-55

2. Which dance or mime ministry do you belong to?

____ Joyful Expressions ____ ACTS Mime Ministry

____ Exalted Praise Dance Team

3. How long have you been praise dancing and/or miming?

4. Do you have formal dance training, or Have you attended any mime (or praise dance) workshops?

5. Why did you consider joining the praise dance or mime ministry?

6. What has being a member of the praise dance team or mime ministry meant to you?

7. What are rehearsals like when preparing to praise dance or mime at church?

8. When you praise dance or mime in church, what emotions or feelings do you have?

9. Do you believe that your praise dancing or miming is a gift from God to be used in worship?

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[168] Ibid., 214.

[169] H. Russell Bernard, *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 2000), 190.

10. How have your leaders been helpful in preparing you to praise dance or mime?

11. What is your favorite praise dance or mime that you have presented at church? Why is that one particularly special for you?

12. Is there any other information you would like to add today?

The first three questions served as icebreakers and helped to identify the context of answers to follow. Each question that followed provided the interviewee with an opportunity to openly share their perceptions of their participation. Dance and mime ministry leaders were among those interviewed. The following questions guided the ministry leader interviews:

1. Which ministry do you lead?

   ____ Exalted Praise Dance Team ____ Joyful Angels Praise Dance Team

   ____ Joyful Expressions Praise Dance Team ____ ACTS Mime Ministry

2. What is your age group?

   ____ 18 – 35 _____ 36 – 50 ____ 51 - 65

3. How long have you worked in this capacity?

4. Do you have any formal training in dance or mime? If so, please provide details.

5. What would you say is your primary goal as a leader of the Praise/Mime Ministry?

6. When preparing for a Sunday worship experience, how long is the preparation process?

7. What factors do you consider when determining the following elements: music choice, choreography/gestures, facial expression, and attire?

8. Are there any concerns when preparing to dance or mime in worship?

9. Are there steps you take to inspire the dance/mime members to approach what they do as ministry in the worship experience?

10. What feedback have you received from FBC members concerning your dance/mime?

11. Is there anything you would like to share about the praise dance or mime ministry at

FBC that may not have been asked in this interview?

Questions one through three provided information needed to establish a framework for the following interview questions. The ministry leaders and participants were provided with "broad and general questions so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons."[170]

Each interview was recorded through a voice recording device on the researcher's laptop. The recordings have been saved to a password locked laptop. All interviews were transcribed verbatim to an electronic file, given pseudonyms to protect the identity of the interviewees, and stored on a laptop secured by a password.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis was based on the two forms of data collection: surveys and interviews. The surveys were analyzed via the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey. Data was analyzed through graphs and charts developed through Survey Monkey. The open-ended responses were interpreted through inductive data analysis. According to Creswell, "this inductive process illustrates working back and forth between the themes and the database" allowing this researcher to establish themes and coding.[171] The analysis process was "a continual reflection about the data" during and following the data collection.[172]

[170] Creswell, 26.

[171] Ibid., 164.

[172] Ibid., 171.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

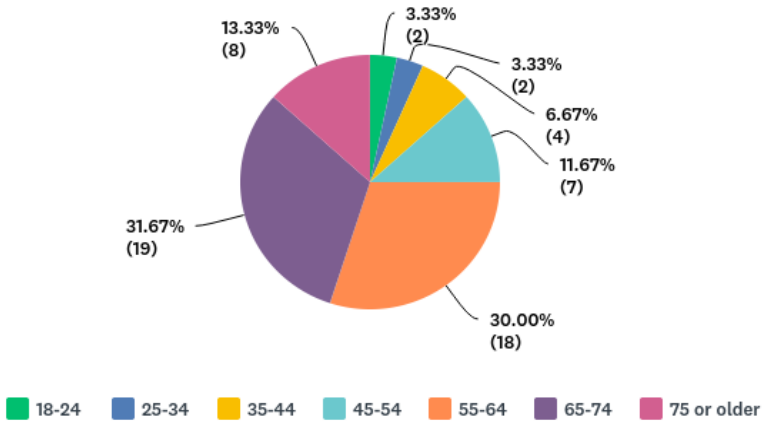
In this chapter, the data collected from interviews and surveys will be analyzed to test the hypotheses that (a) the qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated are music choice, choreography and spiritual engagement; (b) the qualities of liturgical dance and mime that are appreciated most will differ according to age. The findings of this qualitative study express that all generations find qualities of choreographed body movement that benefit worship. In addition, the perceptions of ministry leaders and participants from interviews analyzed through coding and themes from transcribed audio-recordings are presented. The semi-structured interviews focused on the origin, preparation and presentation of liturgical dance and mime expressions utilized in the assembly of worshipers. This chapter reports the findings of completed surveys and participant interviews. The data collections and analysis will be discussed.

Findings and Analysis of Survey

An open-ended survey was conducted to discover the qualities that generations appreciated most in liturgical dance and mime. Sixty members of FBC participated in this survey following worship services that integrated liturgical dance or gospel mime. Each participant was asked to respond to worship services that included one of each choreographed movement experience. Desiring to reach beyond generational preferences, this survey requested participants to designate their age group (see Figure 1 for a breakdown of the participants by age group). In particular, representation of generations including; Gen Z: Born 1996 or later, Millennials: Born 1977-1995, Generation X: Born 1965-1976, Baby Boomers: Born 1946-1964, and Traditionalists or Silent Generation: Born 1945 and before was achieved.[173]

[173] "Info About All of the Generations: 10 FAQs On Generations," *The Center for Generational Kinetics,* (2016) http://genhq.com/faq-info-about-generations/

