

SHARED-TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE AND THE ROLE OF THE MINISTER OF MUSIC:
A CASE STUDY OF MOTHER EMANUEL AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

By Wayne M. Singleton

A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements of the Degree
Doctor of Worship Studies

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

May 2020

APPROVED BY:

Paul Rumrill, D.M.A., Committee Chair

Hanna Byrd, D.W.S., Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The ministry of the minister of music is essential when the local church has experienced a shared-traumatic event. Since many churches have never experienced a shared-traumatic event, there is little research to aid worship leaders in leading their congregation through loss and grief. There is a need to study the significant role of the minister of music when confronted with a life-changing event that has affected the local church ministry. Mother Emanuel AME Church, located in Charleston, SC, experienced a tragic event that significantly influenced the worship leader's role in leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic event. This phenomenological study seeks to increase the awareness of the non-musical role of the worship leader, leading pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning. The authentic experience in hymnody singing is a valuable part of the corporate worship experience. The shared-traumatic realities of many congregants often generate a desire for empathy and healing.

Acknowledgments

I am thankful to God for allowing me to serve in the ministry of music for His Glory. I am thankful for the opportunity to share my story as minister of music of Mother Emanuel AME Church while leading the church through such a traumatic experience.

I am grateful for my family, who supported me through this journey. I am truly blessed with a beautiful wife, Myra, who encouraged me through every step of my journey. Thank you for your love and support.

I am grateful for the faculty of Liberty University. I am especially to Dr. Paul Rumrill and Dr. Hanna Byrd, who guided and directed me throughout the project. It was through their support that allowed me to fully develop this thesis.

Lastly, I am thankful to the members of Mother Emanuel AME Church, who supported my research by participating in the survey and providing encouraging words. I am thankful for Rev. Eric S.C. Manning for his leadership and granting me permission to share the story of the tragedy of June 17, 2015.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Worship Leader

The worship leader plays an essential role in the ministry of the church. In most churches, the worship leader is responsible for leading the praise and worship team, bible study, and various roles throughout the ministry. To become a worship leader, one must possess specific leadership skills and characteristics that are vital to the success of the ministry. The worship leader must be able to lead by example and have a lifestyle that epitomizes the life of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12 states: “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”¹ Building up the body of Christ should be the focus of the worship leader.

To become a successful leader in ministry, one must follow the plan that God has put in place. When one answers the call to become a worship leader, your life will change because of the higher calling. Leading others in worship requires having a special relationship with God, and being successful, the leader must be effective and efficient. God laid the foundation, and we must follow his lead. Morgan explains, “If we’re going to master Life and fulfill the distinctive purpose God has for us, we have to say: There are many things I can do in life, I have many possible venues and avenues, many options and opportunities, many decision and distraction. But Christ gave me a pattern to follow, and He died to provide eternal life. Under His lordship, I pledge to live for Him, to devote myself to the Father’s business from this moment and forever.”² The worship leader must have a passion for seeking God through praise and worship, just as God intended.

¹ Holy Bible. Ephesians 4:11-12. KJV.

² Morgan, Robert J. *Mastering Life Before it's Too Late*. New York, NY: Howard Books, 2015, 14.

Those who are called to lead worship must be a worshipper. One cannot lead where one has never been. Worship is not limited to what others see on Sunday mornings. Worship is about living a life of worship regardless of your surroundings. The role and life of the worship leader should encompass a life of worship, prayer, and daily devotion. It is during these times that the leader further develops and a personal relationship with God. The worship leader should be a person who is after God's heart just like King David in 1 Samuel 13:14, "But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."³ When in worship, the intention is to reach God's heart; if one fails to reach God's heart, it is impossible to lead others to God. Here again, one cannot lead others to a place that one has not experienced. To further reiterate, the worship leader must have a spiritual connection to God; this is the primary fundamental of leading worship. "The effective leadership of worship by a pastor depends ultimately on his or her character, integrity, and spiritual depth. The ability to lead public worship is secured only by private worship in the study."⁴

The worship leader must confirm his/her calling as a servant leader. A servant leader cannot lead the people if he or she does not have faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There are times in leadership roles where one may place their faith on the back burner because of our dependence on others. There is a beautiful relationship between faith and leadership, of which God is the head. Hebrews 11:1 states, "now faith is confidence in what we hope for and

³ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages reference as in the *King James Version*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, 2015.

⁴ Walters, Michael. *Can't Wait for Sunday*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006, 79.

assurance about what we do not see.”⁵ There are leaders -in the bible, like Abraham, Moses, and Joshua, who showed their faith and had a relationship with God. When the Servant Leader demonstrates faith, he or she is saying that they know God and will do as He commands. Faith and leadership must be joined together for the servant leader to be successful. As a servant leader, one must surrender to God and be dependent on the Holy Spirit.

To become a worship leader, he or she must be spiritual. It is imperative that the worship leader has a relationship with God and honors Him as being the Supreme Being in their life. The worship leader’s life must be aligned with God’s plan and serve God and the church with humility and grace. When Christians worship, they are presenting ourselves to God, our bodies, minds, heart, and soul. Becoming a worship leader entails excellent leadership skills to motivate and sustain the ministry. Specific skills are needed to lead an entire ministry. “Congregations aren’t served, and Christ isn’t honored when the individual in front doesn’t give clear signals, is unsure where he’s headed, or doesn’t make sense when he speaks.”⁶ The worship leader must serve God first, honor the leadership of the church, and serve the worship team and congregation.

The worship leader must work very closely with the head pastor and ensure that the highest quality of worship and ensure that all elements of worship are theologically sound. The worship leader must have faith in God. If they profess to be saved and live by faith, they are acknowledging that God is the head of their life, and He raised Jesus from the grave. “We should demonstrate that the Holy Spirit abides within us. By living for God, we demonstrate how to worship God.”⁷ The leader should show kindness and goodness as they are elements of

⁵ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages reference as in the *King James Version*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, 2015.

⁶ Kauflin, Bob. *Worship Matters*. Wheaton, IL; Crossway Books, 2008, 254.

⁷ Navarro, Kevin J. *The Complete Worship Leader*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 2001, 129.

the fruit of the spirit. When the leader shows goodness and compassion, the ministry team will see their motivation and will nurture a good working relationship within the ministry.

The worship leader must have the self-control to lead the ministry to effectively lead the ministry. The leader should refrain from being involved in church politics and remain focused on the role of the ministry leader. Patience is a significant factor when leading others in worship. There are times when the musician and singers are off track; some may not sing the right note or play the correct; some may not show up for rehearsal. Though these are common problems, the worship leader must possess patience and work through the process. Patience is tested every time because there are multiple personalities; the leader must meet people where they are in the spiritual walk.

The worship leader must have a level of knowledge to be able to manage the music ministry. The bible states in Proverbs 18:15, “An intelligent heart acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.”⁸ The worship leader should have the desire to gain to equip better to serve God and the church and utilized what they learn to share with the ministry to augment the worship experience. “As you develop people and they begin to share the load of leadership, it’s important for you to give them the right expectations.”⁹ The worship leader must be given the time and freedom to foster new leadership. The ministry will not grow without stable guidance.

Serving as a worship leader is a rewarding position that allows the individual to touch the lives of others and become a good judge of character. The leader has an opportunity to share his or her knowledge and train others to lead the ministry. The leader should be able to identify

⁸ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages reference as in the *King James Version*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC, 2015.

⁹ Maxwell, John C. *How Successful People Lead: Taking Your Influence to the Next Level*. Nashville, TN: Center Street, 2013, 102.

individuals within the ministry that are willing and have the desire to be prepared. It is a blessing when a team notices your commitment to the ministry and desires to learn and be coached. As a leader, one should invest in the life of others to grow in Christ and become a strong leader within the church.

The leader must have a heart for worship that encourages and lead others to seek Christ and lead by example. Maxwell explains, “Worship is about the totality of our lives, about the kind of life we live before the living God.”¹⁰ The leader needs to set the atmosphere for worship. He or she must make sure that everyone is on the same page. Leading others in worship is not about performing or entertaining the congregation but creating an atmosphere where people can feel the presence of the Lord. The leader must be able to communicate that when worship is taking place, they all can experience and encounter God.

Uncharted Waters

On June 17, 2015, Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church experienced a horrific tragedy in which a gunman entered during a weekly bible study session and killed nine members, including the ministerial staff. This heinous event rattled the members of the church and the whole world. As the minister of music and one of the staff members that were not on duty the night of the tragedy, I was propelled into uncharted waters. The scope of the ministry grew to include leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience by participating in pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning.

Additionally, my musical role led me to meet with the families to plan the series of funerals by assisting the families in choosing the music that spoke about the life of their loved

¹⁰ Navarro, Kevin J. *The Complete Worship Leader*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 2001, 123.

ones and selecting the music for the worship services. We desired to make sure that the funeral services were a celebration of life and utilize music that was reflective of their lives. In contrast, “The worship leader, also known as the minister of music, choir director, artistic director, or various other names, is typically responsible for the application of music, drama, and other artistic portrayals to the church service.”¹¹ Although most people witness the worship leader leading the congregation in singing, they help build a culture of worship that reflects the uniqueness of their local church.

As I and others began to move through the process of assisting the families in planning the funeral services, my role as the minister of music changed. The minister of music met with the families and leading them through the most devastating traumatic experience of their lives. As we met with the families, it was essential for us to listen to them as they shared stories of their loved ones.

Those who were personally affected by this shared-traumatic experience must remember that through it all, God is faithful even during this time of mourning. The scriptures explain in Psalm 23:4, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”¹²

My newfound role of pastoral care was in full effect as I was able to hear the valuable stories and learned more about the various personalities. Constance Cherry refers to the role of the worship leader that works in this capacity as a “pastor musician.” “The pastor musician has to sense the capacities and resources of a particular people, then write or choose music that

¹¹ Harris, William Bryan and Roland, Daniel. “*Information Needs of Church Worship Leaders*,” *Journal of Religious & Theological Information*, 13:1-2, 35-52, 2014.

¹² Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005).

expresses the praise of God with those peculiar capacities and resources.”¹³ Each family needed to have input on the services, and it was our role to make it happen. Never in my life did I think that I would be helping plan nine funerals of church members. The task at hand was unfathomable because of the nature of their untimely deaths.

As we continued making preparations for the funerals, it was my responsibility to gather the choir members to discuss what needed to be done for the funerals and to make sure that the choir members were emotionally prepared to minister to the congregation and members of the community. On June 25, 2017, eight days after the shooting, there were two funerals on the same day, 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The second phase of this shared-trauma experience has begun. Later that evening, the memorial service for the pastor was held. June 26, 2017, the music ministry provided music for the third funeral of the victims, the Honorable Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney, pastor of Mother Emanuel. This rigorous schedule continued until the last funeral was held on June 30, 2017. The music needed to be uplifting as we celebrate the life of our loved one; in fact, Boswell states, “Singing expresses our most deep-seated joys the way that crying does our sadness. When we are overwhelmed with joy, we sing! This is why God commands it.”¹⁴ As expected, the choir members were distraught with grief; however, the choirs came together as a family and community to minister through music for all of the families. Kauflin said it best, “A worshipping community recognizes that passionate times of singing God’s praise flow from and lead to passionate lives lived for the glory of Jesus Christ.”¹⁵ It was

¹³Constance M. Cherry. *The Special Service Worship Architect- Blueprints for Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Holy Communion, and Other Occasions*: Baker Academic, 2013, 186.

¹⁴Boswell, Matt. *Doxology & Theology: How The Gospel Forms the Worship Leader*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2013, 78.

¹⁵Kauflin, Bob. *Worship Matters. Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008, 127.

at this moment that I realized that the church was depending on my leadership as the worship leader to lead and guide the ministry as we moved through this shared-traumatic experience.

The Problem

Although individuals often attempt to cope with their feelings of loss and grief, a prolonged sense of emptiness, anger, and sorrow may remain. Many congregation members who experienced the shooting have expressed their opinions, there may be untold perspectives of these individuals. These stories must be shared to allow the worship leader to assist in leading and guiding the congregation as they cope with a shared-traumatic experience. No one can predict when tragedy will invade the church; however, the ministry leaders must be willing and able to lead the congregation through a severe crisis. Dr. Vernon Whaley states, “One important aspect of worshiping through pain is “while worshiping,” we should worship God in the spirit of God Himself because it is His spirit that dwells within us.”¹⁶ The members need an outlet to share their feelings, and the ministry of the worship leader can lead the congregation with their response to God.

The role of the worship leader is essential to a church that has experienced a traumatic experience. The worship leader must be ready to assist in planning various services, community events, and working closely with the church leaders. There will be times when the worship leader be asked to perform duties that are outside of the normal duties. The experience from the traumatic experience will help one discover new skills to further cultivate the ministry.

The Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological research study is to share the story of this shared-traumatic experience according to those who lived the terror and through the eyes of the minister

¹⁶Whaley, Vernon. *Called to Worship*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009, 253.

of music who led the congregation through such a tumultuous time at the Mother Emanuel AME Church located in Charleston, SC. The majority of the data came from the personal experiences of the minister of music, in-depth interviews of members of Mother Emanuel AME Church, non-members of the church with personal ties to the congregation. Kathleen Hoffman-Smith states, “Congregations experiencing challenges are often characterized by a variety of intense emotions, including an increase in anxiety and a concurrent decrease in the creative energy needed for planning and implementing corporate worship. Sometimes the crisis or conflict results in a loss of leadership—even a loss of the pastor or other central worship planner or leader.”¹⁷ The members of Mother Emanuel experienced the traumatic experience and now have the task of managing the pain amid worship.

Additionally, the purpose of this study is to show how the role of the worship leader drastically changed while leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience at Mother Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, South Carolina. This study will provide powerful insight for pastors, worship leaders, worship pastor, and ministry leadership who may find themselves suddenly faced with an unexpected church tragedy. As a worship leader, worship pastor, minister of music, we need to ask ourselves how we would respond if we were suddenly in a position of leading a congregation through a shared-traumatic experience.

The African American Church is no stranger to attacks, whether by church burnings, bombings, shootings, and segregation. The gunman who killed the nine parishioners of Mother Emanuel studied the history of the church and learned that it is the oldest black church in the

¹⁷Hofman Smith, Kathleen S. *Worship in Difficult Times*. Reformed Worship 2019 by Worship Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church, 23.

south.¹⁸ The killer wanted to ignite a race war. “Bailey states, “the strength and presence of black churches might reflect a threatening racially-biased religious solidarity that served as an institutional base for challenging prevailing economic and political power structures, and may also serve as an institutional indicator for elevated levels of racial conflict.”¹⁹ The shooting would not have been possible if the gun laws were upheld. The killer was allowed to purchase a gun that was used in the attack as a result of a breakdown in the federal gun background check.

The killer had a criminal record that includes drug possession, yet he was allowed to purchase a handgun. The background system that was intended to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and drug users failed, and the nine members of Emanuel were the victims. The killer, a white supremacist, believed that the white race was in danger, and no one was doing anything about it. The gunman studied several African American Churches in the area and decided to make Mother Emanuel his target. The world was expecting an uproar of violence, but it did not happen. Keenan states, “The exceptionalism of Charleston’s “peaceful” response begs the question of what American society, as reflected through the interpretive lens of national and local media, understands racial violence to be as well as who or what is “normal” when it comes to race.²⁰ The killers' efforts did not ignite a race war; however, it drew the community together in unity with the message that “Hate Won’t Win.”

Similarly, the 16th Street Baptist Church, located in Birmingham, Alabama, is another African American Church which experienced racial driven hate crime. Just like Mother Emanuel, 16th Street served as a meeting place for community meetings for various social groups and

¹⁸ Tribune News Services. 2016. “Dylann Roof’s Confession, Journal Details Racist Motivation for Church Killings.” Chicago Tribune, December 10, 2016.

¹⁹ Bailey, Amy Kate, and Snedker, Karen A., “Practicing What They Preach? Lynching and Religion in the American South, 1890 - 1929.” *AJS; American journal of sociology* vol. 117,3 (2011).

²⁰ Kevin Keenan and Anthony Greene (2019). Whiteness or Resilience? Placing Terror by Studying the Charleston, South Carolina Mother Emanuel Church Shooting, *Urban Geography*, 40:1, 104-127.

widely recognized through the community; and a safe-haven for black families. Ultimately, the church became the center for racial tensions, which was unwelcomed by the white community.

The church came to be viewed by many as a symbol and a rallying place for civil rights activists, and it became the focal point for racial tensions and white hostility towards the civil rights movement in Birmingham. On September 15, 1963, a bomb exploded in the church, killing four young girls who were attending Sunday School. Perry states, “This wave of church arson did not halt the progress made by the Civil Rights movement, but the events did serve as an ugly reminder to African Americans and their white allies that racism was still alive.”²¹ Several members were injured as a result of the bombing. The black community considered Birmingham the most racist city in America, and the bombing heightened Birmingham’s image as a racist city and seen around the world.

