

Liberty University

School of Music

**Understanding the Characteristics of the Artistic Temperament
in a Local Church Through the Eyes of the Choir Members and the Lens of Scripture:
A Case Study**

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Faculty of Liberty University School of Music
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Ph.D. in Christian Worship

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Disclaimer Page

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in this dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university. I remain solely responsible for the content of this thesis.

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Abstract

Madness has long been associated with musical geniuses, known as temperamental musicians with uncomfortable mood swings that often border on manic depressive episodes. Secular studies show parallels between musicians with an artistic temperament (AT) and bipolar/manic depressive disorders. Many church choir members and church leaders expect church music directors to be more expressive, but if negative characteristics associated with an artistic temperament (AT) emerge during rehearsals, such as anger or moodiness, conflict is inevitable. This is a phenomenological qualitative study of the characteristics associated with AT in a local church through the lens of Scripture. The purpose of this research is to raise awareness of possible AT in the church and to increase knowledge and understanding of any negative traits associated with AT. Recent theological differences in the United Methodist Church created conflict and exacerbated friction in one local church that resulted in the hiring of five different music directors in as many years. Six choir members, two church leaders, and two former pastors were interviewed to see if the choir directors displayed any behaviors associated with AT. Many of the negative traits associated with AT emerged in the participants' stories when interviewed which do not contradict each other. Scripture did not seem to be frequently implemented nor were there planned strategies used to maintain a positive environment. One of the five music directors who had an obvious display of temper was given the opportunity to obtain mental health counseling but refused and resigned. More research is needed by both mental health professionals and Christian worship educators to help church leaders understand and identify the negative traits associated with AT. Also, it is important for music directors to become self-aware of possible traits of AT and seek counseling or medical help to effectively minister and lead worship in the churches they serve.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Conflict is inevitable when professional musicians display any of the mildly manic traits attributed to an artistic temperament (AT). AT is widely accepted as normal behavior that accompanies artistic geniuses in the secular world. Music history books are filled with examples of famous composers behaving badly. Such episodic displays of temperamental extremes seem to be glossed over as simply part of what is expected of creatives and any quirkiness is also overlooked. However, bad behavior such as hostility, rudeness, or bullying on any level threatens the goals of organizations, especially the ministry of the church.

Within the church, bad behavior displayed by musicians is not compatible with scriptural teachings. Music directors are often unaware of how their AT behavior is perceived by the choir, keyboardist, or praise team members. Aristotle's famous quote, "Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom," parallels Solomon's inspired words: "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding" (Prov. 3:13, New International Version). Many evangelical Christians believe Scripture holds standard protocols for behavior and relationships in the church, but studies related to the negative behavioral traits of AT in the church are limited in scholarly research. It is important for church musicians and church leaders to understand the unfavorable traits of AT to be able to identify it personally or to see the symptoms of AT in those whom they hire. From the lived experiences of the choir members, this phenomenological case study research titled, "Understanding the Characteristics of the Artistic Temperament in a Local Church Through the Eyes of the Choir Members" provides Christians with an amplified awareness of AT, and an increased understanding that AT in a music leader is not the problem, but rather, how one manages traits associated with AT.

This chapter includes an explanation of the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the study's rationale, and the main research question and sub-questions as part of a qualitative phenomenological study. The researcher's methodology adds the lens of Scripture and a Heideggerian theoretical framework including a Biblical worldview. This chapter also includes a description of the population and the significance and relevance of the study to contribute to the existing knowledge of AT. Key terms are defined in this chapter followed by assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and a description of the researcher.

Background, Context, and Theoretical Framework

Recently, a large South Georgia United Methodist Church experienced a tumultuous time having hired five different music directors over a period of five years. Three of the music directors sought employment elsewhere and two were fired. While the evidence does not prove conclusively that these music directors suffered from traits associated with AT, one must wonder if they exhibited some of AT's negative traits. This study explores the lived experiences of the choir members involved in this church throughout the transitioning of the five music directors to discover if there were negative traits exhibited that could be attributed to AT.

Context for the Study

In the local church included in this study, the hiring of church staff other than the pastor is done by the church Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC). It is apparent that during the interview process for new music hires, AT is not considered as an issue to be explored. This study suggests that PPRC committee members need to understand the body of secular knowledge surrounding negative traits associated with AT. Without an awareness of this phenomenon, many churches, like this one, will handle AT conflicts in much the same manner as a court of law in which a musician is brought in and asked, "Why did you react with such anger by slamming

doors and screaming insults?” or, “By what authority did you start this petition to have the senior pastor fired?” Such experiences are known to have happened at the church in this phenomenological case study. This study can become a resource to assist PPRC or similar Human Resource (HR) committees in looking for signs of potential traits associated with AT in music applicants for future positions in the church.

Theoretical Framework

This researcher endeavors to take a Heideggerian approach and utilize the hermeneutic circle to focus on what emerges from the lens of the choir’s experiences pertaining to the studied phenomenon of AT. Katarzyna Peoples explains that “in hermeneutic phenomenology, there is a focus on the interaction between the researcher and the data. Each participant’s experiences are translated through the researcher by comparison and contrast of accounts with other participants.”¹ The choir members at this church have experiences to share; therefore, their data is collected by the researcher who anticipates probable modification of understanding due to the hermeneutic circle. As a phenomenological case study, the researcher uses a journaling process and revises experiences, assumptions, and interpretations with follow-up interviews.² The purpose of this study is to view the traits of AT and concerns through the lens of the choir member who has experienced these tumultuous years, so that the church leaders and the church at large may better understand the essence of AT and how it emerges within church creatives.

Understanding how certain known traits of AT are perceived by choir members will also benefit the growth and development of the music director(s) and possibly other church musicians

¹ Katarzyna Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation, A Step-by-Step Guide* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2021), 64–65.

² Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 65.

who exhibit similar emotional traits of AT, such as deep-seated anger and mood swings. Some choir members in this church may have preconceived concepts of AT that are not easily overcome; thus, the Heideggerian approach is necessary. With this approach, one takes a step back with each story to reassess overall data so that there is continuous improvement on the part of the researcher to understand choir member experiences.

An important framework in this study is a biblical worldview through the lens of scriptural truth. Paul tells Timothy that “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” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Scripture’s mandates must be applied to the lives of every believer; thus, this study would be incomplete without comparing how the Bible addresses one’s behavior and responses. The Apostle John says, “We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen” (1 John 4:19–20). Some issues that lead to conflict involve disagreements, but these disagreements can lead to intolerance of a person or downright dislike. Living a life of love as Christ did demands certain behaviors, mandating the proper management of moods and emotions. This is where Scripture can be an overriding corrective power in the believer’s life, AT or no AT.

Scripture can be relied upon to manage issues of one’s heart, which is the seat of all emotion. This researcher believes that along with Christian counseling, Scripture’s truth as corrective measures for symptoms of AT can help artists develop better management of AT’s symptoms. Only God can change a heart by the power of the Holy Spirit working within it, and fortunately, the church in this case study holds to Wesleyan theology and believes in this power that can change people.

Charles Wesley provides the evidence of life-changing experiences in a letter to his brother John. He writes, “Having already seen with my own eyes more than one hundred witnesses of that everlasting truth, ‘Everyone that believeth hath peace with God; and is freed from sin and is in Christ a new creature.’”³ Through the lens of scriptural truth applied to the modifications within the hermeneutical circle, comparing and contrasting the data of this study affects the overall perceptions and the final analysis. This study helps to discover if there is any evidence of scriptural influence during the choir members’ experiences in rehearsals or woven throughout their stories during the time in question.

Churches should be able to hire musicians with shared biblical worldviews, but this is not always the case when filling church music positions. By obtaining the stories of several choir members who were there (*Dasein*) during the five-year span of conflict, evidence of differing theologies of the music directors, such as social justice versus a biblical worldview may emerge to contribute to a preconceived interpretation of the events (*fore-sight/fore-conception*). For example, if a choir director is pro-choice, and the church takes a pro-life stand, conflict is bound to happen and could be exacerbated by AT. This framework takes the shared stories of choir member experiences as one lens, the attachment theory of music director and choir member as another and merges them through the lens of a biblical worldview to reveal any new understanding of AT traits that might emerge from each lens.⁴

Problem Statement

Today’s larger churches are hiring more and more musicians for praise bands, choirs, and worship teams to lead worship in multiple services. Livestreaming, which grew prodigiously out

³ Thomas Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.* (London: Lucy Booker Roper, 2014), 137.

⁴ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 34.

of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, has become the norm that generated an immediate need for the church to look good online. For that reason, churches often hire musicians with great skill but lacking in Christian maturity. A lack of spiritual depth may also contribute to increased displays of AT, as those without a strong faith are not guided by a biblical worldview. Traits attributed to AT, such as negative mood swings and unbridled tempers, can create uncomfortable situations for everyone in the church, but mainly for members of the choir or worship teams. The problem is that the topic of AT in the church has not been adequately addressed in secular literature. Therefore, no one has tried to consider the potential impact of musicians in the church who display traits associated with AT. Knowledge in the secular realm of AT surrounds quirky behaviors of creatives, including causal assumptions of those in music, art, poetry, and dance, but not musicians within the church where one's beliefs must be considered as an important part of faith, work, and practice.

Whether in a rehearsal, a performance, or a one-on-one encounter, if a spiritually shallow professional musician displays any of the unfavorable traits associated with AT, it can mean a short tenure for the musician and inflict detrimentally long-term effects on the church. Secular literature suggests that AT parallels the high and low mood swings of mild bipolar personality disorder and can be managed with medication or psychotherapy; however, through the lens of scriptural truth, this research study aims to apply biblical mandates for all Christians as high ideals to which the church musicians can strive and behave accordingly.

Not all conflict involving musicians can be attributed to traits associated with AT, but if negative patterns of AT behavior emerge from the stories of choir members in this case study, AT traits could be identified and correlated with the secular research findings of AT as a possible psychological issue. With additional knowledge about AT's traits related to personality

disorders, church musicians can seek help, counseling, and guidance toward a more successful call to church music ministry. Solomon writes, “For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers” (Prov. 11:14). The Amplified Version of Proverbs 11:14 states: “Where no wise guidance is, the people fall, but in the multitudes of counselors there is safety.”

When one is taught or counseled to view Scripture as mandates and not merely suggestions, the Bible becomes transformative. Paul instructs Titus to “Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone” (Titus 3:1–2). This proposed phenomenological case study aims to help fill an existing gap in the research of AT concerning the effects of AT’s negative traits on church choir members and how Scripture may be applied to guide the management of AT in some circumstances.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the research in this case study is to discover if the negative traits associated with AT were perceived in any of the five music directors at the church by choir members and pastors who served with these directors between 2015 and 2020. Interviews were conducted with six choir members, two in church leadership, and two former pastors to explore their experiences and detect evidence of the phenomena of AT among the music directors. Documenting the stories of the participants by use of a qualitative study reveal potential negative traits of AT, according to the choir members who witnessed the behaviors of each consecutive music hire. Since musicians displaying traits associated with AT may react in unpredictable ways that are incompatible with Scripture, this study hopes to increase awareness and provide understanding of AT as a personality/emotional phenomenon to help churches make more responsible decisions when hiring musicians and better serve the musicians they employ.

Methodology

As a qualitative, phenomenological case study, this research is conducted within the framework of a Biblical worldview through the lens of Scripture with choir members as the populational source of data. As a qualitative study, this researcher uses narratives from interviews, observations, and documents to further develop a thesis and gain knowledge of a problem. Diverse studies suggest that AT shares similarities to mental illness. However, according to John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, one might encounter a study that contains no overall theoretical orientation as is the case of AT.⁵ Therefore, a qualitative, phenomenological case study is the route taken. The researcher uses a theoretical lens or perspective of Scripture which helps shape the questions asked, inform how data is collected and analyzed, and provide a call for action or change.⁶ As a phenomenological case study, the emphasis is on the lived experiences of several choir members without trying to define a complete answer to a well-defined problem, but rather, to describe the phenomenon of AT which needs to be better understood.

Using qualitative methods, the interview questions are designed to discover any emerging negative traits of AT within the shared experiences of the participants. Through the lens of scriptural truth—mainly God’s love, patience, and grace—the goal is to better understand AT’s effects on the choir members. Through the lens of Scripture, one is better able to respond to AT’s traits and seek discernment provided by the Holy Spirit to help one act as having the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16).

⁵ John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publishing, 2018), 64.

⁶ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 62.

Data is collected and studied through interview processes, non-participant observations, and the collection of documents, such as email correspondence provided by choir members, or any documentation of the conflict deemed suitable to be shared by the church leadership. All the questions are free of assumptions, asking only about what the choir members felt or sensed at the time of their experiences. The components of the study are included in the questions, and they are presented in an easy format that do not need further clarification.⁷

The participants are briefed on the purpose of the study and given definitions of AT before their interviews begin. With information concerning the parallels of AT to bipolar disorder, the choir members may be better able to identify the level, if any, negative traits of AT exhibited by contributing musicians such as accompanists or instrumentalists who may have been involved. Information provided to the population must also include the researcher's position along with how the final accounts are written.⁸ An analysis of the data is compiled to help church leaders and choir members identify the behaviors of AT that emerge and ensure that AT's episodes are not easily overlooked or swept under the rug by overly gracious Christians.

Using the hermeneutic circle, discussions that result from the interview questions include the researcher's fore-conception to identify traits of AT that may emerge from stories of choir episodes described by the choir members (*Dasein*). Although AT traits might seem apparent, the objective of the researcher is to be able to understand and summarize AT as a phenomenon during the events. This is most likely to occur if any emergent AT trait, such as moodiness, agitation, or anger, is perceived by the researcher during analysis. The final analysis discloses the

⁷ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 28.

⁸ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 62.

presence of AT traits that may emerge during the interviews with no intention of drawing any probable cause of the actual conflict in the church choir.

Choir members who experienced the known conflicts in the music department during the five-year period are asked open-ended questions that focus on their experiences as insiders. This evidence helps to determine the meaning of the essence of AT within the context of those lived experiences.⁹ Research questions stem from the central question and subsequent questions emerge as the choir members share their stories, such as, “If it was terrible, can you tell me how it was terrible?” This type of questioning helps ensure more data from their stories and thus, more emergent data on AT’s emotional experiences, as described in several of the current studies on AT. Data is collected and then coded to discover any patterns or similarities in perspectives being explored. Follow-up attempts are made to gather data on choir members’ perceptions and consequent perspectives connected to their experiences to discover if any negative traits of AT were evident in the music director(s).

David Schuldberg suggests that genius/creative behavior has been associated with profound emotional experiences, social disjunction, and “cooler moods” displayed when one feels alienated or anxious. Schuldberg compares this to attributes of schizophrenia, which is a diagnosis applied to many disorders “characterized by a break from the world of consensual reality ... and displays negative attitudes.”¹⁰ Therefore, consequent research questions are carefully engineered to help illuminate any profound emotional experiences, social disjunction, or “cooler moods” with signs of anxiety exhibited by the choir members or the musicians

⁹ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry Research Design, Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE, 2018), 200.

¹⁰ David Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits in Normal Creativity,” *Creative Research Journal* 13, no. 1 (2021): 6.

involved in the conflict, without assuming it is present. The results from these questions are used to draw connections between the current literature on AT and the church choir members' perceptions of their lived experiences with music directors who exhibited traits of AT. The data is also used to help measure a degree, if any, of scriptural truth applied to the experiences as corrective measures in light of a biblical worldview. The process of breaking data down into small bits and pieces produces a greater chance of misrepresentation when rebuilding it into a new product, but isolating patterns of information helps make for more meaningful judgments of the data collections.¹¹ Creating larger groupings assists in housing similarities between the secular literature and the Christian context of AT.

Through the process of open-ended questions, more data is produced and traits of AT may emerge. Limitations include organizing and winnowing all the data necessary as does the effort to continually assess what data connects to the central and sub-questions in the study. Data is analyzed by phrases, words, or paragraphs to develop initial codes, patterns, and themes. It is then revised to combine the codes in a finalizing process of approximately 20–30 codes/themes.

Research Questions

In the literature review, the symptoms of AT can be identified as anything from mild, occasional depression to episodic mania with very little depression. The main question for this phenomenological case study surrounding AT is, “During the five years between 2015 and 2020 at the church in this case study, what aspects of AT were demonstrated by music directors from the perspective of the lived experiences of the choir members?” Sub-questions are as follows:

1. Were any negative traits of AT expressed by music directors?

¹¹ Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 12th ed. (New York, NY: Pearson Education Inc., 202), 346–47.

2. What degree of spiritual maturity, scriptural knowledge, or use of strategies was present in the lives of the music directors during this time?
3. What are the lived experiences of choir members sitting under directors exhibiting any negative traits associated with AT?
4. What measures were taken by the church leadership to learn more about musicians and AT?
5. What opportunities were given to church music directors to seek understanding counselors, medical, psychological, or spiritual help?

Rationale, Relevance, and Significance of the Study

Rationale for the Study

Since there is little research being done on AT in the church, choir members and church musicians do not understand it, nor do they know how to handle it. Many famous musicians of the past have exhibited some if not all of AT's negative traits, so today's secular and religious musicians are more or less expected to act the same way; but in the field of music ministry and Christian worship, a greater understanding of the traits associated to AT as "neurotic" behavior is needed. If AT is like any other affective disorder, the church most likely experiences its negative effects on the musicians, choir members, and church leadership.

With such sparse literature concerning Christian musicians and AT, believers who are gifted in music and tasked with music ministry may not know where to turn for continuing education or counseling. For this reason, the researcher utilizes a phenomenological, qualitative study approach to research possible traits associated with AT in this local church. Musicians need to be made self-aware of the negative traits associated with AT to better manage it within themselves, and possibly, with other musicians in the room with the same havoc-causing

temperament. In large church situations, the chances of gathering several choir members or accompanists together who struggle to manage traits associated with AT are greater.

Scripture is the believer's source of all truth; therefore, this study probes what God's Word says concerning Christian behavior and, in particular, the heart of a musician in the church and how scriptural correction and reproof can be applied to change the heart. In the Old Testament, Isaiah states that no matter how talented, not everyone's heart is in the right place when engaged in worship: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught" (Isa. 29:13). In the New Testament, Paul writes: "For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough" (2 Cor. 11:4). This study is significant because evangelical believers should not have to "put up with" the different gospels of today's culture in which the authority of Scripture is being questioned. Likewise, they should not suffer under the leadership of immature believers or those with unregenerated characters.

Significance of the Study

Without a raised awareness of AT in the church, church leaders are being left with a dilemma. Should bad behavior by a musician be overlooked due to possible traits associated with AT, or should the PPRC let this person go? For the sake of musicians in the church with problems associated with AT and the longevity of their tenure, understanding AT while using scriptural truth as a corrective measure is a worthwhile investment of time and study.

Definitions of Terms

Artistic Temperament (AT)—a mental health condition with negative traits that border on lower levels of hypomania (emotional highs or lows) with episodes of depressed moods.¹²

Assumptions—in hermeneutic phenomenological dissertations, biases cannot be set aside or bracketed, and need to be recognized and then revised as new data is revealed.¹³

Bipolar Disorder—a deteriorating affective illness believed to be a source of exceptional artistic creativity.¹⁴

Cyclothymia—a type of temperament that can manifest in several ways but does so as predominantly depressive, manic, hypomanic, irritable, or cyclic disorder. It is a milder variant of manic-depressive disorder.¹⁵

Dasein—a sense of being there.¹⁶

Depression—the depressive phase of manic-depressive illness. Symptoms include apathy, lethargy, hopelessness, sleep disturbance (sleeping far too much or too little), slowed physical movement, slowed thinking, impaired memory and concentration, and a loss of pleasure in normally pleasurable events.¹⁷

¹² Niberca (GiGi) Polo, “The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament: The Effects of Treatment on Exceptional Artistic Talent” (Masters Thesis, The New School For General Studies, NY 2011), 5, ProQuest Theses and Dissertations.

¹³ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 35.

¹⁴ Polo, “The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament.”

¹⁵ Kay Redfield Jamison, *Touched with Fire, Manic-Depressive Illness and The Artistic Temperament* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 13–16.

¹⁶ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 32.

¹⁷ Jamison, *Touched With Fire*, 13.

Fore-Sight/Fore-Conception—Preconceived knowledge about the phenomenon one is studying.¹⁸

Hermeneutic Circle—How understanding is revised when one is analyzing data.¹⁹

Horizon—The present experience, which cannot be bracketed; therefore nothing is fully seen in its entirety as no one is omniscient.²⁰

Intentionality—The fundamental property of consciousness and principal theme of phenomenology; awareness in a sense.²¹

Mania or hypomania (mild mania)—Episodes characterized by symptoms such as elevated and expansive mood, paranoid and irritable, greatly increased activity and energy levels, less need for sleep. Speech is often rapid, excitable, and intrusive, thinking is fast, moving quickly from topic to topic.²²

Manic-depressive, or bipolar illness—Encompasses a wide range of mood disorders and temperaments which vary in severity from cyclothymia to life-threatening and psychotic forms of the disease. It is indisputably genetic.²³

¹⁸ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 32.

¹⁹ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*.

²⁰ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*.

²¹ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*.

²² Jamison, *Touched With Fire*, 13.

²³ Jamison, *Touched With Fire*, 13–16,

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Every study contains assumptions, limitations, and delimitations while interpreting the literature, selecting the population, or dealing with preconceived notions. The short tenures of the five music directors contrast the longevity of several choir members, so it is important to consider this in the selection process for the research population because the experiences to be studied occurred between 2015 and 2020. That each participant is a believer who strives to maintain a non-critical attitude and witness is assumed in the population along with the participants' ability to recall and describe information from so long ago, but neither can be guaranteed. Also, participants may or may not have the ability to distinguish between what might be the result of AT, spiritual immaturity, or the unregenerated soul. Therefore, the selection of samples must also include the senior pastor as the gatekeeper, as well as one or two other key influencers who were on the PPRC during that time. Participants receive prior information on the phenomenological research design to understand and explore AT to avoid entering the study with a cause-and-effect lens regarding AT. Ethical requirements are always observed and guided by the IRB checklist and application process.

Limitations

Further limitations include having to structure open-ended questions so as not to lead the interviewees as the researcher is aware that one cannot always rely on memory as a complete and accurate source over time. The researcher also understands that due to the personal bias of the choir members, this topic may go in many different directions, so keeping them focused on the central questions and sub-questions may be a challenge.

Recognizing that personal bias and limitations lie in one's ability to identify with some of the stereotypical traits of AT, the tendency for this researcher is toward empathy. With that admission, this researcher gives glory to God for the ability to manage known personal symptoms and negative traits of AT. For these distinctive reasons of the analyst, more in-depth study is needed to unmask the mysteries hidden behind the stereotypes.

Delimitations

Known weaknesses and shortcomings include the fact that several key people involved in the five-year period have since moved their membership to another church. Delimitations involve interviewing a small number of the population due to the attrition of the original choir members and the transient nature of the leadership in the church. Documentation by the PPRC involving various incidents may not be available to the researcher due to privacy concerns. Also, the views of choir members could be at odds with those of leadership since some were known to disagree with termination decisions made by the PPRC. For this reason (which is a major concern), the proposed instrumentation, which is the researcher, must remain neutral throughout the interview process by being constantly aware of researcher bias and the need to maintain a professional, analytical stance throughout the interviews. The researcher must also consider group dynamics within the choir at the time (which have changed dramatically) or in the church leadership and their knowledge or lack of knowledge concerning AT then and now, as it pertains to this phenomenological case study.