Figure 1: Survey Participants by age group

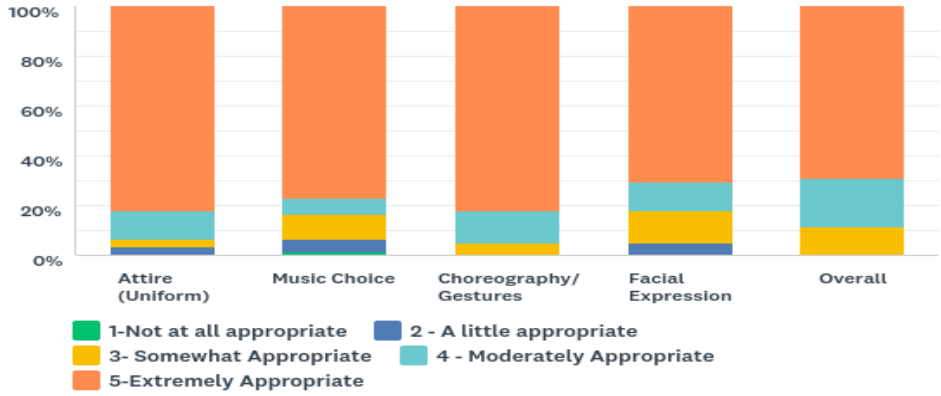


Less than 25 percent generational members were of the four youngest age groups. More than 61 percent of respondents were between fifty-five and seventy-four, the Baby Boomer generation.

RQ1: What are the qualities of liturgical dance and mime most appreciated by congregation members in the traditional African American Baptist Church? This survey offered participants a rating scale to determine what elements of the dance or mime were appropriate as a worship expression. Open-ended questions provided greater insight to the Likert-type scale measuring perception on a scale of one (not at all appropriate) to five (extremely appropriate).[174] Elements in these questions included; attire (uniform), music choice, choreography/gestures, facial expression and overall presentation (see Figure 2).

[174] Shane P. Desselle, PhD. "Construction, Implementation, and Analysis of Summated Rating Attitude Scales" *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Eduation* 69, no. 5, (December 9, 2005), 3. Desselle states, "Likert Scale was developed by Rensis Likert (1932). Attitude scales of this sort typically are comprised of a set of statements or "items" that scale a respondent's level of agreement, favorability, or other similar perception."

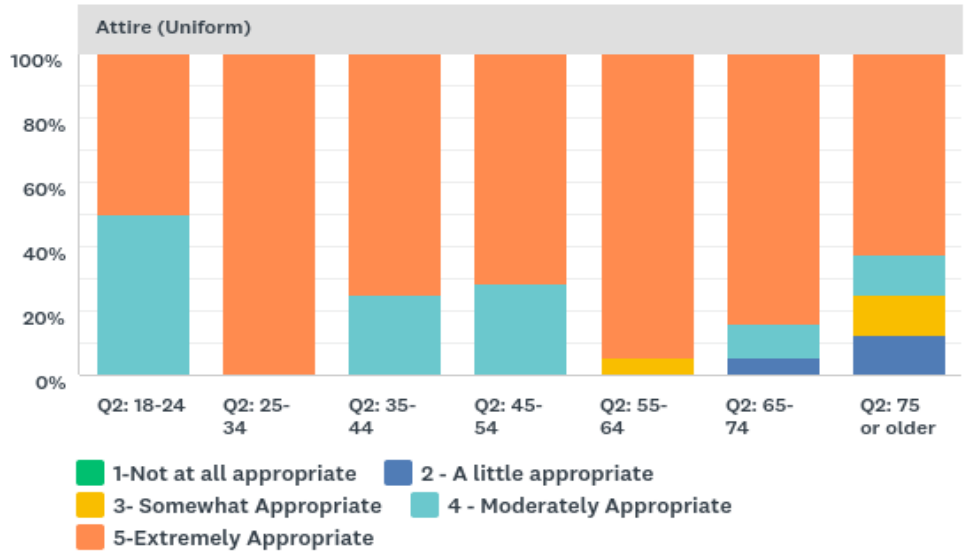
Figure 2: Appropriateness ratings of specified elements.



These results indicate a small percentage perceived attire; music choice and facial expressions were somewhat appropriate. In addition, one percent considered the musical choice as inappropriate. Eighty percent perceived that attire and choreography were extremely appropriate likewise 78 percent rated music choice as extremely appropriate. Facial expression and overall presentation averaged an extremely appropriate rating of 70 percent.

RQ2: In what ways do the most appreciated qualities of liturgical dance and mime differ within the traditional African American Baptist Church according to age? Generational responses to the appropriateness of attire for liturgical dance and mime are illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Attire (uniform) ratings according to age groups.