Another racially motivated hate crime took place in November of 2008. The U.S. elected the first African American president, Barack Obama; hours later on November 5, 2008, the Macedonia Church of God In Christ was burned to the ground by three white men who were angry over the election of an African American president. Haskell, one of the arsonists, confessed why he and others burned the church, “Because it was a black church.”²² Jacques, another arsonist, stated, “I was angry that the country was going to have a black president. Blacks and Puerto Ricans would have more rights than whites.”²³ This church burning is another example of hate crimes extended to the African American Church. Despite their heinous act of hatred, the church received an overwhelming amount of support from the community. Robinson states, “The efforts of the three arsonists to stir up racial hostility brought disparate groups

²¹ Perry, Barbara. *Hate and Bias Crime, A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003, 198.

²² Robinson, Todd E. “Up from the Ashes: The Macedonia Church Fire in the Post-Racial Era, *Souls*, 12:4, 358-375.

²³ *Ibid.* 371.

together momentarily.²⁴ The black church has always served as a pillar in the community for which it serves; unfortunately, the church remains a victim of hate.

Significance

Unfortunately, this study is essential for ministry leaders and congregations who may find themselves unexpectedly leading a congregation through a terrible shared-traumatic experience through musical and non-musical events. There is no way to predict when tragedy will strike a church as it did at Mother Emanuel AME Church on June 17, 2015. There is still a need for pastors, worship pastors, worship leaders, music ministry leaders to assist in leading the congregation through the shared-traumatic event. We have the ability to express ourselves through many mechanisms, “Every individual has the ability, through healing prayers, to express faith-the belief in the truth, value, or trustworthiness of a person, idea, or things. It goes on to say that ‘Biblical faith is determined by reliance upon God rather than man and confidence in the power of God.’”²⁵ As one serves in the role of worship leader, it is imperative to be mentored and gain vital leadership skills needed to lead others.

From a pastoral perspective, the congregation will look to the ministry leader for strength and guidance to lead them through the traumatic experience. Members of the congregation will turn to the ministry leaders for prayer, counseling, and spiritual guidance that is needed during an unexpected tragic event. The ministry leaders must pray for strength and ask God for clarity to lead the congregation. “Religious/spiritual resources such as religious support may protect people from developing mental health symptoms after traumatic events.”²⁶ When dealing with a shared-traumatic experience, the congregation must receive the proper pastoral care to care for

²⁴ Ibid. 372.

²⁵All About Prayers. “Healing Prayers.” Accessed April 15, 2020

²⁶ “Religious Support Buffers the Indirect Negative Psychological Effects of Mass Shooting in Church-Affiliated Individuals.” *Psychological trauma : theory, research, practice and policy*. (2019): n. page. Web.

the grieving congregation effectively. “Trauma survivors may feel support from the Sacred (i.e., God or whatever the person considers the object of their spiritual connection), religious leaders, or members of their religious community.”²⁷ The members of Mother Emanuel AME Church experienced this same type of grief; ready or not, the interim ministerial staff, along with the minister of music, had to fulfill the needs of the congregation.

It is essential for congregations to understand the role of the worship leader and not see it as someone who is limited to leading the congregation through music only. The ministry of the worship leader includes a non-musical role that expands to pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning. Andrew Roby eloquently states that “Since music expressions possess a higher degree of memorability than most other kinds of content in the liturgy, the texts and meanings those musical expressions carry will shape and form us in our theology and faith more powerfully than other kinds of content we employ.”²⁸ The worship leader must be confident in his or her abilities to lead the congregation musically and non-musically, which is critical to the music ministry. Zac Hicks states, “When we plan and lead worship services, we hold the flock’s feelings in our hands. The context we create can either haphazardly manipulate emotions or intentionally guide people toward “faithful” feelings.”²⁹ From a musical standpoint, the worship leader is paramount to selecting the music while gaging the healing process while leading those who are affected by a shared-traumatic event.

The ministry of the minister of music is essential when the local church has experienced a shared-traumatic event. Since many churches have never experienced a shared-traumatic event,

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Roby, Andrew. “Worshipful Singing: Four Roles of Song in Worship.” *Choral Journal* 57, no. 3 (10, 2016): 58-66

Saliers, Don E. “What Difference can Music make?” *The American Organist*, 05, 2017, 12.

²⁹Hicks, Zac. *The Worship Pastor. A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016, 194.

there is little research to aid worship leaders in leading their congregation through loss and grief. There is a need to study the significant role of the minister of music when confronted with a life-changing event that has affected the local church ministry. Mother Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC, experienced a tragic event that significantly influenced the worship leader's role in leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic event. This phenomenological study seeks to increase the awareness of the non-musical part of the minister of music leading pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning.

Additionally, the study will show how the minister of music leads the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience through musical selection, gaging of the healing process, and corporate worship. Michael Lewis states, "the most therapeutic hymns have a ring of authenticity, often stemming from the writer's own experience and struggle and thus may create a feeling of empathy with members of the congregation who might be experiencing similar challenges."³⁰

Statement of Research Questions

The research questions for the challenges of worship leader leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience are:

Research Question 1: In what non-musical way can the worship leader support the congregation after a shared-traumatic experience?

When the tragedy took place at Mother Emanuel AME Church, the non-musical role of the minister of music drastically changed. The non-musical part of the minister of music was essential in leading the congregation by assisting the new interim minister through meeting with

³⁰Lewis, Michael J. "The Role of Hymns in Religious Healing Services." *Journal of Applied Arts & Health* 6, no. 3 (2015): 269-277.

the grieving families to assist in planning the funerals of their loved ones, planning the Sunday worship services, and planning the various community events.

Additionally, the minister of music stepped into serving the church by providing office support during the chaos and shock of the shared-traumatic events. While emotions were high, the congregation relied on the minister of music for providing leadership to a grieving congregation. Since many churches have never experienced a shared-traumatic event, there is little research to aid worship leaders in leading their congregation through loss and grief. There is a need to study the significant role of the minister of music when confronted with a life-changing event that has affected the local church ministry.

Research Question 2: In what musical way can the worship leader minister to the congregation after a shared through a shared-traumatic experience in terms of worship engagement?

After the initial shock of the shared-traumatic experience, I had the task of planning for the first Sunday worship service four days after the tragedy, which happened to be Father's Day. There were over 1,000 persons in attendance; there were a plethora of media everywhere. The music for the worship service needed to be uplifting as emotions were volatile; members, non-members, and various ethnicities were now in one place of worship, and the world was watching. The Sunday worship service was to become the service that will set the tone of worship for the upcoming funerals.

The musical role of the minister of music was essential in meeting with the families to help select music for wake services and eight funerals. Additionally, Hicks states, "Music's ability to describe, mimic, and as a result, engender feelings makes it uniquely suited as a vehicle to traverse the terrain toward emotional maturity. Emotions can be trained through music's

power to shift feeling from one state to another.”³¹ This period was a stressful time as the families were very emotional and wanted the funeral service of their loved one to be unique and reflective of their lives. The minister of music was responsible for keeping the choir members abreast of all the wake and funeral schedules and ensuring that the choir members were prepared emotionally for the task at hand. All of the funeral services were held within eight days; however, we knew that this was just the beginning of the shared-traumatic journey.

Thus, these two questions are essential to the research as they seek to highlight the role of the minister of music as it relates to leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience. It is essential to show that the worship leader supports the church ministry through non-musical tasks such as pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning. Also, the minister of music leads the congregation from a musical perspective by selecting the music that promotes healing and restoration.

The ministry of the minister of music is critical to the church that has experienced a shared-traumatic event as the ministry involves a willingness and ability to enter into the personal feelings and experiences of the local church members. The magnitude of this horrific event pushed the members into a dark place beyond anything they have ever had to experience. The worship leaders’ ministry is available to assist the members musically, and non-musically offering support for those affected by a shared-traumatic experience.

Core Concepts

The core concepts of this research study help solidify the role of the worship leader in ministry. In the realm of supporting the congregation through shared-traumatic experience, the

³¹Hicks, Zac *The Worship Pastor. A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016, 196.

worship leader serves in a non-musical capacity by providing pastoral and counseling to help lead and guide the congregation through unexpected tragedy. Also included in the non-musical aspect of leadership, the worship leader must ensure that the planning of the multiple worship events is spiritually uplifting and promotes healing and restoration. Cheydleur explained that the “ultimate goal is to assist the counselee to come into agreement with God about the healing HE as for them.”³² The support given by the worship leader is paramount to the ministry as it allows the congregations to understand the musical and non-musical role fully.

The core concepts also include the worship leader functioning as a mainstay for planning, ensuring that the musical selections are theologically sound and spiritually uplifting for those who are coping with the shared-traumatic experience. Additionally, the minister of music must work closely with the pastor to ensure that the congregation is fed spiritually, which ultimately leads to healing and restoration.

Working Hypothesis

The working hypotheses for this study are:

H1. The worship leader can support the congregation experiencing a shared-traumatic experience through pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning.

H2. The worship leader can lead the congregation that experienced a shared-traumatic experience through musical selections, gauging of the healing process, and corporate worship.

Hypothesis one describes the many hats worn by the minister of music in the church ministry. In a non-musical capacity, the minister of music functions in several roles; leading the congregation through a traumatic experience thrusts the minister of music into functioning in pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning. As a member of the ministerial staff of the

³² Cheydleua, John R. *Called to Counsel*. Chicago: Tyndale House Publishing Inc., 1999, 172.

church, the worship leader assumes the responsibility of leading the congregation through the shared-traumatic experience. With the loss of the majority of the ministerial staff, the worship leader assisted the interim leadership by assisting in worship planning, ministry meetings, and the overall administration of the music ministry. The natural calling and dedication of the worship leader to the ministry would be expected during this difficult experience.

Hypothesis two points out that the minister of music also functions in a musical capacity by selecting music that is conducive to worship and helps move the congregation through the healing and restoration process of a shared-traumatic experience. The minister of music must ensure that the musical selections are in sync with the sermon to help lead the congregation through the healing process. Additionally, the results will shed light on the unique role of the minister of music when leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience. The worship leader must assess the worship culture and plan the music that will promote spiritual healing.

Research Methods

My study is a phenomenological research project. As the minister of music of Mother Emanuel, and have lived and experienced the shared-traumatic event, I will be able to share first-hand knowledge. The particular process supports the use of personal interviews. According to Creswell, “This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon.”³³

This phenomenological study requires approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval process will include completing the application explaining the type of research that will be conducted along with submitting a list of interview questions to be used.

³³Creswell, John W. *Research Design-Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, LTD, 2018, 13.

Permission was obtained from the pastor to conduct the research. The pastor was informed how this research will benefit the church; additionally, the interview questions were shared to ensure that it will not affect the church in a negative capacity. The research study will focus on one phenomenon, which is the shared-traumatic event that took place at Mother Emanuel AME Church, where nine members of the congregation, including the pastor, were killed tragically during a bible study session, June 17, 2015. The research will also cover the first Sunday morning worship service following the tragic event. According to Creswell, “As a study develops over time, factors will emerge that may influence this single phenomenon, but begin a study with a single focus to explore in great detail.”³⁴ Upon approval, it will be necessary to solicit members and non-members to participate in the study. A recruitment letter will be emailed to the church members asking them to participate in an online survey. If the participants meet the study requirements, they will be directed to the anonymous online survey. The researcher will review the study participants' responses following the survey deadline.

Research Plan

The key to this phenomenological research is data obtained from living individuals who experienced the shared-traumatic experience at Mother Emanuel AME Church. Personal survey responses from the members of the congregation will be critical as they have lived the process and have shared their own stories regarding the shared-traumatic experience. Existing literature about the personal lived experience by the minister of music was examined. The literature consists of the role of the minister of music, leading a congregation using musical and non-

³⁴ Ibid. 134.

musical methods. The research for the non-musical approach includes how the minister of music led the congregation by serving in a pastoral role, counselor, and worship planner.

The research material will include materials showing the musical role of the worship leader leading the congregation by choosing the musical selections and engaging the congregation through the healing process. This research explains how crucial the ministry of the minister of music is vital while leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience.

After the data analysis process is complete from an online survey, it is crucial to gain an understanding of the meaning of the description of the phenomenon. This process consists of coding specific themes from the reoccurring statements of the participants. The coding process will ensure that there is no misinterpretation of the interview responses. The interviewer will be able to listen to the recording to ensure accuracy and avoid misunderstanding of information. There will be a unique code utilized to hide the identity of the church members and non-church members participating in the interviews. The final report will disclose the personal testimonies feelings about the tragedy that include the worship service, sermons, music, and overall ministry of the church. A record of the keywords utilized during the interview process, tabulated and color-coded, which will aid in building a theme for the project.

Conclusion

There has been much research regarding the role of the minister of music within the church ministry. Serving as a worship leader requires a certain level of leadership that is pivotal to the life of the ministry. The worship leader's personality and demeanor should represent what God has called and ordained to lead the congregation. The life of the worship leaders should be aligned with the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which provides nine essential elements that worship

leaders should strive to emulate. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.”³⁵ The worship leader must exhibit how to lead worship.

The role of the minister of music is clearly defined; however, despite all of the preparations and training, there is very little information regarding the role of the worship leader leading a congregation through a shared-traumatic experience. Because many churches have never experienced a shared-traumatic event, there is little research to aid worship leaders in leading their congregation through loss and grief. There is a need to study the significant role of the minister of music when confronted with a life-changing event that has affected the local church ministry. Mother Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC, experienced a tragic event that significantly influenced the minister of music’s role in leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic event.

³⁵ Holy Bible. Galatians 5:22. KJV.

CHAPTER TWO-REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

There is very little literature regarding church tragedies and the role of the worship leader leading the congregation through such a horrific act of terror. The purpose of chapter two is to examine the literature related to church tragedies and the role of the worship leader. The literature in this chapter is portioned into four sections to show the various aspect of the worship leader The Doxological Role of the Minister of Music, Community, and Service Roles of the Minister of Music, Musical Roles of the Minister of Music, the Non-Musical Roles, and hate crimes committed against the black church.

A review of the literature reveals that the role of the worship leader is significant to the life of the church. The worship leader is also known as the music minister and choir director, depending on the denomination and responsible for selecting the music for congregational worship. Additionally, the worship leader and pastor must work closely together to plan the various services within the church effectively. Although the role of the worship leader and minister of music are synonymous, the functions are viewed differently among the multiple denominations.

Doxological Roles of the Minister of Music

The Complete Worship Leader, written by Kevin J. Navarro, provides insight into the various roles of the worship leader. The author provides essential qualities that help solidify the position of the worship leader. Navarro primarily teaches concepts that will allow a leader to connect hearts and minds with God through a comprehensive and holistic approach. The text does not emphasize your style of worship; instead, it focuses on the substance of religion regardless of the form of service. It talks about enjoyable rehearsals, good conversations,

motivation, how worship and sermons work together, and many other things that reach far beyond the average book on the subject. It speaks of being a leader of leaders as you encourage our worship team to think above and beyond Sunday morning as well.

The book is divided into four topics that speak to the role of the worship leader:

Becoming a Theologian, Becoming a Disciple, Becoming an Artist, and Becoming a Leader.

Navarro makes a bold declaration as it relates to the worship leader becoming a disciple:

The worship leader must think theologically about what he or she is doing and must worship God with accuracy. Worship is initiated by God, who has revealed himself. Theology is discovering God, not inventing revelation. Revelation tells us three bits of information: There is a God, we have rebelled against this God, and we need to be redeemed.³⁶

The worship leader is essential to the church ministry, and the focus should be on the personal relationship with Christ. To effectively lead others in worship, the worship leader must be a willing vessel of God. Navarro states, “Worship comes from worshipers. Christian worship comes from those who know, love, and follow Christ.”³⁷

The role of the worship leader can be examined through the lens through the process of curation, as explained in *The Art of Curating Worship: Reshaping the Role of The Worship Leader*, written by M.F. Pierson. The author provides a model of worship-leading as curating depends first on the assumption that worship is an art form. Pierson emphasizes the theological aspect of worship and the arts. The book likens the worship leader as a curator, “A maker of context rather than a present of content.”³⁸ The author’s aspect includes collaborative planning, engagement by participants, creative symbols such as candles, and various sacraments.

³⁶ Navarro, Kevin J. *The Complete Worship Leader*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001., P. 49.

³⁷ Ibid, 50.

³⁸Pierson, M. F. *The Art of Curating Worship Reshaping the Role of Worship Leader*. Minneapolis, Sparkhouse Press, 2010, 84.

Pierson utilizes an approach that is ecumenical-friendly and accepting of traditional methods to worship. The curator approach allows the individual to improvise on a particular theme that is broad and inclusive of all worship styles. “Worship curators are those whose responsibility and “care for” worship leads them to shape, plan, and lead worship events that allow participants to experience and encounter God’s presence.”³⁹ The worship leader is free to be creative in their approach to worship. *Curating Worship* promotes a new vocabulary that helps curators work out how and why and where worship can best engage their community.