It is important not only to seek to understand AT's complexities but why it seems to be more prevalent among professional musicians. This researcher's biblical worldview holds professional church music hires to the same biblical standards as clergy and sees failure looming over musicians who do not adhere to these standards or believe they should. There is no current

literature that addresses any distinctions of Christians with AT, and therefore, little factual guidance has been provided for the researcher.

Qualifications of the Researcher

The researcher is the Director of Sacred Arts in a large, now independent church in which this study is conducted. The Director of Sacred Arts is tasked with hiring, training, and discipling other musicians along with leading several musical teams and choirs. As other professional musicians are expected to have a higher level of musical excellence, the Director of Sacred Arts must not only reach that higher level of musicality but also spirituality. Over the years, this researcher has developed a deep desire to understand the “quirky” behaviors of so many musical family members, friends, and colleagues in music education, music theater, and religious music. To stay spiritually fit, this researcher believes devotional time is crucial to behavior and relationships, and therefore has developed a habit of devoting one to two hours daily to Bible study, prayer, journaling, and writing poetry.

With three decades of music education in the rear-view mirror, the researcher has a toolbox of strategies from classroom experiences that better deal with large and small groups while working with administrators as a department chair. As a mentor and supervising teacher of undergraduate and graduate student chorus teachers, the researcher oversaw their progress in the music classroom and gave constructive criticism which was expected as part of their student teaching experience. Within the context of the church, however, any such assessments or constructive criticism can result in complicated discord. No other musician on the music staff at this church has served in music education where continuous assessments are expected to maintain a positive environment and teaching style. Pointing out any shortcomings of church

musicians can easily result in professional jealousy, insecurity, and other seemingly negative traits of AT amongst good, Christian people working together in the church.

The researcher is a Methodist preacher's wife and has worked in church music both full-time and part-time while having taught music to every age level in public schools and in higher education. This researcher has conducted previous research, resulting in a published article with a co-contributor, showing prior experience in research and academic writing.

As mentioned earlier from personal experience, music teachers are held to a higher standard of ethics and excellence in the classroom than musicians in the church, which in this researcher's mind seems backward. Christians are to walk worthy of their calling (Eph. 4:1), starting with the fruit of the spirit: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs" (1 Cor. 13:4-5).

Summary of the Study

Although AT seems to be a concern today in the secular world, it is often overlooked in the church. However, moodiness is and always will be a potential problem within the church. While true excellence is the goal for church musicians, most prioritize their commitment to performance over Christian character and spiritual growth, and this affects professional Christian musicians employed by the church. In chapter two, the current literature surrounding the traits associated with AT is organized into three categories: (1) Medical, (2) Secular, and (3) Religious. The earliest literature (1900s) attempts to help people with AT by teaching them to exercise willpower, independence, and perseverance with a higher ideal in view and this parallels a more biblical worldview that insists on higher ideals. The contemporary literature parallels AT with bipolar disorder requiring medication and psychotherapy and should not be discounted by

the church. This results in quite a gap in the literature and makes the need for this research credible. The current literature falls short of understanding the effects of AT upon those who suffer from its traits in the church. Perhaps AT can be better understood through the eyes of the choir members in this population as a phenomenon so that other musicians can be helped, especially in the church. Churches need to move beyond the “temperamental musician” assumptions of the past by understanding the negative traits of AT and help provide musicians with knowledge and skills to understand traits of AT, such as unwanted, depressive mood swings. Likewise, choir members and church leaders benefit from increased knowledge of AT when seeking to hire musicians or working with musicians already on staff.

Because secular science believes AT is inborn and that those with AT cannot help their thoughts and behaviors, some will most likely oppose suggesting a biblical worldview of renewing the heart and mind (Rom. 12:2), preferring instead to rely solely on medication and psychotherapy. Wendell Reed says it is important to not only disciple the music minister, but also, the musicians in the church to live a life of humility and modesty. If music ministers lack spiritual depth, “Persons serving in the choir, worship team, and band may not be receiving proper teaching regarding what it means to be a Christian disciple.”²⁴ Conflicts in today’s church music areas may be attributed to a lack of theological training for music directors, or that music directors are not well-disciplined, but displays of negative traits associated with AT, such as moodiness and displeasure, add salt to any such wounds. Research conducted on AT is needed to avoid any assumptions surrounding traits and behaviors in church musicians that might exist.

²⁴ Wendell Reed, “Biblical Concepts in Action: A Case for Discipleship in the Worship Ministry” (PhD diss., Liberty University School of Music, 2020), 1, <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3846&context=doctoral>.

There is no assigned place in psychiatry for AT because it has yet to be well-researched and studied; therefore, knowledge of AT in the church is limited. More research is needed to understand the effects of AT on church musicians, choir members, and church leaders. The gap lies between two extremes—secular acceptance of musical artists exhibiting AT behaviors as normal for genius musicians, and religious believers who infer that AT is just one more sinful side effect the church can attribute to the fall. Some see AT today as a mental disorder to be understood and treated as a medical condition, but the overall medical, secular, and religious study results are inconclusive and misunderstood in the church. The application of Scripture is controversial even within different denominations. This study of AT through the eyes of the choir members and the lens of scriptural truth in the church adds to the overall knowledge on the topic and will hopefully foster more studies in this area of Christian Worship in the future.

Chapter three describes the research methodology, restatement of the research focus and the need for the study. Chapter four summarizes the data and describes how it was analyzed, and chapter five includes the study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The essence of AT may not only be problematic but proudly and prominently displayed by some musicians in secular music and in the church. Secular medical studies of AT are more prevalent and seem to further inspire the preconceived notions surrounding the traits of AT. The next chapter details the available research studies associated with AT.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There are several arguments in current and historical literature that support a connection between Artistic Temperament (AT) genius and madness. It is interesting to note that the earliest references to AT are perceptions found in the biographies of famous artists and composers which depict high and low mood swings, and the quirky behavior attributed to their creativity. There are few descriptives of AT's negative traits in these historical accounts other than artists being plagued by a certain creative "madness" that bordered on insanity.

Research has been conducted on the benefits to the mental health of musicians through secular involvement in community choirs, which alludes to a general need for musicians to gather and sing.¹ A church choir is another obvious venue to address the musician's need for community, but there is no literature on the musician's involvement in the church for reasons of mental health. Research also shows that musician involvement is an important recruiting agent for institutions, such as schools and colleges.² Churches also draw musicians using choirs and praise bands as recruiting tools, but again, this is not readily addressed in the existing literature. However, more research is available on the characteristics of AT in the field of medicine.

Kay Redfield Jamison writes in her book, *Touched With Fire, Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*, that a common assumption exists within the artistic circle of

¹ Tony C. Daniels, "Community Engagement or Community Outreach? A Case Study of the Tallahassee Community Chorus and Its Unity Concert" (PhD diss, Florida State University College of Fine Arts, 2017), 14, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

² Miguel Antoine-Julius Bonds, "Strategies for Recruitment, Growth and Retention through Marching Band Enrollment at Talladega College, 2011–2021" (DMuEd Diss, Liberty University School of Music, 2021), 2, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

madness being “somehow normal.”³ It is not until the twentieth century that AT begins to be addressed as either a personality trait or a possible mental disorder. There are also perceptions of AT’s origin on a large scale from one’s upbringing (nurture) combined with their genetic pool (nature). Toward the end of the same century, AT began to be studied and recognized by psychologists and medical professionals as problematic to the mental health of creatives. Jamison teaches psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She has also written several more books about manic-depressive illness and AT, which, along with other authors, validates the existence of AT’s negative traits and the perceptions of AT held by doctors and mental health professionals.

Jamison says that what complicates matters surrounding the study of AT is that certain lifestyles provide cover for deviant and bizarre behavior and that “the arts have long given latitude to extremes in behavior and mood.”⁴ She reveals startling statistics showing a higher correlation between award-winning poets and the Protestant faith (94 percent), deriving these numbers from her own study of treatment rates amongst poets for mood disorders at St. George’s Medical School in London and the University of Oxford.⁵ With this startling connection of poets to mood disorders, how can religious poets and hymnists escape AT? This makes for a credible foundation for further study of AT’s connection within church music departments. Jamison lists several studies by others in her field revealing increased rates of suicide, depression, and manic-depressive illnesses in groups of creative people,⁶ but most of the literature on AT skirts the

³ Kay Redfield Jamison, *Touched with Fire, Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1993), 4.

⁴ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*.

⁵ Jamison, *Touched With Fire*, 75.

⁶ Jamison, *Touched With Fire*, 88–89.

reality of its effects on church musicians and does not investigate AT associated with religious beliefs.

Summary of Literary Review

This literature study investigates the possible parallels between musicians in the church with problematic traits of AT and the parallels found in secular studies of musicians with negative symptoms of AT. There are three areas of literature that emerge on the topic of AT relative to psychiatric diagnostic criteria: (1) Medical, (2) Secular, Non-medical, and (3) Religious. The secular literature encourages those with AT to understand themselves and suggests drilling constant willpower while aiming for high ideals. This corresponds with that of a Biblical worldview. However, the medical research provides many fascinating “A-ha” moments for anyone dealing with AT because it describes in more detail the symptoms and inevitable struggles of those creatives with AT while offering medication or therapy, or both, depending upon the degree of recognizable AT symptoms present in the person. Starting with a secular research study on professional musicians helps lay the groundwork for understanding some negative personality traits associated with AT.

The essence of AT may not only be problematic but proudly and prominently displayed by some musicians in secular music. One such qualitative study by Angelica Gusewell and Willibald Ruch investigates the shared traits of secular, professional musicians. While this study does not identify with AT, Gusewell and Ruch discover that their population of musicians score significantly lower on judgment, perspective, teamwork, fairness, and leadership.⁷ Thus, when professional musicians are tasked with servant leadership/ministry in the church but are solely

⁷ Angelica Gusewell and Willibald Ruch, “Character Strengths Profiles of Musicians and Non-Musicians,” *The Journal of Arts & Humanities* 4, no. 6 (2015): 7.

“performers,” they may experience failure due to the aforementioned lack of judgment, perspective, teamwork, fairness, and leadership. An enhanced understanding of AT from the perspective of choir members and church leaders may help encourage church musicians to see the need to adjust to a higher standard of adhering to Scripture as trained clergy must do. Gusewell and Ruch conclude their study with hopes of raising awareness that along with music training, more differentiated job training is needed for young musicians to be able to succeed in any of the various areas of music professions.⁸ This points to the likelihood of church musicians needing to obtain more training as well, especially in the areas of leadership, teamwork, and fairness.

Medical Literature on AT

To provide a foundation for a better understanding of AT, one must read the research claiming a parallel between the traits of AT and bipolar disease. If a basic assumption of AT is that creatives behave badly or exhibit emotional highs and lows, one must consider the causal possibility of a mental disorder. Numerous books, journal articles, and research studies have been conducted that offer evidence to this effect in the medical field.

Some compelling psychiatric evidence is found in a dissertation by Niberca (Gigi) Polo, who is an artist/teacher diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Because of her own diagnosis, she seems passionate about finding a relationship between creatives with AT and bipolar disorder; thus, her study suggests a strong connection between AT and mental illness. Polo identifies traits of AT as mild or lesser bipolar with subsequent medical research. Polo discovered that AT and manic episodes in people share the same triggers such as stress. Her study also uncovers how

⁸ Gusewell and Ruch, “Character Strengths Profiles,” 15.

certain medications for mental conditions can affect artists with AT.⁹ Research studies conducted by Polo indicate that some cases of AT are on the spectrum, and those musicians are prone to depressive moods or unfavorable behaviors making it difficult to maintain a positive environment. This is true especially if one is unaware of his or her own negative AT traits.¹⁰ Polo paints AT as a rather negative phenomenon in which individuals with AT exhibit little joy because of depressive moods and unfavorable behaviors. According to Polo, negative traits of AT border on lower levels of hypomania which often produces episodes of depressed moods.¹¹ Manic moods and depression are considered normal in musical geniuses. Polo adds that stress triggers negative symptoms in people with bipolar disorder; therefore, stress can do the same to those with AT.¹² Stress is unavoidable in church music. However, when stress exacerbates a church musician's AT with anger or negative moods, most church leaders frown upon acting out as inappropriate, expecting church musicians to adhere to scriptural norms of responsive behavior. Thus, a church musician displaying reactive behaviors associated with bipolar disorder or AT traits could easily create an uncomfortable, negative environment.

Kay Jamison's research on the negative traits of affective disorders helps to fuel Polo's findings. Jamison offers many details connecting AT and the negative traits of mood disorders. She lends credibility to Polo's assumptions by saying that creatives are "more or less touched" with symptoms of manic-depressive illness.¹³ She goes on to say, "Poetic or artistic genius, when

⁹ Niberca (GiGi) Polo, "The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament: the Effects of Treatment on Exceptional Artistic Talent" (Master's Thesis, The New School for General Studies, 2011), 5, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

¹⁰ Polo, "The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament."

¹¹ Polo, "The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament," 1.

¹² Polo, "The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament," 5.

¹³ Jamison, *Touched With Fire*, 2.

infused with these fitful and inconstant moods, can become a powerful crucible for imagination and experience.”¹⁴ From Jamison’s professional perspective as a psychiatrist, artistic people displaying fits of fierce energy, manic moods, quick intelligence, visions of grandeur, and a restless or feverish temperament often have a propensity for bouts of “madness.”¹⁵ Along with this understanding, Jamison acknowledges:

That impassioned moods, shattered reason, and the artistic temperament can be welded into a “fine madness” remains a fiercely controversial belief. Most people find the thought that a destructive, often psychotic, and frequently lethal disease such as manic-depressive illness might convey certain advantages (such as heightened imaginative powers, intensified emotional responses, and increased energy) counterintuitive. For others it is troubling or unlikely association that conjures up simplistic notions of the “mad genius,” bringing with it images of mindless and unaesthetic reductionism as well as concerns about making into disease something that subsumes vital human differences in style, perception, and temperament.¹⁶

Jamison is saying that some people have the wrong perception of manic depression. Instead of acknowledging it as a disease that has the side effects of ruined relationships, emotional instability, and even suicide, it is looked upon as a somewhat noble way of acquiring unusual productivity and creative genius.

Jamison’s book emphasizes the bipolar form of mood or personality disorder which causes episodes of hypomania and episodes of depression and is marked by “extraordinary and confusing fluctuations in mood, personality, thinking, and behavior [which] inevitably has powerful and often painful effects on relationships.”¹⁷ Throughout her book, Jamison details the behaviors of famous writers, poets, and musicians who have been described by biographers as having mental disorders of some kind. In her study of British poets who lived between 1705–

¹⁴ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 3.

¹⁵ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 2.

¹⁶ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 3.

¹⁷ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 256–67.

1805, Jamison concludes that Samuel John, Thomas Gray, George Crab, William Wordsworth, Sir Walter Scott, and Leigh Hunt all had recurrent depression.¹⁸ Over several pages, Jamison compiles a chart with detailed comments showing poets who were (1) actually diagnosed with manic-depressive illness, (2) had psychotic features, (3) were confined to an asylum, and (4) who committed suicide. Poets with definite manic-depression, psychotic features and confined to an asylum were Christopher Smart, William Cowper, Robert Fergusson, and John Clare. William Collins had psychotic melancholia and possible mania with psychotic features and was confined to a lunatic asylum: “‘accustomed to rave much and make great moanings,’ dissipation, intemperance, and excess while an undergraduate at Cambridge.”¹⁹ Thomas Chatterton and Thomas Lovell Beddoes were both diagnosed with manic-depressive illness, and while they were not committed to an asylum, both committed suicide. William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and James Clarence Mangan were all diagnosed with manic-depressive illness with psychotic features but were never confined to asylums. Jamison further describes the overall health, family situations, and temperaments of the poets, including recurrent physical illnesses, opiate and alcohol abuse, quick, irascible, ungovernable, or volatile tempers, strong family histories of mental illness and/or suicide, paranoia, delusions, melancholia, social withdrawal, extravagant, and eccentric.

According to Jamison, the biographers of these poets include information from the poets themselves describing their negative, manic-depressive traits, like sleepless nights or sleeping too much. Quentin Bell writes in his biography that his aunt, Virginia Woolf, suffered incredible

¹⁸ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 63–71.

¹⁹ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 63.

headaches, anxiety, and depression as a result of insomnia due to her manic-depressive illness.²⁰ Bell gives his aunt's own account of suffering from her novel, *The Voyage Out*: "...Those interminable nights which do not end at twelve, but go on into the double figures—thirteen, fourteen, and so on until they reach the twenties, and then the forties... there is nothing to prevent nights from doing this if they choose."²¹ These self-described episodes offer evidence of depression and despair with little hope of a better future. Theodore Roethke writes, "I have myself an inner weight of woe that God himself can scarcely bear."²² This extremely negative mood is incompatible with Scriptures like Numbers 11:23: "Is the Lord's arm too short?" and Jeremiah 32:17: "Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you" (New International Version). Faith in God's higher purpose for one's life can become the leverage needed to lift a soul out of sadness.

While Scripture can be a source of correction (2 Tim. 3:16–17) or a healing, balm-like medicine for the aching soul (Jer. 46:11), Jamison's view of any relief for affective disorders centers more on the advancements in her field of psychiatry. According to Jamison, the amelioration of genetic testing, neuroscience, and psychopharmacology has put more of an emphasis on a biological perspective of mental disorders rather than just the psychological.²³ Interestingly, Jamison finds that there is a correlation between needing less sleep just before AT sufferers have episodes of intense creativity. She writes that just prior to episodes of creative

²⁰ Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London, England: Hogarth Press, 1972), 11.

²¹ Bell, *Virginia Woolf*.

²² Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 27.

²³ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 3.

energy, 28 percent of writers and artists describe waking spontaneously at 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. and being unable to return to sleep.²⁴ In addition, Jamison further reports that:

Mood changes were profound. One-half reported a sharp increase in mood just prior to the beginning of an intensely creative period. For example, one person described feeling “excited, anticipatory, energetic,” while others said they were “elated,” “euphoric,” or “ecstatic”; yet another said, “I have a fever to write, and throw myself energetically into new project.”²⁵

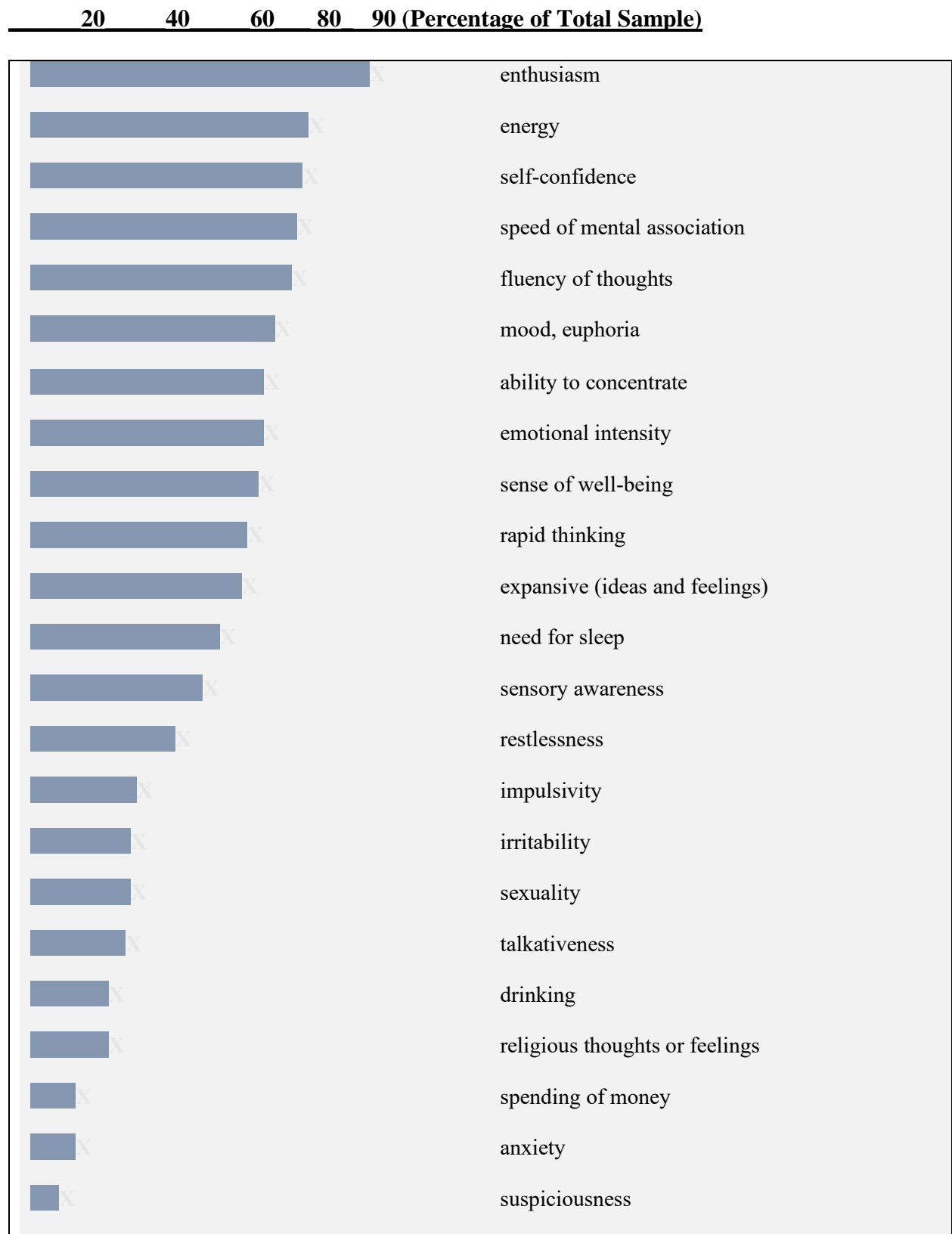
Jamison follows with a chart of mood, cognitive, and behavioral changes that are reported during the poet’s intense creative episodes. Ninety percent of them experienced enthusiasm, eighty percent, energy, seventy-five percent, self-confidence and speed of mental association and fluency of thoughts. On the negative side, less than ten percent wanted to be sociable, and experienced anxiety, suspiciousness, and were argumentative.²⁶ Glancing at the table below, it is easy to see why AT’s traits can be seen as beneficial to many of the British writers in Jamison’s study.



²⁴ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 78.

²⁵ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 78.

²⁶ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 79.

Table 1. Mood, Cognitive, and Behavioral Changes Reported During Intense Creative Episodes



	argumentativeness
	sociability

The mood disorder patterns of those with creative or artistic ability are not surprising given the historical and biographical information of many in the arts. However, for those who live with similar traits, life can be quite difficult and frenzied. It is highly possible that the tables of poet behaviors provided by Jamison and Gamma et al. are similar to those who are musicians. Both Robert Schumann and William Blake pen similar sentiments, stating, “Joy and sorrow are inseparable all through life.”²⁷ Blake writes it this way: “Joy & Woe are woven fine, a clothing for the Soul divine; under every grief & pine, runs a joy with silken twine.”²⁸ Based on these words, it seems that Blake is trying to justify laments by insisting joy is part of it, much like the silver lining of a dark cloud.