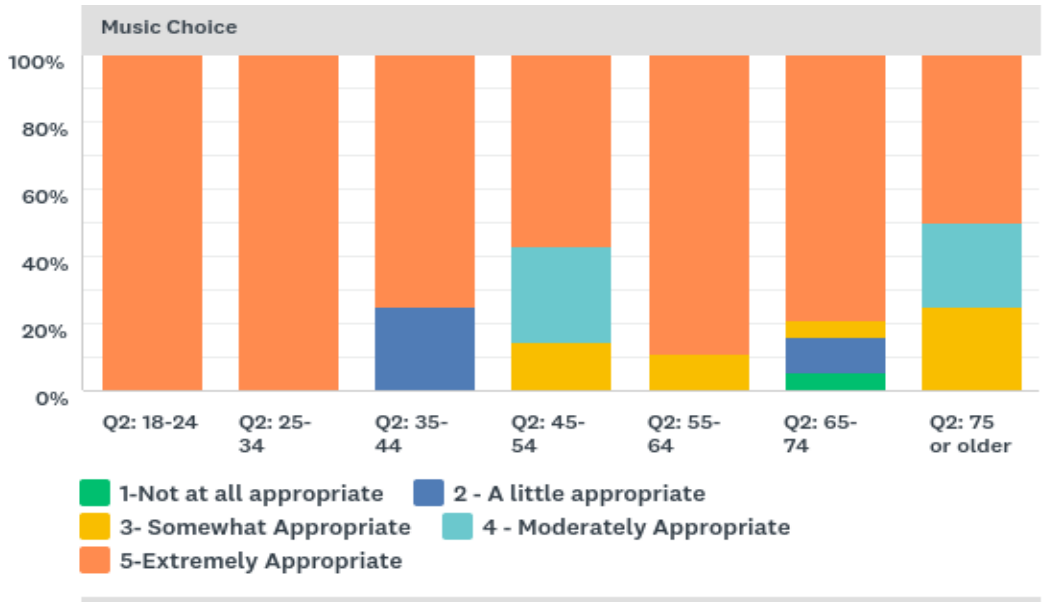


The appropriateness of attire either prompted moderate to extremely appropriate responses of those eighteen to fifty-four. One individual in the fifty-five to sixty-four age group responded that the attire was somewhat appropriate. The most diverse responses occurred in those sixty-five and older; although, at least 50 percent or more find the attire to be moderately or extremely appropriate, 12 percent or less of individuals over sixty-five found attire to be less than appropriate. One hundred percent of those surveyed in the twenty-five to thirty-four age range rated attire as extremely appropriate. Additionally, more than 95 percent of those fifty-five to sixty-four agreed that the apparel of those involved in liturgical dance and mime was acceptably appropriate.

Generational responses concerning music choice offer additional insight (see Figure 4). Although music choice of dance and mime ministries is seen as extremely appropriate by Millennials and Generation Z, 20 percent of Generation X and 18 percent of older Baby Boomers (sixty-five to seventy-four) consider the music choice to be a little to somewhat appropriate.

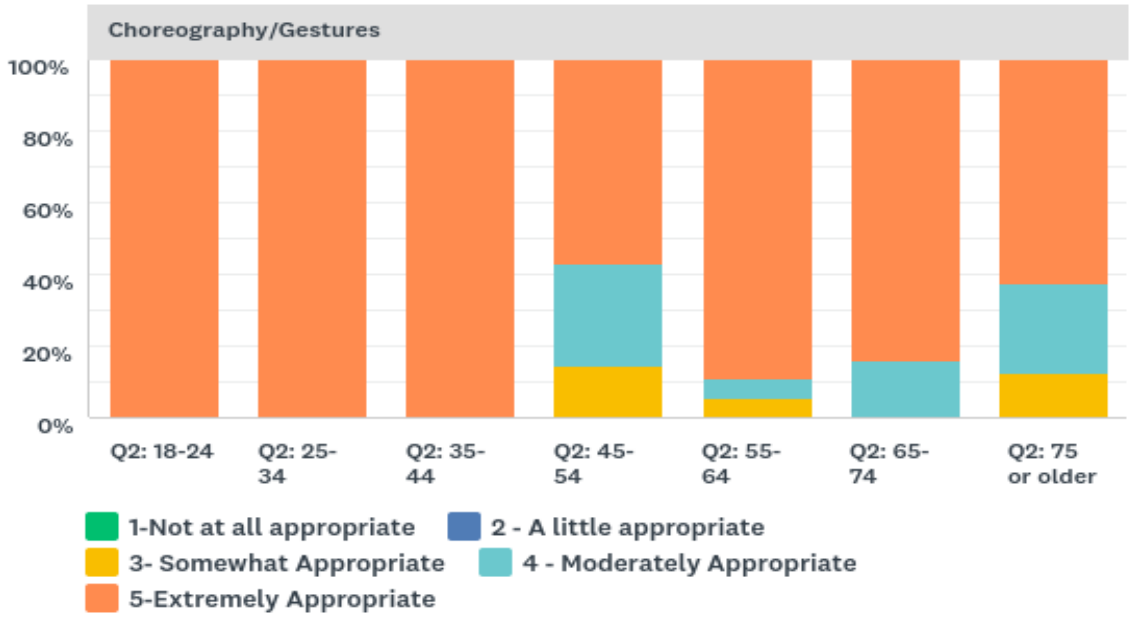
Fifty percent of the Silent Generation perceived the music choice to be somewhat to moderately appropriate.

Figure 4: Music Choice ratings according to age groups.



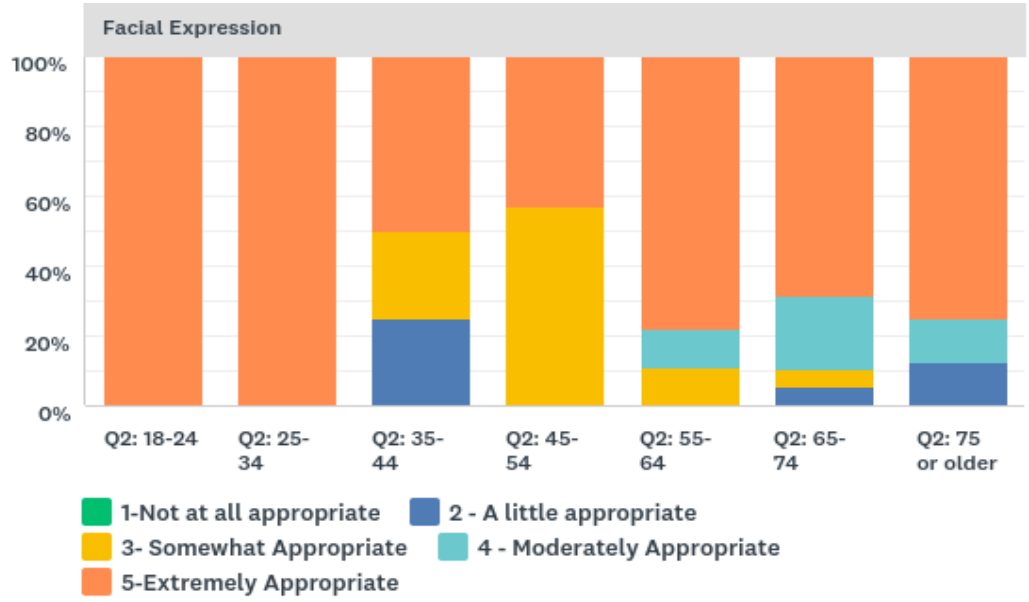
Choreography/gestures seem to spur similar perceptions of appropriateness by age group (see Figure 5). The younger three age groups marked the choreography and gestures of dance and mime in worship as 100 percent extremely appropriate. Slightly more than 10 percent of forty-five to fifty-four-year-old members, as well as, seventy-five and older members considered the choreography and gestures of the dancers and mimes to be somewhat appropriate. Five percent of fifty-five to sixty-four-year-old members agreed that the choreography is somewhat appropriate as well as another five percent rated choreography as moderately appropriate. Additional age groups perceiving the choreography and gestures to be moderately appropriate included more than 20 percent of those forty-five to sixty-four-year-old congregants, as well as, seventy-five or older congregants. More than 50 percent of each age group found the choreography and gestures of the dancers and mimes to be extremely appropriate.