John Witvliet of the Calvin Institute of Christian worship states, “What the church needs most is not another hymnal, larger choirs, more technology, a revised prayer book, or another set of published scripts. What the church needs most is discerning, prayerful, joyous people who treat their work as worship planners and leaders as a holy, pastoral calling.”⁴⁰

Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God, written by Bob Kauflin, provides an excellent roadmap for those who serve as worship leaders. The role of the worship leader has been one part of leadership within the church. Worship leaders have served: cantors, directors accompanists, soloists, music directors, and organists. Kauflin points out that there are no definite roles of worship leader in the New Testament; however, we there are examples of leading worship within the Old Testament in the book of 1 Chronicle 16:1-8, These scriptures allow us to see the Levites, Asaph, Zechariah, Jaaziel many others in their role of leading worship:

They brought the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before God. After David had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in

³⁹ Pierson, M. F. *The Art of Curating Worship Reshaping the Role of Worship Leader*. Minneapolis, Sparkhouse Press, 2010, 240.

⁴⁰ Witvliet, John D. *Worship Seeking Understanding*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003, 248.

the name of the LORD. Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each Israelite man and woman.

He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to extol, thank, and praise the LORD, the God of Israel: Asaph was the chief, and next to him in rank were Zechariah, then Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps, Asaph was to sound the cymbals, and Benaiah and Jahaziel, the priests, were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God.

That day David first appointed Asaph and his associates to give praise to the LORD in this manner:

Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
Make known among the nations what he has done.

According to Kauflin, anyone who encourages others to praise God can be referred to as a “worship leader.” Worship can involve music, but it can happen without it as well. Moreover, while aspects of the worship leader’s role may be inferred from Scripture, there are no requirements to have one. A pastor or a team of people can serve together to accomplish these goals just as well as, if not better than a single person.”⁴¹ Kauflin’s goal is to demonstrate the significance of worship and biblical teaching. He provides a guide to worship while focusing on practical purposes and addresses the challenges of creating an active worship service. Kauflin believes that the worship leader should recognize the importance of sound doctrine.

When serving as a worship leader, one must be faithful in worship as one is responsible for making people aware of who God is and what He has done in our lives by magnifying the greatness of God. When serving as the worship leader, it requires one to operate within the realms of the Holy Spirit. This involves dependence, expectation, and humbleness.

In his book *The Contemporary Christian*, John Stott provides insight on the non-musical role of the worship leader by confirming that God is the center of our worship. “God must speak

⁴¹ Kauflin, Bob. *Worship Matters. Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008, 53.

to us before we have any liberty to speak to Him. He must disclose to us who he is before we can offer him what we are in acceptable worship. The worship of God is always a response to the Word of God. Scripture wonderfully directs and enriches our worship.”⁴²

In his book *Worship Three Sixty-Five*, David Edwards, covers a plethora of information regarding the biblical perspective of worship. The author emphasizes that worship is a two-way street; and guides the worship leader. He reminds us that “Praise is the vehicle into God’s presence, and worship is what we do once we get into God’s presence.”⁴³

There is a theological aspect of serving as a worship leader. David Peterson provides insight into the theology of worship in the church and the various styles. He also uses the bible and encourages the worship leader to rethink their meaning and practice of worship. “A theology of worship must consider key themes such as revelation, redemption, God’s covenant with Israel, and the call for his people to live as a distinct and separate nation. Once the connection between worship and these themes is established and traced through to the New Testament, the distinctiveness of biblical teaching emerges.”⁴⁴ Although Peterson emphasizes biblical theology of worship across old and new testaments, he consistently ties threads back to the former.

The worship leader must possess leadership skills to minister to the congregation and the music ministry. J. Sanders demonstrates in his book *Spiritual Leadership-The Principles of Excellence for Every Believer* the principles of leadership from the earthly and spiritual point of view. The author uses the lives, Peter and Paul, to describe biblical men of God and, who are examples of true worship leaders.

⁴² Stott, John. *The Contemporary Christian: Applying God’s Word to Today’s World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995, 174.

⁴³ Edwards, David M. *Worship Three Sixty-Five*. Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing, 2006, 124.

⁴⁴ Peterson, David. *Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992, 23.

The worship leader should possess discipline, vision, wisdom, courage, humility, integrity, and sincerity. “God prepares leaders with a specific place and task in mind. Training methods are adapted to the mission, and natural and spiritual gifts are given with a clear purpose. An example is Paul, who never could have accomplished so much without direction training and divine endowment.”⁴⁵

Sandra Maria Van Opstal shares her expertise on what it takes to train worship leaders in her book entitled, *The Next Worship, Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. The author focuses on showing love to God and love our neighbor practically in worship, specifically by sharing leadership and guiding others in change. “Congregational worship is critical. It is not merely about singing songs; it is the doxology to music, sermon to a song.”⁴⁶ Worship leadership requires emotional intelligence, skills, and coaching.

Worship formation in the African American church is crucial to how the church responds to traumatic events shared by its members and community. Vondley explains, “African American liturgical traditions are held together mostly by the rather broad scheme of singing, preaching, prayer, and fellowship.”⁴⁷ There are denominational differences within the African American church; the style of African American worship differs in worship style, celebrations, mourning, and liberation. Worship formation within the black church derives from its ancestors who were slaves. The slave spirituality derived from years of oppression, and they sought solace through their prayers, spirituals, and camp meetings.

⁴⁵ Oswald, J. Sanders. *Spiritual Leadership. Principles of Excellence for Every Believer*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007, 51.

⁴⁶ Van Opstal, Sandra Maria. *The Next Worship, Glorifying God in a Diverse World*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2011, 47.

⁴⁷ Vondey, Wolfgang. “The Making of a Black Liturgy: Pentecostal Worship and Spirituality from African Slave Narratives to American Cityscapes,” *Black Theology*, 2012, 10:2, 147-168.

This article sheds light on the black pastors across the U.S. who spoke out against racial violence despite the danger it placed on their lives. One notable pastor was Charles Price Jones, founder of the Church of God, a holiness denomination. Other black pastors wrote books and articles against lynching, which were published in their denominational newsletters. Other notable pastors include Rev. Francis Grimke. According to the author, “Grimke argued for comprehensive anti-racist education as a way to undermine the narratives that led to lynching.”⁴⁸

Dr. Martin Luther King’s Letter from Birmingham Jail wrote a letter after reading an open letter from white ministers who criticized him and his followers of non-violence that were unfair to black. King stated his stance against civil disobedience, “There is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was seen sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar because a higher moral law was involved. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks before submitting to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire.”⁴⁹ In his letter, Dr. King shed light on the protests taking place in Birmingham due to racist laws and ordinances that played a significant role in the black church and community.

“Corporate Worship and Spiritual Formation: Insights from Worship Leaders,” addresses the worship component of the worship leader; through his/her expectation that God will be present in the worship service. Also, the authors discuss how the anticipation of the worship of God. The article touches on the expectation of the congregation and God-centric engagement in worship.

⁴⁸Foley, Malcolm. “Lynching preachers: How black pastors resisted Jim Crow and white pastors incited racial violence.”

⁴⁹ King, Martin Luther. “Letter From Birmingham Jail.” April 16, 1963.

The minister of music and worship leaders of the church serve in various capacities. In today's technological age, the media ministry is now a vital part of the church. In her article entitled, "Panoptic or Pastoral Gaze? The Worship Leader in the New Media Environment," Tanya Riches explains the importance of music to the worship service and the resources needed to make it happen. She explains how the ministry utilizes various media resources to reach beyond the walls of the church for community outreach. Riches also associates the media ministry with pastoral care, "Because the pastoral relationship is deeply connected to congregation members' spiritual development, it is important to investigate the way pastoral support for the congregation translates in the new media environment."⁵⁰ Today, worship leaders utilize global resources while integrating them into the local church.

Inagrace T. Dietterich wrote an article entitled, "Sing to the Lord a New Song: Theology As Doxology." The author explains that theology and doxology is the giving of ourselves through our thoughts, words, and actions. The responsibility of the church is to proclaim the word of God; tell others what God has done in our lives. Dietterich states, "The doing of theology-studying and talking about God-is the responsibility of all who participate in the church. Church members themselves are to be involved in the process of exploring the "mysteries" of the Christian faith."⁵¹ Ministry leaders must teach that the doxology is our way of expressing reverence and praise to God. We must open our hearts and minds to receive God's glory.

Zac Hicks describes the worship leaders as curators: "Worship pastors are curators. Starting with the architecture of service, worship curator creatively fills that space with the right

⁵⁰Riches, Tanya. "Panoptic or Pastoral Gaze? The Worship Leader in the New Media Environment." *Congregational Music-Making and Community in a Mediated Age*, 2015.

⁵¹ Dietterich, Inagrace T. "Sing to The Lord a New Song: theology as doxology." *Currents in Theology and Mission* 41, no. 1 (2014): 23+.

elements arranged in the right way. A curator brings a variety of perspectives to bear on the selection and presentation of worship materials.”⁵² As a curator, the worship leader supports the ministry by assisting in prayers, music, and scripture readings. Once the tasks are complete, the curator passes the mantle to the pastor.

The article on “Theological Reflections on the Role of Music in Worship” provides insight into the importance of music within the church. The article lists six components of music in its theological reflections: music is a gift of God, the human voice has priority over all instruments, singing is a ministry that belongs to everyone, singing provides more corporate worship, the ministry of the song is for the glory of God, music is not for the edification of God’s people.

The RMC Commission states, “Music should communicate and express a sense of awe and wonder in the presence of God; it should lead our thoughts toward God rather than toward ourselves.”⁵³ Careful attention must be given to the music for worship services and should be theologically sound.

Rev. Ralph S. March, a Catholic priest penned the article, “Are you a True Minister of Music?” In the article, March states the elements of what every minister of music should possess. He believes that musicians should have a strong theological background and be familiar with historical, cultural, and artistic events that influence various musical styles. March also states that the minister of music should fulfill the role of an educator, diplomat, and student. While the afore mention attributes were suggested, March provides steady wisdom, “The ideal

⁵² Hicks, Zac M. 2016. *The Worship Pastor: A Call to Ministry for Worship Leaders and Teams*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. Accessed April 4, 2020. ProQuest eBook Central, 175.

⁵³ RCA Commission on Worship. *The Theology and Place of Music in Worship*.

music minister unifies and never divides; he builds and never destroys.”⁵⁴ The music minister must possess the spirit to serve the people. Oliver Messiaen was a dynamic composer, and devout catholic was a musical genius whose work touched the hearts and souls of those who listened. Through his instinct, Messiaen would capture the essence of the environment through his “coloured” dreams. He had a gift for utilizing aurora borealis (northern lights) to inspire his work. Messiaen's profound statement about his music is exciting, “my music “is not nice”-it is certain. “I am convinced that joy exists, convinced that the invisible exists more than the visible, joy is beyond sorrow, beauty is beyond horror.”⁵⁵ One can never understate the power of music as it relates to healing.

Community and Service Roles of the Minister of Music

In Melva Costen’s book, *African American Christian Worship*, she explains the importance of kinship within the African American community. “This understanding of community created by the kinship system is a reminder that individuals exist as a part of the corporate whole. One becomes aware of self, duties, privileges, and responsibility in terms of others.”⁵⁶ The relationships established within the African American culture promotes a loving community and allows the worshiper to reach beyond the social structures dictated by the various cultures.

The minister of music wears many hats and serves in multiple areas within the ministry. There are special events that require the assistance of the minister of music/worship leader. In Constance Cherry’s book, *The Worship Architect-A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faith Services*, she compares the role of the worship leader to that of an architect

⁵⁴ March, Ralph S. “Are You a True Minister of Music?” *Sacred Music* 141, no. 2 (Summer, 2014): 15-24..

⁵⁵ Messiaen, Oliver.

⁵⁶ Costen, Melva Wilson. *African American Christian Worship*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993, 9.

because they help plan worship services that are theologically sound and engaging to the worshipers. Cherry refers to this role as a “pastor musician.” She states, “the pastoral musician is a leader with developed skill and God-given responsibility for selecting and employing music in worship that will serve the actions of the liturgy while reflecting on theological, contextual, and cultural considerations, all for the ultimate purpose of glorifying God.”⁵⁷ The author sheds light on the process of creating meaningful services that are relevant to God.

Michael Hawn examined a study conducted by Dr. Judith Jubicki, an associate professor of theology at Fordham University. Within her research, Kubick believes that it is essential that the congregation understands the hymns they sing. Kubicki states, “Because it invites participation and because it is a symbolic activity that points beyond itself, hymn singing has the potential to be transformative.”⁵⁸ Kubicki provides examples of hymns. As the congregation sings the hymns, there is a renewing of faith, liberation, and transformation.

“Where Hearts Must Break: Pastoral Musician as Prophetic Minister,” an article was written by Kathleen Harmon, depicts the role of the pastoral musician. She provides an in-depth description of a prophetic ministry. Harmon explains one of the crucial factors of a pastoral musician, “The most important prophetic ministry of the pastoral musician is to all the liturgy to remain faithful to what it is meant to be: ritual participation in the consciousness of Christ through surrender to the paschal mystery.”⁵⁹ Within the prophetic ministry, the minister of music is able to discern the appropriate music for various musical services and events.

⁵⁷ Cherry, Constance. *The Worship Architect. A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2010, 180.

⁵⁸ Hawn, C. M. “The Song of the Singing Assembly: A Theology of Christian Hymnody.” *The Hymn* 69, no. 2 (Spring, 2018): 36-7.

⁵⁹ Harmon, Kathleen. “Where Hearts must Break: Pastoral Musician as Prophetic Minister.” *Pastoral Music* 28, no. 6 (08, 2004): 21-5.

Worship music is a provides the map to praise and theology. Congregational music is vital to the church ministry; it is the most favorable aspect of worship. Music media provides outreach into the community through various methods of technology. “Music functions in congregational worship in many ways: as a vehicle for content, a site of sensory engagement, a means of connection to tradition, a place for personal expression and a channel for emotion. For still others of us, music in worship enables not only human ritual and social connection but also our access to the Divine.”⁶⁰ The authors explain that there are numerous ways that music, media, and religious belief and praxis become ‘lived theology’ in our media age, revealing the rich and diverse ways that people are living, experiencing, and negotiating faith and community through music.

Lament is the process of showing passion expressing sorrow and grief. In June Dickie’s article, “The Importance of Lament in Pastoral Ministry: Biblical Basis and Some Applications,” she shares the biblical basis and application of lament. The article explains lament from the Old Testament perspective to the present era. Dickie notes, “Without leadership encouraging biblical lament, Christian often view despair and anxiety in their own lives as a lack of faith and so fail to express it.”⁶¹ The lack of lament harms the community; as individuals become consumed in their sorrow and grief. Dickie further discusses the benefits of lament; the individual has the opportunity to share their story, which is an essential step in the healing process.

When tragedy strikes a community, society turns to the church for healing and comfort. The role of the church is vital to the healing process of the members, and Paul Wong explains in his article, “Renewing the Church as a Healing Community.” Wong states three issues that the

⁶⁰ Nekola, Anna E. and Thomas Wagner. *Congregational Music-Making and Community in a Mediated Age*. New ed. London: Routledge, 2016;2015.

⁶¹ Dickie, June F. “The Importance of Lament in Pastoral Ministry: Biblical Basis and some Applications.” *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 40, no. 1 (2019).

church must adhere to become a healing source for the community: feelings of isolation and insecurity, feelings of futility and helplessness, and feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.⁶²

In the time of trouble, society seeks solace and consolation from the church. The church is a haven for healing, learning, serving, and worshipping.

There are times when the worship leader will be charged with leading the music ministry and congregation through grief and healing. There are no direct instructions on how to lead a ministry; one must depend on his or her relationship with God and ask for His wisdom. The worship leader will need to draw from the worship elements to help facilitate the healing and grief process. *Music's Role in Facilitating the Process of Healing-A Thematic Analysis*, written by Juyoung Lee, Roman Catholic Korean, and Jane Davidson, conducted a study of Korean migrants to evaluate the role of music in the healing process. "Results show that music performed in religious forms such as Praise and Worship and Speaking/Singing in tongues prayers was found to intensify the spiritual experiences of the people as a group, and over time, each participant experienced improved physical and mental well-being."⁶³

Lee was directly involved in the creation of the Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM), which allowed Korean adult migrants to meet and pray. According to Lee, "The purpose of CPM is to encourage "the awareness and the experience of the full role of the Holy Spirit" that leads to "experiencing union with God inner transformation; ministry empowered by charisms for evangelization and service and building communities that witness to a renewed Catholic life."⁶⁴ The authors provide insight into the different religious and cultural backgrounds of how

⁶² Wong, P.T.P. "Renewing the Church as a Healing Community." Tyndale Connection, 2018, 14(2), 10-11.

⁶³ Lee, Juyoung and Jane W. Davidson. "Music's Role in Facilitating the Process of Healing-A Thematic Analysis." *Religions* 8, no. 9 (2017): 184.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

music facilitates the process of healing. The authors state how healing is promoted through prayer meetings, praise, and worship teams. The article provides insight into how the various ethnicities for their healing.

The article does state that leading this type of ministry requires a specific skill and have ongoing training set as mandated by the Catholic Church. The format of the CPM gathering consists of daily readings, praise, and worship, speaking in tongues, interpretation of the tongues, another session of praise and worship which concludes the session. “The role of singing Praise and Worship was clearly perceived as an effective medium to access to a spiritual experience.”⁶⁵ Those who participated in the CPM sessions testify that they received a strong spiritual power while participating in the CPM meeting.