Blake and Schumann’s actual “feverish mood” experiences seem to accompany their creative genius. Sadly, Schumann had feelings of panic which included actual panic attacks, obsessions, and delusions that, according to Jamison, are typical in severe depression.²⁹ Although Jamison studied more poets and writers than musicians, she provides biographical information on Schumann as a composer. This includes the possibility that Schumann inherited a

²⁷ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 128.

²⁸ William Blake, “Auguries of Innocence,” in *The Complete Poetry and Selected Prose of John Donne and the Complete Poetry of William Blake* (New York, NY: Modern Library Publications, 1941), 598.

²⁹ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 22.

“melancholic and relentless streak” from both his mother and his father.³⁰ The year Schumann was born, his father suffered a nervous breakdown and never fully recovered, while his mother experienced recurring attacks of depression. This established a hereditary nature of mood disorders for Schumann, who wrote in his diary that he was obsessed with the thought of going mad. At the same time, his wife Clara writes that he began and completed a symphony in four days.³¹

According to Jamison, Schumann’s manic times were outweighed by the melancholic. Of his own remarkable feats of extraordinary productivity, Schumann writes: “I cannot see that there is anything remarkable about composing a symphony in a month. Handel wrote a complete oratorio in that time.”³² Schumann acknowledges the genius of Handel’s accomplishments but exhibits imposter syndrome-like traits when evaluating his own compositional work. A lack of self-confidence on Schumann’s part appears to be yet another negative example of AT’s self-deprecating traits of insecurity during depressive episodes.

As a law student, Schumann was miserable and merely tolerated school, but music provided him much joy. After the publishing of his first composition, Schumann writes, “I doubt if being a bridegroom will be in the same class with these first joys of being a composer.”³³ Both the highs and lows of Schumann’s moods are consistent with manic-depressive illness.

Evidently, it is believed that Schumann’s madness may have been symptomatic of syphilis due to

³⁰ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 202.

³¹ Frederick Niecks, *Robert Schumann* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1925), 219.

³² Ronald Taylor, *Robert Schumann: His Life and Work* (Glasgow, Scotland: Wm. Collins & Sons & Co., 1987), 271.

³³ R. H. Schauffler, *Florestan: The Life and Work of Robert Schumann* (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co., 1945), 42.

an illness in 1854, but Jamison reports that recent evidence suggests Schumann may never have contracted it.³⁴

Schumann's mental state led him to run out of his house on a cold, February day and throw himself into the Rhine, from which he was rescued and placed in an insane asylum. While there, he died of self-inflicted starvation in 1856.³⁵ This is but one musician whose life was "touched with fire" and about whom Jamison writes. Many other famous composers have been known to live with great high and low emotional moods, but Jamison explores closely only one composer—Schumann—while suggesting a link between certain types of "madness" and artistic genius. She sees recent literature as evidence suggesting that "manic-depressive illness and its related temperaments are most closely allied to creativity in the arts."³⁶

Jamison lists Schumann and thirty more composers with probable cyclothymia, major depression, or manic-depressive illnesses. Of that group, the following were committed to asylums or psychiatric hospitals: Anton Bruckner, Otto Klemperer, Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, Irving Berlin, Charles Mingus, Charles Parker, Cole Porter, and Bud Powell. Four of the composers listed attempted suicide (Hector Berlioz, Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf, and Charles Parker) and three of them committed suicide (Jeremiah Clarke, Peter Warlock, and Bernd Alois Zimmerman).³⁷

Appendix B in Jamison's book also includes the names of eighty-three poets, forty-one writers, and forty-one artists with probable cyclothymia, major depression, or manic-depressive

³⁴ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 205.

³⁵ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 207.

³⁶ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 48.

³⁷ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 269.

illness. Of the poets, thirty of them were committed to asylums or psychiatric hospitals, twelve attempted suicide, and twenty-one committed suicide. Of the writers, thirteen were committed to asylums or psychiatric hospitals, seven attempted suicide, and four committed suicide. The artists seem to mirror the poets: thirteen were committed to asylums or psychiatric hospitals, three attempted suicide, but fourteen succeeded in committing suicide.³⁸ Jamison concludes, “The more recent biographical evidence gives strong support to a much higher rate of mood disorders in artistic populations than could be expected by chance alone.”³⁹

Jamison lists the research of several others, including W. H. Trethowan, who studied the lives of sixty composers, and Joseph Schildkraut, A. J. Hirshfeld, and J. M. Murphy, who studied fifteen visual artists from the abstract expressionists of the New York School and found that approximately one-half of their research subjects suffered from depressive or manic-depressive illness.⁴⁰ Jamison again sees this representation of data as an “almost tenfold increase in affective illness over what could be expected by chance alone.”⁴¹ Overall, Jamison finds in these other studies that artists, writers, and composers are six to seven times more likely to be forced into psychiatric hospitalization than those in the non-artistic group.⁴²

In an article published in *Psychology and Psychobiology*, Hagop Akiskal, a psychiatrist at the University of Tennessee, and his wife, Karen, corroborate Jamison’s findings by concluding that two-thirds of their artistic study population of writers, poets, painters, and sculptors suffered

³⁸ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, Appendix B, 267–70.

³⁹ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 56.

⁴⁰ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 60–61.

⁴¹ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 61.

⁴² Jamison, *Touched with Fire*.

a major depressive episode.⁴³ Jamison also lists David Evans of Memphis State University as having replicated the Akiskal's study using blues musicians with similar results. Evans reports that fifty percent of the blues musicians in the study suffered a major depressive episode.⁴⁴ According to Jamison, the percentages of people being diagnosed with depressive illness and requiring minimal antidepressants in the general population within these studies remain quite low—below three percent.⁴⁵ Her own research coupled with other similar research shows a higher correlation between artistic personalities and mood disorders that require treatment, psychotherapy, or hospitalization than the general public. This indicates a high probability that artistic personalities in the church may suffer from identical mood disorders.

In a review of Jamison's book, Sandra Russ offers a meaningful commentary on the text. Russ confirms that Jamison wants "to make a literary, biographical, and scientific argument for a compelling association, not to say actual overlap, between two temperaments—the artistic and the manic-depressive—and their relationship to the rhythms and cycles, or temperament, or the natural world."⁴⁶ In her review, Russ focuses on AT as reflected in individuals with manic-depressive illness who are also creative,⁴⁷ and distinguishes between people with manic-depressive illnesses who are not creative. To clarify, not everyone with a mental disorder can write poetry, compose music, or paint landscapes. Although the literature suggests this relationship, it is important to note that making a distinction between the symptoms of AT and

⁴³ Hagop Akiskal and Karen Akiskal, "Reassessing the Prevalence of Bipolar Disorders: Clinical Significance and Artistic Creativity," *Psychiatry and Psychobiology* 3, (1988): 36.

⁴⁴ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 75.

⁴⁵ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 77.

⁴⁶ Sandra W. Russ, "Poetry and Science—An Exceptional Blend: On Jamison's *Touched With Fire*: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament," *Creative Research Journal* 8, no. 3 (1995): 307.

⁴⁷ Russ, "Poetry and Science," 307.

manic depression may be difficult but may also be something that some creatives may not want to own personally. Some do not wish to lose the manic energy that seems to fuel productivity and see many advantages that could keep artists from seeking any help to alter their symptoms.⁴⁸

According to Alex Gamma et al., many great creatives “owed their productivity and intellectual or artistic achievements to being melancholic, manic-depressive, or hypomanic. Systematic study of this phenomenon has been rare, but has substantiated the existence of a connection between bipolar disorder and creativity.”⁴⁹ The researchers studied the consistent, higher levels of activity and productivity in creatives and discovered that those diagnosed with hypomania were nearly twice as frequently found among the highest income class, were “significantly more often married,” and had “consistently higher social activity and sexual interest.”⁵⁰ Gamma et al. also find that since many benefits are prevalent in hypomania, this side of manic-depressive illness (without depression) is under-investigated compared to depression. It is also important to note that their data is far from conclusive and that hypomania is an intermittent, non-temperamental condition.⁵¹

Gamma et al. report that almost 70 percent of their research population of hypomaniacs have problems sleeping, which corresponds with their apparent reduced need for sleep. About one-third reported needing more sleep, so the two extremes exist within the realm of hypomania.⁵² The authors compile a table of benefits indicating the percentages of their

⁴⁸ Alex Gamma, Jules Angst, Vladeta Ajdacic-Gross, & Wulf Rossler, “Are Hypomanics the Happier Normal?” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 111, (2008): 236.

⁴⁹ Gamma et al., “Are Hypomanics the Happier Normal?” 236.

⁵⁰ Gamma et al., “Are Hypomanics the Happier Normal?” 243.

⁵¹ Gamma et al., “Are Hypomanics the Happier Normal?” 242.

⁵² Gamma et al., “Are Hypomanics the Happier Normal?” 241.

population reporting higher levels of experiencing benefits to hypomania (see Table 2). Gamma et al. suggest that hypomania's positive effects have been neglected as an important study in cases of manic-depressive disorder. Taken from this study, the following table shows the frequency of hypomanic symptoms in four interviewees, between the ages of 26 and 41, in descending order.⁵³ Gamma et al.'s chart almost replicates Jamison's chart in Table 1.

Table 2. Frequency of Hypomanic Symptoms

Symptom	Overall Frequency (%)
More energy and power	25.3
Works More	25.3
More plans and ideas	24.0
Needs less sleep	20.0
More self-confident	18.7
More physically active	18.7
More socially active	16.0
Over-happy, over-optimistic	16.0
Less shy and inhibited	14.7
Spends too much money	14.7
More irritable and impatient	14.7
Talks more	13.3
More traveling, driving	13.3
Faster thinking, more jokes	12.0

⁵³ Gamma et al., "Are Hypomanics the Happier Normal?" 240.

More coffee/cigarettes	10.7
Careless business deals	9.3
More sexual interest	9.3
More alcohol	6.7
More easily distracted	2.7

David Schuldberg of the University of Montana suggests a variety of causal possibilities linking genius to madness. In his study titled, “Six Subliminal Spectrum Traits in Normal Creativity,” he finds it difficult to determine if (1) psychopathology causes creativity, (2) creativity causes psychopathology, or (3) multiple factors cause both.⁵⁴ Schuldberg explains that creative intelligence can be confused with divergent thinking and thought disorders of schizophrenic-like cognition, which makes it difficult to separate and measure.⁵⁵ He disagrees with Jamison and others who argue that fluent and overproductive cognitive disturbances are most akin to the processes of creativity.⁵⁶ Schuldberg sees a real contrast here. He believes (specifically schizophrenic) thought disorders disrupt speech, logic, and reasoning resulting in a loss of productivity or creativity.⁵⁷ Also hard to measure, Schuldberg agrees that traits of hypomania, antisocial behavior, and impulsivity do contribute to creativity.⁵⁸ He concludes that

⁵⁴ David Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits in Normal Creativity,” *Creativity Research Journal* 13, no.1 (2000–2001): 7.

⁵⁵ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 7, 9.

⁵⁶ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 10.

⁵⁷ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 10.

⁵⁸ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 10–11

great amounts of manic energy and impulsivity coupled with seclusion could be the impetus for creative productivity.

For those who are not psychologists, Schuldberg helps explain the ambiguities of the spectrum. On a *horizontal level*, the classification of psychopathological groups, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, are seen as related and even overlapping in some ways.⁵⁹ Schuldberg also says the spectrum can be visualized with the classifications placed on different *vertical levels*, so that different traits, like depression or mania, can be stacked according to their degree of severity, while all being viewed as “on a continuum with each other and with normality.”⁶⁰ His definition of the *vertical* spectrum is similar to a hierarchy of mental illnesses stacked according to their traits. Schuldberg asserts that when one combines established traits of mental illness with environmental variables, such as cultural norms or personal ego strength, it becomes easier to understand the psychological processes underlying creativity.⁶¹ This all culminates with Schuldberg giving credibility to the relationship of creativity with the more positive traits of bipolar disorder, hypomania, and impulsiveness. However, his study shows less of a relationship between creativity and depression. Thus, Schuldberg arrives at the conclusion that hypomania is related to creativity, but depression is not so much.

Schuldberg’s findings on depression and creativity do not explain the productivity of poets known to have suffered from depressive moods. With seeming disagreements between psychiatric researchers concerning a relationship between AT and bipolar disorder, identifying or diagnosing AT as mildly on the spectrum or on the spectrum at all is very difficult. Adding AT

⁵⁹ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 6.

⁶⁰ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 6.

⁶¹ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 6–7.

into the mix of already established mental disorders seems to increase the gray areas that overlap on the horizontal spectrum or differentiate on the vertical spectrum. This points to the need for more study.

Since AT has not been given a formal classification in psychopathology, the concept is still being pursued and studies continue in the medical field to attempt to find a relationship between bipolar disorder and AT. Studies conducted by The Mayo Clinic seem to indicate a parallel between symptoms of bipolar disorder and AT. Mayo Clinic scientists regularly hold clinical trials along with research to help improve the lives of children and adults with bipolar disorder. Their pharmacogenomics research on how genetics can help predict one's response to medication makes individual treatment plans for bipolar disorder possible.⁶² The Mayo Clinic defines the bipolar disorder in this way:

Bipolar disorder, formerly called manic depression, is a mental health condition that causes extreme mood swings that include emotional highs (mania or hypomania) and lows (depression). When you become depressed, you may feel sad or hopeless and lose interest or pleasure in most activities. When your mood shifts to mania or hypomania (less extreme than mania), you may feel euphoric, full of energy or unusually irritable. These mood swings can affect sleep, energy, activity, judgment, behavior and the ability to think clearly. Episodes of mood swings may occur rarely or multiple times a year. While most people will experience some emotional symptoms between episodes, some may not experience any. Although bipolar disorder is a lifelong condition, you can manage your mood swings and other symptoms by following a treatment plan. In most cases, bipolar disorder is treated with medications and psychological counseling (psychotherapy).⁶³

The Mayo Clinic website also describes an episode of bipolar disorder as someone experiencing three or more of the manic or depressed traits of bipolar disorder. These traits include both abnormal highs and lows. The highs are referred to as manic or hypomanic traits

⁶² Mayo Clinic Staff, "Bipolar Disorder Care at Mayo Clinic," Mayo Clinic Website, last updated 2024. [mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bipolar-disorder/symptoms-causes/sync-20355955](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/bipolar-disorder/symptoms-causes/sync-20355955).

⁶³ Mayo Clinic Staff, "Bipolar Disorder," 1.

(more extreme) that include being abnormally upbeat, jumpy, or wired, increased activity, agitation, euphoria, unusual talkativeness, distractibility, and poor decision-making. In distinct contrast, the lows include depressed traits of feeling sad, empty, hopeless, irritable, marked loss of interest, feeling no pleasure in activities, restlessness, fatigue, feelings of worthlessness, excessive or inappropriate guilt, thinking about, planning, or attempting suicide.⁶⁴

Like regular people or non-musicians, most musicians experience an occasional symptom or two of bipolar disorder, so the key words to remember in determining if one has AT are *excessive* or *inappropriate* amounts of *guilt*, *restlessness*, etc.⁶⁵ A musician who experiences these tendencies a majority of the time, as the literature suggests, may suffer traits of bipolar disorder or cyclothymia (bipolar moods disorder). Even mild, bipolar traits of AT within a church setting would present a dilemma due to limited tolerance by members for inappropriate, non-Christlike outbursts from a music director.

There are many different mental and personality disorders with traits that overlap. The term *creative* is often used synonymously with AT. So, along with bipolar and manic-depressive illness research coupled with AT, some studies have been conducted to determine if creatives have connections to schizophrenics, schizotypals (schizotypy), and schizoids. The latter two are personality disorders that look alike and are commonly confused with schizophrenia.⁶⁶ Although an expert analysis and diagnosis of these disorders are needed, it is important to be able to identify any similarities that could be attributed to AT.

⁶⁴ Mayo Clinic Staff, "Bipolar Disorder," 2.

⁶⁵ Mayo Clinic Staff, "Bipolar Disorder," 2.

⁶⁶ Ramani Durvasula, "Schizophrenia VS. Schizotypal VS Schizoid Personality Disorder," (MedCircle.com podcast), directed by Kyle Kittleson, accessed December 1, 2023, <http://www.annabellepsychology.com>.

Many believe that a schizophrenic person has a split personality like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, which, according to Ramani Durvasula, is a misnomer. She explains that schizophrenics have psychotic delusions which break from reality, or hallucinations in which they see or hear what others do not hear or see. Individuals with schizotypy and schizoid personality disorders do not have these delusions or hallucinations, but rather, they seem to behave unusually toward others, may dress differently, or even make strange noises.⁶⁷ These clinical terms all have the same prefixes—*schizo*—which conjures many preconceived notions surrounding them. This is due to inaccurate story lines in many horror movies and books. To clarify, these types of mental disorders can produce symptoms and behaviors that are similar to those of artistic people with AT.

Thomas O'Reilly, Robin Dunbar, and Richard Bentall find a connection between schizotypy (extreme and persistent social anxiety) and the determination of creative pursuits.⁶⁸ One reason cited by O'Reilly et al. is that people with psychotic traits often have a difficult time maintaining a job and are socially isolated, so they face a higher risk of suicide.⁶⁹ They say there is more research connecting mood disorders with creatives than creative achievement with schizophrenia, and they quote Jamison's research which indicates that 38 percent of British writers suffered from mood disorders in 1989.⁷⁰ O'Reilly et al. compare the current literature on creative artists and hypomanics/manic-depressive illness and bipolar disorders and find that divergent thinking is specifically associated with psychoticism as a personality dimension "rather

⁶⁷ Durvasula, "Schizophrenia VS. Schizotypal."

⁶⁸ Thomas O'Reilly, Robin Dunbar, and Richard Bentall, "Schizotypy and Creativity: An Evolutionary Connection?" *Personality and Individual Differences* 31 (2001): 1067.

⁶⁹ O'Reilly et al., "Schizotypy and Creativity," 1068.

⁷⁰ O'Reilly et al., "Schizotypy and Creativity," 1069.

than the more clinically derived concept of schizotypy or psychosis-proneness.”⁷¹ Thus, their research suggests more of an attraction or openness of creatives to certain types of careers or occupations than a connection between schizotypy and AT. O’Reilly et al. help reiterate the difficulties of associating AT with personality and mental disorders even when traits are so similar.

While contemporary literature makes a distinct connection between AT and mild hypomanic behavior, when going back one hundred years, one finds a different medical explanation of AT. Medical doctors of the early 1900s expose a particular past paradigm of AT in short articles from the London-based *The Hospital Biomedical Journal* from the early 20th century. The articles resemble a modern-day mini-series or editorial column in a weekly medical journal. The first article, dated May 13, 1916, begins by reporting many abnormal, negative, but inborn traits of AT and attributes them to nothing more than a genius who has been coddled and spoiled as a child. These traits elicit distasteful behaviors including selfishness, rudeness, laziness, reactions and responses lacking in common sense, and an inability to pursue a task to completion. The writer goes on to compare AT to that of the feline character: self-absorbed, aloof, irresponsible, taking care of his or her person, habitual acting by fits and starts, luxuriousness, self-indulgent, playfulness, dishonest, and cruel. The report states, “He does not always wreck his own life, but if the temperament is highly developed, he will infallibly wreck the lives of others.”⁷²

A second article in the 1916 series explores AT as more of an extension of a genius’ highly emotional experiences. There seems to be much more tolerance in this article which

⁷¹ O’Reilly et al., “Schizotypy and Creativity,” 1076.

⁷² NH U.S. National Library of Medicine, “Insanity and Temperament: The Artistic Temperament,” *The Hospital Biomedical Journal* (May 13, 1916): 147.

concludes that one must have such depth of emotion to create art that stirs others emotionally.⁷³

A third article argues that someone with AT may appear to be lazy in professional pursuits but in reality, the person with AT desires to work at nothing else except his or her art.⁷⁴ This description implies a lack of self-discipline like a “spoiled child,” a trait of AT that is replicated in another article written around the same time titled, “The Artistic Temperament and the Artist’s Progress,” by Fuller-Maitland.

Fuller-Maitland writes from a music teacher’s perspective and portrays the musician with AT as a child prodigy whose parents have treated him or her differently than other siblings due to this great exceptionality. Fuller-Maitland attributes this special treatment to several reasons including pride for having such an offspring, average parent nervousness, or possible exploitation.⁷⁵ The writer details pedagogical methods and performance strategies to help develop and polish the musical talent of a musician with AT but adds that such a genius needs to change teachers often. He reasons that a student with AT will outgrow a teacher and become bored. He further suggests that this is all part of the same depravity to which AT is “particularly prone.”⁷⁶ According to Fuller-Maitland, successful progress of musicians with AT can be accomplished with “the constant exercise of will-power, independence, perseverance, as well as keeping a high ideal in view.”⁷⁷ These older articles seem to indicate that AT can be understood

⁷³ NH U.S. National Library of Medicine, “The Artistic Temperament: The Real Artist Analyzed,” *The Hospital Biomedical Journal* (May 20, 1916): 175.

⁷⁴ NH U.S. National Library of Medicine, “The Editor’s Box: ‘Human Temperaments: The Temperament of the Artist,’” *The Hospital Biomedical Journal* (May 27, 1916).

⁷⁵ J. A. Fuller-Maitland, “The Artistic Temperament and the Artist’s Progress,” *The Musical Quarterly* 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1916): 97.

⁷⁶ Fuller-Maitland, “The Artistic Temperament,” 108.

⁷⁷ Fuller-Maitland, “The Artistic Temperament,” 107–8.

and managed outside of medication or psychotherapy, which contradicts researchers of today who claim that AT parallels some mental diseases. The third article states:

Perhaps your contributor will go on to tell us to what extent that artist's temperament is itself a morbid symptom? If he can and will do this his preliminary step must be to lay down what is to be regarded as the standard of sanity, unselfishness, and health.... Only by an understanding of the humdrum and the normal can the limelight of science be flashed upon it, and incidentally Psychology be rescued from her position as the Cinderella of the Sciences, where covered with dirt she now lies amid the dust and ashes of the unreal and remote studies to which her pretentious and purse-proud sisters, Madame von Psychiatry and Frau Research have scornfully and, in the end, as we now see, suicidally condemned her.⁷⁸

This statement indicates that current literature challenges the work of these earlier twentieth-century writers who tended to assume an explanation for AT other than mental illness because psychiatry was not yet a well-accepted practice within medical circles.

In more recent medical studies, psychiatrists Zaman, Agius, and Hankir report: "Not all (not even most) writers and artists suffer from major mood disorders. Likewise, most of those who have major mood disorders are not writers or artists. However, despite this, research does strongly suggest that there is a correlation between manic-depressive illness and the artistic temperament."⁷⁹ They also contend that chances of mental illness are much higher in creatives and that there is a strong correlation between poets and craziness, madness and genius, manic-depressive illness, and the artistic temperament These three psychiatrists affirm the following about AT and mental illness: "We decided to investigate the relationship between manic-depressive illness and the artistic temperament. Research strongly suggests that, compared with the general population, writers and artists show a vastly disproportionate rate of the affective

⁷⁸ NH U.S. National Library of Medicine, "The Editor's Box," 175.