Figure 5: Choreography/Gestures ratings according to age groups.



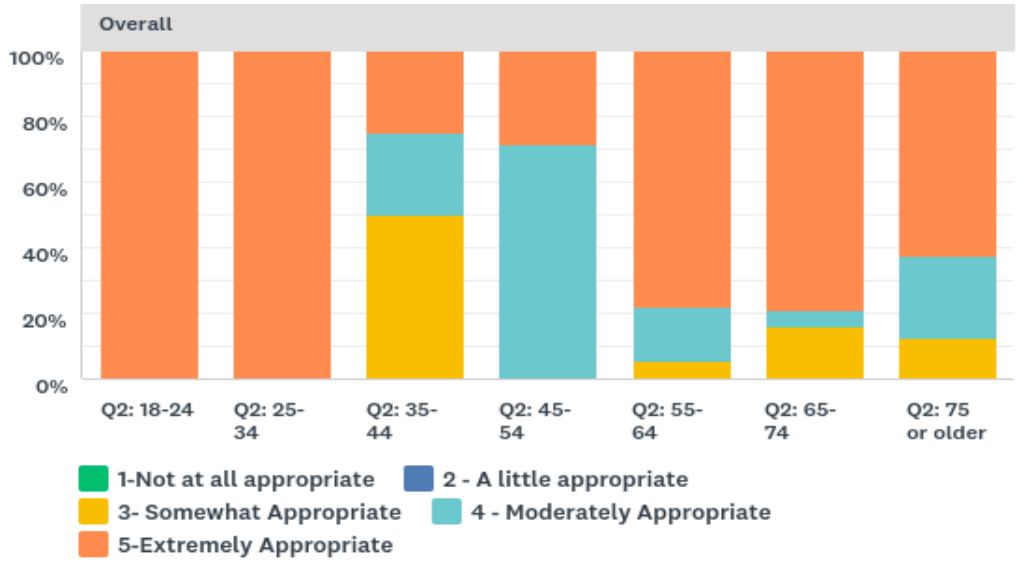
The survey asked participants to evaluate the appropriateness of facial expressions for the liturgical dancers and mimes they observed (see Figure 6). All of the survey participants eighteen to thirty-four years of age found the facial expressions to be extremely appropriate. Over 50 percent of forty-five to fifty-four-year-olds rated facial expressions as moderately appropriate as did 30 percent of congregants thirty-five to forty-four years of age as did 10 percent and five percent of younger and older Baby Boomers, respectively. Over 20 percent of persons age thirty-five to forty-five rated facial expressions to be a little appropriate as did 10 percent of the eldest participants. One sixty-five to seventy-four-year-old person rated the facial expressions as not appropriate at all.

Figure 6: Facial Expression ratings according to age group.



FBC survey participants were asked to consider all elements of liturgical dance and mime (i.e. attire, music choice, choreography/gestures, and facial expressions) to rate the overall appropriateness in worship (see Figure 7). Individual open-ended responses to dance and mime as worship expressions are offered later in this section to understand the context of this category.

Figure 7: Ratings of Overall Appropriateness of liturgical dance and mime by age group



One hundred percent of the age groups spanning eighteen to thirty-four-year-olds considered the choreographed expressions as extremely appropriate. Fifty percent of thirty-five to forty-four-year-old participants marked the choreographed presentations as somewhat appropriate, as did 15 percent or less of those fifty-five-years of age and older. Over 70 percent of persons forty-five to fifty-four years of age marked liturgical dance and mime as moderately appropriate with the remaining 30 percent marking the presentations as extremely appropriate. Also perceiving dance and mime presentations as moderately appropriate were 20 percent of individuals thirty-five to forty-four years of age and seventy-five years of age and older. Close to 80 percent of Baby Boomers (fifty-five to seventy-four) perceived that liturgical dance and mime are extremely appropriate while 60 percent of the Silent Generation (seventy-five and older) agreed with this perception.

Upon further analysis of the open-ended responses of ratings three or below for attire choice of the Joyful Expressions (teenage females), the dance was accompanied by an upbeat contemporary gospel song with instrumentation and rhythms reminiscent of secular music. The teenage females wore uniform graphic lavender t-shirts and black yoga-style pants. Additional responses, from the Baby Boomer Generation and older, focused on the typical attire of dancers usually consisting of flowing skirts and drape-style overlays or tunics. This attire is deemed as more appropriate for praise dancing in worship.

Open-ended responses to the importance of music choice for the presentations provided various insights according to age groups. One sixty-five to seventy-four-year-old wrote, "Music choices can make you focus more on worshipping God and less on yourself, others or your surroundings."[175] Similarly, another expressed that "the choice of music is key to the message

[175] All survey responses were anonymous; the names of those surveyed are withheld by mutual agreement.

being conveyed through mime or dance. It should be of secular or spiritual rhyme that stirs emotions in audience." An individual in the eighteen to twenty-four age group explained how music choice influences the presentations, "Music is life. If someone ministers to a song that you know you will be a little more excited and still receive the message. If someone ministers to a song that you do not know it makes you pay attention more to the movements & lyrics of the song because at the end of the day, by watching someone minister, you are supposed to receive some type of message or lesson from that experience." A member over 75 years of age wrote, "Music selection is very important to the story being told on Sunday." Included in these supportive responses are FBC members who respond differently to dance and mime in the worship service.