Music continues to play a significant part in healing around the world. On March 11, 2011, Japan experienced an earthquake that triggered a nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. As a result of the damage from the quake, Japan’s musical stage was severely devastated. All of the scheduled musical events and future records were canceled. Because of the traumatic event, artists began using their artistic creativity to write and perform songs that promoted patriotism while lifting the spirits of the country. St. Michel explains, “Tokyo’s indie music scene avoided the overtly political and instead pumped out songs reflecting the mood of post-earthquake Japan.”⁶⁶

The History of Mother Emanuel AME Church is deeply rooted in history as it relates to racial tensions. The church was formed due to the efforts of Rev. Morris Brown and Denmark Vessey. Vessey was a slave a purchased his freedom and led a slave revolt in 1822. As a result, Vessey and others were hung on July 2, 1822. The Local white community heard of Vessey’s

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ St. Michel, Patrick. “A Year After the Quake, a Rifts in Japan’s Musical Landscape.”

slave revolt and implemented more strict regulation on the black community.⁶⁷ Some of the black members returned to the white churches, and others decided to continue worship within the tradition of the AME Church, and in 1865 purchased the present site of Mother Emanuel.

The black church has seen its share of struggles, particularly during slavery. Dr. Laurie Kipp's article, "An Introduction to the Church in the Southern Black Community, provides a synopsis of the church during slavery. Kipp's research explains how the native-born population of African Americans transformed their culture and language with a group of enslaved slaves. This practice led the way to preserve the religious traditions that have influenced African-American worship today. The article sheds light on the African American leaders who led the church in politics and education. Kipp explained, "Missionaries like Daniel Payne, and AME bishop, took it as their task to educate Southern blacks about what "true" Christianity looked like; they want to convince ex-slaves to give up any remnants of African practices (such as drumming, dancing, or moaning) and embrace a more sedate, intellectual style of religion."⁶⁸ The article focuses on how the black community adapted to evangelical Christianity, which influences their freedom, society, and existence.

This article sheds light on the act of lynching, religion, and race and its effect on African American worship.

According to the author, "White southern religious groups, voiced unanimous, enthusiastic support for maintaining racial segregation, a theological perspective at odds with mainstream present-day interpretations of Christian doctrine."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Mother Emanuel AME Church, "Church History.

⁶⁸ Kipp-Maffly, Laurie F. Documenting the American South. "An Introduction to the Church in the Southern Black Community." University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

⁶⁹ Bailey, Amy Kate, and Snedker, Karen A. "Practicing What They Preach? Lynching and Religion in the American South, 1890 - 1929." *AJS; American journal of sociology* vol. 117,3 (2011). 5

During the period 1890-1929, society was concerned with upholding a moral community; however, the black community still endured lynching and segregation. “Bailey states, “the strength and presence of black churches might reflect a threatening racially-biased religious solidarity that served as an institutional base for challenging prevailing economic and political power structures, and may also serve as an institutional indicator for elevated levels of racial conflict.”⁷⁰ Several black churches have experienced the wrath of racism.

Worship planning is one essential duty of worship leaders, music ministers, and others. This task can be tedious at times, and it is a task that is necessary and fruitful for the ministry. The author of *Guidelines Worship: The Gifts of God from the People of God* shed light on the process of worship planning, as it should be a joint effort involving the entire team. Edwards notes, “When pastors and other worship planners and leaders find themselves using solo or siloed planning, there is less opportunity for creativity in planning and less diversity of voices and gift offered in worship.”⁷¹ The book also lifts the role of virtual worship, whereby the church can minister to others throughout the entire world. Worship leaders have a very expansive ministry that is crucial to leading others in worship.

Musical Roles of the Minister of Music

To further solidify the position of worship leader, Constance Cherry refers to the worship leader as a “pastor musician” as they have the responsibility to lead others in worship through music. “A pastoral musician is a spiritual leader with developed skill and God-given responsibility for selecting, employing, and leading music in worship in ways that serve the actions of the liturgy, engage worshipers as full participants, and reflect upon biblical,

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Burton-Edwards, Taylor W. *Worship: The Gifts of God from the People of God*. Nashville, Tennessee: Cokesbury, 2016, 13.

theological, and contextual implications, all for the ultimate purpose of glorifying God.”⁷² The relationship between pastor and minister of music is essential to the worship ministry, as they must remain spiritually connected to lead others in worship.

Information Needs of Church Worship Leaders, written by William Bryan Harris and Daniel Roland, is a journal article that specifically addresses the needs of the worship leaders across all denominations. The authors conducted qualitative research to investigate the needs of church worship leaders of various backgrounds, faiths, education, and experience.

There is over 350,000 religious congregation in the United States that come together for weekly worship services. Most of the churches have a designated person to lead the worship services through music, among other worship elements. Many authors have written about the role of the “worship leader” as it relates to their congregation. “Worship leaders have particular information needs. The worship leader, also known as a music minister, choir director, artistic director, or various other names, is typically responsible for the application of music, drama, and other artistic portrayals to the church service.”⁷³ The “worship leader must be able to plan, develop his or her plans for worship promptly to meet the deadlines for the Sunday worship experience.

While planning, the worship leader must be in communication with the pastor to ensure that the music correlates with the current liturgy. There is limited information that addresses the congregational needs during the worship service. The majority of data is either technically or artistically oriented. “The level of understanding that the worship leader brings to this

⁷² Stansbury, K.L., Harley, D.A., King, L. *et al.* African American Clergy: What are Their Perceptions of Pastoral Care and Pastoral Counseling?. *J Relig Health* 51, 961–969 (20120

⁷³ Harris, William Bryan and Roland, Daniel. “Information Needs of Church Worship Leaders,” *Journal of religious & Theological Information*, 13:1-2, 35-52..

conversation is dependent upon his or her level of theological education as well as formal musical training.”⁷⁴

In *Worship Leaders-We Are Not Rock Stars*, Stephen Miller adds, “By deciding which songs the local church sings, a worship leader is exercising his pastoral responsibility. He must discern the doctrines he is teaching to whomever he is leading and shepherd them into a greater understanding of gospel truth.”⁷⁵

The Organist As Worship Leader, written by James Good, examines the role of the worship leader as an organist. “It is imperative, of course, in striving to create a meaningful worship experience, that worship services be carefully planned. Such should involve the thinking and experience of all those responsible for the leadership of worship. The organist should thus be included as a part of this team.”⁷⁶ Many people do not view the organist as a worship leader; however, then he or she plays a vital role in worship.

The musical skills, the organist is expected to teach and cultivate an appreciation for music that leads to worship. The organist also functions as a choir director by providing leadership. “A competent organist will want not only to provide the very best in organ literature for the regular services of worship but might like to extend the exposure of his congregation to such music in occasional recital programs.”⁷⁷ In many churches today, the organist is combined with the role of choir director. The organist/director combination solidifies the leader leadership and adds significant value to the church ministry, especially for the smaller congregations. “Through his various capacities—at the console during worship, as a teacher, in his relations with the staff as plans are made for worship, and possibly as director of the choirs—he can participate in a very

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Miller, Stephen. *Worship Leaders-We Are Not Rock Stars*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013. P. 59.

⁷⁶ Good, James W. “The Organist as Worship Leader.” *Review & Expositor* 69, no. 2 (May 1972): 217–24.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 220.

real and effective way in a ministry through music.”⁷⁸ A thriving church will recognize the role of the organist as a critical role person and should strive to include the organist in all of its worship and education programs.

Greg Scheer discusses the role and relationship of worship leader as it pertains to the choir. He mainly explained the role of the worship leader and sharing various duties with the worship team. The author states that the sharing of musical leadership beautifies and encourages the congregation and provides unified singing in worship. Scheer believes the relationship between the worship leader and the congregation produces a win-win for the ministry. “Sharing of musical leadership beautifies and encourages the congregation’s voice and sends the message, “we are in this together.” The choir and congregation may have different roles but share a unified responsibility for singing in worship.”⁷⁹ The worship leader must ensure that each member of the music ministry is aware of their part in leading the church in worship as it is a calling that should not be taken lightly.

“Music in Therapy and In Daily Life: Health of Musicians, Concepts of Aesthetics, Measurement, and New Media” is an article that explains how music used as a therapeutic option. The author explains, “They find that whether music is healthy may depend on how you practice it. Whereas amateur musicians benefit from the healthy aspects such as social and emotional involvement and a sense of mastery, professional musicians face health problems related to their profession, which may range from worries about income to drug abuse. The belief that music is healthy was most common among those adults who had sung and played music as children.”⁸⁰ The study shows there is a correlation between music leading a healthy lifestyle.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 223

⁷⁹ Scheer, Greg. “The Church's "Big" Choir.” *The Choral Journal* 56, no. 5 (12, 2015): 89-93.

⁸⁰ Gold, Christian. *Music in Therapy and in Daily Life: Health of Musicians, Concepts of Aesthetics,*

In Marius E. Marton and Raj Attiken's book entitled, *Worship Music in the 21st Century: Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm*, they review the process of selecting proper church music as it relates to melody, lyrics, and instrumentation. The book also sheds light on the role of the musicological and theological aspects of worship. Marton also speaks of the importance of music in the evangelistic ministry from the biblical perspective. "God uses music as a ministry tool and a way for the young shepherd to earn a living in the royal court and to bring healing to the king's ailments. In the example of disciples, Jesus uses little children to teach them about the importance of humility and the quality of openness."⁸¹ The book explains the misconceptions regarding instrumentation, rhythm, lyrics concerning theology.

Non-Musical Roles of the Minister of Music

The Special Service Worship Architect: Blueprints for Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Holy Communion, and Other Occasions written by Constance Cherry, provide a wealth of information regarding the non-musical role of the worship leader. The readings offer guidance related to the worship leader assisting in the planning of specialized services, sacraments, and various occasions. Cherry explains, "Rituals provide us the ways and means to express the relationship between God and God's people."⁸² The reading provides an excellent overview of the various services from the historical and theological perspective.

The shared-traumatic event that took place at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church thrust the minister of music in an area of ministry that was unexpected. "*The Inventory of Complicated*

Measurement, and New Media, Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, 2018, 27:4, 257-258.

⁸¹ Marton, Marius E. *Worship Music in the 21st Century : Selecting Proper Music for Worship in Regards to Lyrics, Instrumentation, and Rhythm* Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2015, 27.

⁸² Cherry, Constance. *The Worship Architect: The Special Service. Blueprints for Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Holy Communion, and Other Occasions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2013, 12.

Spiritual Grief: Assessing Spiritual Crisis Following Loss,” an article written by Laurie A. Burek and Robert A. Neimer explains how grievers significantly struggle with the death of a loved one. The study addresses how those who are grieving struggle with their relationship with God and their faith community. This condition is known as complicated spiritual grief (CSG) and consists of long-term pain due to separation of distress and feeling a sense of loneliness.

When suddenly dealing with an unexpected loss, this process may cause an individual to question their faith. “In the context of bereavement, prolonged and debilitating spiritual distress of this sort, which includes the collapse or erosion of the griever’s sense of relationship to God and their faith community, has been termed complicated spiritual grief (CSG).⁸³ The authors conducted several studies to evaluate the grieving process for various individuals. They developed a scale to determine where the individuals stand in the grieving and compare it to their religious beliefs along with their relationship with God.

The researchers developed a list of questions to determine the level of grief for the individuals further, for example:

“I don’t understand why God has made it so hard for me;”

“I no longer feel safe and protected by God;”

“I struggle with accepting how a good God allows bad things to happen.” These types of questions can assist the ministry leaders in ascertaining the level of the grief of the church members and providing the necessary counseling.

In ministry, one will inevitably assist a church family in planning a funeral for the loved one. As the pastor and worship team meet with the families, it is important to be engaged with the family. Peter Wherry explains, “Contact with a family prior to the funeral is the prime

⁸³ Burke, Laurie A.; Neimeyer, Robert A. 2016. “The Inventory of Complicated Spiritual Grief: Assessing Spiritual Crisis Following Loss.” *Religions* 7, no. 6: 67.

opportunity to do human exegesis. In this process of exegesis, the preacher has the opportunity to discern the dynamic at work in a family and to glean valuable insight into the life of the deceased.”⁸⁴ The pastor should be in communication with the worship team to discuss the funeral service to ensure that the needs of the family are met.

In Michael Walters, *Can't Wait for Sunday*, the author makes suggestions important information that will help the worship leader enhance the worship environment. The author provides guidance on how to implement change in the congregation, music without forgetting the joint mission of worship. Walters states, “The effective leadership of worship by a pastor depends ultimately on his or her character, integrity, and spiritual depth. The ability to lead public worship is secured only by private worship in the study. Those intimately connected with God will capably lead others in finding a connection with Him.”⁸⁵

The role of the worship leader will change as the church ministry experiences changes. Rory Noland expounds on the various modes of worship by the worship leader. The author addresses how the worship leader should worship in spirit and truth are prepared for change. “The lesson for us is this: be open to the possibility that your ministry role might change over time. Change is as much a part of ministry as it is a part of life.”⁸⁶ As the worship leader worship in the spirit, he/she will develop the character of God. While worshipping in truth, the worship leader will be able to teach about the presence of God and what it means to serve Him.

Jonathan Dodson, the author of *The Unbelievable Gospel*, describes the stresses of evangelism and how the role of the worship leader is affected, which may cause some to revert to

⁸⁴ Wherry, Peter M. *Preaching Funerals in the Black Church: Bringing Perspective to Pain*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2013, 8.

⁸⁵ Walters, Michael. *Can't Wait for Sunday*. Indianapolis, IN, Wesleyan Publishing House, 2006, 79.

⁸⁶ Noland, Rory. *The Worshiping Artist. The Heart of the Artist*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007, 197.

their old lifestyle. Dodson enforces that as worship leaders, pastors, we are called by God; however, the weight should not be entirely on our shoulders. Dodson also believes that apologetics in evangelism is needed, as many people do not understand Christianity.

“Using Art and Music to Heal Grief,” an article describes how the healthcare organization's use of art and music help the patients dealing with healing and grieving. The hospital system created a program entitled Safe Harbor. This unique group provides ongoing grief support for children, teens, and their families. The authors state, “Grief is a normal response to a death, but when it is prolonged or more intense, it becomes complicated grief and requires more care and support to prevent illness. The children participate in groups that utilize their artistic talents and share songs that help them express their feelings. The administrators formed a camp called “Camp Charlie” developed for children who are experiencing grief. “Camp Charlie” provides an opportunity for kids to participate in individual or group activities to teach them various options for handling their pain. “Throughout the years, music therapists, dance specialists and artists have attended Camp Charlie to share songs with the campers, help them choreography dances and teach them to express themselves through paint, sculpture, song, movement, talk and other media.”⁸⁷ This article is a useful resource for the worship leader who has individuals coping with grief within their ministry. The church ministry may consider creating a ministry dedicated to offering grief support for its members.

Pastoral care and counseling play a crucial role in assisting members who have experienced adversities such as grief, bereavement, family problems, and marital problems. Pastors in the African American church are highly respected, and after for counseling and guidance. The article, “African American Clergy: What Are Their Perceptions of Pastoral Care

⁸⁷ McGoldrick, Margaret M., F.A.C.H.E. and Deborah Teasdale. "Using Art and Music to Heal Grief." *Healthcare Executive* 32, no. 5 (Sep, 2017): 56-8.

and Pastoral Counseling?” provides the role of pastoral care from the pastor’s perspective. The study conducted indicated that how pastors see their role in the church, “The clergy repeatedly defined pastoral care as “Shepherding the Flock,” which entailed providing spiritual, religious, or faith-oriented leadership to their congregations and the broader community.”⁸⁸ In some ministries, the worship leader is recruited to assist the pastor's care for the members.

Researchers have discovered the value of music therapy associated with trauma. The survivors of The Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred on Friday, March 11, 2011, jolted the country with a 9.0 magnitude. Music therapy services were utilized to meet the psychological needs of the survivors. The author spoke of the effects of a traumatic experience, “Following a traumatic event, there are individuals who are not able, ready, or appropriate to being counseling and also those who may not see the value of entertainment.”⁸⁹ The use of music therapy has been found to aid in the healing process of individuals who have experienced a traumatic life event.

This article explains how individuals can be effected through physical and psychological trauma. The authors noted, “musical activities including listening, playing, singing, dancing and songwriting, are commonly used for coping and mood regulation.”⁹⁰

Music emerged as a creative form to address the stress and coping skills of those who have had a life-changing traumatic event.

“Music and Stress,” an article was written by Nechama Yehuda, reminds us that music has been essential to human life for ages. “Music is a universal language, but it “speaks” louder

⁸⁹ Otera, Masaka. “What Do Music Therapists Need to Know Before the Disaster Strikes?” *Voices, A World Forum for Music Therapy* 12, no. 1 (February 13, 2012).

⁹⁰ Garrido, Sandra & Baker, Felicity & Davidson, Jane & Moore, Grace & Wasserman, Steve. “Music and trauma: The relationship between music, personality and coping style.” *Frontiers in psychology*, 2015, 6. 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00977.

than words. Since music sounds never lie, music has a truthful authority.”⁹¹ Music has a profound effect on emotions and body. Lively music can make one feel cheerful, and slower music has a calming effect on the mind and body.