⁷⁹ R. M. Zaman, Agius, and A. Hankir, "Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament," *European Psychiatry* 26, no. 52 (2011): 261.

disorders manic-depressive and depressive illness.”⁸⁰ This study concludes with findings that show that many of the traits attributed to mildly manic states (e.g., changes in mood, thinking and perception) are “highly characteristic of creative thought as well... melancholy has also been reported to be associated with artistic inspiration and productivity.”⁸¹

A more recent reprinting of Zaman, Agius, and Hankir’s research article indicates continued, engaging interest in the phenomenon by those in the field of psychology.⁸² However, AT has not been studied medically or categorized as of the time of this research as a mental illness in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) nor is it specified as a type of neurosis on the spectrum of mental illnesses. It is important to note that even though AT does not yet hold an official place in the psychological or medical field, AT is being described negatively as having traits that parallel bipolar disorder and is often understood to be synonymous with the term *creativity* within the current literature.

Secular, Non-Medical Literature on AT

Secular literature suggests those who are unfamiliar with AT may be interested in its correlation with those associated with the Arts and Humanities. A secular, non-medical study was performed by Necka and Hlawacz, of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw, titled, “Who Has an Artistic Temperament? Relationships Between Creativity and Temperament Among Artists and Bank Officers.” They attempt to make a connection between

⁸⁰ Zaman et al., “Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament.”

⁸¹ Zaman et al., “Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament.”

⁸² R. M. Zaman, Agius, and A. Hankir, “Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic temperament,” *European Psychiatry* 26, no. 52 (2011): 261, reprinted online by Cambridge Press (2020), <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-psychiatry/article/abs/manicdepressive-illness-and-the-artistic-temperament/5B695C772D9D46ADC024F2335A0FDCF9>.

creativity and AT. Part of their quantitative study includes the hypothesis that temperament is conceptualized as the biologically rooted, mostly inborn, foundations for personality and other traits.⁸³ They gave sixty bank officers and sixty artists a temperamental traits measurement test (Streleu's Formal Characteristics of Behavior—Temperament Inventory FCB—TI, 1997) and Urban and Jellen's (1986) Test for Creative Thinking Drawing Production (TCT—DP) along with an experimental task that required word categorization.⁸⁴ According to Necka and Hlawacz, it appears that creativity is positively correlated with AT and negatively with emotional reactivity, but only within the group of artists. Bank officers who were given the tests were generally less creative than artists, showing no relationship between creativity and temperament.⁸⁵

Music education provides literature that outlines specific expectations, traits, and behaviors of music teachers that rely heavily on routine. These routines seem to work well in the world of public music education. Veteran teacher Michael Linsin provides strategies to help music teachers whose personalities seem moody and who demonstrate an inability to experience joy. These strategies help them create routines in life and work to manage any depressive thoughts. He says that music teachers must make every word count and adds the following:

⁸³ Edward Necka and Teresa Hlawacz, "Who Has an Artistic Temperament? Relationships Between Creativity and Temperament Among Artists and Bank Officers," *Creativity Research Journal* 25, no. 2 (2013): 1.

⁸⁴ Necka and Hlawacz, "Who Has an Artistic Temperament?" 1.

⁸⁵ Necka and Hlawacz, "Who Has an Artistic Temperament?" 1.

Always be sensitive to your singers' fatigue or frustration levels. Twenty minutes on one piece is close to the saturation point for high school students. Watch for and heed signals of restlessness or boredom during rehearsal and modify your plans accordingly. Your face should show the mood of each piece and how you feel about the music, the singers, and their efforts. Pay attention to your rehearsal demeanor because students will mirror what you do. The same holds true with talking. If you talk too much during rehearsal, your students will too.⁸⁶

If secular knowledge says that band and chorus students need to see certain things on the faces of their music directors, there can be a direct application of using music education information to help church musicians with AT tendencies. Topics in Linsin's book cover the basics: Relationships, Temperament, Composure, Room Environment, Praise, Giving Directions, What Not to Do, Being Consistent, Slow Down, Presence, and A Love for Your Class—all of which emulate Scripture and a biblical worldview surrounding Christian behavior. Most will agree that these chapters hold a treasure trove of reminders for Christian music directors (i.e., leaving choir members wanting more, practicing [consistent] enthusiasm, hopefully expecting success, adjusting to group size, avoiding needless talk, and diverting problems before they snowball).

Louis Leverett, in Paris, once wrote a letter to Harvard Tremont in Boston comparing life in Paris to life in Boston. The letter reveals Tremont's AT traits exhibiting *on ne peut pas vivra* (negative lifestyle) tendencies. Leverett says that, in his opinion, this is not as widely accepted in Boston as it is in Paris. He states that in Boston, things are either right or wrong. But in Paris, the sensuality of deeper feelings conveyed through "the artistic temperament" prevails.⁸⁷ This letter perhaps hints at a more normal or natural acceptance of AT in highly gifted people in some cultures like Paris, but less tolerated in others like Boston. Although Leverett does not directly say so, Tremont's AT tendencies toward a negative lifestyle could have been problematic for

⁸⁶ Michael Linsin, *Classroom Management for Art, Music, and PE Teachers* (San Diego, CA: JME Publishing, 2014), 70.

⁸⁷ Henry James, "Bundle of Letters," *The Free Library of Literature*, 1–4.

him in colonial Boston. However, Christians with a biblical worldview search the Scriptures to understand what God has to say about being heedless of prudent behaviors. For example, one could compare Tremont's AT tendencies to the fool in the following verse: "The wise see danger ahead and avoid it, but the fools keep going ahead and get into trouble" (Prov. 27:12). E. Johnson has this to say about Solomon's thoughts on the advantage of forethought: "Prudence has been described as 'the virtue of the senses.' It is the science of appearances. It is the outward action of the inward life.... Thus, true prudence is only that which foresees, detects, and guards against the ills which menace the life of the soul; for there is no profit in the prudence which seeks the world and risks the soul."⁸⁸ While AT's traits in Tremont suggest a lack of prudence and forethought of reality, the application of Scripture could help those with AT acknowledge a need for the forethought of prudence, thus, according to E. Johnson, contributing to the "health of mind by complying with the laws of intellect."⁸⁹ The laws of the intellect in this context point to the need for Scripture's moral good habits, prudence, and forethought.

Religious Literature on AT

According to both the medical and secular fields, AT can be like mental disorders, but there is no significant religiously based literature about musicians in the church exhibiting traits of AT. In one of the few literature sources relating a religious worldview to AT, I. G. Stevenson writes about AT as if enamored with those who have it. He begins his 1913 article with a resolute statement concerning AT:

Unhappy is he for whom the reminder of the artistic temperament fails to conjure up arresting visions of beauty in many forms... a march of Wagner or a strain of Debussy, Caruso's rendering of some solo of the unwholesome duke in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Ellen

⁸⁸ E. Johnson, *Proverbs*, vol. 9, *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (McLean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, 1983), 526.

⁸⁹ Johnson, *Proverbs*, 526.

Terry’s appealing declamation as Portia, a poem of Burns, or a page of Peter’s matchless prose—all these are typical products of the artistic temperament.⁹⁰

Stevenson infers that many geniuses with AT have contributed to the beauty of God’s creation and are “part of the divine scheme for the education of the race.”⁹¹

In contrast, according to a qualitative, phenomenological study by Kwee, Dominquez, and Ferrell, many evangelical people believe that psychological problems are the product of a “sinful and spiritually fallen condition.”⁹² According to Genesis 3:19, man’s ultimate punishment for sinning against God is physical death brought on by different negative things like sickness and maladies. Since AT has not been officially diagnosed as a mental disorder or an affective malady, but rather parallels one, this study is needed to draw awareness to the negative effect AT has on creative people, especially in the church.

One of the “Fathers of Methodism,” Charles Wesley (1707–1788), is depicted by biographers as having suffered depression. John R. Tyson, editor of *Charles Wesley, A Reader*, writes that General Oglethorpe observed growing depression in Wesley during his assignment to the small Georgia mission on St. Simons Island. To combat Wesley’s morbid moods, General Oglethorpe suggested that Wesley get married rather than remain celibate.⁹³ Wesley was evidently not interested at the time. His strict religious legalism was highly disliked by the early settlers, and this exacerbated his depressive episodes. Due to combined troubles in relationships, physical illness, and mental depression, he resigned his mission in Georgia, having alienated

⁹⁰ J. G. Stevenson, “The Artistic Temperament and Its Relation to Religion,” *Quiver Historical Periodical* 48, no. 7 (May 1913): 700.

⁹¹ Stevenson, “The Artistic Temperament and Its Relation to Religion,” 700.

⁹² Alex W. Kwee, Amy W. Dominquez, and Donald Ferrell, “Sexual Addiction and Christian College Men: Conceptual, Assessment, and Treatment Challenges,” *Christian Association for Psychological Studies* 26, no. 1 (2017): 4.

⁹³ John R. Tyson, ed., *Charles Wesley, A Reader* (New York, NY: Oxford Press, 1989), 8.

himself from the people.⁹⁴ Other studies confirm Wesley's propensity to seclusion and melancholy, which could indicate that he suffered other negative traits of AT that would have an impact on his ability to build lasting relationships and maintain long tenures in his churches.

As a predecessor to Tyson, Thomas Jackson (1783–1873) describes Charles Wesley's depression in this way: "There was a peculiarity in his mental constitution, which serves to explain many things in his conduct that would otherwise appear inexplicable. Above almost every other man, he was the child of feeling; so that it was with the utmost difficulty he ever divested himself of a deep and solemn impression that had been made upon his mind."⁹⁵ Jackson writes that until the end of his life, Wesley suffered mentally and had gloomy moods which he introduced into his hymns.⁹⁶ Yet, contrary to what Schuldberg says about depression, Charles Wesley was highly creative, wrote devotional poetry, and is credited with more than 6,500 hymns. Jackson says that he composed them as poems first for his own edification, and second, for the edification of the church.⁹⁷ In the case of Wesley, depression seems to have been an accompanying factor in his creativity.

Any episodes of depression in Charles Wesley read more like deep religious commitment and sincerity in his personal, daily journals, annotated by Jackson. Wesley was deeply affected by the death of his friend, Thomas Walsh, and wrote three hymns in which he described the character and history of the deceased.⁹⁸ In this way, Wesley's poetry no doubt became a catharsis

⁹⁴ Tyson, ed., *Charles Wesley, A Reader*, 66.

⁹⁵ Thomas Jackson, *The Life of the Reverend Charles Wesley, M.A.* (Orlando, FL: Lucy Booker Roper, 2014), 782.

⁹⁶ Jackson, *Reverend Charles Wesley*, 783.

⁹⁷ Jackson, *Reverend Charles Wesley*, 788.

⁹⁸ Jackson, *Reverend Charles Wesley*, 552.

for him personally but also helped provide a theological foundation for Methodist worship. The use of Wesley's hymns with poetic stanzas and choruses has become standard in church music for almost two centuries.

Don Hustad says that conflict in the church today is created by superficial rhetoric in church worship due to focusing on the lure of commercialism while avoiding biblical themes yet pretending to be faithful. He states that many churches use styles of worship as entertainment due to a lack of spiritual training for the music minister which leads to conflict.⁹⁹ In his book, *True Worship*, he explains that solutions lie in simply training the musician theologically and growing them spiritually. He suggests how to teach worship,¹⁰⁰ and even shares historical nuggets of drama (conflict) in Scripture.¹⁰¹ Hustad does not touch on AT's problematic traits in church musicians.

Martin, McGann, Noland, and Willis help to explain topics on worship, the roles of worship leaders, integrating old and new music styles, and how to balance humility with confidence to avoid any problems in the church. Noland agrees that worship musicians need to be more spiritually prepared than technically prepared to lead worship.¹⁰² However, he does not mention or recognize AT as a culprit in some church situations nor how to manage depressive moods with anything other than prayer, Bible study, and personal spiritual growth important to all Christians.

⁹⁹ Donald P. Hustad, *True Worship: Reclaiming the Wonder & Majesty* (Wheaton, Hope Publishing, 1998), 120.

¹⁰⁰ Hustad, *True Worship*, 164.

¹⁰¹ Hustad, *True Worship*, 275.

¹⁰² Rory Noland, *The Worshiping Artist: Equipping You and Your Ministry Team to Lead Others in Worship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 10.

Lucas Ramirez describes actual conflict situations in the church and explains what Scripture says about handling them. Along with inspirational, encouraging messages, he includes some practical listening strategies and possible dialogues to create unity. Ramirez states that faith is a marriage relationship with Christ, the groom, but also a covenant relationship with the brothers and sisters in Christ.¹⁰³ Ramirez acknowledges various types of church conflict but says nothing about AT in church musicians as a possible contributor.

C. McCully offers marriage counseling strategies for coping with conflict in the church. His research titled, “Conflict Resolution to Preserve Church Unity,” goes a step beyond scriptural authority by adding marriage conflict resolution exercises for church groups to resolve conflict. McCully states that church bonds can grow stronger due to conflict, because just as in marriage, it can be used to engender growth.¹⁰⁴ Parallels can be made between applying marriage counseling strategies to any conflicts that might arise within the church created by AT’s unfavorable traits.

Parallels can also be made between AT and strategies that have been developed to help music directors maintain good self-care—physical, emotional, and psychological. Handbooks such as one by Gregory Brewton point out the need for music directors to be more intentional in caring for themselves so they can last in ministry.¹⁰⁵ As a church musician, one’s physical and emotional wellbeing is most important, but gaining and maintaining good spiritual health is essential. In his book, Brewton states, “None of us really knows how long the Lord will allow us

¹⁰³ Lucas Ramirez and Mike Devito, *Designed for More: Unleashing Christ’s Vision for Unity in a Deeply Divided World* (Nashville, TN: FaithWords, Hachette Book Group, 2018), 175.

¹⁰⁴ C. McCully, “Conflict Resolution to Preserve Church Unity” (DMin diss., Portland Seminary, 2021), 95–98.

¹⁰⁵ Gregory B. Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry: The Worship Minister’s Life and Work* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 105.

to serve in a particular place,” so... “...training disciples takes priority over training musicians.”¹⁰⁶ His point and the point of this book is that spiritual training and nourishment is needed for choir members and the praise teams, but also for the music director. Personal knowledge of one’s well-being in all areas is crucial to relational and pastoral care and may not be covered in undergraduate performance, theory, sight reading, and music history classes.

Despite all the many attempts to pinpoint conflict in the church—no doubt it can come from many different directions—the research is insignificant concerning conflict that originates in musicians with negative traits of AT. Admittedly, the church is lacking in knowledge of AT while the secular and medical worlds seem to have already studied it. Recent secular and medical findings point toward a relationship between creatives and mental illness. Quantitative data provided by Gusewell and Ruch concerning character strengths and profiles of musicians seem to support the work of qualitative researchers such as Niberca Polo. Gusewell and Ruch’s findings that musicians score lower on judgment, perspective, teamwork, fairness, and leadership than non-musicians seem to support Polo’s research suggesting that creatives suffer depressed moods, similar to hypomania. According to Polo, hypomania can cause one to develop poor judgment and bad perspectives, leading to more weakened character traits. Both studies challenge the earlier assumptions that AT is likely a result of over-indulgent parents who spoil their child protégé or that AT is accepted as the “quirky” nature of an extremely gifted, artistic, genius adult.

Stephen Miller describes what poor overall well-being looks like today in church musicians: “I (also) know that there are many suit-wearing choir and orchestra worship pastors who are some of the biggest *prima donnas* a man could ever meet and are filled with high-church

¹⁰⁶ Brewton, *A Guide to Worship Ministry*, 115.

snobbery, pride of their GQ swag that makes elderly women swoon, and arrogance that their way is far superior to others.”¹⁰⁷ Miller sees this as an attitude and mentality of musicians rather than a pop cultural style, but could AT be a contributing factor? With many churches of the modern worship movement mimicking a “rock star worship syndrome,” future study of AT in Christian worship ministries is needed to help better prepare musicians to be servant leaders in the church.

Summary

The present information about AT is mainly found in the psychiatric field of medicine. Studies have also been conducted across the secular range of creatives by secular researchers, biographers, and historians. These studies research AT as it relates to musicians, artists or sculptors, teachers, performers, etc., however, they shy away from using medical terms. In great contrast, very little study, past or present, has been done in the area of AT and religion.

At first glance, it seems that Kay Redfield Jamison presents the most research comparing symptoms of bipolar disorder or manic-depressive illness (equating the two) with AT. Jamison combines her own study of British poets with the research of several others who have studied composers and all other types of writers and artists. She employs their findings on mood disorders, AT, and creatives to corroborate her own conclusion that there is indeed a relationship and interaction between manic depression and AT.

Prior to Jamison, very little data had been collected on AT. Some compelling evidence presented by Jamison includes high percentages of creatives with symptoms of bipolar disorder, like difficulty sleeping, great amounts of enthusiasm, self-confidence, and bouts of depression, but also the speed of mental acuity and fluency of thoughts. Probably the most startling statistic presented by Jamison is that thirty out of eighty-three British poets studied were committed to

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Miller, *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013), 6.

asylums or psychiatric hospitals for mood disorder treatment. Of these poets, twelve *attempted* suicide, and twenty-one *committed* suicide. Jamison asserts that there is a much higher rate of mood disorders in the artistic populations than could be expected by chance alone.¹⁰⁸ Drawing on Jamison's work, Niberca (GiGi) Polo's research on the bipolar connection to AT centers around psychiatric findings and terms and how AT affects creatives. Polo's research describes her own bipolar symptoms by mixing terms and behaviors of manic-depressive disorders with AT. As an educator diagnosed with bipolar disorder, Polo's research could also be classified as secular literature on AT because she is not in the medical field, even though she interviews medical doctors. Polo highlights AT as having the mild or lesser traits of manic-depressive disorders. Due to the number of musicians with AT's negative traits, Polo suggests that AT is related to manic depression but is most likely the least severe of the mental disorders.¹⁰⁹ Her study helps to shed light on AT for creative educators who may have AT while teaching students with AT. They must adjust and manage symptoms of AT within themselves before they can help manage it in their students.

Where Jamison's study points to both the manic and the depressive sides of bipolar disorder as important to creative production, Alex Gamma et al. sees only its hypomanic side as creatively productive. His team suggests that many hypomanic artists forego any kind of treatment, drugs, or psychotherapy because they do not want to alter their unusual and massive creative energy. This coincides with the findings of David Schulberg. His research suggests a variety of causal possibilities linking genius to madness, but depression is not one of them.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 56.

¹⁰⁹ Polo, "The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament," 8.

¹¹⁰ Schulberg, "Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits," 7.

Schuldberg not only organizes six traits of the mental disorder, schizophrenia, but explains categorical placements of mental disorders on the horizontal level versus the vertical level of the spectrum. Horizontally, many traits easily overlap, but vertically, traits are categorized according to severity. He implies that psychiatrists and psychologists have a difficult time categorizing and diagnosing various disorders. Schuldberg adds that this is because other variables, like cultural norms or personal ego, must be considered as part of the overall analysis of traits and behaviors. Since AT has not been officially assigned a place on the spectrum, medical professionals are therefore reluctant to diagnose it in any terms other than bipolar disorder or manic depression.

Necka and Hlawacz studied artists and bankers and found a relationship (positively correlated) between creativity and AT, with bankers showing no relationship to creativity or AT. Also, sensibly speaking, music educators seem to acknowledge a relationship between creatives and AT and rely heavily on their methods of training to manage AT, with strategies like establishing a routine and being careful to watch their own demeanor and facial expressions with students. By far, the most compelling information surrounding AT and musicians comes from Angelica Gusewell and Willibald Ruch, whose findings show that musicians score significantly lower on judgment, perspective, teamwork, fairness, and leadership than normal people.¹¹¹ This is important because musicians find themselves in careers in which character traits of judgment, perspective, teamwork, fairness, and leadership are necessary. This is especially true in Christian music and in church musicians.

Unfortunately, the field of religion has little to nothing in terms of research connecting Christian creatives or musicians to AT. Near the beginning of the twentieth century, Rev. I. G. Stevenson wrote about AT as if enamored with those who showed symptoms of it as part of

¹¹¹ Gusewell and Ruch, "Character Strengths Profiles," 7.

God's "divine scheme for the education of the race."¹¹² Later literature has been written by Christian Worship educators, Don Hustad and Rory Noland, to help church musicians identify any negative traits they might have that are inconsistent with Scripture. They discuss these behaviors as problematic but fail to see a relationship to mental disorders or AT.

Since unmanaged negative AT symptoms can create conflict in the church, one would suppose religious literature would address it, but religious writers on conflict resolution in the church do not. Instead, they generalize conflict in the church and advise church leaders to use certain dialogues and marriage counseling strategies to avoid or resolve them. The area of AT or conflict within music departments is not considered. This type of research could help identify relationships between church musicians and AT. This literature review presents a lack of sufficient research which demonstrates a research gap and the need for consequent research. To help fill the literature gap on traits associated with AT, the researcher outlines the procedures of this phenomenological study on the characteristics of AT in chapter 3.

¹¹² Stevenson, "The Artistic Temperament and Its Relation to Religion," 700.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

The focus of this study is to explore and understand the traits associated with an Artistic Temperament (AT) in church music directors and the possible effects of AT on the lived experiences of the choir members they shepherd. The research is a case study of a large, independent Methodist church in South Georgia (formerly United Methodist, now disaffiliated) where five different choir directors either left or were fired within a five-year period (2015–2020). This revolving door of music directors leaving, being hired, or being fired, created some lingering, negative repercussions in the church's music department. This researcher wants to understand if the phenomenon of AT was present at the time.

Longevity in any ministry position is a goal for which everyone hopes. So why did these directors not stay? Assumptions to answer this question include things like differences in theology, personality clashes, or perhaps a better offer from another church. Still, the purpose of this study is not to find causal reasons for the phenomenon but to investigate and better understand the essential character or nature of the traits associated with an Artistic Temperament (AT) and discover if the negative traits associated with AT were perceived in any of the five music directors at the church by choir members and pastors who served with these directors between 2015 and 2020. By gathering qualitative data from singers who participated in the church choir during this time of great tension in the church, the researcher hopes to discover if any negative traits of AT emerge from their stories to help better understand the phenomenon of AT. Gathering data from the church administrators and leaders at the time may also help raise awareness of AT's negative traits as a possible contribution to the short tenures of the five music directors in this church.

Chapter three outlines the procedural expectations of this research as a hermeneutical, qualitative, phenomenological study. Documenting the participants' stories through a series of interviews provides the data necessary to identify the emergence of any negative traits attributed to AT in any of the music hires at that time. Interviewing church leaders and pastors gives the needed triangulation (credibility) or alignment of experiences. If the music directors reacted in ways that were not compatible with Scripture, this study might help raise the awareness of Scripture's role as a corrective means of grace and growth for church musicians who have difficulty managing the negative traits associated with an AT.

There is little research on AT's negative effects on church musicians. Scripture is foundational for setting standards of behavior and relationships in the church. The researcher interviewed choir members to understand if scriptural protocols and group management strategies were used or ignored during the regular church music rehearsals, performances, and routines. By examining choir members' lived experiences, this phenomenological case study hopes to provide Christian musicians with added knowledge to identify AT but also to provide Scripture that helps build longevity in ministry by learning to cope successfully with AT's negative traits.