One member admitted to not paying attention to liturgical dance citing, "I consider it unimportant to the worship service. Realizing the service is for the entire congregation, I accept its inclusion." Responses from members concerning choreography included their concerns, "if it is just street dancing, I tend to tune it out and become disinterested," said a thirty-five to forty-four-year-old. Another in the same age range stated, "Choreography and gestures determine if the performance was spiritually led or a gap filler for a program." On the effects of choreography, a worshiper in the age group of forty-five to fifty-four stated, "…if a person doesn't know what the message is all about, the gestures can help."

Facial expressions were often referred to by individuals of each age group as working together with the choreography. Worshipers across the age groups mentioned distractions that occur from time to time, such as: gum chewing, blank expressions or looking disinterested. Facial expressions while miming is seen as being very important to "conveying the feelings" of the song to the congregation. Mentioned in two responses was the use of white paint on the faces of mimes that draw attention to the expressions on the faces. One Baby Boomer noted that, "Facial

expressions show that the dancer or mime is centered and engaged in the ministry that they are presenting. It is less of a performance when the words of the music are also felt in the spirit of the dancer or mime."

To further understand if congregants view dance and/or mime as expressions of worship, the survey asked if these presentations were entertainment or viewed as worship. First, of those surveyed, fifty of the sixty surveys did not categorize liturgical dance and mime as entertainment. Rather, those participating in the research realized the importance of this activity as an act of worship in the service. Three of the ten who stated that dance and mime are both entertainment and worship because it is engaging worshipers. Six members say it is entertainment for one of two reasons, either the presenter of the dance or mime does not express the song, or the choreography is not reflective of the song's meaning. An individual person in the thirty-five to forty-four age group generalized that "dance is only seen as entertainment at FBC." Another in this age group shared this claim, "the performers seem selected based on preset schedules instead of talent needed to support the Word." Two members stated that the worship expression they experienced "felt like entertainment," but "when done right it is worship."

In response to whether dance and mime are worship expressions, fifty-seven participants (95%) said, "Yes," it is worship. A Baby Boomer offers this insight, "I do view dance/mime presentations as worship, if this is done with your whole heart and mind." As believers one must, "give Jesus all that you have in lifting Him up with your gifts and talents [in] worship expression." Another Baby Boomer answered, "Worship is really about one's relationship with God. The various mediums of expression are not really worship but an expression of praise and thanksgiving during the worship assembly."

Interview Results and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with dance and mime ministry leaders and members. These interviews occurred after the surveys of volunteer church members were completed. Each interview helped to gain insight to the origin of each dance and mime that is presented at FBC. Responses to interview questions regarding training, preparation, intent of presentations, and views of worship through movement are analyzed in this section.

Training

According to the interviews with persons in leadership roles for the three dance teams and the mime ministry, none have had formal dance or mime training. However, each leader had attended workshops in their specified creative art. The ACTS Mime Ministry leader has also conducted mime workshops at FBC and beyond. He stated, "I don't have formal training in mime ministry, but I learned much of what I know from the leader at the time I joined twelve years ago."[176] A former leader of ACTS was introduced to gospel mime while worshiping at another church over thirteen years ago. He and members of his family introduced mime through a Bible Study presentation at FBC. He shared, "The only training I have is through a workshop I attended in another state. Then we [mime ministry] ended up teaching a few workshops at our church."

In the last five years, the coordinator for all dance ministries at FBC has made attendance to praise/liturgical dance workshops mandatory. She stated, "When I took on leadership, I made it mandatory that the girls go [to dance workshops], so that they could understand what their requirements and restrictions were. They had this thing where they wanted to wear short sleeves

[176] All interviews were confidential; the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.

and short dresses. They needed to understand that there is to be no unnecessary exposure of skin and understand the meanings of the colors [that they wear] according to the Bible."

Leaders of each entity expressed the importance of spiritual leadership as a necessity for properly trained members for sharing dance and mime in worship. When responding to the question: what would you say is your primary goal as leader of the ministry?, the mime ministry leader stated, "My primary goal of the mime ministry is to ensure that [the young men and women] understand the songs, understand their role in worship and really bring the songs to life through their actions." The choreographer for the Joyful Expressions and Joyful Angels primary goal is "to be able to show the girls that if you want to praise the Lord, you can praise Him, not with just a song or with just instruments, but with your whole body with movement to music, which I think of as dance." One of the spiritual leaders and coordinator for the dance ministries aims to provide "the girls with a solid foundation in understanding who Christ is, and understanding how David danced before the Lord. I give them the Biblical meaning and references of dance."

Preparation

On most occasions the ministries rehearse weekly. Leaders of mime and dance were asked what they consider when choosing music, attire, and choreography. The dancers and mime participant also discussed how rehearsals prepare them for worship. ACTS mime ministry leader is "always listening to worship songs. I consider tempos of the music, due to the traditional nature of our worship, and the style of music, but most importantly, what does God want? I spend time in personal prayer and meditation selecting the music and gestures." One of the dance leaders shared, "Sometimes when I listen to a piece, I actually visualize a dance or a figure moving, then I know it's a song I want to do." Another leader said, "I go into teacher mode, and I

write down all of the words and then research sign language. I might come up with a story to tell through the song." Each leader made reference to praying and seeking God for movements and gestures that will help to "bring the song to life."