Hate Crimes Committed Against The Black Church

The African American church has always played a significant role in the lives of the African American community from the civil rights era to the present. As a result, the church has become the target of various heinous acts, such as the massacre that occurred on June 17, 2015, in Charleston, SC, at Mother Emanuel AME Church. In his article, “Forgiveness after Charleston: The Ethics of an Unlikely Act,” Larry Jorgensen explained the history of the church when African Americans were not allowed to worship in their church. In 2015, a young white racist entered the church, killing nine members of the congregation that lead to some of the families offering forgiveness to the killer, while others struggled. The article sheds light on the thoughts of the community, “Black people forgive because we need to survive. We have to forgive time and time again, while racism or white silence in the face of racism continues to thrive. We have had to forgive slavery, segregation, Jim Crow laws, lynching, inequity in every realm, mass incarceration, voter disenfranchisement, inadequate representation in popular culture, microaggressions, and more. We forgive and forgive and forgive, and those who trespass against us continue to trespass against us.”⁹² Despite showing forgiveness, the African American church continues to be the victim of hate crimes that is a result of years of slavery and civil unrest.

⁹¹ Yehuda, N. Music and Stress. *J Adult Dev* 18, 85-84 (2011).

⁹² Jorgensen, Larry M. “Forgiveness After Charleston: The Ethics of an Unlikely Act.” *The Good Society* 26, no. 2 (2017): 338-353.

Racial tension in American remains a hot topic within the African American community. The writer sheds light on the “Black Lives Matter” movement that has ignited the black community, the role of the black church, and racial inequality. Bishop T.D. Jakes was instrumental in depicting the issues that plague the black church and community. House explains, “The study also exposed the groups’ failure to acknowledge the existence of present forms of racism, as well as its systematic dependence on a legacy of historical, structural, and social discrimination. Yet, white Evangelical, Republican Christians were almost twice as likely compared to the general population to strongly agree that “racism is mostly a problem of the past, not the present.”⁹³ House’s study revealed that the majority of white Christian churches are ill-prepared to get involved in racial reconciliation; deny that the white race benefits from structural oppression of African Americans.

Researchers conducted a study to examine how religion affects those who have experienced traumatic events. According to the researchers, “When a mass shooting occurs, people living in the affected community can experience resource loss and negative mental health outcomes. For individuals connected to a church community, their perceived level of religious and spiritual support helped protect them from experiencing religious and spiritual struggle, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, even when they experienced resource loss.”⁹⁴ Experiencing a traumatic event within a church extends far into the community as many feel the loss of family and friends and security.

⁹³ House, Christopher A. “Crying for Justice: The #BLACKLIVESMATTER Religious Rhetoric of Bishop T.D. Jakes.” *Southern Communication Journal* 83, no. 1 (2018): 13-27.

⁹⁴ San Roman, Luis; Mosher, David K; Hook, Joshua N; Captari, Laura E; Aten, Jamie D; Davis, Edward B; Van Tongeren, Daryl R; Davis, Don E; Heinrichsen, Hugh; Campbell, Clark D *Psychological Trauma : Theory, Research, Practice and Policy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009.

When a church experiences a traumatic event, the healing process can last for years, which significantly affects the ministry. This article provides the core principles and values of a family and community resilience approach to recovery. Walsh explains, “When traumatic loss is suffered, we should not expect resolution in the sense of some complete, “once-and-for-all” getting over it. Thus, resilience should not be seen as readily getting “closure” on the experience or simply bouncing back and moving on. Recovery is a gradual process over time. Various facets of grief may alternate and reemerge with unexpected intensity, particularly with anniversaries and other nodal events.”⁹⁵ Five years have passed since the tragedy at Mother Emanuel AME Church, and the church family is still moving through the healing process. Dr. Kendra Barber explains the role of the contemporary of the black church in the public domain. Barber explains the role of the black church in race relations within the community. Barber also shares her thoughts regarding the role of the black church. She states, “I assert that the Black Church should remain engaged in the public sphere for two reasons: first, black churches are operating in the absence of state welfare rather than as an alternative to it and second, black churches are among the few institutions providing race-specific remedies that have been abandoned in a colorblind era.”⁹⁶ The article further explains that the combination of social gospel and traditions of the black church has influenced other organizations that help combat racism that affects the black church community.

“When Faith, Race, and Hate Collide: Religious Ecology, Local Hate Cultures, and Church Burnings” address information on the number of hate crimes that directed toward the church through shootings, church burnings, and church desecration. The authors study the

⁹⁵Walsh, Froma. 2007. “Traumatic Loss and Major Disasters: Strengthening Family and Community Resilience.” *Family Process* 46 (2): 207–27.

⁹⁶Barber, Kendra. “Whither Shall we Go? The Past and Present of Black Churches and the Public Sphere.” *Religions* 6, no. 1 (2015): 245-265.

geographical areas to determine the factors that contribute to these heinous acts. The authors explain, “Church burning simultaneously conveys racial and religious animus, and is directed quite broadly at a community of people. As such, it might be the most efficient means for attempting to claim additional territory and extend the reach of hatred.”⁹⁷

This study explores the extent to which the spate of church burnings that occurred throughout the South during the 1990s may have been influenced by local religious ecologies, diverse forms of civic engagement, and broader community support for racial animus that we call local hate cultures (e.g., prior hate crime incidents, hate group presence). We use county-level data from a variety of sources to determine the degree to which church arsons were associated with relevant features of local communities. Various congregational factors measuring county-level religious ecology are significantly associated with the number of church burnings in Southern communities, as are several local hate culture indicators. Our study provides empirical confirmation of the linkages between church arsons, the public role of religious institutions, and local hate cultures. It also suggests a number of theoretical refinements for existing community-level approaches to the study of religion and hate crimes.

The massacre that took place in Mother Emanuel AME Church sparked Adelle Banks speaks about the various patterns of racial violence that have plagued the black church. The article lists some of the violent acts against black churches throughout the years: Mother Emanuel AME Church, 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham was bombed in 1963. Four girls were killed, many injured. Martin Luther King’s mother was shot and killed as she played

⁹⁷Howell, Frank, M., Bartkowski, John, Hempel, Lynn, M, Jeremy, Porter R. “When Faith, Race, and Hate Collide: Religious Ecology, Local Hate Cultures, and Church Burnings.” *Review of Religious Research* 60, no. 2 (06, 2018): 223-45.

the organ on June 30, 1974. Macedonia Church of God in Christ, Springfield, MA, was burned to the ground as a retaliation to the election of the first black U.S. President.

According to Valerie Cooper, an associate professor of black church studies at Duke University, states, “For African Americans, church violence has historical dimensions. The attack at Emanuel African Methodist Church reflects “a pattern of random, racialize violence against religious institutions.”⁹⁸

Summary

The review of literature shows a wealth of information regarding the role of the worship leader and the multiple hats that are worn. The literature shows that the worship leader is vital to the church ministry in terms of leading through administration, leading through music, and serving the community. Unfortunately, the research does not address the research questions, which indicates that more research is needed.

⁹⁸ Banks, Adelle M. “Emanuel is Latest Victim in History of Violence Against Black Churches.” *The Christian Century*, Jul 22, 2015. 13.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological research study is to share the story of the shared-traumatic experience that took place on June 17, 2015, where nine people were killed, including the pastor during a bible study session. This chapter will explain the methodology used to conduct the study, including the research design, participants, instrumentation, procedures, and methods for data analysis, all to answer the research questions.

Design

An anonymous online survey was conducted to obtain views and opinions through the lens of the church members. The survey specifically asked the church members to share their views on the musical and non-musical role of the minister of music during and after the shared-traumatic event. The particular process supports the use of personal stories. According to Creswell, “This description culminates in the essence of the experiences for several individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon.”⁹⁹ The survey was the most appropriate approach for this study.

The research question for this study was:

Interview Question 1: How do you view the role of the minister of music at Mother Emanuel AME Church following the tragedy that took place on June 17, 2015?

Interview Question 2: How important were the musical selections, i.e., hymns, gospel music, anthems to your healing process during the tragedy of June 17, 2015?

⁹⁹Creswell, John W. *Research Design-Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, LTD, 2018, 13.

Interview Question 3: What were some ways that the minister of music helped the congregation through the healing process, musically and non-musical?

Interview Question 4: What feelings did you experience about worship services prior to the tragedy and following the tragedy?

Research Questions and Hypothesis

Research Question 1: In what non-musical way can the worship leader support the congregation after a shared-traumatic experience?

Research Question 2: In what musical way can the worship leader minister to the congregation after a shared through a shared-traumatic experience in terms of worship engagement?

The hypotheses for this study were:

H1: The role of the minister of music can support the congregation experiencing a shared-traumatic experience through pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning.

H2: The role of the minister of music can lead the congregation that experienced a shared-traumatic experience through musical selections, gauging of the healing process and corporate worship.

Participants

Participants were recruited through a recruitment letter distributed through email. The email list contained the email addresses of the church members and was provided by the church administrator. To participate, the participants confirmed their eligibility by completing the online screening questions by clicking on the link within the email. Each participant must be 18 years of age or older and consent to participate. The survey was accessible online for one week to allow for responses. After the survey was closed, there were twenty-four participants. The survey results confirmed the age eligibility, consent, and written responses from all participants.

Setting

The site for this study was an online survey via Survey Monkey. Upon clicking on the link within the recruitment email and confirming eligibility, the participants were directed to the questions.

Procedure

Before the study, university permission was secured to conduct the experiment. The Institution Review Board (IRB) approved the phenomenological study, study procedures, and all required documents (e.g., waiver of consent). Additionally, permission from the pastor of Mother Emanuel AME Church was obtained in order to conduct the study.

Recruitment

The recruitment letter was distributed via email to the church membership of Mother Emanuel. The letter contained a link to the anonymous online questionnaire via SurveyMonkey.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the study will be analyzed to show how individual was affected by the tragic shooting that took place at Mother Emanuel. The study will also analyze how the role of the minister of music aided their personal worship during the tragedy. The data will be analyzed for specific theme included in the responses from the participants.

The key to this phenomenological research is data obtained from individuals who experience the shared-traumatic experience at Mother Emanuel AME Church. Personal comments from the members of the congregation will show how they process the event and share their feelings regarding the shared-traumatic experience. Existing literature about the personal lived experience by the minister of music was examined. The literature consists of the role of the minister of music, leading a congregation using musical and non-musical methods.

The research for the non-musical approach includes how the minister of music leads the congregation by serving in a pastoral role, counselor, and worship planner.

The research material will include materials showing the musical role of the worship leader leading the congregation by choosing the musical selections and engaging the congregation through the healing process. Additionally, the research will further explain how crucial the ministry of the minister of music is vital while leading the congregation through a shared-traumatic experience.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

The chapter describes the analyses conducted to test the hypotheses that (a) the role of the minister of music can support the congregations experiencing a shared-traumatic experience through pastoral care, counseling, and worship planning and (b) the role of the minister of music leads the congregation that experienced a shared-traumatic experience through musical selection, gauging the healing process and corporate worship. The minister of music is viewed as a vital role in the church. This chapter defines the key terms and reports descriptive comments in the study. The findings are presented, and the results are discussed.

Results

A phenomenological study was conducted to assess how the congregation viewed the musical role and non-musical role of the minister of music. Study participants answered four questions that address the role of the minister of music. Twenty-four members of the congregation submitted their responses through an online survey.

Interview Question 1: How do you view the role of the minister of music at Mother Emanuel AME Church following the tragedy that took place on June 17, 2015?

Participants Responses:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Participant 1. | Our minister of music was responsible for keeping spirits lifted through musical selections and song choice during that time. |
| Participant 2. | Many people find comfort and effective ministry through music. Where a person's word cannot bring you comfort, the lyrics to songs can help. The minister of music knows which songs can provide comfort and exact words to ease the pain. |
| Participant 3. | The role of the minister of music was pivotal during the aftermath of the tragedy because the songs that he played aided in the healing process. |

- Participant 4. The minister of music is an integral part of our recovery.
- Participant 5. Very important since our church anticipates hearing our pipe organ during worship services. After the tragedy, Mr. Singleton appropriately selected songs of solace.
- Participant 6. The role of the minister of music was crucial and instrumental in helping the healing process to begin during that tragic time in our lives. Through music, the congregation was able to express themselves and find peace through the songs.
- Participant 7. Because of the importance of music in worship, being able to continue with our rehearsals, singing in the choir and congregation during worship, and learning new selections helped me return to normal. The service music was especially important because of the loss of a very devoted choir member during the tragedy.
- Participant 8. The music rendered was soothing, reflective, and embraced my grieving.
- Participant 9. The role is active and adaptive; Active comes from his involvement in all aspects of the music ministry, from the children's choir to the traditional/contemporary choirs. Many churches will have two musicians or more to support several choirs. Emanuel does not. The active role also encompasses his understanding of the pulse of the church by attending the business meetings. These non-worship gatherings that address church concerns/challenges would shape (I imagine) how he plans and thinks about music. Also, this role was not only within the walls of Emanuel but also in the community. Many times, since the tragedy, the music minister was approached about bringing the music of Emanuel to the community or other church events. Thus, his role here was active in helping the community through its grief as he did at the church. My final comment is about his role being adaptive. I think that his role was challenged here because, since the tragedy, Mother Emanuel has had three ministers. Thus, while he has a music vision for the church, he had to mesh that with the approach that the various pastors have had since the tragedy.
- Participant 10. I view the role of the Minister of Music as an essential appointment as he leads the congregation through that challenging and sad time. There were so many funerals in such a short period. During Sunday services, he was responsible for setting the tone for worship through music.

- Participant 11. Elder Goff delivered messages to restore our faith. However, the Minister of Music also played a significant role in making sure selections were parallel to service.
- Participant 12. Critical to the healing process. Music invokes the Holy Spirit and enables us to connect on a much higher, deeper level.
- Participant 13. I view the role of the minister of music as a very vital and essential role in church service. Music brings peace and healing to the soul. Since the tragedy, the church as one song that when it is sung on Sunday, we all can find hope in its message. The song “ I'll Make It Somehow” in my opinion, is our anthem song.
- Participant 14. Wayne Singleton provided music that enhanced the experience of the congregations in the worship service before and after the tragedy that took place on June 17, 2015. He fosters an innovative, blended style of music that supports the worship message goals.
- Participant 15. His role was to continue to help us through the tragedy through music. He was expected to provide music that would heal our hearts and make us understand the purpose of it all. He had to play the correct song for just the right moment. Every song sent a message. Every song was another step in the healing process.
- Participant 16. The minister of music plays a crucial role following the tragedy because the music sets the stage for healing.
- Participant 17. It was very important to have the minister of music there to render songs that were comforting and soothing to the hurt and pain that was being felt at that heart-wrenching time.
- Participant 18. The minister of music's role of providing music expanded from being the director of the choir and player of the keyboard at typical services to a consoler and comforter of his choir members, musicians, the families, and the congregation after June 17, 2015 massacre.
- Participant 19. The role of the minister of music at that time was unquestionably multifaceted. The minister of music, yes, was doing his job as the minister of music, however having attended all nine funerals, the Minister of Music brought spiritual encouragement and comfort.
- Participant 20. The minister of music played a critical role following the tragedy on June 17, 2015.

- Participant 21. I believe the minister of music played a vital role at the beginning of the healing process after the tragedy.
- Participant 22. The minister of music was instrumental to our church because he led the church with his music. He was always available for the needs of the church.
- Participant 23. Understanding the different types of worship musical arts, including the use of technology in planning and presenting music as part of congregational healing and worship services. Direct choirs and work with the pastor in the planning of the music ministry to help steer the overall goals and objectives of the ministry.

As the minister of music, the music ministry falls under my leadership. Therefore, I must ensure that the choirs and musicians are ready to serve. Music is a vital element of worship that must be taken seriously. During the tragedy, it was important to select music that is meaningful and uplifting, providing hope to a congregation that had been shaken to its core. The response to this question showed that the congregation sees the role of the minister of music as one who provided comfort, peace, and healing through the music ministry.

As the minister of music, I must be guided by the Holy Spirit so that I can adequately serve the people of God. Study participants 9, 13, 15, and 17 share the sentiment of comfort and healing. The minister of music is synonymous with a bridge connecting an island to the mainland. In comparison, the congregation is on the island; the minister of music is the bridge that provides the support needed to take them to the mainland where they can find comfort, healing, and peace. The book of Ephesians 4:11-12 speaks of the gifts of the worship leader, “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of

Christ.”¹⁰⁰ The minister of music is the builder that lifts the congregation that is dealing with a traumatic event.