This study was conducted as a case study of one local church (unnamed for the sake of confidentiality). Scriptural knowledge and spiritual maturity are expected, desirable qualities in evangelical church leaders and church music hires. Traits and behavioral patterns attributed to AT, such as negative mood swings and unbridled, raging tempers in music rehearsals, can create great tension, so it is important for any symptoms associated with AT to be better identified, acknowledged, and checked within the church. Also, it is important for musicians to understand that certain traits of AT in creative people are similar to the affective disorders of those on the

spectrum. Perhaps through this study, church leaders can recognize AT's traits and encourage the musician(s) involved to gain self-awareness that prompts help from a qualified, professional Christian counselor or (in a worst-case scenario) a Christian psychologist/psychiatrist.

The secular research findings of AT as a psychological issue for musicians increase the probability that AT can produce self-serving, negative traits in church musicians that contradict serving Christ and others. To gain an inclusive picture of AT in the church, a more comprehensive and complete understanding of AT must be sought through data that extensively describes the knowledge, opinions, perceptions, and feelings of the people involved in this case study.¹

Research Questions

There is great intrigue surrounding a choir member's ability to endure unprecedented experiences of saying, "Hello," and "Goodbye," to five different directors in a five-year period. This study's population was asked open-ended questions to get their perception of AT and if their preconceived knowledge of the phenomenon includes experiencing any negative symptoms of AT that might have emerged in their lived experiences (i.e., any mild or occasional depressive or manic behaviors of the directors). However, the main question for this phenomenological case study surrounding AT is, "During the five years (2015–2020) of the church in this case study, what aspects of AT were demonstrated by music directors from the perspective of the lived experiences of the choir members?" Subordinate research questions are as follows: 1) Were any negative traits of AT expressed by music directors? 2) What degree of spiritual maturity, scriptural knowledge, or use of strategies were present in the lives of the music directors during

¹ Carol Roberts and Laura Hyatt, *The Dissertation Journey, A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending Your Dissertation*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Publishing, 2019), 143.

this time? 3) What are the lived experiences of choir members sitting under directors exhibiting any negative traits associated with AT? 4) What measures were taken by the church leadership to learn more about musicians and AT? 5) What opportunities were given to church music directors to seek understanding—counselors, or medical, psychological, or spiritual help?

The best research design to answer these questions is a qualitative, phenomenological approach to help generate knowledge of AT. Any emergence of negative traits displayed by the musicians could restate the study's purpose for a need to explore AT's negative traits in church musicians, and how one might manage AT in the church through the corrective nature of Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit within the heart of all believers involved. This method relies heavily upon the researcher as the main instrument for asking questions, and upon the researcher to stay focused on the research questions. In addition, there are eight interview questions asked of each participant in the study.

1. What were the joys and trials you experienced as a member of the church choir between 2015–2020?
2. If it was good, how was it good? If it was terrible, how was it terrible?
3. Can you tell me how the music directors displayed any negative behaviors, emotional highs or lows and how it made you feel at the time?
4. Did you and the choir experience any hypomanic or depressive moods of a music director occasionally, or on a regular basis, and if so, how did that affect the overall atmosphere of the rehearsals?
5. Did the music directors seem intentional about maintaining a positive environment, and if so, how did he/she execute that?

6. Do you think it is normal for a church music director to be more emotionally expressive? Why, or why not?
7. Where any apparent strategies used to help alleviate tension, like prayer and or biblical references, or was the use of Scripture non-existent in rehearsals or meetings with the music director(s)?
8. Did you experience few, none, or many positive comments to individual singers or sections, praises to God, playfulness, fun jokes, seamless transitions, or creative new ways to rehearse or lead in worship?

Personal interviews were conducted to record the stories of the three groups of participants—the choir members, church leaders, and clergy, —who were at the church during the five-year period in this case study (2015–2020). Each participant was directed to answer the questions with examples of their experiences and the researcher collected data on those experiences. The researcher employed a Heidegger-applied approach to research utilizing the hermeneutic circle filtered through the lens of Scripture. With this design, the researcher expects participants' answers to provide understanding, recognizing that the understanding may change and increase as data parts are organized into themes, analyzed, and then assimilated into the whole, while always reviewing all the parts.² The corrective lens of Scripture was used in the review process.

Emerging feelings are not easily quantified. Thus, a qualitative approach is the best way to analyze large quantities of spoken data on traits associated with AT by organizing answers or individual stories into patterns and meaningful themes. Later, these smaller parts were analyzed,

² Katarzyna Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation, A Step-by-Step Guide* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc., 2021), 33.

triangulated, and constructed into an inclusive picture of the phenomenon of AT in church musicians.³

Methodology

Open-ended questions are necessary to collect the participants' stories of lived AT experiences, thus the qualitative research methodology applies. While the quantitative approach provides logical positivism, qualitative research provides a more theoretical/philosophical rationale.⁴ Numerical data is best collected using a quantitative study, but to understand specific issues surrounding a phenomenon, interviews provide deeper insights into "the intricate interactions of this population's experiences."⁵

As a hermeneutic phenomenological study (design), the data was gleaned as it emerged from the stories of choir members who shared their lived experiences while serving under the five music directors who left the church. This requires the exploration of feelings, unlike quantitative questions that seek facts and causes of behavior.⁶ Using an added framework of a biblical worldview required further analyzing of the narratives from the interviews, observations, and documents.

The theoretical lens or perspective of Scripture helps shape the questions asked, inform how data are collected and analyzed, and provide a call for action or change.⁷ Without trying to define a complete answer to a well-defined problem, the researcher instead tried to describe the

³ Roberts and Hyatt, *The Dissertation Journey*, 143.

⁴ S. Staindack & W. Staindack, *Understanding & Conducting Qualitative Research* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 1988), 4.

⁵ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 25.

⁶ Roberts and Hyatt, *The Dissertation Journey*, 142.

⁷ Creswell and Creswell, *Research Design*, 62.

phenomenon of AT, which needs to be better understood. Prayer for discernment adds yet another phenomenological aspect to the research design and is employed throughout the plan as a major component.

The literature suggests that AT shares similarities to mental illness. As a qualitative study, personal interview questions were designed to discover any emerging negative traits of AT within the shared experiences of all participants. Through the lens of scriptural truth, mainly God's love, patience, and grace, the goal is to better understand the effects of a music director's behaviors on the study's participants. Was there a consistent positive atmosphere during rehearsals? If not, another goal of the study is to increase understanding of the need for believers, even those exhibiting traits associated with AT, to seek discernment provided by the Holy Spirit and have the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), which helps Christians better handle any negative traits that emerge from within.

The three groups of participants (choir members, church leaders, and pastors who were at the church during this time) were also asked to submit other data, such as email correspondence to choir members, or any documentation of the conflict deemed suitable to be shared by the church leadership. All of the questions were free of assumptions, asking only about what the choir members felt or sensed at the time of their experiences. The components of the study were included in the questions, and they are presented in a simple format that does not require further clarification.⁸

⁸ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 28.

Research Design

The qualitative research design to understand the characteristics associated with AT in a local church combines a case study of an individual church with a phenomenological research approach to understand the traits of AT. Added to the parameters of this design is the hermeneutic circle. Any discussions that result from the interview questions include the researcher's fore-conception to identify traits of AT that may emerge from stories of choir episodes described by the choir members (*Dasein*).⁹ Although AT traits might seem apparent due to the literature available, the objective of the researcher is to be able to understand and summarize AT as a phenomenon during the events. Within this design, participants discuss what their experiences were like and how they made them feel, which makes it possible for others to imagine it too.¹⁰ Answers or stories that contain any emergent AT traits, such as moodiness, agitation, or anger, were identified by the researcher during a deductive coding process and a final analysis to perhaps disclose the presence of AT traits in the music directors at the time of the case study. There was no prior intention of the researcher to draw attention to any probable cause of the conflict or tension in this local church but to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of AT in church musicians.

The phenomenological design allows for further questions and discussions that may be generated from the main research questions, such as, "If it was terrible, can you tell me how it was terrible?" This type of questioning is part of Heidegger's hermeneutic approach and helps to ensure the obtaining of more data from participants' stories which creates more emergent data on the emotional experiences associated with AT. With a Heideggerian approach and the

⁹ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 34.

¹⁰ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 4.

hermeneutic circle to focus on what emerges from the lens of the choir's experiences, data was collected pertaining to the studied phenomenon of AT. Katarzyna Peoples explains, "In hermeneutic phenomenology, there is a focus on the interaction between the researcher and the data. Each participant's experiences are translated through the researcher by comparing and contrasting accounts with other participants."¹¹ With the addition of Scripture as an interpretive lens, there was a safeguard in this process that ensured the researcher analyzed the data objectively according to biblical truth.

Follow-up interviews were also part of this design and were necessary to add large sums of data. The need for these additional interviews may have suddenly appeared when one person's story was completely opposite as compared to another person's story of the same experience. The participants were then asked more questions to gain clarity and understanding because people may approach AT with different perspectives while sharing a lived experience. Connecting large quantities of data from different sources (triangulation) is an important part of the design that adds credibility to the study's philosophical constructs of the overall experiences of AT in the church. Adding an additional correction through scriptural application adds yet another layer of credibility as the researcher's triangulation of the participant's stories is qualified in chapter 5 by what is biblically faithful. The following section helps to describe the participants who are providing their lived experiences during this five-year period.

Population and Sample Selection

The setting for this case study is a large, now Independent Methodist Church in South Georgia. At the time of the study, the church had replanted its congregation after going through disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church due to theological differences regarding the

¹¹ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 64–65.

interpretation of Scripture. The choir members who participated in this study were required to be eighteen years of age or older and must have served under or with two or more of the five music directors between 2015 and 2020. Likewise, the church leaders or former pastors interviewed in the study worked with two or more of the music directors during this period of time. As a qualitative case study, there are a minimum of ten participants with three different sources of data. A phenomenological study depends mainly on lengthy interviews (60–90 minutes long), “with a small, carefully selected sample of participants.”¹² There are at least seven remaining church choir members who were faithful attendees between 2015 and 2020. Several church leaders are still heavily involved in the church and agreed to participate in the study. Two former pastors who have since retired agreed to participate in interviews either by phone or computer-generated ZOOM meetings.

According to Leedy and Ormrod, the phenomenological study should have at least five to twenty-five individuals, all of whom have had direct experiences with the five different music directors who may have shown traits of the phenomenon (AT) during the period being studied.¹³ Therefore, ten participants in this study were sufficient. Participants were told in advance that follow-up interviews would most likely be scheduled as needed to help clarify their lived experiences and provide more data. This triangulation of stories with others along with a proper comparison of feelings felt during shared experiences created credible insight. Follow-up interviews also helped the researcher better understand the population’s personalities and individual perspectives which could influence how they interpreted their experiences. All these things were explained to participants in advance and as necessary in the progression of the study.

¹² Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 233.

¹³ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 233.

The population was selected mainly because they were faithful as choir members or to the church as administrators/leaders between 2015 and 2020, and thus, they were most likely present to share the lived experiences being studied. As a case study, the selected population of choir members, church leaders, and former pastors were asked ahead of time if they would be willing to provide any emails, documents, letters, or digital messages that could shed light on their experiences with the music directors during 2015–2020. Since little research exists on AT in church musicians, the population was asked to recall any events or unique conditions at the time that could provide explanations regarding the phenomenon of AT, such as whether the music director(s) was/were sympathetic to the progressive and cultural norms that do not align with Scripture or the disciplines of the church (at the time).¹⁴ A more in-depth description of these sources of data continues in the next section.

Sources of Data

Most of the data in this study was collected from the researcher's individual interviews with the population. Thus, the researcher was the main instrument. As a phenomenological study, the data concerning AT emerged from the stories given by the population during the initial interview sessions and the follow-up sessions. As mentioned, other types of data discussed were emails, copies of letters, recalled or saved text messages, statements, and church documentation of reported incidents that could be legally shared. Only two emails were shared, and no church documentation was disclosed. Data was collected by the researcher after analyzing each of the three sources of participants' transcripts and the emails provided.

Journaling was another instrument used by the researcher in this study to collect data associated with Scripture's corrective nature and how it can be applied to the life of individuals

¹⁴ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 231.

in the church. According to Peoples, hermeneutic phenomenological researchers also use journaling to help “concentrate on the data during ceaseless distractions and biases that are continually created within.”¹⁵ Journaling is also a means of delineating the hermeneutic circle process in which understanding increases by moving from the parts to the whole, and again back to the parts and the meaning continuously changes with new data.¹⁶ This process was submitted to scriptural truth for proper alignment and necessary correction in the analysis.

The goal of the questions asked in the interviews was to get a sense that, “I understand better what it is like for someone to experience that,”¹⁷ in the church. Names and other identifying information were requested as part of this study, but data was numbered so that participant identities are not disclosed. The interviews were intentionally unstructured and free-flowing, shifting focus from one thing to another as new and potentially significant events presented themselves.¹⁸ Interviews were recorded on a tape recorder or computer recording device (audacity) and saved on a password-secure computer in a locked shoulder satchel.

The process of generating data from more interviews and then breaking it down into small bits and pieces produces a greater chance of misrepresentation when rebuilding it into a new product, but isolating patterns of information helps make for more meaningful judgments of the data collections.¹⁹ Following this method allowed for more discussions to create larger

¹⁵ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 65.

¹⁶ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 33.

¹⁷ D. E. Polkinghorne, “Phenomenological Research Methods,” in *Existential-Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology*, ed. F.S. Valle and S. Halling (Boston, MA: Spring, 1981), 46.

¹⁸ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 243.

¹⁹ Leedy and Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 346–47.

groupings which assisted in identifying similarities between the secular literature and the Christian context of AT.

The validity and reliability (discussed under the next headings) depend upon data collected in a trustworthy, transferable, and dependable way.²⁰ Prolonged interviews lasting an average of 60–90 minutes helped to build trust between the participants and the researcher and gave them more of an opportunity to relax so they could share intimate details of their experiences. Data was collected in a safe, conference room setting at a local college where confidentiality could be upheld. Data was returned to the participants to check for accuracy (member-checking) as a means of credibility.

Validity

Validity is the degree to which instruments truly measure what they purport to measure with true findings.²¹ The data was collected from reliable participants as true and certain. To ensure validity, three different groups of the population for the study were interviewed from the church: (1) the choir members, (2) the church leaders, and (3) the pastors. Two emails were collected as data in the way of letters to choir members. Emails and subsequent interviews were conducted to further clarify the understanding of new data. Quasi-statistics were used to indicate general percentages of the participants' experiences, such as, "More than three-fourths of those interviewed said they had a terrible experience when one of the choir directors stomped out of rehearsal."

This qualitative study on AT in the church relied on discovering and illuminating the lived experiences associated with AT encountered by the choir members, and thus, the ability of

²⁰ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 84.

²¹ Roberts and Hyatt, *The Dissertation Journey*, 149.

the researcher (the instrument) to generate trustworthy data that revealed if AT emerged during rehearsals generates credibility. Having a “test panel” of similar participants answer the questions prior to the actual interviews was another way to establish validity.²² Along with these measures, the researcher, as the instrument, also showed consistency in research procedures to speak to the reliability of this research in the next section.

Reliability

The reliability of a study is the degree to which an instrument *consistently* measures something.²³ The key word—*consistently*—puts a great amount of responsibility on the researcher. The approaches taken by the researcher in this study to establish such reliability include strict adherence to the methodology and design of the research as a phenomenological case study with the main instrument—the researcher. Realistic strategies to provide reliable findings for this study are similar to validity, and include triangulation (using numerous sources), member checking (transcripts reviewed by participants), addressing researcher bias (journaling), conducting test interviews, and having adequate time “in the field.”²⁴ Along with providing detailed accounts of participants’ experiences, patterns, and themes the researcher put details into context to clarify these participants’ lived experiences.²⁵

Reliability is also established as the researcher was *consistent* in the proper handling of data, organizing it by deductive codes and descriptive, topical themes and putting it into an established research database. The researcher transcribed the stories of the participants after each

²² Roberts and Hyatt, *The Dissertation Journey*, 148–49.

²³ Roberts and Hyatt, *The Dissertation Journey*, 149.

²⁴ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 11, 69, & 70.

²⁵ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 70.

interview and worked toward a quick return of member checking so that identifying patterns and themes could begin by highlighting repeated words or phrases that stood out to create the various deductive codes and themes.²⁶

Establishing good communication with participants, typing transcripts, and then exchanging them in a timely manner are all important pieces of the reliability puzzle. The transferability of the data gleaned from the church participant's stories corresponded with the findings of the secular studies mentioned in the literature. By consistently following the detailed steps of collecting data in this research, the steps can be repeated for additional research into the same phenomenon of AT within the church and further studies should yield similar results.²⁷

Data Collection and Management

To begin the data collection process, a letter was emailed to potential participants informing them of this research study and describing the purpose of the study—to see what characteristics associated with artistic temperament (AT) were demonstrated by the music directors at the church between the years of 2015 and 2020. The requirements of the participants were listed in the letter and all participants were asked if they were willing to be interviewed by the researcher to provide answers to questions concerning lived experiences in the choir or the church staff during that time. The letter also confirmed that permission has been granted by the church for the study. Prospective participants were told what would happen if they took part in the study and were given details of what they would be asked to do if they agreed to participate in the study. These permission and confirmation letters are all saved as data.

²⁶ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2021), 139.

²⁷ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 85.

After the participants responded to the email invitation to join the study, interview days and times were scheduled via email or phone. At the start of each interview, the researcher read through an information sheet outlining the research procedures and expectations to ensure participants' knowledge and understanding that participation was voluntary. The information sheet further briefed them on what to do if they decided to withdraw from the study and who to contact if they had questions or concerns about the study or about their rights as a research participant. The information sheet assured them of confidentiality, and there was no undue influence or coercion on the researcher's part during the interviews. They were asked not to discuss the study outside of the interview process, but it is up to the participants to abide by this request, which is not something that the researcher can fully guarantee. After ample time was taken to discuss the information sheet and participants agreed to participate under the terms given, they were asked for permission to record their interview session(s).

Data was collected from the subsequent 60–90 minute interview sessions of each participant in the three groups of the study's population. Prior to the interview in the invitation letter, the participants were asked to provide any documentation in the form of emails, letters, text messages, or documents of incident reports that pertain to the circumstances during the five-year period surrounding their lived experiences with the music directors at that time. The interviews were transcribed word-for-word to ensure reliability and a transcript was returned to each participant to review for accuracy. After a participant returned their transcript and provided any documents pertaining to the time period, the first cycle of data processing began.

During this first cycle of coding interview transcripts, the researcher started by using a combination of basic deductive coding methods and *In Vivo Coding* (*Terrible Time* or *Put Someone Down*), *Process Coding* (*Unable to Take Constructive Criticism* or *Overly Defensive*),

and/or Values Coding (*Overly Angry* or *Unrealistic Expectations*), as a method of attuning oneself to participant perspectives and actions.²⁸ The researcher carefully read through the transcripts and documents to identify patterns and themes that emerged as an initial analytic strategy and highlighted them with different colors assigned to the various codes/themes.

For the researcher to organize and analyze daily data and future data, the patterns and themes taken from all initial data were documented, color-coded, and further categorized into groupings, then compiled in a password-protected computer. This helped the researcher to better organize, analyze, save, and later compile larger amounts of data.

For further clarification, the researcher facilitated follow-up interview schedules and, once again, secured confidential areas for specific days and times. Upon arrival, open-ended questions were asked to help corroborate and/or clarify the lived experiences and stories of the participants that the researcher had already questioned when necessary for clarification. Through the process of open-ended questions, more data was produced, and more traits associated with AT emerged. Follow-up interviews along with consistent winnowing of all the data were necessary to reduce it into assessable groups that connected to the central and sub-questions in the study. Data themes were revised to combine the codes in a finalizing process of approximately 20–30 codes/themes, which were realistically more manageable.

All data was kept confidential by the researcher by redacting participant names and assigning a number to their transcripts. All stored data, backup drives, and notes were kept together in a code-locked shoulder bag to stay with the researcher. If the bag went with the researcher to work, it was locked in the researcher's office. The data will continue to be securely

²⁸ Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, 96–97.

kept for three years and then properly deleted from hard drives or additional storage devices, and physical notes/journals will be properly destroyed.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to the principles of the Belmont Report, showing consistent respect, justice, and beneficence in the study design, methodology, procedures, and interview questions. Participants were invited to join the study and were given descriptive information about the study's purpose, their expectations, and the research procedures. Names and other identifying information were requested as part of the study, but participant identities were protected by assigning numbers to their data. The author can assure them that when analyzing and submitting participant stories or keeping confidentiality, every effort has been made to ensure their protection.

Since all but one of the choir members in this study are still current members of the choir, under the direction of this researcher, any disclosure of their responses outside the research or in the completed dissertation will remain confidential and will not reasonably place them at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing employability, educational advancement, or reputation (see Appendix A).²⁹ Participants were assured by the researcher during the interview process that in subsequent analyzing or submitting of participant stories, again, every effort will be made to keep confidentiality regarding the study. Also, every effort was made to ensure that there was no undue influence or coercion on the part of the researcher during the interview process or during future rehearsals or events together at the church. Participants were asked not to discuss the study outside of the interview process, but it is

²⁹ IRB approval letter attached as Exhibit 1, Exemption – IRB-FYWE-WR-788, Category 2, (11). See Appendix A.

up to the participants to abide by this request, and it is not something that this researcher can fully guarantee. Member checking is obligatory to ensure researcher validity and reliability, and participants are privy to the researcher's completed published study.

Approval from the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University was received on January 30, 2024, stating that the researcher may begin the research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in the approved application with no further IRB oversight required. The IRB determined that this case study falls under the exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participant research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR46:104(d), as stated above.³⁰ The IRB confirmation letter is included in the appendix A.

Participants' contributions of emails or text messages that may indicate negative symptoms of musicians with AT were added data for the study and will be returned to them upon completion of the study, or properly destroyed after three years. The participants were assured that taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants were welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations of the study include the researcher's pre-conceived knowledge of the lived experiences of (possible) negative traits of AT during the time of the study. Also, the participants' fore-sight/fore-conception about this phenomenon, while unavoidable, prompted the curiosity of this researcher to understand the negative effects (if any) of AT on music directors in the church. Considering this, the choir members, church leaders, and pastors were guided by the researcher during interviews to look through their biases and understandings instead of trying to

³⁰ Any modifications to the protocols of this study that would change this exemption status must be brought to the attention of the Internal Review Board at irb@liberty.edu. No such modifications were made.

suspend them.³¹ Careful adherence to seeing experiences through the lens of personal bias could possibly change their perceptions of what they experienced, as could the passing of time.

Another limitation is the inevitability of Christian participants having differing levels of scriptural knowledge. The researcher evaluated their data through the lens of scriptural truth applied to modifications with the hermeneutical circle to provide her perceptions accordingly. Comparing and contrasting the data as seen through these different lenses may have affected the researcher's overall perceptions and the final analysis. For example, there is one known participant who holds a more progressive view of Scripture while most of the others hold to a more traditional study and knowledge of Scripture. Some of these Christian believers strive to maintain a non-critical attitude and witness, thus, not wanting to "appear judgmental" may have affected their ability to recall and describe information so long ago as negative. They also may or may not have been able to distinguish between what might be the result of AT, spiritual immaturity, or the unregenerated soul.