Dance leaders answered questions regarding attire choice because it changes regularly based on the liturgical season. Each leader emphasized the importance of each female participant being covered. One leader expressed, "our dance movements emphasize our words and the spirit of the music, nothing should distract from that." Another leader detailed the attire choice, "You have the overlays (over the shoulder or around the waist) as a top layer skirt. We discuss the colors according to the Bible. For instance, we have reds for the blood, purple for royalty, white for purity, etc. We also have finger scarves." For the dancers, the overlays and/or sarongs are worn over the solid white or black body suit and long skirt.

Members of the Exalted Praise Dance Team and Joyful Expressions were asked to describe rehearsals. One of the members of the Women's praise dance team, Exalted Praise, responded, "Everybody is willing to work with me, since I am one of the older ones. I have gained confidence, because sometimes when we minister I get a little nervous. I'm reminded that I am praising the Lord, it doesn't matter. You look great in His eyes, if your heart is right." A member of Joyful Expressions feels that rehearsals are "a little chaotic. It's not really organized but we get everything done. The leaders help calm me down and they help me remember the dance by going over the dance several times, pep talks, etc." Another Joyful Expressions member explained, "[rehearsals] are very different. They are not always the same. Sometimes we'll have rehearsals that are like, we'll practice a few minutes and we'll talk about things in our lives. And sometimes it's like, strict and then we'll go home. Well, it's not so strict, it's really fun and we are getting stuff done."

Worship Through Movement

Face-to-face interviews also included personal expressions on what dancing or miming is perceived to be in worship. One teenage dancer expressed, "I love the gift of dance. Not everybody can do it." One dancer in her fifties stated, "We have to understand that worship encompasses more than just singing a song, clapping our hands, and reading Scripture; it is physically moving. It is our response to God moving throughout the congregation." Another dancer shared, "I'm a part of the dance team but it's like I'm dancing for Him by myself. It's my time to be intimate with God." A longtime mime ministry member expressed his feelings about the art, "It truly is a creative expression. I think any worship expression can be creative. I fully submit to that moment of being in worship and being vulnerable to the Holy Spirit. Letting it take over your spirit and your body. Just like when people are speaking in tongues, you have to totally submit yourself [to God]."

Each ministry leader voiced what concerns they have faced preparing mime and dance for a traditional congregation with multiple generations. Integrating liturgical dance in worship has been present at FBC for about twenty years and mime was regularly implemented approximately ten years ago. Challenges also include preparing for 8:00 a.m. as well as 11:00 a.m. worship services with differing congregational behaviors. Leaders from mime and dance mentioned selecting music appropriate for each service as a concern. The tempos must be considered because worshipers at the earlier service seem to be slow to respond. While the mime ministry leader appreciates "FBC for being open-minded to the inclusion of mime," the dance leaders are concerned about being seen as entertainment. One dance leader stated, "I am concerned that members will look at it as entertainment and not in a spiritual or worshipful way." The mime ministry leader addressed a question regarding the type of feedback he had received from FBC

members. He responded, “It’s been great feedback! I’ve had good constructive criticism, mostly about song choices as I have tried to understand where the congregation is. For the most part, FBC has accepted the whole creative expression piece. It’s been outstanding.”

Summary

The results from both the survey and interviews contribute to the research of perceptions from worshipers and participants. Worshipers’ perspective provided a picture of what elements were found to be most appropriate in dance and mime. The data collected also included responses from worshipers showing differences in perception by age group. FBC members who participated in the survey responded to open-ended questions about music choice, attire, choreography and gestures, and facial expressions. Some views were supported by biblical truths while others were based on personal preference.

Examining the responses of ministry leaders and members on training, preparation, intent of presentations, and views of movement in worship brings to light a multitude of sensitivities. Ministry leaders’ bear much of the burden when training and preparing themselves to train and prepare those they lead. Attention is given to biblical contexts of music, gestures, choreography, and even dance attire to prepare expressions that will glorify God and benefit the worship atmosphere. Chapter five will provide further acknowledgement of responses that imply a need for improving the experience for the church as a whole. Although the members of FBC seem to appreciate the dance and mime expressions in worship, responses imply that a better understanding of worship is necessary.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will summarize each study, purpose, and procedure pertaining to this studies' development of liturgical dance and mime. Findings from the research develop a defense for and encouragement to cultivate and implement enhancement in worship gathering by including visual aspects of worship pointing those participating and viewing body movement in worship to the Creator, Redeemer , and Lord of all humanity. Additional feedback from interviews and surveys provide insight to the spiritual engagement of worshipers and participants as they seek to honor God through liturgical dance and mime. Limitations encountered in this study are described in this chapter. Finally, recommendations for future studies to expand the range of this research are offered.

Summary of Findings and Prior Research

Researching the perceptions of worshipers in the integration of liturgical dance and gospel mime at a multigenerational African American Baptist church was the primary purpose of this study. This qualitative study utilized historical and biblical contexts to provide a framework for the use of body movement in a multigenerational worship. Inclusion of worshiper responses through an anonymous open-ended survey with a Likert-type scale offered an analysis of attitudes across age groups. Ministry leaders and members of the liturgical dance and mime ministries at FBC were interviewed to understand the perspective of those involved in the ministries.

Biblical references to dance offer the foundation for including movement in worship. In the Old Testament, Miriam and the other women took their timbrels and danced to the Lord exhibiting their exaltation to the Lord for delivering the Israelites from Pharaoh and his chariots.[177]

[177] Exodus 15: 20

David danced enthusiastically "as the ark of the Lord came into the City" and his wife, Michal, did not understand his worship.[178] There are many in modern settings and historically who are skeptical when spontaneous or choreographed dance is rendered in worship. The findings from worshipers at FBC show a remnant of this skepticism; however, perceptions of most members across the generations observed liturgical/praise dance and mime as beneficial to worship.

Albert Rouet acknowledges the tensions that have existed between liturgy and the arts, yet expounds on the idea that "faith asks dance to translate into art those spaces where our words cannot reach, but where the human spirit moves forward and where Christ himself ventured ahead of us."[179] Interpreting the words of sacred music through movement emphasizes the meaning of the lyrics to the participant and the worshiper. This study found that worshipers connect to the meaning of the song on a deeper level when it is acted out through mime or danced to through liturgical dance.