Public Responsibility and Competency

In my role as minister of music, there is a level of expectancy from the congregation. The congregation expects the choir and musicians to be prepared for the worship services; anything less is unacceptable. Interview question one inquires of how the members view the role of the music of minister following the tragedy. Participant 2 states, “Many people find comfort and effective ministry through music. Where a person's word cannot bring you comfort, the lyrics to songs can help. The minister of music knows which songs can provide comfort and exact words to ease the pain.” The expectation of the minister of music is to be able to select appropriate music for the worship services. Participant states, “The role of the minister of music was crucial and instrumental in helping the healing process to begin during that tragic time in our lives. Through music, the congregation was able to express themselves and find peace through the songs.” The members are seeking comfort and solace through the message of the music that aids in the healing process. Participant 9 solidifies the expectations and competency of the minister of music, “The role is active and adaptive; Active comes from his involvement in all aspects of the music ministry, from the children’s choir to the traditional/contemporary choirs. Many churches will have two musicians or more to support several choirs. Emanuel does not. The active role also encompasses his understanding of the pulse of the church by attending the business meetings. These non-worship gatherings that address church concerns/challenges would shape (I imagine) how he plans and thinks about music. Also, this role was not only within the

¹⁰⁰ Ephesians 4:11-12

walls of Emanuel but also in the community. Many times, since the tragedy, the music minister was approached about bringing the music of Emanuel to the community or other church events. Thus, his role here was active in helping the community through its grief as he did at the church. My final comment is about his role being adaptive. I think that his role was challenged here because, since the tragedy, Mother Emanuel has had three ministers. Thus, while he has a music vision for the church, he had to mesh that with the approach that the various pastors have had since the tragedy.”

The post-tragedy services were essential to the healing process of the congregation; they gathered anticipating to be revived spiritually through the music and the sermon. Through music, the minister of music brings healing and serves as a peacemaker for the congregations, as stated by participant 15, “His role was to continue to help us through the tragedy through music. He was expected to provide music that would heal our hearts and make us understand the purpose of it all. He had to play the correct song for just the right moment. Every song sent a message. Every song was another step in the healing process.” To adequately serve the congregation, they must have confidence in my ability to lead the music ministry. The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 tells us, “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Timothy’s background in the faith gave him the courage to stand firm during hard times and to hold firm the message of the gospel. As the minister of music, I expected to hold firm the message of the gospel while ministering through music.

Interview Question 2: How important were the musical selections, i.e., hymns, gospel music, anthems to your healing process during the tragedy of June 17, 2015?

Participants Responses:

- Participant 1. They were very helpful. The songs we sing help to keep our spirits grounded in Christ and serve as a means of uplifting us. It is a reminder that although we were facing tough times, God is our comforter and will help us see our way through.
- Participant 2. The musical selections provided comfort during a time in which you felt that you would never feel comfort again.
- Participant 3. The first song that I recall that was played was Total Praise by Richard Smallwood. After the day of the loss, people from across the world were invoked to worship despite the pain of the loss. The hymn, "My Hope is Built" was played continuously. The hymn reminded us of the source of all hope, God.
- Participant 4. The music was very important. The various musical selections helped the congregation begin the healing process. The musical selections were always timely.
- Participant 5. The selections that selected helped me to remember that God is still in charge, and he does not make mistakes. They allowed me to grieve and gave me a sense of calm afterward.
- Participant 6. Music was carefully selected and tailored to uplift, strengthen, inspire, and healing.
- Participant 7. Very important because they fed people, they comforted people, they gave hope during an unforgettable time.
- Participant 8. The music for the funerals was selected by the families. Those selections were often based on that particular victim. However, the choices for services and events were a mixture of musical selections that made me feel better. It was a feeling that life would be better again. It was like a hug of reassurance.
- Participant 9. Very important for me, the music lifted my spirit and gave me hope that all will be all right in the face of a tragedy.
- Participant 10. It helped me feel a sense of hope and peace.
- Participant 11. We needed every song to be perfect for the moment. He was able to play one song that would mean so many different things to so many people. Music was our message from God. It brought comfort and gave us a way to express ourselves.

- Participant 12. The music was comforting and provided healing for my body and strength for the journey ahead. It helped me relate and connect a closer walk with God.
- Participant 13. The musical selections were very important to my personal healing because I love music. Music brings people of all races together in some form or fashion. Especially Gospel music. The Sunday service after the tragedy every song that was sung ministered to my broken heart and soothed my soul in a way that I still can remember today. Sadness was in the atmosphere, but there was also a warm loving presence of the Holy Spirit and the spirits of the “Emanuel 9.” The music was healing.
- Participant 14. For me, it taught me how to be still and listen to God. It brought a whole new level of peace to my soul.
- Participant 15. Musical selections played an important part in our healing process, granted us hope, and calmed our spirits.
- Participant 16. The musical selection was very important because everyone needed something to help go through the journey. We were going through, and that something came from the Minister of Music for me.
- Participant 17. They were all important in various ways. Perhaps, a contemporary piece, like “For Every Mountain,” or a traditional hymn, like “O Thou in Whose Presence,” would just hit the spot at just the right time. “The Lord is My Shepherd” was another work that I found to be helpful in this healing process.
- Participant 18. The selections were very important. I could not imagine the church without music.
- Participant 19. All forms of music since that incident helps us continue the healing process. It was critical to our being able to continue our worship service participation and move forward to healing, not hate.
- Participant 20. Very important. The minister of music chose selections that were appropriate for what the church and the people were experiencing. The selections provided comfort and hope for healing.
- Participant 21. Very important> Vital.
- Participant 22. Extremely important. I heard a song on the radio last week that took me back to the first Sunday after the tragedy. It was at that

moment that the choir sang, “I Won't let you fall,” that I felt that we would survive the loss.

Participant 23. This has been very important because sometimes all we need is the right musical selection, and our minister of music is excellent at adjusting the music to what is needed.

Participant 24. The singing and music were critical in promoting and restoring the spiritual well-being of the congregation and community.

I believe the responses to this question provide an overwhelming theme of healing comfort. As I made preparations for the funerals and worship services, it was important that the music provides hope, comfort, and healing. Yes, we all were hurting; we all can find solace in the word of God and music. The response from participant 3 was a turning point as it made reference to the first Sunday after the tragedy. As I prepared to begin the prelude, the weight of the tragedy came upon me, and I became very nervous. I stopped and prayed and asked God to give me a song, and He gave me “Total Praise,” which is based on Psalm 121, in which David wrote about relying on God during a difficult time. We, the church, the community were relying on God to bring us comfort through this troublesome period. As I began playing, the choir began to sing, and the congregation joined in; everyone began to stand to their feet. It was the breakthrough that we needed to move forward through the trying and difficult times. Participant 11 stated that every song needed to be perfect for the moment. The musical selections touch people in a variety of ways, which makes it essential to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. “Total Praise” was the perfect song that set the stage for the worship service.

Based on the responses from the participants, their spirits were lifted as they found comfort, healing, peace through the musical selections during moments of the tragedy. As the minister of music, I desired that everyone in attendance would feel better through music than they came. The power of music gave us courage for the facing of this hour. Deuteronomy 31:6

states, “Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” We can find comfort in God’s word and through music. There is healing for our souls.

The Road to Recovery

It has been five years since the tragic killings, and the church its members are progressing through the healing process. Research question two asked the participants the importance of the musical selections to their healing. As the members attended the worship, they were seeking healing and comfort through the music. The pain that we have felt since June 17, 2015, has not dissipated; we realize that God will provide strength for a time such as this. Isaiah 41:10 states, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” The respondents were very telling of how music ministers to their needs.

Participant 1 states, “They were very helpful. The songs we sing help to keep our spirits grounded in Christ and serve as a means of uplifting us. It is a reminder that although we were facing tough times, God is our comforter and will help us see our way through.” Again, the members are leaning on the music to provide comfort as through transition through the healing process. Participant 3 states, “The first song that I recall that was played was Total Praise by Richard Smallwood. After the day of the loss, people from across the world were invoked to worship despite the pain of the loss. The hymn, “My Hope is Built” was played continuously. The hymn reminded us of the source of all hope, God.” The titles of these particular songs convey the message of praise, and the importance of having hope in God. Participant 6 noted, “Music was carefully selected and tailored to uplift, strengthen, inspire, and healing.” This

participant views the minister of music as a tailor, one that pulls the piece of material together to meet the needs of those who needed to be strengthened.

Participant 13 acknowledges that music is vital to their personal healing. “The musical selections were very important to my personal healing because I love music. Music brings people of all races together in some form or fashion. Especially Gospel music. The Sunday service after the tragedy every song that was sung ministered to my broken heart and soothed my soul in a way that I still can remember today. Sadness was in the atmosphere, but there was also a warm, loving presence of the Holy Spirit and the spirits of the “Emanuel 9.” The music was healing.”

As the minister of music, it is essential that I review the lyrics of the songs to ensure they are theologically sound and while providing a message that can promote healing. Participant 17 states, “They were all important in various ways. Perhaps, a contemporary piece, like “For Every Mountain,” or a traditional hymn, like “O Thou in Whose Presence,” would just hit the spot at just the right time. “The Lord is My Shepherd” was another work that I found to be helpful in this healing process.” The various messages of the music provided different levels of healing for the members. The members want to feel free to worship through their pain, as stated by participant nineteen, “All forms of music since that incident helps us continue the healing process. It was critical to our being able to continue our worship service participation and move forward to healing, not hate.” The church members are in various stages of grief and healing; therefore, the music must be able to need the needs on various levels as stated by participant 23, “This has been very important because sometimes all we need is the right musical selection, and our minister of music is excellent at adjusting the music to what is needed.” The power of music has proven to help individuals move through their trials and tribulations. Music can make us cry, laugh, and joyful.

Interview Question 3: What were some ways that the minister of music helped the congregation through the healing process, musically and non-musical?

Participants Responses:

- Participant 1. Musically, again this was done through song selection. Non-musically, he was always present. Being a member of the spiritual family, we also recognized that he was also going through this with us.
- Participant 2. Honestly, details around this time are somewhat of a blur. As an officer of the church at the time, I had to process what took place, provide support for the interim pastor and the families. I do know that the Minister of Music's continued presence and support was evident.
- Participant 3. The minister of music was present at the church immediately following the tragedy, during the funerals and the worship experience. His presence was the source of comfort because he played music, which soothed the wounded hearts. He also spoke to members and visitors and offered words of hope and peace. Perhaps because the music ministered to him first and subsequently, he could minister to those in need and pain.
- Participant 4. He was always visible, speaking with the members of the congregation. There were times I requested a particular song, and he granted my request. Bro. Singleton has a kind demeanor.
- Participant 5. Our minister of music has a calm spirit. He always greets you with a smile and a kind word. He seemed to have a 6th sense about what songs we needed. Sometimes when I went to church, and my heart was heavy, the choir would sing a song that expressed just how I was feeling. Afterward, I felt better.
- Participant 6. A key and important factor was showing up every time and skillfully managing the tone and moments of intense emotions. I was able to adjust to rapidly changing situations.
- Participant 7. The minister of music was ALWAYS present and ready even while experiencing loss as well. The minister of music was holding the church family together. The minister of music was guidance and support.
- Participant 8. He was always available to victims and families to play the keyboard for them even when the choir did not participate. He

- traveled out of town with the pastor for speaking engagements to provide his services.
- Participant 9. Our minister of music, just his presence alone and playing softly, made it much better for me. I knew that he felt our pain because he, too, was hurting.
- Participant 10. The minister of music was there not only to play for the services, but he offered words of encouragement and shared fond memories of the victims.
- Participant 11. He was there for the worst. He was there during the funerals. He had to be mindful of how the tragedy affected him and still do his job of comforting others. He knew the members that were killed. He was there for us, not himself. He had to be on point always.
- Participant 12. Wayne helped bridge generational/cultural differences by selecting a balance of musical styles for every service, which has a multi-generational appeal. Wayne presented the spiritual context of all music to the congregation in terms through which all generational and cultural perspectives can understand, relate, and connect with God.
- Participant 13. The minister of music helped by just being present. Being there to use his hands and that pipe organ to pour out music that gave us hope. The minister of music was also very engaging with the church members of his church family. He lost people he knew very well, so I think that we all just needed each other during that tragedy.
- Participant 14. Wayne has this incredible gift of discernment that allows him to select the correct songs for our services. He has a patient, calm demeanor that transcends his connection to God.
- Participant 15. Minister of Music helped set the atmosphere on Sundays by being observant of the congregation. He knew exactly what song to play!!! Personally, the same songs I sang for years, but during this time, the words really hit home and carried me throughout the week.
- Participant 16. Music was everything, not too sad nor too happy, but it had to be just right, and Mr. Wayne Singleton provided that.
- Participant 17. Just being present is one way. He seems to be always there when the church needs him. Second, to reiterate what I said in another section, he understands the pulse of the church by attending the

business meetings. My last comment here relates to his talents. To use music to help in a healing process, one must know a variety of styles of music to reach traditional and contemporary worshippers. This minister of music can play classical pieces, traditional hymns/spirituals, and contemporary gospel music. For one to use music in a healing process, one must know diverse styles of music to reach diverse worshippers.

- Participant 18. He helped with the musical selections that were chosen by him.
- Participant 19. Minister of Music Wayne Singleton showed a great deal of respect while we were “going through.” He was very understanding when choir members were affected during the singing of certain songs. He also realized that some members were unable to enter the hall where the tragedy occurred and made sure to provide access to the sanctuary that eliminated the need to view or enter this area.
- Participant 20. He selected songs that would soothe and move the congregation.
- Participant 21. Selections of hymns; interactions with congregants after services.
- Participant 22. He was at every funeral and an integral part of every worship service. His calm and comforting nature reassured the congregation and brought them together.
- Participant 23. He ensures we have music at all church events that is appropriate; he attends church meetings; supports the church financially, and participates in volunteer events.
- Participant 24. First and foremost, through prayer and ongoing support of the leadership, congregation, and community, ensured that the music was relevant and ministered to the spiritual and overall well-being of the congregation.

As I reviewed the responses from question three, one of the main themes that stood out is that my presence is deemed valuable to the congregation. The participants utilized terms such as the presence, visible, greet, showing up, always present, being there, just being present, and support. As a ministry leader, my philosophy is that I cannot lead from behind. The role of the minister of music is not a job; it is a ministry. Philippians 2:4 states, “Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.” My music ministry is based on this

scripture. My presence has allowed me to connect with the congregation while providing support through encouragement and music.

There is an overwhelming response to the musical selections providing comfort and peace. The correlation between music and comfort is amazing. Many people attend worship services seeking answers to their personal trials and tribulations. They may find solace through the sermon or music. The role of the minister of music is to prepare the hearts and minds of the worshiper to receive the word of God. Zack Hicks describes the worship leader in this manner, “Worship pastors are curators. Starting with architecture of service, worship curators creatively fill that space with the right elements arranged in the right way. A curator brings a variety of perspectives to bear on the selection and presentation of worship materials.”¹⁰¹ As the curator, I must be able to assess the services and the needs of the congregation. The fruits of my labor is a worship experience that meets the needs of those in attendance.

The Presence and Demeanor of the Minister of Music

As the minister of music, my presence is essential to the vitality of the music ministry. Members of the church and ministry team need someone who is committed and willing to dedicate his/her life to the calling, which they were called. The minister of music must be a servant-leader. Philippians 2:1-4 states the qualities of a good leader, “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others.” It is important display a Christ-like character. As I lead the music

¹⁰¹ Hicks, 175.

ministry, others must see Christ in me; as stated in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”

Interview question three asked the participants how the minister of music helped them through the healing process. Participant 1 elaborated, “Musically, again, this was done through song selection. Non-musically, he was always present. Being a member of the spiritual family, we also recognized that he was also going through this with us.” Participant 3 stated, “The minister of music was present at the church immediately following the tragedy, during the funerals and the worship experience. His presence was the source of comfort because he played music, which soothed the wounded hearts. He also spoke to members and visitors and offered words of hope and peace. Perhaps because the music ministered to him first and subsequently, he could minister to those in need and pain.” The minister of music must earn the respect of the congregation by showing dedication and forming relationships with members, as mentioned by participant four, “He was always visible, speaking with the members of the congregation. There were times I requested a particular song, and he granted my request. Bro. Singleton has a kind demeanor.” Due to my willingness to connect with the members, I am able to receive feedback regarding the music; and the members feel comfortable requesting their favorite song. I make a note of the request, and I ensure the members that I will make it a point to add their requested song to the schedule.

During and after the tragedy, emotions were at a peak, which was stressful at times. Although I may have been stressed, I kept my composure as I know the ministry was dependent on my leadership. Participant 5 stated, “Our minister of music has a calm spirit. He always greets you with a smile and a kind word. He seemed to have a 6th sense about what songs we needed. Sometimes when I went to church, and my heart was heavy, the choir would sing a song

that expressed just how I was feeling. Afterward, I felt better.” I rely on Proverbs 3:5-6 during stressful times, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”

The church depends on the presence of the pastor and minister of music. Their consistent presence shows a commitment to the ministry. Participant 17 share their thoughts regarding the presence of the minister of music, “Just being present is one way. He seems to be always there when the church needs him. Second, to reiterate what I said in another section, he understands the pulse of the church by attending the business meetings. My last comment here relates to his talents. To use music to help in a healing process, one must know a variety of styles of music to reach traditional and contemporary worshippers. This minister of music can play classical pieces, traditional hymns/spirituals, and contemporary gospel music. For one to use music in a healing process, one must know diverse styles of music to reach diverse worshipers.” Participant 11 elaborates more on the presence of the minister of music, “He was there for the worst. He was there during the funerals. He had to be mindful of how the tragedy affected him and still do his job of comforting others. He knew the members that were killed. He was there for us, not himself. He had to be on point always.” My commitment as minister of music allows me to bond with the members as we worship together.