Delimitations of the study include the exclusion of the unhappy choir members who left the church from 2015 to 2020 out of disagreement with the leadership or the music directors. Likewise, the researcher did not extend an invitation to any of the five music directors who came and left the church between 2015 and 2020 because the current population was sufficient to conduct a phenomenological case study. Therefore, this study only presents the views of those who stayed in fellowship with the church and their perceptions of lived experiences with those who may have exhibited negative traits of AT.

³¹ Peoples, *How to Write a Phenomenological Dissertation*, 34.

Summary

Churches often hold a “temperamental musician” assumption of music directors by not understanding AT’s negative traits in the secular arena that could possibly transfer into the religious world. This study’s goal is to give church leaders and musicians insight, knowledge, and understanding of the negative traits associated with AT, such as depressive mood-swing-like behaviors that could weaken their music ministries. Through the lens of scriptural truth applied to interpretations of the data within the hermeneutic circle, this phenomenological case study hopes to discover the lived experiences of choir members, church leaders, and pastors in a church where five music directors came and left in as many years. The purpose of the study is to discover if the negative traits associated with AT were perceived in any of the five music directors at the church by choir members and pastors who served with these directors between 2015 and 2020. This was done by using the data collected, coded, organized, and analyzed by the researcher as the main instrument and comparing it to the established secular literature currently available on AT.

Qualitative methodological protocols were followed in questioning participants to determine if any negative traits of AT emerged in their stories. Participants were asked to provide any additional letters, emails, texts, or documents from the time of incidents as further data that might support the emergence of AT’s negative traits in the church music departments. Only two emails were supplied from choir members. More data was collected through extended interviews and/or follow-up interviews to clarify, triangulate, and corroborate participants’ stories to show similar experiences or different ones.

Credibility and *transferability* are the terms typically used in qualitative research to describe validity and reliability in most quantitative research.³² However, they can be interchanged with *validity* and *reliability* to ensure the integrity of the study. Thus, for greater credibility, data was transcribed and returned to participants (member checking) and then coded by the researcher for possible patterns and themes. The participants' identities were kept confidential by numbering their transcripts, and they were advised not to discuss the study outside of the interviews. Still, it is up to them to abide by this request because this is something the researcher cannot fully guarantee. Transferability was examined by conducting a "test panel" group prior to the actual interviews and when comparing answers, similar results were achieved.

The data was organized, color-coded, and stored in a password-protected device kept in a locked carry case. Data is securely saved and will be destroyed properly after three years. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants could have opted out of the study at any time with any documents returned to them and/or data collected destroyed.

In conclusion, this study hopes to present both evidence of AT's emerging negative traits and the extent of evidence of scriptural influence during the choir members' experiences in rehearsals or if there was evidence of the music directors' use of planned strategies during the time in question. The research received Internal Review Board (IRB) approval, and every effort has been sought to maintain the ethical considerations of the Belmont Report (respect, justice, and beneficence) while conducting the study.

While obtaining the stories (data) through interviews of several choir members, church leaders, and former pastors who were there (*Dasein*) during the five-year span of conflict at this church, many themes emerged. There is pre-conceived knowledge of the researcher and the

³² Leedy & Ormrod, *Practical Research Planning and Design*, 239.

participants that might taint perceptions. Still, the hope was to identify any negative AT traits emerging from their lived experiences and thus, better understand the phenomenon of AT.

Limitations and delimitations to the study include not exploring each of the participant's differing theologies that could have influenced their overall perceptions. Also, the views of the five music directors were not obtained in this study to get their perspectives and experiences at the time. In the next chapter, participants tell their stories to help shed some light on the unique happenings at this local church in South Georgia from 2015 to 2020, disclosing any emerging evidence of AT's negative traits.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

Data for this research was collected through a series of sixty-minute interviews with ten different church members actively involved in a South Georgia church that experienced five music directors within five years (2015–2020). The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the data from the interviews, explain how data was analyzed, and break it down into a series of thematic codes to represent the most important elements of the characteristics that are associated with artistic temperament (AT). Like a puzzle, the pieces of data were then assembled to give a coherent and convincing story that answers the research questions and provides insights that are loyal to the data.³³

The purpose of the research in this case study is to discover if the negative traits associated with AT are perceived in any of the five music directors at the church by choir members and pastors who served with these directors between 2015 and 2020. The topic of AT in the church has not been adequately addressed in the literature at all. Therefore, it is probable that no one has considered the potential impact of musicians in the church who display traits associated with AT. Such problems are addressed in the secular realm concerning the quirky behaviors of creatives, including causal assumptions of those in music, art, poetry, and dance, but not regarding musicians within the church in which one's beliefs must be considered as an important part of faith, work, and practice.

As a qualitative study, open-ended interview questions were used to collect data from the stories of the participants who were active and closely involved with the directors at this time.

³³ Mai Skjott Linneberg and Steffen Korsgaard, "Coding Qualitative Data: A Synthesis Guiding the Novice," *Emerald Insight* (2019): 259, www.emeraldinsight.com/1443-9883.htm.

Prior to each interview, a copy of the research project's information sheet (the consent form) along with a copy of the questions were emailed to each participant. Some interviews were face-to-face meetings in a centrally located community college conference room, and some were conducted via ZOOM. At the start of each interview, this researcher gave each interviewee a personal, hard copy of the information/consent form previously emailed to them and reiterated the purpose of the study and its procedures. Participants were also given a hard copy of the questions that would be asked and extra time was allowed for their questions about the study, its purpose, what would happen to their data, how it would be stored, and how it would be used. This researcher explained that the Internal Review Board (IRB) of Liberty University exempted the study due to minimal risks for participants, and all interviewees gave their consent to continue with the interview.

This chapter includes findings from the data necessary to help understand characteristics associated with AT among church musicians as a phenomenon, but it attempts to avoid any causal reasoning. The intent of this study is not to diagnose AT in any individual but to identify characteristics in these directors perceived by the study's participants that might be associated with AT. To assist the reader, analyzed data is explained in text, tabular, or figurative format. To add validity and reliability, all transcripts were returned to the interviewees to check for accuracy (member checking). Each interviewee confirmed each transcript to be accurate in an email response. All participants were assured that their answers were confidential but that there would be a "deep immersion"³⁴ into the data, which would then be presented as unidentifiable segments and not as entire transcripts. This chapter presents organized textual results of the study, with an interpretation of the results presented in chapter 5.

³⁴ Linneberg and Korsgaard, "Coding Qualitative Data," 260.

The interview questions on the topic of characteristics associated with AT among church musicians begin with broad and general questions concerning their lived experiences in the choir to determine if any negative traits associated with AT would emerge from their stories. The following questions were asked, but follow-up questions were often required for clarification of the given answers:

1. What were the joys and trials you experienced as a member of the church choir between 2015 and 2020?
2. If it was good, how was it good? If it was terrible, how was it terrible?
3. Can you tell me how the music directors displayed any negative behaviors, emotional highs or lows, and how that made you feel at the time?
4. Did you and the choir experience any hypomanic or depressive moods of a music director occasionally or on a regular basis, and if so, how did that affect the overall atmosphere of the rehearsals?
5. Did the music directors seem intentional about maintaining a positive environment, and if so, how did they execute that?
6. Do you think it is normal for a church music director to be more emotionally expressive? Why, or why not?
7. Were any apparent strategies used to help alleviate tension, like prayer and/or biblical references, or was the use of Scripture non-existent?
8. Did you experience few, none, or many positive comments from the music director to individual singers or sections, praises to God, playfulness, fun jokes, seamless transitions, or creative new ways to rehearse?

The last two questions address the spiritual focus of the music directors while engaging with people, both during and outside choir rehearsals. These encounters include churchwide committee meetings, Bible studies, conversations with administrators and pastors, or social events. These questions were asked as part of the research to determine if Scripture and prayer were employed by the music directors to manage any negative traits associated with AT that emerged while fulfilling the job description of music director. Also important is the coding of any emerging expectations of the choir members, pastors, or church leadership and whether those expectations are reflected in the actual beliefs and behaviors of the music directors involved at the time. Since several music directors left the church after less than one year, it is important to consider whose expectations were not met. There is evidence from the data to defend both sides of this issue.

Descriptive Findings

Within the community, the church in this study has been a leader in everything that concerns music. The community choir began under the direction of a former music director at the church, and before COVID, many community concerts were held at the church. However, the revolving door of music directors helped separate the church from the community choir, along with misinformation concerning disaffiliation.³⁵ After the last of the five music directors left in 2020, the community choir began meeting in a Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) building. However, the church in this study has underwritten and hosted its own concerts and artist series for over ten years, but it also has a huge heart for missions, both local and foreign. Concerts,

³⁵ Kenneth J. Collins, "The Disaffiliation Process, Labeling and the Mis-Measure of the Church," *Firebrand* (Aug. 8, 2023): 1, <https://firebrandmag.com/articles/the-disaffiliation-process-labeling-and-the-mis-measure-of-the-church>.

considered outreach opportunities, are frequented by many unchurched members of the local community.

At the time of this study, the church hosts public school concerts and recitals, professional instrumental groups, the local symphony orchestra, and a secular, family-oriented artist series that has been in existence in the area for over eighty-five years. This church's outreach since COVID has been remarkable, even with its past issues with music directors. Folks who do not darken the doors of a church come into this one to attend a concert, a recital, or a special program. The hope is that as they walk through the foyer or throughout the building to enjoy refreshments in the fellowship hall, get a drink from a water fountain, or visit the restrooms, they might pass the rack of gospel tracts and Christian or church-related literature that sparks an interest.

The church's current culture reflects the scars of the coming and going of its music directors, and there are more scars from its disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church. Its replanting phase hosts approximately 750 new "charter members" who have joined since the disaffiliation. The progressives who left the church over disaffiliation joined other local United Methodist Churches that have decided not to disaffiliate. With all these rifts in the church, the choir has only seven current members remaining from those singers who sang from 2015 to 2020 and were thus eligible to be interviewed in this study. As of 2024, the choir has over thirty-five members. This current number reflects the number of those who remain in the choir after each music director's *au revoir* and the disaffiliation. Thankfully, it also shows the new members who have replaced them.

The participants in this study include six choir members, two former pastors, and two former lay members from the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) in the church. Of the

choir members, there are three retired public school educators, one retired law enforcement officer, one lawyer, and one individual who travels extensively, representing a prominent hotel group. Both former pastors are now retired, but each worked with at least two of the five music directors during their pastoral tenures at the church. The two former members of the PPRC are businessmen in the community. One is a semi-retired CEO who has been a member of the church for over fifteen years, and the other still works full-time in his business, having been a “double charter member” of the church since its groundbreaking in 1986. His “second charter” membership comes from the church gaining independence by disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church in 2023.

The church is located on a small island off the coast of South Georgia. The population is 94% Caucasian, and the median family income is \$125,250 annually.³⁶ A staggering national statistic is that nine in ten American adults believe in God or another higher power, “including 54% who say they believe in ‘God as described in the Bible’ and 34% who say they don’t believe in the biblical depiction of God but do believe there is ‘some other higher power or spiritual force in the universe.’”³⁷ This is in direct contrast to Peter’s address to the Jewish leaders in Acts 4:12, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (New International Version).

Description of the Sample

All of the interviewees have completed an undergraduate degree, with several earning master’s or specialist degrees, and one has earned a doctoral degree. The church’s culture

³⁶ “World Population Review,” St. Simons, Georgia Population, 2024, Google, last modified May 2024, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/st-simons-ga-population>.

³⁷ “Pew Research Center,” Spiritual Beliefs, Report: Spirituality Among Americans, Google, last modified December 7, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/12/07/spiritual-beliefs/>.

includes those with high levels of education and many members involved in banking, finance, real estate, entrepreneurship, teaching, or management positions that result in higher incomes and high expectations for the church and church staff. Over the years, music hires have reflected these high expectations. All five music directors between 2015 and 2020 possessed undergraduate degrees in music—three had doctoral degrees, and one was pursuing a doctorate.

The following table shows the study’s participants’ current age, education, and standing in the church between 2015 and 2020.

Table 3. Description of Population

Participants	Age	Education	Pastor	Leadership	Choir
P1	60+	Ed. S.			X
P2	60+	Jurisprudence		X	X
P3	55+	Master’s		X	X
P4	60+	Ed. S.			X
P5	70+	B.S.			X
P6	60+	B.S.			X
P7	70+	MBA		X	
P8	55+	MBA		X	
P9	60+	DMin	X		
P10	60+	MDiv	X		

The participants received an invitation to join the study via email, and upon acceptance, they were sent copies of the questions and the letter of consent along with a follow-up email that gave directions to the interview location. Participants confirmed suitable dates and times available for interviews and if they were to be in-person or ZOOM interviews; likewise, they

chose their interview dates and times. The interviews averaged one hour each in accordance with the availability of the conference room. There are 122 pages of transcripts, averaging 12.2 pages per interviewee. After interviewing the ten participants, the transcripts were typed and returned to them for member checking. Each responded via email that the transcripts were accurate.

Data Analysis Procedures

As a qualitative, phenomenological case study, deductive codes were derived from the secular literature and the recurring themes emerging from the ten interviews to seek to describe the lived experiences of the participants. An outline of the themes helped to organize the coding process, and five main categories of codes were assigned: (1) Atmosphere, (2) Music Director Qualities, (3) Choir Members, (4) Church Leadership, and (5) Scripture Use and/or Strategies. Within each main category, codes depict various recurring themes recognized in the literature as a negative trait of AT, such as *having problems with authority* or *obvious emotional highs and lows, being “moody,”* etc. Codes were assigned to the emerging themes within the church choir, music department, or leadership. These church-related codes involve themes like *Commitment to the Job, Their Calling, Their Beliefs, or Tension between the Choir Director and Others*. An outline of the main categories of themes/codes is as follows:

- I. Atmosphere
 - A. *Tension in the Room/Uncomfortable for People*
 - B. *Tension between Musicians/Not Getting Along*
 - C. *Joyous and Fun*
- II. Director Qualities as Described by Choir Members, Leadership, and Pastors
 - A. *Commitment to the Job as a Calling*
 - B. *Beliefs, Theological or Political*

- C. *Superior Attitudes*
 - D. *Inability to “Read the Room” with Normal Social Skills*
 - E. *Music Directors having Problems with Authority*
 - F. *Music Directors being Overly Defensive*
 - G. *Music Directors having Outside Problems or Personal Problems*
 - H. *Music Directors having High or Low moods, and Possible Self-Medicating*
 - I. *Music Directors with Unrealistic Expectations and Unprofessionalism*
 - J. *Music Directors’ Attempts at Keeping a Positive Atmosphere*
 - K. *Music Directors being Contrarians/Negative/Critical*
 - L. *Music Directors being Unable to Accept Constructive Criticism or Receive Help*
- III. *Choir Members*
- A. *Unspoken Choir Member Expectations of the Music Directors and/or Leadership*
 - B. *Purposely Staying “Out of It” or Did Not Know What was Going On*
 - C. *Loyalty to the Choir and/or the Church*
 - D. *Joyful Times in the Choir Between Choir Members and/or Music Director*
- IV. *Church Leadership*
- A. *Unspoken Church Leadership Expectations of the Music Directors*
 - B. *Leadership Aware or Unaware of Tension Surrounding Characteristics Related to AT and Lack of Communication*
 - C. *Leadership Bias Toward Music Directors/Church Musicians*
 - D. *Leadership in Conflict with Music Directors*
 - E. *Challenges for Leadership and Attempts to Mentor Music Directors/Church Musicians*

V. The Music Directors Used:

A. *Scriptures as Part of Life and Practice*

B. *Apparent Strategies like Humor, Redirecting, etc.*

After organizing the main groups and themes/codes, the researcher reviewed the 122 pages of transcripts, marking and coding each instance. For example, when Scripture was referenced by the music directors in rehearsal, in meetings, or elsewhere, the phrase was highlighted in the transcript, and the corresponding Roman numeral from the outline was placed on the right side of the page (i.e., V (main group) A (subgroup)—*Scripture*) indicating its exact place in the outline of codes. The following table shows the number of times each code listed above was referenced in some way by the ten interviewees.

Table 4: Number of References for Each Code

I A. <i>Tense Atmosphere in Room</i> (24)	II L. <i>MD is Unaccepting of Criticism/Help</i> (7)
I B. <i>Tension Between Musicians</i> (8)	III A. <i>Choir Member Expectations of MD</i> (54)
I C. <i>Joyous Atmosphere</i> (10)	III B. <i>Purposely “Out of It”/Didn’t Know</i> (14)
II A. <i>Music Director’s (MD’s) Calling</i> (19)	III C. <i>Loyalty to Choir & Church</i> (18)
II B. <i>MD’s Beliefs, Spiritual/Political</i> (18)	III D. <i>Feeling of Choir Fragment/Conflict</i> (34)
II C. <i>MD’s Superior Attitude</i> (25)	III E. <i>Joy Within the Choir</i> (18)
II D. <i>MD’s Social Cues/Dysfunctional</i> (36)	IV A. <i>Leadership (LDR) Expectations</i> (17)
II E. <i>MD’s Problems with Authority</i> (12)	IV B. <i>LDR Awareness/Communication</i> (18)
II F. <i>MD is Overly Defensive</i> (8)	IV C. <i>LDR Bias</i> (14)
II G. <i>MD’s Outside Problems/Personal</i> (22)	IV D. <i>LDR Conflict with Music Director</i> (14)
II H. <i>MD’s Obvious Highs & Lows</i> (15)	IV E. <i>LDR Challenged/Tried to Mentor</i> (11)
II I. <i>Unrealistic/Unprofessional/Neurotic</i> (29)	V A. <i>Any Apparent Scripture Used</i> (16)
II J. <i>MD’s Attempts @ + Atmosphere</i> (7)	V B. <i>Any Apparent Strategies Used</i> (15)
II K. <i>MD is Negative/Contrarian/Critical</i> (14)	

The themes/codes in the table above were then consolidated into smaller subcategories under the same main categories: *Atmosphere* (I), *Director Qualities* (II), *Choir Members* (III), *Leadership* (IV), and *Use of Scripture or Strategies* (V). For example, many answers to the first question—“What were the joys and trials you experienced as a member of the church choir between 2015 and 2020?”—reveal an overall *Joyous Atmosphere* or an *Attempted Joyous Atmosphere* (I C, II J, & III E). Likewise, answers to question #5—“Did the music directors seem intentional about maintaining a positive environment, and if so, how did he/she execute that?”—reveal *Tension in the Rehearsal Atmosphere* (I A) or *Tension between Musicians* (I B).

Thus, these five themes were all color-coded in yellow (I A, I B, I C, II J, & III E) throughout the transcripts and were described under the heading of *Atmosphere* (I).

Under Director Qualities (II), the themes of *Commitment to Job* (II A) and *Personal Beliefs* (II B) are combined and color-coded in sage-green; *Attitude* (II C), *Director's Problems with Authority* (II E), *Being Negative, Contrarian, Critical* (II K) and *Unaccepting of Constructive Criticism or Help* (II L) are all colored-coded in orange. Thus, all the themes are grouped together and often coexist generically such as being *Overly Defensive* (IIF) and *Exhibiting Obvious Lows/Highs/or Possible Self-Medicating*, having an *Ability to Read the Room/Social Cues* (II D) with *Unrealistic Expectations or Unprofessional* (II I). One theme under *Director Qualities* stands alone—*Outside Personal Problems* (II G).

The two themes, *Purposely Stayed "Out of It" or Didn't Know* (III B) and *Loyalty to the Choir* (III C), are grouped under the *Choir Members* heading (III), while two themes seem more isolated under that same heading—*Unspoken Choir Member Expectations* (of the director, III A) and *Feelings of Fragments in the Choir/and or Conflict* (III D). Under the *Leadership* heading there is one theme that stands alone—*Conflict between Leadership and Directors* (IV E). Groupings under *Leadership* are *Leadership Expectations* and *Leadership Bias*. Likewise, *Leadership Awareness/Unawareness of Tension of Characteristics Related to AT/Communication* (IV B) is paired with *Challenges/and or Mentoring of Directors by Leadership* (IV E).

The final group—*Use of Scripture and Strategies* (V)—has only two themes, *Any Scripture Used* and *Any Strategies Used*, so each remains as an individual code. An example of Scripture use emerges along with two other themes, *Superior Attitude* (II C) and *Conflict* (IV D), with the following statement from a former pastor:

[It was] Just more of an attitude that was communicated that the music program was far and above more important than anything else that was going on... including the ministry of the Word (V A). With one director in particular, this was a constant conflict (IV D), where he told me that my sermons needed to be shortened in order that there was enough time for all of the things that he had planned musically.

In questions #7 and #8, the use of Scripture by itself or as a strategy to deflect tension elicited more negative responses than positive ones. Nine out of ten participants answered both questions concerning the music director's use of Scripture or planned group strategies to maintain a positive atmosphere with a straight, "No."

The groupings result in 14 clusters of code subcategories out of the original 27 codes/themes. The five major categories remain the same, but the content descriptions or subcategories are reorganized by similarities in all but the final category of *Scripture and Strategies*. The following chart shows the new subcategory groupings with *In Vivo Codes* that are usually short phrases, not full, sentence-length representations,³⁸ while full descriptions of the codes are in table 4.

Table 5. Main Categories with Subcategories

Overall Atmosphere	Director Qualities	Choir Members	Leadership	Scripture & Strategies
<i>Tense</i>	<i>Commitment to Calling, Beliefs</i>	<i>Expectations or Bias of choir members for the director</i>	<i>Expectations of Leadership for the director</i>	<i>Evidence of Scripture in life, work & practice</i>
<i>Joyous</i>	<i>Superior or Negative Attitude, problem with Authority, Unaccepting of Constructive Criticism</i>	<i>Purposely stayed "Out-of-It" or Loyalty to the choir or church</i>	<i>Awareness of tension/ Communication problems</i>	<i>Evidenced Strategies in life, work & practice</i>
<i>Attempted Positive Environment</i>	<i>Dysfunctional, Unrealistic Expectations,</i>	<i>Feelings of Conflict or</i>	<i>Bias of Leadership toward</i>	

³⁸ Johnny Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2021), 37.

	<i>Neurotic</i>	<i>Fragments in Choir</i>	the music director	
	<i>Highs/Lows Defensive, Self-Medicating</i>		Feelings of Conflict with Leadership	
	<i>Outside Problems</i>		Challenges of Mentoring	

To help further describe the *In Vivo Codes*, the following table breaks down each category and its subcategories with a detailed description of the codes and their possible *In Vivo Codes*. Table 5 provides a brief definition of each code with a short example pulled from participants' answers to the research questions. Some subcategories are grouped in table 4, such as the *Expectations of Leadership* and the *Bias of Leadership toward the Music Director*.