This study explored the responses of FBC worshipers by generations. In multigenerational churches, it is especially important for generations to worship and share in worship as one. Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross view the community of faith as a "place where generational differences are to be transcended rather than reinforced."[180] The results indicated that liturgical dance and mime have been beneficial to the multigenerational worship experience. Allen and Ross distinguish worship that includes and engages the generations as intergenerational worship (IM). Further study by Robyn Burns-Marko likens IM to "a bite of a sandwich, one can taste the cheeseburger, and even upon reflection, identify the individual flavors, but the

[178] 2 Samuel 6: 14, 16

[179] Rouet, *Liturgy and the Arts*, 149.

[180] Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 155.

sum of the entire cheeseburger creates its own unique taste."[181] This study's findings support this idea; the flavor brought to worship through choreographed liturgical dance and mime engages each generation in the worship experience.

Historically, movement, such as dancing, clapping, and swaying were evident in early African American worship. Today, many churches of various ethnicities and denominations are utilizing dance, drama, and various other artistic expressions in the liturgy. Sandra Barnes' quantitative study found increased participation when African American churches intentionally provide youth and young adult programs which include "music and dance expressions germane to a diverse cultural base."[182] This research found that such creative expressions are attracting the participation of youth and young adults as well as adults at FBC.

This study showed that the FBC ministry leaders of liturgical dance and mime take great care in choosing music, attire, choreography, gestures, and facial expression. Additionally, a personal relationship with God is important to conveying the gospel message through the participant's beings. Carla De Sola expresses the power of dance as a visual language stating, "…dance makes an indelible impression upon the viewer. Communication is body-to-body with the distance between sanctuary to pew being traversed kinesthetically."[183] This communication translates as gratefulness and joy as a single mother danced to a song of praise to Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides, for meeting the needs of the family. It could also be translated in the acknowledgement of a young man's body to worship through the art of gospel mime, Jehovah Shammah, the God who is there, placing the world's struggles in His capable hands. It can be

[181] Burns-Marko, "Intergenerational Ministry," 11.

[182] Barnes, "Enter into His Gates," 173.

[183] De Sola, "…And the Word Became Dance," 154.

found in the healed praise dancer who knows Jehovah Rophe, the God whose power restores and cures. A mime may tell the story of Jehovah Shalom, the God who lifts burdens and gives peace in the midst of trials and tribulations. Body movement and gestures, shared from the heart, communicates the attributes of Jehovah Elohim, the Creator of all things, in a deep and meaningful way to the participant and the worshiper in the pew. The emphasis must be on God's presence and the redemptive message of Christ as our Savior through the work of the Holy Spirit for worship and praise to be lifted unto Him.

Limitations

In any research there are obvious limitations. Particularly, the study could possibly have four areas of considered limiting. First, could be considered limited in scope. The most unavoidable limitation was the number of volunteers who participated in the survey across the age groups. Of the sixty members who participated, 37 percent were under the age of fifty-five. The small number of young adults limited the feedback representing Millennials and Gen Xers. Generalizing responses from a small representation does not provide a true picture of perceptions by most persons in a specific age group. Another limitation was the lack of participants from

Second, the limited group of participants involved in the study. Specifically, certain liturgical dance and gospel mime teams at FBC, particularly from ACTS mime ministry and Joyful Angels' members were excluded requirements for participation in interviews. Third, obviously this research was exclusive to a specific denomination, ethnicity, and church for gaining statistical information. Ministry history and practice was gained from the liturgical dance and mime ministry of an African American Baptist church with a multicultural tradition. However, the limitation of FBC's ethnic diversity does not specify the assumed findings of ministries of differing historical, geographical or ethnic backgrounds.

Finally, the primary researcher of this study has been employed as the Associate Director of Music at the site for twenty-four years as of this study. As is the case in any effective ministry, personal relationships have been forged with many of those involved in the discovery of statistical information. Those involved in the surveys were gained anonymously. However, interviews were face-to-face. Every possible action was taken to reduce any potential bias in the interview process. Yet, it is impossible to determine how personal relationship, with the primary researcher, may have influenced interview responses.

Recommendations for Future Study

The primary recommendation for future study of integrating liturgical dance and gospel mime should be expanded to include multi-ethnic, as well as, mutigenerational churches. Studying the impact on worshipers in various church settings could be impactful to the vitality and engagement of worship throughout cultures and denominations. In addition, studying the challenges church's encounter while integrating artistic expressions in worship is recommended.

During the initial discussion of this thesis topic, the researcher desired to study the impact of various creative art expressions in worship including; spoken word, drama, and visual art as well as liturgical dance and gospel mime. Due to the broad scope of such a study, necessity compelled the concentration of the study to focus on liturgical dance and gospel mime, rarely studied, in worship. It is recommended that future studies investigate the benefits of integrating dramatic arts and visual arts in worship.

Implications for Practice

Although this study was limited to an African American Baptist church, there are implications for worshipers, student ministries, and worship planners of multigenerational churches of various denominations. Individual Christians, with artistic talents, are encouraged through this study to utilize their talents to the glory of the Lord. If the opportunity does not exist in a local church, this study provides theological, historical, and methodological foundation for introducing creative expressions to the local community of faith.

Student ministries of churches and colleges are encouraged, through this study, to introduce creative ministries to your constituents. As discussed in this study, forms of liturgical dance allow for spiritual expressions of faith and gives words to that which is inexpressible in words. Incorporating creative expressions can be a tool that will nurture faith and hope within those who have experienced deep hurt, sorrow, or pain. Liturgical dance, gospel mime, or other forms of artistic expression may be the outlet one can use to creatively empower where making music may not be present.