My passion to serve the people of God allows me to serve with gladness. My worship should reflect my joy, and gratefulness to God. As the minister of music, I must cultivate the atmosphere for worship because worship is a journey of enjoying the fulness of the Lord.

Interview Question 4: What feelings did you experience about the worship services prior to the tragedy and following the tragedy? The responses from this question indicated the following key terms: worship, tragedy, experience, service, church, music, God, family.

Participants Responses:

- Participant 1. Prior to the tragedy, the worship services were part of my routine and would give me something to look forward to for the week ahead and keep me grounded. Following the tragedy, I needed the worship services to help me stay connected to my church family and to draw hope, encouragement, and reassurance that we would be ok.
- Participant 2. The intake of the word is definitely more focused after the tragedy. I don't take for granted my presence, and every phrase my mother and grandmother used to say about the church and God I truly understand now. I feel my spiritual growth and let the music minister to my heart and soul. For me, those nine people did not die in vain. The pain of the survivors and everyone's family is constantly on my mind. I cry more; I rejoice more, I appreciate life and peace of mind more. My worship experience is more "real." I thank God more because it could have been my immediate family or me. There is so much to be grateful for and much less to be angry about....All of that makes my worship experience more personal and needed.
- Participant 3. The pain of grief of loss was clear before worship services. However, after the worship experience, I often felt a sense of peace and comfort because of the opportunity to worship and listen to the word of God.
- Participant 4. Before the tragedy, I didn't have any issues with going to church. Afterward, I was very anxious about going. I look around frequently and have to calm myself down so I can enjoy the worship experience. The music plays a major role in that calming effect.
- Participant 5. Worship services continue to provide an atmosphere for comfort and healing. The music provides the foundation for this process.
- Participant 6. They were always spirit-filled.
- Participant 7. Because I think the minister of music is one of the best musicians I have heard, I did not experience a different feeling from before and after. He is a talented musician and a great person.
- Participant 8. I experienced warmth and peace and love before and after the tragedy.

- Participant 9. I have felt worship was the one place I could go to reassure me that everything was going to be all right. After the tragedy, I had a hard time not thinking that we are not safe anywhere you go.
- Participant 10. My experiences before the tragedy was a happy family worshipping together. After the tragedy, we mourned together. Somehow, we were closer. It could have been any one of us at the church on the day of the killings.
- Participant 11. I quote Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for thou will be comforted." There is comfort in the Lord for those who are mourning the tragedy. Calling on him in our times of need is not acting on weakness, it is showing that our trust is in Him and that He is whom we seek out in our times of grief.
- Participant 12. Before the tragedy, my feelings toward worship experience was that I needed a little more of something. I cannot explain it. After the tragedy, my feelings became happy, sad, angry, confused. I experienced so many feelings that I just let myself go through the emotions that I was dealing with.
- Participant 13. Prior to the tragedy, services were upbeat and positive. After the tragedy, there seemed to be a strong need for healing and understanding during worship services.
- Participant 14. After the tragedy, I feel my worship experience has changed drastically, going through this life-changing event. I'm focused more on the word of God. I was often reflecting on how I got over and will continue to grow.
- Participant 15. The worship services were good before the tragedy. My wife and I utilized Wayne as our minister of music for our wedding, one year before the tragedy, and he was great.
- Participant 16. After the tragedy, it was so different, because the church went from 125- 200 people a service to 400-500 every Sunday.
- Participant 17. Before the tragedy, the worship was just a worship service following the format of the order of worship that I remember doing since I was a child, which was many decades ago. Non-members were always welcomed. I felt safe. Post-tragedy, we still follow the same order of service. Non-members are still welcomed, but my feeling of safety is relative. While enjoying the music and other parts of the service, there is another level that has penetrated our worship experience. I was uncomfortable closing my eyes during

the prayer. There is a uniformed police officer who circulates on the different levels of the church during the service, along with members of the Emanuel security team. They were vigilant, while members were watching non-members for unusual behavior. At times I am a little on edge compared to Pre-tragedy.

- Participant 18. The worship service supported me in my personal grief as I had the loss of my 23-year-old son and was in a suicidal state of mind after the loss of my sister and mother.
- Participant 19. For the past forty-plus years, I have participated in and attended worship service with great expectations for a tremendous and inspiring worship experience. That has continued to this present time. God is good, and blessings abound. Be blessed.
- Participant 20. I have always enjoyed my worship experience. Music has always been an important part of the experience. Music sets the tone for the service.
- Participant 21. Prior to the tragedy and after my experiences were about the same.
- Participant 22. The services were joyful after the addition of our minister of music came to the church. The message was already good, but the choirs began to sing differently and added so much more to the worship service.
- Participant 23. I had a sense of security and trust before the tragedy that I do not have now when I am in service. Always watchful of visitors.
- Participant 24. Ministry at Mother Emanuel has always been uplifting. After the tragedy, it was critical to continue the tradition, but also ensure the music sought to provide words that promoted healing and spiritual renewal.

To further demonstrate the significance of the role of the minister of music, it is essential to gauge the worship service before the tragedy and afterward. Before the tragedy, the worship service at Mother Emanuel was in an upswing, as the music ministry was gaining momentum. A few of the participants shared that the atmosphere was joyful, upbeat, and positive. Music continued to be one of the favorite elements of the worship service. As expected, the majority of the responses focus on the services after the tragedy. The church was still in shock, hearts

broken, and we had to find solace through this tragic event. We were all looking for answers, and we had to rely on our faith. As the minister of music, I needed to make sure that the music ministry provided music that would bring comfort, healing, and peace to the members as well as myself.

While trying to meet the needs of the church and the music ministry, I needed to seek healing, comfort, and peace. During my time away from the church, I often sat in my home, trying to make sense of the tragic event. I was giving of myself, and now I needed to be replenished. Psalm 29:11 states, “The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.” As I reminisced over the funerals, my emotions took over, and I cried out to God. I felt the pain of the family members and church family. I relied on my faith in Jesus, knowing that He is always with us. Nekola said it best, “Music functions in congregational worship in many ways: as a vehicle for content, a site of sensory engagement, a means of connection to tradition, a place for personal expression and a channel for emotion. For still others of us, music in worship enables not only human ritual and social connection but also our access to the Divine.”¹⁰² As we continue this journey through the healing process, we must remember that God’s grace will bring us peace. My love and passion for the church is apparent to the members of Mother Emanuel. Romans 12:10 states, Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.” The congregation expects me to give of myself, as I pursue God’s glory and not my own.

¹⁰² Nekola, Anna E. and Thomas Wagner. *Congregational Music-Making and Community in a Mediated Age*. New ed. London: Routledge, 2016;2015;. doi:10.4324/9781315573434.

The Worship Services: Then and Now

Before the tragedy of June 17, 2015, the worship services were lively and full of spirit. The sermon and music provided an atmosphere of worship. Research question four inquired about the participants feeling regarding the services prior to and after the tragedy. Participant 2 shared their experience, “The intake of the word is definitely more focused after the tragedy. I don't take for granted my presence, and every phrase my mother and grandmother used to say about the church and God I truly understand now. I feel my spiritual growth and let the music minister to my heart and soul. For me, those nine people did not die in vain. The pain of the survivors and everyone's family is constantly on my mind. I cry more; I rejoice more, I appreciate life and peace of mind more. My worship experience is more “real.” I thank God more because it could have been my immediate family or me. There is so much to be grateful for and much less to be angry about...All of that makes my worship experience more personal and needed.” Participant 10 elaborated on the culture of the church, “My experiences before the tragedy was a happy family worshipping together. After the tragedy, we mourned together. Somehow, we were closer. It could have been any one of us at the church on the day of the killings.” Participant 13 shared the same sentiment, “Prior to the tragedy, services were upbeat and positive. After the tragedy, there seemed to be a strong need for healing and understanding during worship services.”

Before the tragedy, the ministry of Mother Emanuel was progressing, and the services were consistent, and the spirit of the Lord was present. Following the tragedy, there were many elements that changed, such as the presence of security officers and the increase in attendance. Participant 16 stated, “After the tragedy, it was so different because the church went from 125-200 people a service to 400-500 every Sunday.” Participant 17 shared, “Before the tragedy, the

worship was just a worship service following the format of the order of worship that I remember doing since I was a child, which was many decades ago. Non-members were always welcomed. I felt safe. Post-tragedy, we still follow the same order of service. Non-members are still welcomed, but my feeling of safety is relative. While enjoying the music and other parts of the service, there is another level that has penetrated our worship experience. I was uncomfortable closing my eyes during the prayer. There is a uniformed police officer who circulates on the different levels of the church during the service, along with members of the Emanuel security team. They were vigilant, while members were watching non-members for unusual behavior. At times I am a little on edge compared to Pre-tragedy.”

After the tragedy, some members were uncomfortable sitting a church with heightened security; some were unable to close their eyes during the prayers. Participant 23 shared, “I had a sense of security and trust before the tragedy that I do not have now when I am in service. Always watchful of visitors.” The members are now sharing their church with the world. The traditions of Mother Emanuel are still prevalent, as stated by participant nineteen, “For the past forty-plus years, I have participated in and attended worship service with great expectations for a tremendous and inspiring worship experience. That has continued to this present time. God is good, and blessings abound. Be blessed.” The pains of this tragedy are still prevalent, and the healing still continues, as stated by participant fourteen, “After the tragedy, I feel my worship experience has changed drastically, going through this life-changing event. I'm focused more on the word of God. I was often reflecting on how I got over and will continue to grow.

Discussion

Research questions asked the following:

Research Question 1: In what non-musical way can the worship leader support the congregation after a shared-traumatic experience?

The information received from the participants indicate that there is strong belief that the worship leader supports the congregation through congregational engagement. Additionally, the worship leader supports the church through community outreach and programming. The results of the respondents align with hypothesis one.

Research Question 2: In what musical way can the worship leader minister to the congregation after a shared through a shared-traumatic experience in terms of worship engagement?

The information received from the participants indicate that the musical role is vital to the healing process. The selection of music weighed heavily with the participants as they found healing and comfort through music. The results of the respondents align with hypothesis two. The responses from the study participants indicates that

Summary

A phenomenological study was conducted to analyze the role of the minister of music, leading Mother Emanuel AME Church through the shared-traumatic event of June 17, 2015. The responses from the study participants indicate that the musical and non-musical role of the minister of music is essential to their healing and the entire ministry of the church. The willingness and ability of the minister of music were welcomed by the members, as it allowed him to interact with the members and share personal feelings and experiences.

The minister of music is responsible for crafting the worship services for the church by being prayerful while selecting the music that will be administered to the congregation. There is an expression of God's love and personal witness that is necessary to lead the ministry.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will present a summary of the study, purpose, and procedure utilized for this study. The findings are discussed and related to prior research. This chapter will describe the limitations of the study. Finally, chapter 5 concludes with the implications this study may have for ministers of music, worship leader, and others who find themselves faced with a shared-traumatic event.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to share the story of this shared-traumatic experience according to those who lived the terror; and through the eyes of the minister of music who led the congregation through such a tumultuous time at the Mother Emanuel AME Church located in Charleston, SC. The results of the survey provided personal feelings and thoughts from members of the church.

The Healing Process

The participants were asked in what ways did I help the congregation through the healing process. The responses overwhelmingly indicated that my role is essential to the healing process by selecting music that aided in healing during the worship service, being present for the church and families during an emotional time, being sensitive to the spiritual needs of the members. Cherry describes this pastor musician role as “a leader with developed skill and God-given responsibility for selecting and employing music in worship that will serve the actions of the liturgy while reflecting on theological, contextual, and cultural considerations, all for the ultimate purpose of glorifying God.”¹⁰³

¹⁰³Cherry, Constance. *The Worship Architect. A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2010, 180.

The results are consistent with Walsh's article, where he states, "When traumatic loss is suffered, we should not expect resolution in the sense of some complete, "once-and-for-all" getting over it. Thus, resilience should not be seen as readily getting "closure" on the experience or simply bouncing back and moving on. Recovery is a gradual process over time. Various facets of grief may alternate and reemerge with unexpected intensity, particularly with anniversaries and other nodal events."¹⁰⁴ In my role as the minister of music, members of the congregation viewed my role as essential in helping them move through the healing process.

The Tragedy

I will never forget June 17, 2015, the day in which nine members of Mother Emanuel AME Church were killed. It was the day that God directed me to go home instead of going to the church. This is the day that my role as minister of music shifted into uncharted waters. My emotions spun out of control because of the hurt and pain caused by the senseless killings. I had to compose myself and mentally plan for the first worship service after the tragedy, followed by the funerals in the subsequent days. I always read and hear about shootings, mass murders around the country through the news media; I never thought that I would experience a horrific event like this; in our church. I Corinthians 13:12 explains, "In the same way, we can see and understand only a little about God now, as if we were peering at his reflection in a poor mirror, but someday we are going to see him in his completeness, face-to-face. Now, all that I know is hazy and blurred, but then I will see everything clearly, just as clearly as God sees into my heart right now."¹⁰⁵ The journey has been rough as we try to peek through the fog for answers; someday, we will see with clarity.

¹⁰⁴Walsh, Froma. "Traumatic Loss and Major Disasters: Strengthening Family and Community Resilience." *Family Process* 46 (2): 207–27, 2007.

¹⁰⁵ I Corinthians 13:12.

Chronology of Events

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Wednesday, June 17, 2015, is a day that I will never forget. On the evening of June 17, I received a phone call informing me that there was a shooting outside of the church. A few minutes later, another phone call informed me that the shooting had taken place inside the church. My heart dropped. I immediately turned on the television, and the local news was at the church reporting on the shooting. As I watched the reporter interviewing the chief of police, I knew it was terrible because the church pastor, Rev. Clementa Pinckney, would have been the person speaking to the media. My cell phone rang continuously, informing me of those who were in the church during the shooting. One by one, I received the names of those who were killed and also those who survived. I fell to the floor, crying hysterically. I could not wrap my mind around someone entering the church and killing nine individuals. The national news media retrieved my name from the church website and flooded my cell phone. I wanted to go to the church just to put everything into perspective; however, I decided to remain at home. My wife and I stared at the television in disbelief until 3 a.m.

Thursday, June 18, 2015

After four hours of sleep, I continued watching the reports of the killings. The news showed hundreds of people gathering in front of the church, placing flowers on the sidewalk. Calhoun Street was blocked, which allowed the news media and community to gather. My wife and I decided to go to the church around noon. When we arrived, we had to wind our way through the crowd that had gathered. It seemed so unreal that something like this had taken place. A member of the church called my name, and we greeted each other with a hug. We were in earshot of a CNN reporter, and he asked if he could speak with me. The CNN representative

asked me about my role with the church and my relationship with those who were killed. I later consented to an interview with CNN, as most of the media were searching for someone who was a staff member of the church. Following the interview, members were gathering, and we all were trying to wrap our minds on the tragedy that rocked the world.

Friday, June 19, 2015

The African Methodist Church (A.M.E) leadership assumed the leadership of the church as the entire ministerial staff was murdered. Everyone was asking whether the church would be open for worship service on Sunday. As the church leadership met, the decision was made to have a worship service on Sunday. It was time to pull the choirs together and plan the music for the service. I knew that emotions would be high, and the service needed to be uplifting despite the hurt and pain we all were feeling. The choir members were notified and were ready to serve.

Saturday, June 20, 2015

Saturday was the first time the church leadership was allowed to enter the building since the killings. As I walked in the lower level, the entire room was spotless. I moved very slowly while staring at the spot where the shooting occurred. I then noticed the walls were riddled with bullet holes; all of the bullets were cut out of the wall, which made it easy to recognize. There were markings on the floor where the bullets hit. My heart was racing as I imagined what it was like just a few days ago. I will never forget what I felt upon entering this room. I went upstairs to the sanctuary and pulled the music for Sunday's service. My focus is now on leading the music ministry through this tumultuous time.

Sunday, June 21, 2015

It is Sunday morning, Father's Day. There were approximately 1200 people in attendance, not including those who stood outside for the entire worship service. The media was

everywhere. The choir was in place; the chatter of the congregation filled the sanctuary. As I sat at the organ, the reality of the tragedy finally hit me, and I became extremely nervous and anxious. I immediately prayed and asked God to help me through this service. After praying, I began playing a soft melody and transitioned to playing “Total Praise” by Richard Smallwood. While playing “Total Praise,” I heard some of the choir members and congregation singing along. As the song continued, members of the choir stood up, the congregation stood, and everyone sang this beautiful song together, which ended with shouts of adoration and praise from the entire church. At that point, we all felt God’s presence, and I knew we were going to be okay. Suddenly, Rev. Dr. Goff shouted, “Praise God From Whom All Blessing Flow,” and we were ready to worship!

The Funerals

We made it through the worship service, and now it was time to focus on the next phase of our journey; the preparation for the funerals. The church leadership and I met with the families a few days after the tragedy to set the schedule for the funerals. As expected, the meeting was emotional, and it was difficult to watch family members struggle with their grief. For many years I’ve served as a minister of music, and I never thought that I would be placed in a situation such as this.