Table 6. Descriptions of Codes

Categories	Subcategories	Code Descriptions and Data Samples	In Vivo Codes
Atmosphere	<i>Tense</i>	Codes refer to negative feelings from the participants if they encountered an issue with the music director in or outside of the church setting: "Up and down moody?" "Yes, very much and it did impact negatively the choir." "There were some moments I would probably call 'terrible,' but those were the really strong interpersonal conflicts that took place between directors, choir members, and other people in the church that weren't necessarily closely related, not participants in the music program but still experienced conflict with directors." "There was a definite level of toxicity all the time and the staff said that. That's not something that I am surmising."	Tension in Room Tension Between Musicians Tension Felt by Leadership Musicians Not Getting Along Toxic
	<i>Joyous</i>	Codes refer to positive feelings from participants when they	

		<p>encountered joys in the choir rehearsals, at choir functions/parties, or with the choir director in general: “The joys were in those moments when we were worshiping together, and people were able to use their gifts and express them in a way that was directed to bring glory to God.”</p> <p>“The joys are being able to participate with such a neat, multi-generational group. It’s just a neat way I can contribute as part of such a neat group!”</p>	<p>Joys in Worship</p> <p>Joys in Choir</p> <p>Joys in General</p>
	<i>Attempted Positive Environment</i>	<p>Codes refer to times when the music director or choir members made an obvious attempt to maintain a positive environment in the rehearsals or in other situations, in or outside of the church: “We went over to his place and enjoyed it. I think he did a good job of integrating (socially) with the choir.” “We (the choir) stuck together... I’d say that was probably the biggest joy.” “In general, if somebody was laughing about anything it wouldn’t have been because of the director, but it would have been somebody in the choir.”</p>	<p>Integrating with the Choir</p> <p>Attempts at Positive Atmosphere</p> <p>Attempts at Fun</p>
Director Qualities	<i>Commitment to Calling and Beliefs</i>	<p>Codes refer to any positive or negative comments about a music director’s commitment to the job or to their personal religious, theological, or ethical beliefs. “I know by his own admission church music was not his first choice, so it didn’t really come to him as a calling.” “I thought it was an anti-gay thing... I don’t know. People took a stand on a principle they weren’t willing to bend on and that’s kind of what I thought it was.”</p>	<p>Commitment to Job or Calling</p> <p>Not Invested</p> <p>Beliefs</p>

	<p><i>Superior or Negative, Attitude, Problems with Authority, Unaccepting of Criticism</i></p>	<p>Codes refer to the music director's superior or negative attitudes which result in problems with authority or being unable to accept any form of constructive criticism or mentoring. "It was just more of an attitude that was communicated that the music program was far and above more important than anything else that was going on." "If you could have initiated help for this person in some way, do you think he would have taken it?" "I don't know." "Within thirty days of him being here I got an email where he made some kind of off-handed comment about the pastor near the end of it." "Were there any positive comments to your section or to you personally?" "No."</p>	<p>Superior Attitude Negative Unaccepting of Constructive Criticism Problems with Authority Negative and/or Critical</p>
	<p><i>Dysfunctional, Unrealistic Expectations, Neurotic, Overly Defensive</i></p>	<p>Codes refer to times when the music director was unable to "read the room" and respond accordingly due to unrealistic expectations or neurotic, overly defensive behaviors/excuses: "we just had some really dysfunctional... or some really personal failure of tragic decision making..." "He's terrible! He's got to go." "He just got upset because he didn't feel like people were fully, trusting's not the right word, were fully behind him, and were complaining and he just was very thin skinned." "If you pointed something out, he would become very defensive."</p>	<p>Dysfunctional Unrealistic Expectations Neurotic Behavior Unprofessional Behavior Overly Defensive</p>
	<p><i>Highs/Lows, Self-medicating</i></p>	<p>Codes refer to obvious negative feelings or moodiness of the music director which causes ineffectiveness, tardiness, absenteeism, or misuse of drugs to self-medicate. "Was he hyper or manic?" "Both!" "Up and down</p>	<p>Obvious Highs or Lows</p>

		moody?” “Yes, very much.” “There was one that did drink a lot.”	Self-Medicating
	<i>Outside Problems</i>	Code refers to problems within families, marital issues, financial, cultural, or anything that might cause distractions from their work as a music director in the church: “I remember this one music director was going through some really rough things personally, and just kind of allowed that to spill over into a choir rehearsal and did not handle that very well.”	Outside Personal Problems
Choir Members	<i>Expectations or Bias</i>	Codes refer to spoken or unspoken expectations of the choir members for their music director: “I think in all cases the people who were leading us were helpful and had different skills but were able to help us sing.” “I don’t think anybody was terrible as a choir director.” “There are certain things that are too far, but as long as it’s not too far then it’s worth it because, the artistry matters.”	Expectations of the choir Bias of AT
	<i>Purposely Out-of-It, Loyalty to the Choir</i>	Codes refer to any references where the choir members wanted to stay out of the conflict and remain loyal to the choir and to their church: “I didn’t see any of that or maybe I didn’t purposely.” “I never took it personally (being talked down to) but I think there were people who did.” “For the most part, people hung in there.”	Purposely Stayed Out of It Loyalty to the Choir Loyalty to the Church
	<i>Conflict or Fragments in the Choir</i>	Codes refer to the acknowledgment of conflict in the choir by members of the choir or to how the conflict caused fragmentation, division, or ill-feelings between choir members and/or leadership: “It’s definitely a roller coaster...every time somebody leaves an expectation is	Choir Conflict

		<p>that they had certain relationships that were good and that's going to be really hard for them.”</p> <p>“Obviously, every situation when somebody leaves, certain people are upset about it and so it kind of fragments the choir a bit too.” “I hate to see that conflict.”</p>	Choir Fragmentation
Leadership	<i>Expectations or Bias of Leadership for the MD</i>	<p>Codes refer to the expectations of the church leadership/pastors of the music director, and depending on their theological or business backgrounds, their bias toward musicians with AT: ”I always like seeing in our pastors and our support staff that their spouse is involved in the church.” “... the flesh got in the way of those moments that I have described as being joyful.” “Well, I’d actually seen that (AT) before, so it was not like it was my first rodeo.”</p>	<p>Leadership Expectations</p> <p>Leadership Bias</p>
	<i>Awareness of Tension</i>	<p>Codes refer to the leadership’s level of awareness of any tension or conflict surrounding the music directors related to traits of AT “Who coined this AT phrase?” “I was wondering how much we in the church are responsible for promoting the AT with those who serve us.”</p>	<p>Leadership Awareness of Problems</p> <p>Leadership Awareness of AT</p>
	<i>Communication Problems</i>	<p>Codes refer to the way leadership handled communication with music directors or choir members: “He (someone in leadership) had been sitting on this email for about thirty or sixty days, so we called a meeting with the director.” “I purposely didn’t want to be in on everything but at the same time I felt left out when people were leaving and I thought, ‘What happened?’”</p>	<p>Leadership Communication with Directors</p> <p>Leadership Communication with Choir</p>
	<i>Challenges in Mentoring</i>	<p>Codes refer to any challenges the leadership faced while attempting to collaborate with, guide or</p>	

		mentor the music directors: “I saw it as kind of a challenge to me to do my part as a senior pastor to make a shift and try to help this person to see another perspective.”	Leadership Challenges Leadership as Mentors
	<i>Conflict with Leadership</i>	Code refers to references to noted conflict between a music director and church leadership: “He fought me tooth and nail.” “With one director there was constant conflict where he told me that my sermons needed to be shorter in order that there was enough time for all of the things that he had planned musically.”	Leadership Conflict
Scripture & Strategies	<i>Evidence of Scripture</i>	Code refers to instances when Scripture was incorporated into the director’s vocabulary or brought into a rehearsal by means of a devotional thought/ referenced in prayer. “No, I don’t think that was a big priority.” “Um, I don’t remember a whole lot of Scripture”	Scripture Used
	<i>Evidence of Strategies</i>	Code refers to evidence of planned or rehearsed strategies to disarm conflict, alleviate tension or move forward through difficulty as in skills for classroom management: “No... they seemed very much focused on themselves.” “The first one tried to do a little of that.”	Strategies Used

The codes in table 4 were extrapolated on paper by printing the transcripts and then highlighting any references made to the main categories and sub-categories throughout the text. The *In Vivo Codes* were written in the margin next to the phrases highlighted in the text and color-coded to match the sub-categories. Each code includes its corresponding Roman Numeral and letter for its subcategory. In the next step, the researcher used different shades of colors to combine the codes into smaller groupings. While developing this table, shorter quotes were pulled from the transcripts to verify descriptions and help qualify the *In Vivo Codes*.

In the following section, various themes emerge within each of the eight questions. In table 2 above, the number of references represents totals throughout the transcripts and, in some cases, shows more references due to interviewees' additional comments at the end of the session that may or may not be connected specifically to one of the eight questions. Some of the themes emerge more in certain questions than others. For example, in question #6 concerning the expectations of the music director, 8 out of 10 said they expected the music director to be more emotionally expressive. Overall, the answers and examples given in the participants' answers and stories are similar. Slight but expected variations emerge due to the different perspectives of participants as either choir members or as part of the church leadership.

Results

To begin, the data was organized in an unidentifiable manner under each of the eight interview questions. While some themes or codes emerge mainly within a certain question, they are just as likely to occur anywhere in the interview. For example, an episode revealing *Unprofessional Behavior*, or a *Superior Attitude* can be found in answers given to the first question about the joys and trials of the music program while also appearing in the last question about the use of Scripture or planned strategies. Unless otherwise noted, the following answers are separated by quotation marks to indicate the views of a different participant.

Question One: What Were the Joys and Trials?

From all ten interviewees, there are 28 references to *Joyous Times* experienced through singing choir-level music or by participating in the music of a worship service, both in congregational singing and just listening to the choir music. Nine out of ten participants answered question #1 by focusing on the joys first. The following are a few of the joys experienced during the five directors in five years (I C & III E).

“The joys? Many have said that it is like a family. It is!” “The joys were in singing with just very talented people in ministry for the glory and honor of God.” “I know what’s coming in worship from my perspective of the sermon (as pastor), but I think the music has always been one of the primary ways for me to worship. The choir really afforded that. There are all sorts of ways to worship musically, and I enjoyed it.” “The joys are being able to participate with such a neat group that is multi-generational.... it’s just a neat group!” “One of the things I’ve said, if I were to have a funeral tomorrow, half of the people at the funeral would be the choir members.” Several choir members saw the choir as “their family or small group” because “These are the people that I see, except for my [outside] group of friends, the choir is my small group [within the church].” “It’s one way that I can contribute [to the Kingdom], and that’s the joy—just being a part of it.” “I enjoyed, for me, the learning aspect of music because it was the first choir I’d ever been a part of, so there was a lot of learning for me.... and I’ve enjoyed it.” “I just loved watching them sing ... some of the choir members. You could tell from their expressions that it came just right from the heart, and they were singing their heart out for God.”

Examples of answers to the second part of question #1 concerning the *Joys* and the *Trials* contain themes from I A–II L and III A–IV E and are as follows: “The challenges were in dealing with a couple of directors who were emotionally unhealthy. One of them, I thought very much so. The terrible part, and probably the worst part was dealing with a choir director who was very, very, very, very vindictive, and he did not agree with the theology or the way that the church leadership did things.” “Stress! I developed shingles because of it. Almost quit because of it.” “There was a definite level of toxicity all the time, and the staff said that. That’s not something that I am surmising.”

Several said there was *Tension Between Musicians* (I B): “I think [a certain director] had depression... there was almost, not shouting, but conflict over how the organist was doing something and how this director wanted it.” Another put it this way: “You could feel the tension in some of our leaders. There was a tense relationship with our organist at the time.” “There were some tense moments when either the director was saying something or reacting to something and seemed a little bit on edge, and you could feel that, not necessarily from what they said or from arguing back and forth, but just tension, and you could feel that.” “There were some definite times, but I don’t remember the specifics when something was being said between one of the directors to (an accompanist) where you could feel it... yeah, it wasn’t tension between them, but you could feel it in the atmosphere, and it’s hard to put into words.” “The organist would roll his eyes... so there was some tension there.” “Sometimes it was pretty clear that there was tension, but they sort of ignored it and didn’t do anything with the choir to alleviate it.”

“I think the choir in general felt uncomfortable...” “Sometimes the mood of the choir was a little bit tense with some of the directors, and there it was just something that you could feel.” “There was some personal failure(s) of tragic decision-making that I had to deal with, much of which was of a confidential nature.” “Obviously, the things that would be the trials or pains were related to the fact that everybody didn’t always get along, and you know you’re building relationships with the leader in the function, and they couldn’t stick, right?” “...a couple of members had definite personality conflicts, and now that I think about it, they were musicians as well, so I don’t think they got fed up so much with the choir as they got fed up with the person who was directing and couldn’t work with that person anymore.”

Question Two: How Good or How Terrible Was It?

Most interviewees already generalized all they had to say about their good experiences in question #1. For example, “I think overall, it was a great experience with the music (and) the choir... I really enjoyed it,” and then followed it with details of what was *not* so good. “Trials were of the typical problems in ministry when our humanity and quite frankly, our sinfulness, or as the New Testament describes that part of us that wages war against the Spirit, the flesh got in the way of those moments that I have described as being joyful.” “I don’t know that I would use the word, ‘terrible.’ [However], there were some moments I [might] call ‘terrible,’ but those were probably the really strong interpersonal conflicts that took place between directors, choir members, and other people in the church that weren’t necessarily closely related, not participants in the music program, but still experienced conflict with the directors.”

One skipped over the joys completely and went directly to the trials in question #2: “Well, I think he [the choir director] had his friends in the choir, his close friends, and stories were told that weren’t [sic] completely accurate and they didn’t see eye to eye with the senior pastor and it just got really, one-sided.” This answer reflects the trials of another participant concerning a different choir director:

Performance evaluations came up and he was quite defensive on everything. That was his personality. If you pointed something out, he would become defensive... he was quite defensive, defensive of his team, and his team was very defensive too. There was communication put out to the choir members in the form of an email or text that was not constructive for the church, and we had to act quickly and ask for a resignation and that hurt a lot of people.

A follow-up question was asked about a succeeding director: “Why was this director only there eleven months?” The answer given was, “Sleeping on the platform during the worship services... and then he got a DUI. They kept it out of the paper, I think, but to have your music

director spend a night in jail is not good. Some medication he was taking somehow impaired him enough while he was driving that he got pulled over and didn't pass the sobriety test."

One person tried to summarize the trials with all five directors by saying, "In every case, people are leaving for a reason, and whatever that reason is some people are going to agree with their side of the story versus another side of the story and get upset about it." Another did the same: "...every situation when somebody leaves, certain people are upset about it, and so it kind of fragments the choir a bit too."

The emerging theme of the *Director's Sense of Loyalty to a Calling to Ministry* is addressed as a trial (II A): "He never really wanted the job, I don't think. He was sort of hired because he was just there. He was the organist, and we said, 'Hey, why don't you try it?' And so, he did." "You never really got the feeling that they were all in, like they were here for the long haul, that they were really vested, invested in this group." "[A particular director] was fairly good at it [directing], but... their hearts [sic] weren't in it." "I had gone through the interview process for some of these folks and they came in, and they seemed like they were not there all the time. They were there, but I don't know how to explain it, but they weren't really involved."

Some regarded *Trials* as: "They didn't help me." "[In addition, they would] kind-a speak down to the choir." "There was one choir director that made our lives miserable." When the researcher asked, "How was that?" the wide-eyed reply was, "We literally got chewed out as a choir for not doing, I don't even remember what the issue was, but we didn't do something that he thought we should have done, and so when we got into the choir room, I mean, he just lit into us."

Trials from the leadership's perspective include: "The worst time was when they [PPR] invited [a music director] to stand in the social hall with the PPR, and the District Superintendent

and [the music director] excoriated me for an hour.” This person “would sit in the front row of the choir and be asleep all the time.” “[This director] didn’t participate very well on staff; [instead, he] sat there like a lump most of the time.” “He always acted as he should in choir, [but] he would undermine [leadership] by talking and telling other disparaging things and, of course, I could tell what he was saying.” An example was given by a choir member of a terrible experience in this way:

He expressed to people how church leadership had done things incorrectly and how it should have been done a different way—the way he was saying. He wanted to start a church service at a different time that had never been done at that church and church leadership said, “No,” and he belittled that everywhere because he thought he knew better. [He] wanted a different church service where the church leadership and the church pastor were not in charge, where he and who he chose would be in charge.

Question Three: Any Negative Behaviors, Emotional Highs or Lows?

Themes involving *Challenges to Leadership in Mentoring* (IV E) and the *Director’s Ability to Read the Room* (II D), *Highs and Lows* (II H), and *Unrealistic Expectations* (II I) often emerge in response to question #3: “I always heard that [a certain director] was ‘moody,’ but that’s just so long ago for me. I do remember that the committee [PPR] had to act fast with [another director] because of the mood swings and the negativity about our church that was happening inside the choir room with our choir members.” Another talked about a director as being “very strained personally.”

Accounts of *Superior Attitudes*, *Outside Problems*, and “*Dysfunction*” emerge (II C & II D): “I guess sometimes it was more an attitude at times than a behavior... just more of an attitude that was communicated that the music program was far and above more important than anything else that was going on.” “They would bring a lot of their personal baggage into the classroom, I mean into the choir room, and that would definitely affect... it was almost like we were trying to help (them), you know. And you start to feel like you are part of the problem too,

which is another issue.” “One director e-v-e-r-y s-i-n-g-l-e week, I mean it was every single week, he wasn’t feeling good, there was something going on... he often, well, more times than he should have, ran late to practice because it was always something [negative] going on.” She added that this same director, every week, “would talk about the church that he had just left from, and how they didn’t treat him right. I cannot tell you how many times we heard that story.”

Thinking one of the former directors was depressed, a participant provided the following email she had received from the departed director in answer to this question:

Hello, hope you’re doing well. It probably doesn’t matter as much now that you all have someone so invested in Brunswick life that that person need not have significant connections to [the island], or [an exclusive resort], but a completely innocuous post from a friend in [the island] brought to remembrance at least another reason [the church] failed me and my family, if not others as well. Since the pastor and the church wouldn’t make good to [sic] a commitment he and the church made to my family of living on the island, combined with the utter [sic] inhospitable people of the church... not once did I ever get an invite, much less have the opportunity to visit [the exclusive club], furthermore, with the exception of [and he named a few people] no one ever so much invited me to their home, not even the pastor to the parsonage. Thus, I and my family were cut off completely from the — [and I don’t know what the word is], from most of the church. I was set up for failure. I was nothing more than just “the help.”

When asked this follow-up question about the note: “Do you think that any of the directors were *thin-skinned* in some ways and maybe lacked judgment or understanding of the church’s culture?” this participant replied, “Definitely. The culture? Definitely! Immature? Oh yeah, for sure.”

Another participant in leadership indicated: “There was the person going through a marital issue and then I think he wanted to move away.” “I think more of it [negativity] was personal, marital.” “I could see in him a strain, if that makes sense... strained personality. He got into Dave Ramsey, you know, a cash system, and I think he even led some seminars on that. It wasn’t too much longer after that he got divorced.”

Question Four: Were There Any Hypomanic or Depressive Moods Present?

After this researcher explained the meaning of hypomanic and depressive moods, the participants gave the following answers: “For one [director] that was a real problem.” “Hypo or manic?” “Both!” “Up and down moody?” “Yes, very much and it did impact negatively the choir.” “When I come to choir, I come because I want to be lifted up. This is a place where I want to feel like I belong, and that’s not what I’m feeling... it had become all about *his* issues.”

According to a participant in leadership: “[A choir member] told leadership: ‘He’s SCREAMING at us, screaming at the choir members.’” This person in leadership said: “Another choir member and I actually met with the pastor after it happened and said, ‘Hey, we’ve got to do something to keep the choir from getting too upset,’ because basically, that is where the start of the fracturing of the choir happened. A lot of people were leaving because of that.”

One answered with a question: “What was his issue? Pretending to feel emotions? That’s a character trait of a psychopath.” Another said: “I feel like there must have been that [depression]; he obviously got upset and ended up quitting because of it.” Concerning *Hypomanic Behavior*: “There was one that was sort of hyper, but there were also some that seemed kind of passive. Like, literally, [they] would fall asleep in church. Others had anger issues.... Definitely, there were some anger issues with some of them, one in particular.” “We didn’t know that he was depressed at the time but boy, did it come out in an explosion!” “He was a true musician, and he just was nuts.”

Another provided this story about that same director: “So I walked in choir practice one night and he was in front of the choir talking very, very loudly, very upset, and pacing [with] probably ten or fifteen minutes of monologue explaining why the criticism was unjust and how since childhood and youth he had been through [things]... he had not been respected for his

musical talent and ability and how that emotionally affected him.” Another participant’s similar account: “[He was] probably depressive. He appeared to have a kind heart and did not have malice toward others; he just, in my opinion, needed to be working out all of those things with a counselor.” Leadership’s response: “We offered to personally pay for his counseling... the following days after that he quit.”

Question Five: Was the Music Director Intentional About a Positive Atmosphere?

This question centers on noticeable attempts by the choir director to maintain a *Positive Atmosphere* (II J). “I think they tried. I think they made a genuine effort. One of the ways that [one director] tried to do that was by having social activities apart from the rehearsals.” Another added a similar answer but referred to a different director: “[One director] would have people over and have social events and host things. I think he did a good job at integrating with the choir.” One felt that the directors tried: “I think so. I think everybody did their best. I don’t think anybody was at all... there wasn’t any sabotage or anything like that.”

Concerning intentionality: “If I’m going down the list I would say, there was one, maybe two ... one in particular who was intentional. He wasn’t exactly warm and fuzzy, but he did do his best, I think, at trying to maintain a positive environment. He would try to get the choir together for socials and things, and he was positive in the rehearsals and encouraging.”

Another participant answered: “It’s hard to get into somebody’s mind to see if they’re being intentional or if it’s part of their personality. I’m going to accept what you tell me I need to do. So, that [negativity] never bothered me.” One stated: “He did kind of tease in a quirky way to get his point across ... he did his best. Again, he did kind of talk down to us too, but anyway, he did try.” Another said: “I think they all tried, but I don’t think they had the means to do it. I mean

in their heads they didn't know how to explain it or get it or show it to the choir. You know, they just didn't!"

The negative responses include: "In the case of one director, he didn't. It was a negative attitude." "I don't think so. I can't say that [there were any attempts for a positive atmosphere]." "I think you're the only one I've seen do that other than a long-time music director in a former church who was a close friend." "Of the music directors that I had while going there, the present one [the researcher] is the only one that did that. While I was there, that was not done by the others."

Question Six: Is it Normal for a Church Musician to be More Emotionally Expressive?

One participant thought the music director should not be more emotionally expressive: "I don't think it should be. No, I don't expect it. It's a surprise to me. People continue to surprise me." Another was on the fence, but the remaining eight answered affirmatively. They expect their music directors to be more emotionally expressive. The following were the minority: "Well, they all have been [laughing]. No, not all of them, in fact, for one in particular, he would probably have benefited by being a little more in touch with his emotions. But I don't really have a strong reaction to that question."

One participant started out with a possible "no" but moved toward a more convincing affirmative answer: "It would not be my expectation that they would be this way. I would think that would almost be a detriment to be more emotional. Maybe they're a little sensitive. I don't know, but ... everybody thinks of a Beethoven out there, expressive, and you know, that's in order to be a good artist in any discipline—that you have to be a little different I guess."