Worship planning for multiple generations can be challenging, but it is necessary if worship is to engage each heart in the presence of God. Although personal preference is not the basis for worship planning, FBC members overwhelmingly stated that praise/liturgical dance and gospel mime are equally acceptable in worship. The compelling responses through the surveys show engagement, renewal, and vitality in worship across the generations. Creative Expressions in worship can benefit worship and should be considered especially in multigenerational settings. Based on the spiritual leadership of liturgical dance and mime ministries at FBC, engaging worshipers is a response to the communication of personal faith from the liturgical dance and mime

participant. Liturgical dance and mime ministry leaders emphasize the spiritual growth of each participant through intentional training, workshops, and Bible study.

Finally, this study extensively investigated gospel mime as a form of worship. Through body movement, gestures, and facial expressions the truths of God through song are dramatized. Through the findings of this study, worship planners are encouraged to not dismiss the impact this form of expression can have. This researcher suggests integrating it into a special service, a play, or a youth event. Let God be praised in the dance.

Summary

This research may have limitations, but it is a step to explore the use of artistic expressions in Christian worship. God has gifted His creation with special skills, talents, and abilities to "employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."[184] As members of the body of Christ, we are to share these gifts, whatever they are, to the glory of God. They are not performances but poured out offerings to the Lord.

The writings of African American Christian worship development acknowledge the inherent use of body movement in worship. As Africans began to experience God through the exposure to Christianity in the New World, the rituals of their abandoned beliefs became expressions to the character of who God was in their lives. Slavery did not deter the African's desire to worship God with fervor and vitality. This context is still true today with African Americans who worship to "separate from an oppressive society, provide opportunities for ecstatic modes of ritual that help free one's thoughts and revitalize the hope inherent in the gospel."[185] This world is full of trouble, yet worship can be that which lifts congregants from daily woes renewing the

[184] 1 Peter 4:10

[185] Costen, *African American Christian Worship*, 67.

Spirit with a perspective of hope in the Lord. Such godly hope is present in the feet of a young child who dances to songs of praise to God, a woman who communicates her abandonment to the Lord through the dance, and a young adult who is able to freely express his or her love for God through the expression of gospel mime.

Biblical worship for all denominations, generations, genders, and ethnicities begins with the Word of God; which reveals His truths. With God as the audience in worship, all elements of worship must be inspired by Him. Allen Ross states, "For worship to be as glorious as it should be, for it to lift people out of their mundane cares and fill them with adoration and praise, for it to be the life-changing and life-defining experience it was designed to be, it must be inspired by a vision so great and so glorious that what we call worship will be transformed from a routine gathering into a transcendent meeting with the living God."[186] In conclusion, liturgy is the work of God's people; there is room to include the artistic gifts and talents God has given to His people.

[186] Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2006), 39.

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Appendix A:

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 24, 2019

Lydia Toliver Richards
IRB Approval 3656.042419: Multigenerational Worship: Liturgical Dance and Mime within a Traditional African-American Baptist Church

Dear Lydia Toliver Richards,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

> 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)
>
> Your study involves surveying or interviewing minors, or it involves observing the public behavior of minors, and you will participate in the activities being observed.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

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

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Appendix B:

January 16, 2019

Dear Lydia T. Richards,

After careful review of your research proposal entitled "Multigenerational Worship: Liturgical Dance and Mime within a Traditional African-American Baptist Church," I have decided to grant you permission to access our membership and invite them to participate in your study conducted at First Baptist Church, 418 East Bute Street, Norfolk, VA 23510.

☒ The requested data WILL NOT BE STRIPPED of identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.

☒ We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

Appendix C:

Survey Questionnaire
(Available through SurveyMonkey)

Date _____

Demographic Questions

Please mark an [X] to indicate your age group:

_____ 18 – 24
_____ 25 – 34
_____ 35 – 44
_____ 45 – 54
_____ 55 – 64
_____ 65 – 74
_____ 75 or older

Please mark an [X] to indicate your gender.

_____ Male
_____ Female

Please mark an [X] that best describes your Ethnic Origin.

____ White
____ Hispanic or Latino
____ Black or African American
____ Native American or American Indian
____ Asian/Pacific Islander
____ Other

Are you a FBC member? _____
If so, please indicate the approximate number of years you've been a member at First Baptist Church?
_____ 1 – 10 years

_____ 11 – 19 years

_____ 20 – 29 years

_____ 30 years or more

Research Questions

Place an 'X' next to the creative expression you observed in today's worship service:

____ Praise Dance/Liturgical Dance

____ Gospel Mime

Please mark one number that best describes how would you rate today's praise dance or gospel mime using the following categories: (1 is not appropriate, 3 somewhat appropriate and 5 is very appropriate)

Attire (uniform) 1 2 3 4 5

Music Choice 1 2 3 4 5

Choreography/Gestures 1 2 3 4 5

Facial Expression 1 2 3 4 5

Overall 1 2 3 4 5

In the following questions, please respond by using the scale 1 to 5 in which 1 is not important at all, 3 is somewhat important, and 5 is very important. Please circle the appropriate number.

How important is attire choice to you in praise dance or gospel mime presentations during the worship service?

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain how attire choice influences you in the overall presentation

How important is music choice to you in liturgical dance/praise team presentations during the worship service?

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain how music choice influences you and/or the church in the overall presentation.

How important is the choreography/gestures to you in today's praise dance or mime ministry presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain how choreography/gestures affect you in the overall presentation.

How important were the facial expressions to you in today's praise dance or mime ministry presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

Please explain how facial expressions affect you in the overall presentation.

Please provide feedback to the following questions (reminder: please consider today's presentation when responding).

Do you view today's dance/mime presentation as entertainment? If so, why?

Do you view today's dance/mime presentation as worship? If so, why?

Do you prefer praise dance or mime ministries? Please explain in the space below.

Are you more, or less likely, to attend church service if you know there would be a praise dance or mime ministry presentation? Why or why not?