June 25, 2015

Day one consisted of two funerals. Ms. Ethel Lance’s funeral was held at 11 am, and Rev. Sharonda Singleton’s funeral was held at 2 pm. Both funerals were held at different churches per the request of the family. The church leadership, congregation, and choir members rendered the service for Ms. Lance and immediately afterward made the journey to the next church to provide services for Rev. Sharonda Singleton. Both services were an emotional

rollercoaster as we shed tears of joy and pain. After each service, I met with choir members to see how they were feeling and encouraged them to pray for strength.

After the second service, it was time to shift gears as I had to prepare for the wake service of the church's pastor, Rev. Clementa Pinckney, which was scheduled for later in the evening. When I arrived at Mother Emanuel, the church was filled to capacity for the wake service. People were waiting in line to view the body of our beloved pastor. I prepared myself mentally to render the music while fighting back the tears. As I headed upstairs to the choir loft, Rev. Pinckney's two little girls ran to me and gave me a big hug; their hugs gave me the boost that I needed. After two hours, the wake service ended, and the first day was complete.

Friday, June 26, 2015

Today, we celebrate the life of the pastor, the Honorable Rev. Clementa C. Pinckney. The funeral was held at a local arena and drew national attention as President Barack Obama was the eulogist, and the funeral would be nationally televised. I was involved in the planning and coordinating of the church choir as well as the guest choir and musicians. Since President Obama was the eulogist, security was a significant concern. I was tasked with securing the names of all the choir participants, and musicians to submit to the Secret Service for security purposes. No one could enter the choir area without security clearance.

The arena was packed, and everyone was anxiously awaiting the arrival of President Obama. There was special seating for the families of the tragedy as well as for the Emanuel church family. The audience was filled with U.S. congressmen and state government officials. Rev. Pinckney loved a variety of music, and all of the choirs did a spectacular job. The musical selections included:

He's Done So Much For Me

How Excellent

Permit Now, Oh Lord: My Soult to Enter

My Help

When Peace Like a River

O God Our Help in Ages Past

My Hope Is Built

You've Got to Answer to Your Name

The musical selections touched the hearts of those in attendance and allowed us to celebrate the life of our pastor whom we loved dearly.

Saturday, June 27, 2015

Today, we have the funerals for Mrs. Cynthia Graham Hurd, Mrs. Susie Jackson, and Mr. Tywanza Sanders. Mrs. Hurd's funeral would be held at 11 am at Mother Emanuel, and the double funeral for Mrs. Susie Jackson would be held at 2 pm also at Mother Emanuel.

Again, the music ministry was prepared to sing and to comfort the families through music. The service was lively and uplifting as we celebrate the life of Ms. Hurd and her contributions to the community.

At 2 pm, we celebrated the life of an aunt and nephew, Mrs. Susie Jackson and Mr. Tywanza Sanders, in a double funeral. "Miss Susie," as we affectionately called her, was my oldest choir member and the oldest victim of the tragedy. This funeral was one of the hardest for me. I remembered, "Miss Susie" climbing the steps to the choir loft as she always attended choir rehearsal. I can recall when I assumed the duties of the minister of music; she offered me her support and invited me to call her for assistance.

The service was full of energy, as both “Miss Susie” and Tywanza were both full of life. This service affected the choir members as the majority of them sang with “Miss Susie” for more than 30 years, and now she is gone. They found solace in singing “Miss Susie” favorite songs. I began to see the tiredness of my choir members, as the last few days have been very stressful. It was time to go home and prepare for service in the morning. The work is all divine.

Sunday, June 28, 2015

One week ago, we held the first service after the tragedy. Again, the sanctuary was filled to capacity, and the music ministry was ready to serve. Emotions were still high, and we all were trying to cope with our feelings. I met with the choir members before the service; we all shared our feelings and found comfort in sharing our stories. We were blessed to have choir members from neighboring churches to join in with us; we needed the support. Once the service was over, we had to focus on the funeral of Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor that will be held at 1 p.m.

At 1 p.m., we celebrated the life of Rev. DePayne Middleton-Doctor, who served on the ministerial staff at the church. Rev. Doctor and I were asked to form a new teen choir, and we were in the process of recruiting new members. Rev. Doctor had a beautiful voice and sang like an angel. I was blessed to accompany her during a worship service. The funeral service was well attended, and the choir rendered music that was comforting to all. As the funeral ended, I had a few hours to prepare for the wake service for Sis. Myra Thompson.

Monday, June 29, 2015

The funeral for Sis. Myra Thompson was held at 11 AM. The music ministry was in place and ready to serve. Just like the other funerals, the church was filled with family and supporters. Sis. Myra and I worked together when the church hosted the ASANTE Children’s

Choir of Africa. The service included all of Sis. Myra's favorite songs: My Hope Is Built, The Lord is My Light, God Is, and Great is Thy Faithfulness and Blessed Assurance.

Tuesday, June 30, 2015

The final funeral service was held at 2 PM for Rev. Daniel Simmons. He served on the ministerial staff of Mother Emanuel. I had the privilege of serving Rev. Simmons' minister of music for seven years. He loved the hymns of the church. While serving in his ministry, Rev. Simmons tasked me with selecting the hymns and then submit them for his approval. He was a stickler for placing hymns in the proper place in the worship guide. It was his guidance and tutelage that increase my knowledge and love for hymns.

I returned home after the funeral, physically and mentally drained. I sat down in the family room, thinking about the funerals, and the tears began to fall. I had no more to give.

The Aftermath

We made it through the funerals; now, we have to manage the "new norm." The church is now on stage as more people visit on Sunday mornings. No longer can the members sit on their special pew because of the crowd. We now have uniformed officers sitting in the worship service, along with security cameras covering the entire campus. We now sit in a sanctuary on high alert. The church is consistently in the media. How, then, can we worship? As the minister of music, I needed to keep the music as lively as possible and make sure that we direct our praise to God; and ensure that the choir members were doing well. This journey is just beginning as the emotional rollercoaster still has a few more turns as we prepare for the upcoming trial.

The Trial

The trial of the killer began on December 7, 2016. Again, the church is the center of attention. The emotions of the families and church membership as the wounds are reopened.

During this period, it was essential to gear the music that strengthens faith and assurance. It was my job to make sure to avoid distractions and keep the ministry on a regular rehearsal; while allowing those who needed to step away to do so.

Personal Reflections

Eighteen months after the murders of the “Emanuel Nine,” the families, the congregation found themselves preparing for the murder trial. The process of the trial felt like someone was pouring salt on an open wound. It felt as if we never moved away from June 17, 2015. I had the opportunity to attend the trial, but I declined. It was stressful reading about the trial in the newspaper and seeing the reports on the television.

As the trial progressed, we heard about the horrific crime scene inside the church. We heard the testimonies of the survivors who witnessed the killings and faced the gunman. The story of how the gunman sat beside the pastor during the hour-long bible study session is unfathomable. The attendees were holding hands in a circle while praying. Immediately after the prayer, the gunman begins his tirade of shooting the members as they tried to run. We heard of the number of shots that riddled the building and the number of bullets that hit each victim. I was jolted when I heard that the oldest victim, my 87-year-old choir member, had received the most shots. The pain that we felt during the tragedy hurts to the core. We all were angry, hurt, shocked. Although I was able to function, it felt as if I were in a trance.

Through God’s grace and mercy, I was able to fulfill my role as the minister of music during this period. Our wounds were reopened, and yet, we still had a reason to give God praise. We felt broken, but we know that God is a healer. We felt torn, but we know God is the potter, and we are the clay, and he will put us back together again. Psalm 30:5 says, “For his anger is

but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.” Through this tragedy, we will have joy.

The members of Mother Emanuel AME Church have encountered every feeling imaginable from this horrific event of June 17, 2015. Through this tragedy, the church family has drawn closer, and our faith has become stronger. We often sing this familiar hymns “My Hope Is Built” as our song of victory, for we know that Christ is the solid rock that we must lean on in times of trouble.

Limitations of the Study

As with any research study, there are some limitations. For this phenomenological study, it was necessary to recruit members who were willing to share their feelings regarding the horrific killings of the pastor and the entire ministerial staff. Although the traumatic event occurred five years ago, there is a constant reminder as they continuously see the area where the killings took place. The freshness of death is always present.

The interviews were planned to be done in-person. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the format was changed to an on-line survey to comply with social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines.

Post Shared Traumatic Worship Experience

June 17, 2020, will mark the 5th anniversary of the “Emanuel 9.” Since that tragic day, the culture of the church has changed. We now have the presence of uniformed police officers on the campus, along with the in-house security. Upon entering the sanctuary, bags are subjected to be searched. There are multiple cameras inside and outside of the church. We all had to adjust to the changes. Some members experienced anxiety when sitting in the sanctuary, unable to close their eyes during the prayer, fearing that a shooter will enter the sanctuary. The influx of

visitors has affected the worship culture; the members are now sharing their church with the world. Members may not be able to sit on the pew where they sat for years; it is now the “new normal.” Despite the cultural change, we must continue to worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness.

The following worship services after the tragedy were very emotional as the church was still processing the tragedy and the loss of its members. As the minister of music, it was my task to ensure to select music that would be uplifting as we begin the journey through the healing process. “Sharing of musical leadership beautifies and encourages the congregation’s voice and sends the message, “we are in this together.” The choir and congregation may have different roles but share a unified responsibility for singing in worship.”¹⁰⁶ My responsibilities go beyond playing the organ on Sunday; when I am away from the visible church, I am planning and preparing the music to the congregation in worship.

The church is in the first stage of healing, where we were trying to comfort each other. It was important for the congregation to experience the presence of God despite how they were feeling. When you come to Mother Emanuel, you can expect to feel the presence of God, and a warm embrace from its members. It is important for everyone that attends the service to bring an open heart and be a willing vessel of God. For years, this church has been affected by hate crimes, and racial torment and has managed to survive. Moreover, with this tragedy, the church will survive. Scheer believes the relationship between the worship leader and the congregation produces a win-win for the ministry. Miller states, “By deciding which songs the local church sings, a worship leader is exercising his pastoral responsibility. He must discern the doctrines he is teaching to whomever he is leading and shepherd them into a greater understanding of gospel

¹⁰⁶ Scheer, Greg. “The Church’s “Big” Choir.” *The Choral Journal* 56, no. 5 (12, 2015): 89-93.

truth.”¹⁰⁷ As the minister of music, I must continue to provide support for the congregation by ensuring that the pastor and I are in sync as we plan the worship service for the betterment of the church. “By deciding which songs, the local church sings, a worship leader is exercising his pastoral responsibility. He must discern the doctrines he is teaching to whomever he is leading and shepherd them into a greater understanding of gospel truth.”¹⁰⁸

Forgiveness and Redemption

On June 19, 2015, the bond hearing was held for the gunman. Family members of the victims were present and were allowed to address the gunman. Some family members forgave the killer for his heinous act, while others were still grappling with their emotions of the tragedy. The message of forgiveness quickly spread throughout Charleston and the world. The killer wanted to start a race war and instead united the community and made it stronger. As a result of the killing of the “Emanuel Nine,” the “Hate Won’t Win” movement was created to honor the victims of the tragedy and other victims of hate crimes.

The act of forgiveness is essential to the healing process, especially during this traumatic event. We are reminded in Luke 17:3-4, “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”¹⁰⁹ The members of the families took the first step toward their healing process by forgiving someone that showed no malice for killing nine innocent people. When we choose to forgive, we are releasing the negative hold that may have toward someone and begin the healing process.

¹⁰⁷ Miller, Stephen. *Worship Leaders-We Are Not Rock Stars*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013. P. 59.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 59.

¹⁰⁹ Holy Bible, Luke 17:3-4

Called to Serve

Serving as Minister of Music of the historic Mother Emanuel AME Church has provided an excellent for spiritual growth. The minister of music is an appointed position made by the pastor. , the pastor and I must be in sync as it pertains to the musical and non-musical role.

The book of Colossians reminds us, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”¹¹⁰ In order to be a successful ministry leader, one must first learn to follow leadership. If the pastor and I are not on the same page, the ministry is destined for trouble. As one of the leaders in the church, I function as the worship planner to help lead the worship service so that the congregation experiences God’s presence in powerful ways through singing and receiving the word of God.

The majority of my non-musical role takes place behind the scenes. My administrative duties include managing the musicians, maintaining the CCLI license for the music performed in the worship service changing the bell tones in the chime system, and serving as the back-up sound technician. The church needs a minister of music who is dedicated and committed to serving. Kauflin explains the power of leadership, “Good leaders draw our attention to what’s most important. They make choices that help us focus. That means I take responsibility for what people are getting out of a song and don’t assume everyone is equally engaged or aware of what they should be thinking about. I try to minimize distractions and clear up confusion.”¹¹¹ The non-musical components consist of providing congregational leadership. My involvement encompasses serving the church through its community outreach through preparation for various

¹¹⁰ Holy Bible. Colossians 3:16-17 English Standard Version (ESV)

¹¹¹ Kauflin, 72.

church programs such as vacation Bible school, planning the annual concert dedicated to the memory of the “Emanuel Nine.” There are times when I have to make a decision that may not be popular; my goal is to please God. When I please God, the ministry will be elevated.

The late Rev. Clementa Pinckney hired me in 2009 as minister of music at Mother Emanuel; he gave the charge of enhancing the music. My philosophy as a minister of music is for everyone who listens to my music to hear something that touches their heart and draw them closer to God. I desire that the congregation receives something from the service that enhances their relationship with God. John Witvliet said it best, “What the church needs most is not another hymnal, larger choirs, more technology, a revised prayer book, or another set of published scripts. What the church needs most is discerning, prayerful, joyous people who treat their work as worship planners and leaders as a holy, pastoral calling.”¹¹² The anointing makes the difference when ministering to God’s people.

It is my responsibility to plan the music for all genres. Everyone who attends the worship service should be able to hear a variety of music that includes: hymns, anthems, gospel music, and contemporary music. As we begin the service with the processional, the music should set the tone of the service. Van Opstal shares her expertise, “Congregational worship is critical. It is not merely about singing songs; it is the doxology to music, sermon to a song.”¹¹³ I have the option of changing the placement of the music based on the mood of the service. Discernment is a component of serving as a minister of music.

Following the service, I speak with the choir members and fellowship with the church members and visitors. I love to hear from the members when they say they enjoyed the music;

¹¹² Witvliet, 248.

¹¹³ Van Opstal, 47.

and request a particular song. This feedback is encouraging as I feel that the music ministry is on track in leading and aiding others in worship. The memory of the “Emanuel 9” is always in our hearts; we are still in the healing process. I desire to continue to lead this congregation as God leads me.

Recommendations for Future Research

Due to the tragedy of June 17, 2015, my administrative duties increased. The additional responsibilities included event planning at Mother Emanuel and throughout the community. It was vital to spend more time planning the music for the worship services to ensure that the music is theologically sound and invokes the presence of worship to a congregation that is still grieving and healing. Additionally, I spent more time planning the rehearsals around the busy schedule of the church. The worship leader must communicate with the entire music ministry to ensure that everyone receives the information promptly. There is a need for training worship leaders and ministers of music to develop administrative skills to assist the ministry of the church.

For the next generation of worship leaders, one must be dedicated and committed to the calling of serving others. The role of the worship leader is more than showing up on Sunday. One must focus on the needs of the entire church ministry. It is a good practice to speak to the members form relationships while learning the culture of the church. My commitment to serving God and the members placed me in a position to lead when the church during its most difficult times. As worship leaders, we are called to serve.

Conclusion

One never expects to experience a traumatic event such as the event that took place on June 17, 2015, at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church. As the minister of music, my leadership

ability was tested as I was suddenly faced with a church in turmoil. Not only was I responsible for the music ministry of the church, but it was also my job to serve the members of the congregation by providing support as a shepherd. Developing meaningful relationships with the members allows them to see my concern for their well-being. My role includes a variety of functions and activities that allow the members to feel more comfortable, increasing their likelihood of establishing strong relationship with each other. As a result, the right hymns or songs and I am able to connect with members and non-members.

My management skills are critical to my success in leading worship. I am charged with bringing the congregants together through music to represent the church throughout the community. It is customary for the congregations to build strong relationship with the pastor, worship leaders, ministers of music help promote and strengthen the bond.

Within the ministry, the minister of music should make sure that certain elements are in place to enhance the worship experience. The top priority is that God must always be the center and focus of worship. When rendering songs to God, we must remember that we are not singing about Him but singing to Him; there is a difference. When we sing to God, He recognizes our sincerity and will pour out His Spirit among us.

I believe that God has called me to serve in the capacity of minister of music, and planted me in Mother Emanuel. God prepared me to lead this ministry through a traumatic experience that could not fathom. The shared-traumatic event taught showed me that life is precious and should not be taken for granted.

Through the focus on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group, the research may construct the universal meaning of the event, situation, or experience and arrive

at a more profound understanding of the phenomenon. In this regard, the researcher AS
WORSHIP LEADER should conclude with the following thought:

The nature of the commonality of a lived experience through corporate worship post-
shooting AND post-shooting events is evident as told through the lens of the minister of music.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

April 1, 2020

Wayne Singleton

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-29 Shared-Traumatic Experience and The Role of the Minister of Music: A Case Study of Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Dear Wayne Singleton, Paul Rumrill:

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

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

Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

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

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

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

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office