The majority answered like this: "I think that I would expect that from any artist, back to that point. You know, you just expect them to be artists [chuckle]. And especially those of us

who have lived a while are used to working with artists. There are certain things that are too far, but as long as it's not too far then it's worth it because the artistry matters." "I think musicians in general are just more expressive. I don't think that you couldn't be if you weren't [more emotional] you know, that just comes with the territory of being a musician and loving music, so yeah, they were [more emotionally expressive]." "Yeah, I think it's fine. Why not? I can't tell you what's right or wrong here. I can only tell you that musicians express themselves. They do, and they need to, they *have* to. They *have* to as a musician." "I expect a music director would be very passionate about the music and have high expectations of choir members that God is honored and glorified. But I expect them to be mature and self-controlled not emotionally out of order or out of control."

One answered with a question: "I think you have to be, don't you, with music? I mean, if you don't have emotion with music ... it's not necessarily emotion in other things but with music? When you go through training [in music] you're so focused on that ... but they're just trying to get the choir to do it *their* way." "Music itself is an expressive, emotive ... it's an emotional thing. There's creativity and it's a different side of the brain, I think. And I think that if you are callous, or if you are stale or dry, or you don't pour your emotion into what the choir is doing or what you are playing, there's something very stagnant and [music] is something very much alive." "Part of the beauty of being a music director is to be able to express something that is ancient as well as contemporary in a way that will draw people into worship." "Y'all are passionate people. Yeah, I think so."

Question Seven: Was *Scripture* Used in Life and Practice?

This question refers to Scripture references being read or recited during the course of rehearsals by the music directors to help manage tense situations, teach, or express biblically

based correction. Timothy refers to all Scripture as “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” (2 Tim. 3:16–17) (V A): “I don’t really know. I don’t really remember that. No, I don’t think that was a big priority.”

Some added *Prayer with Use of Scripture* in their answer: “Most of them did use prayer and Biblical references, prayer before or after, some more than others, one not at all, so it kind of ran the gamut.” “I don’t remember a whole lot of Scripture... No, uh-uh, they seemed very focused on themselves.” “No, one of them didn’t use prayer or anything like that, but he wasn’t that kind of director. I just think they were more involved in themselves and what they were doing than it being a faith thing that we’re doing. But that doesn’t mean they weren’t good Christians. Was [choir] inspirational? No. I don’t think so.”

“We would have prayer sometimes, but I don’t recall any Scripture reading.” “Scripture is not used that much. Maybe one director used some. When there was tension, sometimes I think they either didn’t know there was tension, or they said, this is the impression I got, they’re right you’re wrong so they’re not going to vary their way.” “No. That’s unfortunate. [It was more of] ‘Well, let’s come here between 6:00–7:00, and we’re just going to sing and go home.’”

From a leadership perspective: “I think there was some mentorship that one of the pastors put on one of the directors to try to help. I’m not sure about the others. There has always been a paired PPR member with all the staff to have a liaison to bounce things off of.” “You’d have to be a choir member to answer those questions because I was never involved on a daily basis or a weekly basis with any of those guys.” But after further thought, this person added: “No. Not that I saw.”

Question Eight: Any Positive Strategies, Encouraging Comments, Praises, or Creative New
Ways of Doing Things?

To clarify, question #8 usually required a follow-up question that asked if participants remembered any of these directors using positive affirmations, having fun, producing new innovative ways to warm up, putting together creative performances, giving individual praises, or glory to God (V B). Ten out of ten answered negatively: “No. I did not.” One just said: “No.” Another: “Yeah, no, I didn’t see enough to make a difference.” One participant in leadership confided: “I came from a situation where I had nine years of a lot of fun with a music director, and a lot of fun, positive creativity, and my experience at this church was the most uptight, tense, pressurized.... No, there were a few moments where we may have laughed, but they were rare, and it was usually because of a layperson in the choir. There was not a lot of playfulness at all.”

A choir member focused more on the word *Strategy* and conveyed this: “Well, one that sticks out to me was the director that was there during COVID had to use a lot of alternative strategies for us to be able to rehearse and sing. Not everybody was willing to come to practice... [but we] spread out in the sanctuary. I think there were only five or six of us that were willing to do it.” Another said, “None of that really stands out.... I wouldn’t say there were none. I’d say somewhere between few and many... there were positive comments to the sections. We started hearing, it was almost a joke, ‘More alto! You’re good, we just need to hear you.’ But not a whole lot of praising, some joking... there was always some joking...back and forth.”

One choir member said, “No. Oh, I don’t think I was that comfortable back then [to joke around]. No, they were filling in, filling in, filling in, although the choir expected them to stay. [Their stay] was Sunday to Sunday, as far as I was concerned. [Creative new ways or warm-ups?] No. Not that I remember. [Any warm-ups at all?] “No.” “One director I mentioned was

positive and could be very jovial and creative before that one outburst and then he resigned after that and never came back.” “Some directors were more [positive] than others.... One said, ‘Good job,’ to everybody, but I don’t know if he pointed out to sections or individuals.” “No, I hate to say it.”

When asked after completing the interview questions, “Would you like to add anything?” one choir member spoke about *not knowing [Lack of Communication]* what happened when a director left (IV B): “I was pretty close to him, so I thought, ‘Man, I could have helped if he had just said something to me.’” Another theme emerged about a choir member *not wanting to know* if there were problems (*Purposely Staying “Out of It”*) (III B & C): “I’m not one to ... I try to stay out of internal issues with the people, you know, other than the music. I just came to sing. Yeah, I usually can get along with most people, even people that are harsh with me. I try not to let it affect me, but it does. I try not to visibly [show it]. I didn’t see any of that, or maybe I didn’t purposely.”

All the participants expressed *Personal Expectations* for the music directors with AT traits (III A & IVA). One example of this is given by leadership: “I was wondering how much we in the church are responsible for promoting an AT with those who serve us [by idolizing them as musicians]. I know that not everybody is that way, but if there are enough of us that are that way, then it seems that we actually encourage and foster that temperament among those who serve.” Another in the choir: “Obviously, one choir director was hired as ‘the chosen’ and I think the choir was thinking good things were going to happen.” From leadership: “Y’all have a hard job and you’re in a room with other passionate people, very talented people and it’s hard. I think you’ve gotta be that way [AT] and you’ve gotta lead by example.” From a choir member: “Well,

you know, obviously, positive behaviors on the part of a music director are really going to bleed over into the choir.... We pick up our energy from the music director.... It's very infectious."

One choir member finished the interview with an expectation concerning all church music hires: "You're gonna recruit people because of their talent and not maybe because of their beliefs and that's maybe what would be different with the choir than with other church positions.... In a choir people might come just to sing ... [and] I don't know enough about the people involved [choir directors] to understand their spiritual depth."

All six of the choir members talked of *Choir and Church Loyalty* in their answers at one point or another (III C): "There were some voices in the community, some rumors, and I don't know if it was rumors but just, comments like, 'Why can't y'all keep a choir director?' People would ask us, 'What's wrong?' 'What's goin' on with the choir?' So, we took a little bit of, you know, a hit from all of it, but it never deterred us from showing up." Another choir member shared the following about loyalty:

You know what helped so much? [Another alto] sent a letter out. I remember she emailed everyone because we were all ... we didn't know anything. We didn't know what was happening because those who were on the [PPR] board couldn't say anything, so nobody knew. So, it was a big question mark that got everybody riled up... and they left! There were no answers, and they liked those people you see, and they were *sympatico* to them. But she said she'd been a part of this church forever and said that she was going to stay here no matter what. This was her church and she said to all of us, you know, "I love y'all ... and blah, blah, blah," and that was the turning point because she was standing up at the altar and she was so upset, so I put my arms around her and I said, "Look, you've done the right thing. This is so important that you tell everybody how you feel because it will give us something to hang on to," because before that it was all 'hear-say' and there was nothing and she came forth and said, 'This is where we belong, this is our church, this is our choir...'

Others showed loyalty to the Lord: "[I stayed] because of the Lord. Singing for the Lord. Yes, for the greater good. In spite of what man and man's group ended up doing, you really need to stay focused on why you're doing it. And that's why we're doing it ... is to glorify God."

At the end of the interview, another choir member added this story concerning

Communication Between Leadership and the Choir (IV B):

I would ask the other people, ‘What’s going on?’ ‘What happened here?’ ‘Why did so-in-so say that?’ But nobody ever seemed to put that to rest. Nobody even said. It made you feel as if you weren’t trusted to know it. Here we are trying to be cohesive as a group and do well through a little turmoil, and not knowing that all we would see is an email that so-and-so is leaving. Well ... ‘why?’ It made you feel you weren’t trusted to know the reasons, and they even stated, the leadership, at the time now, not that pastor, but the leadership at the time, the council, I remember we were on a conference call, and we got to ask some questions and I didn’t feel we got satisfactory answers on the ‘whys’ of things. They kept going all around the subject of why somebody was leaving. I probably deep down inside knew but it was never confirmed. I thought it was a philosophical difference between (the director) and the pastor, and or the leadership of the church. It could have been interpersonal, as well. I just don’t know. I can’t say for certain, but at the time, I thought it was the anti-gay thing again. Yeah. I don’t know. People took a stand on a principle they weren’t willing to bend on and that’s kind of what I thought it was.

To further illustrate the majority of emerging themes throughout the interviews, several narrative stories were supplied by participants when asked if they had anything they wanted to add anything, such as this comment from leadership: “[Concerning joy in the choir], like when a choir member is sitting next to another choir member, they had fun, okay (V B)? I’m sure that they had fun but not because of anything the director did. Again, I take responsibility for any part in that, maybe putting a little too much pressure on the things that we wanted to emphasize” (IV A). He also said this about a director’s *Superior Attitude* (II C): “Here was something kind of interesting.... He was very intent on me listening to him [Laughing]. He really felt like he had a lot to offer to me and that he was going to bring me along with him. He just really felt like I needed him and there was a lot that I could learn from that. I don’t know if it’s AT or just big personality or whatever it is...”

Another in leadership recalls a *Superior Attitude* (II C): “I think it can happen in any church that goes towards a consumer mentality [*Leadership Bias*] (IV C). A seeker sensitive, ‘What can we do to draw you in to entertain you?’ Certainly, the United Methodist Church has

focused on that for years. That's what we were trying to do. 'Let's do what we can to bring people in.'" Relative to *Scripture* and *Ministerial Calling*, another in leadership added: "I think there were a lot of music directors that didn't even think about opening in prayer (V A). They wanted to get right to the music and it's like, 'Whoa, whoa, whoa, don't get the cart before the horse! Why are you here?' This is a church. This is Christ's church. It belongs to Him, not us."

Concerning *Hypomanic/Depressive Moods* a participant added: "It became obvious that he had a split personality (II H), kind of like the previous one. What brought that whole thing to a head with him was that another PPR member had gotten an email from him and in this email he was very negative, very critical about the pastor, so he was like, 'I've got to do something about this; I can't let this go'" (IV B). "There was dishonesty, manipulative behavior, narcissism, and superficial charm. He was the king of superficial charm" (II D).

On the other hand, one in the choir experienced this: "One of the things that I wanted to do, and some people are adamantly against is to reach back out to the people who left and try to get them to come back.... We were in a meeting one time and some people said [about people who left when a music director left], 'We won! We don't want those people back. We won! They lost!' I was like, 'Come on'" (IV D)! However, he was happy with the new leadership and added: "...I don't know if I could have stayed if that would have happened (IV D). I do know that we have got to be open and loving and of course, we want them back and if they don't want to come back, well, that's their choice but it's not because we don't want them" (III A). Another choir member observed neurotic behavior: "I think there was one email from a director about how he felt like certain people in administration had set him up and tried to catch him... It was a little neurotic ... I can't remember if it was more of an explanation or a kind of defense." She further reported on neurotic behavior in the following story:

I remember one particular incident that might give you more insight. There was one particular director, who, like I said, had to have things, you know, a very, very, very specific way and, it was Fourth of July weekend, and there were decorations in the front with flags, and this director, not thinking anybody would see him, I don't know that anybody did see him, but he took the flags out of the arrangements [of flowers]. [Both chuckle.] Anyway, he did confess later, but he just didn't think that was appropriate (II I). But he did confess, he apologized. He did apologize to the choir and to the person doing the arrangements. At first, nobody knew who. I think he just walked in and he thought, "Oooo," because he's very, what is it when you follow how the Methodists did it, you know, this Sunday you wear this color and he was very all into that and I guess when he first saw it, his first impulse was, "Oh! This is not appropriate" (II C).

Another choir member described a fragmenting experience (III D) with the following story:

We had one person in particular, you either loved [that person] or you didn't, and I think people who were a bit on the sensitive side, personally, didn't because he was a bit gruff on the exterior. I never had an issue with him because I thought he knew what he was doing (III C). He would be abrupt with people He would want to move on to something, like if somebody had a question but he wanted to move on... you know, he was not a 'touchy-feely' kind of guy (II C). And, I didn't have an issue with that, you know as long as we were learning and I was confident he knew what was best [both laugh] so I didn't get upset (III C), but some did, and they didn't particularly care for him (III D).

A choir member who was also in leadership shared about a *Tense, Choir Atmosphere* (I A):

Some of [the directors] would throw out their opinions on things that would not jive with the choir and there was a little bit of "Uh-oh!" Certain issues you should just not talk about in front of a group that could have both spectrums of opinions on everything and it was also, making sure you get it right, somewhat nicer ways of correcting than others, and some of them were pretty strict.... I think if you're correcting someone and you really come hard at them, I don't think that's productive, and I saw a little of that from time to time. Then, the other choir members would just shake their heads. Sometimes, he'd make light of it and try to relieve the tension, but sometimes, I think WE could see it and He couldn't that something was going on with him and he was tense, but I don't think he could see it. He either didn't see it or ignored it. He would talk about various things (concerning what) one of the candidates did and that didn't go over so well with some of the women, and the same thing with another director too. He was also, I would say at that time, a little bit more... his political views kind of came out and he was more toward the left side than the choir in general (II B). [I was thinking] "Get out of this discussion" [laughing]! "Get on with the music" (I A).

A former pastor maintained: "I think that there was a certain amount of sterility to [when he planned worship with one director]." He added that: "Sometimes there was unplanned congruence [with other music directors] because of the work of the Spirit," but when asked if he

sensed this happening while working with one of the music directors between 2015 and 2020, he responded: “No. I hate to say that.”

Certain themes arise from these outlier responses demonstrating the negative traits of AT. However, these added statements also provide evidence, both positive and negative, of the recurring themes. While the analysis of this data comes in chapter 5, the categories and subsets are summarized as the main, essential data in the following section on recurring themes.

Recurring Themes

The table in Appendix A lists the total number of times a theme was referenced by a participant within each interview question. While these themes emerge throughout the interviews, some themes are specifically referenced more within the context of one of the interview questions. For example, when participants are asked to discuss the joys and trials in the music department of the church between 2015 and 2020 there are:

- 8 references among participants recalling fun experiences and a *Joyous Atmosphere* (I C)
- 8 references to “*Dysfunctional*” *Behavior by the Music Director* (II D)

In relation to the context of *joys* and *a positive atmosphere*:

- 7 participants recall feeling very uncomfortable with *Music Directors Bringing Outside Problems* into rehearsals (II G)
- 7 recall trials due to *Unprofessional Behaviors of a Music Director* (II I)
- 6 provide stories of *Conflict Within the Choir* (III D)

More than 7 references among the participants of the whole group indicates a majority, so the vast majority of participants reference the themes in the following positive or negative ways:

- 9 negative responses that directors noticeably *Used Scripture* (V A)
- 10 negative responses to a director’s *Use of Planned Strategies* in rehearsals (V B)
- 7 negative responses with regard to the *Directors Being Intentional about Maintaining a Positive Environment* (II J)
- 10 positive responses *Expecting the Choir Directors to be More Emotionally Expressive* (III A & IV A)

It is important to note that in the context of the theme above, *Director's Use of Scripture and Planned Strategies* to avoid tension (V A & V B), there are 8 references to the *Director's Inability to Accept Constructive Criticism or Help* (II L). The connection between these themes is discussed further in chapter 5.

When discussing if there was evidence of any “moody” or hyper traits in any of the choir directors, the responses are spread throughout the themes, but these are the most referenced:

- 6 choir members detected some hypo-manic traits, *Hyper or Depressed Moods* (II H)
- 6 choir members reference problems between director(s) & *Those in Authority* (II E)
- 5 references were made in leadership of having encountered *Challenges Mentoring Directors* (IV E)
- 5 referenced *Outside Problems* (II G) again as problematic in this context, thus resulting in the depression of a music director

Notice that these causal inferences of a director's moods are made by the participants and not by the researcher. Any conclusions or inferences from the data analysis are made in chapter 5.

Summary

This qualitative study's procedures include interviews involving two former pastors, two former leadership members, and six choir members who were actively present in the church between 2015 and 2020. Along with information concerning all participants in the study shown in table 1, consequent data was collected from the participants' answers to eight interview questions and their additional information volunteered at the beginning and end of the interviews. Each participant provided an hour-long interview and several lasted 90 minutes depending upon the times allotted for the conference room reservation. The data was organized into five categories by Roman Numerals and 27 subcategories using capital letters to label the various themes.

In conclusion, the most recurring themes emerging from specific answers to the research questions are consistent with the most recurring themes overall are generated from stories added

by the participants at the beginning and end of the interviews. Briefly, the highest number of references to coded themes are II D—*The Music Director’s “Dysfunctional” Behavior* (36), II I—*The Music Director’s Unrealistic Expectations* (29), III A—*The Expectations of Choir Members for the Music Director not met* (54), and III D—*The Choir Members’ Feelings of Conflict and Fragmentation Within the Choir* (34). This data, both positive and negative, is further analyzed and interpreted in the next chapter to determine how it compares to the current literature or aligns with Scripture’s standards for the faith and practice of the music directors and the participants.

Chapter 5

Introduction and Summary of Study

Historical and secular literature supports a strong connection between musical genius and an Artistic Temperament (AT). This research topic of AT in the church is important because great music and creativity are critically tied to worship, and AT is associated with creatives and musical geniuses. There is sufficient literature surrounding the characteristics of AT in creatives outside of the church that connects it to personality disorders, but there is no research on the characteristics of AT within the church. This study contributes to the overall knowledge and understanding of the possible effects that the characteristics related to AT have on music directors in churches today. Through thematic data analysis as a qualitative, phenomenological study, the data from chapter 4 is collected from interviewees and analyzed by the researcher to identify themes tied to deductive codes to uncover insights into music directors who may display characteristics associated with AT as perceived by others.

Any negative or quirky behaviors characteristic of AT displayed by music directors who design worship in a church could result in short tenures and be problematic for the church. This study is designed to research the characteristics associated with AT in music directors in a particular church setting with the goal of addressing AT as a potential phenomenon in the local church. The results are presented to better understand the perceptions of characteristics associated with AT. This local church hired and either lost or fired five different music directors between the years of 2015 and 2020, with one leaving after only five months. The gain and loss of five music directors in as many years prompts a bewildering, “What happened here?”

Six choir members, two church leaders, and two former pastors were asked to participate in this study and recall their experiences during the five tumultuous years at the church to

determine if any of the five music directors exhibited traits associated with AT. The researcher presents the data from their experiences as a phenomenological study to help other church leaders, choir members, and music directors, cope with similar situations in the body of Christ.

The study's title, "Understanding the Characteristics Associated with the Artistic Temperament in a Local Church through the Eyes of the Choir Members and the Lens of Scripture," announces its focus on the traits associated with AT in the sacred realm with choir members as the major population for the study. The framework of the research is through the lens of Scripture, and it is a case study of a former United Methodist Church (UMC) in South Georgia. Since 2020, the church has disaffiliated from the UMC and is now an independent congregation of about 800 members. A five-year revolving door in the office of music director created some tragic episodes over which some of the choir members and people in leadership are still recovering and recouping their losses. Half of the choir members left the church because of conflicts within the choir, with church leadership, and with the music directors.

The study's purpose is to help music directors and musicians in the church gain possible self-awareness of the negative traits attributed to AT. This research also aims to help fill the knowledge gap surrounding the characteristics associated with AT. It is important to raise the awareness of church leaders, choir members, and music directors of the secular research that indicates certain personality disorders have similar traits associated with AT so they can identify possible characteristics exhibited by church musicians. The study also investigates the use of Scripture as a corrective response for helping to manage these traits.

The established body of scholarly research addressing AT places some cases of AT on the spectrum. This could explain why some negative behaviors of church musicians are similar

to behaviors of individuals with personality disorders.¹ Roger Kruger explains that growth in understanding personality disorders can greatly enhance the way one relates to and manages them.² He adds, “Those with personality disorders often seem totally oblivious to the effects their behavior has on those around them and have little understanding of how their own behavior and conduct may have contributed to it.”³ Kruger’s statement is significant in the context of this study because it supports the supposition that music directors could be working in the church with characteristics associated with AT and not be aware of it.

Secular findings connect traits of manic-depressive illness/bipolar personality disorders to characteristics associated with AT (in creatives such as musicians and poets). These characteristics include fits of anger, moodiness, inflated egos, and unrealistic expectations of self and others. All such traits, if played out by believers, are in direct contrast with Scripture’s directives. Paul writes: “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (Col. 1:21–22, New International Version). The framework of this research through the lens of Scripture is important because evil has a way of creeping into the church but is in direct contrast with Scripture. Likewise, the negative traits associated with AT may creep into the church to disrupt what should be a positive environment for choir members to enjoy singing for the glory of God.

¹ Niberca (GiGi) Polo, “The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament: The Effects of Treatment on Exceptional Artistic Talent” (Master’s Thesis, The New School for General Studies, 2011), 5, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

² Roger Kruger, *The Proper Care of Snakes: Managing Personality Disorders in Congregational Settings* (Omaha, NE: Grace Point Resources, 2015), 10.

³ Kruger, *The Proper Care of Snakes*, 19.

The researcher presents this study to contribute to the understanding of the characteristics associated with AT in the church as a phenomenon. Participants were asked questions, and data was analyzed, organized, and compiled to help draw conclusions, implications, and recommendations concerning characteristics associated with AT in the church. The main research question is: During the five years between 2015 and 2020 at the church in this case study, what aspects of AT were demonstrated by music directors from the perspective of the lived experiences of the choir members? Subordinate questions are: (1) Were any negative traits associated with AT expressed by music directors? (2) What degree of spiritual maturity and scriptural knowledge were demonstrated in the lives of the music leaders during this time? (3) What were the lived experiences of choir members sitting under directors exhibiting negative traits associated with AT? (4) What measures were taken by the church leadership to learn more about musicians and AT? (5) What opportunities were given to church music directors to seek understanding counselors, medical, psychological or spiritual help? These questions are answered in the following section.

Summary of Findings and Conclusion

AT has a misunderstood reputation in the world due to the bad behaviors of several famous, historical, and modern-day musicians. These preconceived notions often expect and then overlook musicians who exhibit quirky behaviors. In this church, some negative behaviors, possibly associated with AT, progressed to unwanted extremes in which the only recourse was to remove a choir director and then quickly hire another one. The data reported from the participants' experiences was processed to better understand AT as a phenomenon, inspire creative church musicians to use Scripture, and plan strategies that can help them manage any traits associated with AT.

The main research question is designed to determine if the participants' experiences reveal any negative traits attributed to (AT) as defined by the existing literature. The data shows the emergence of negative traits associated with AT. All ten participants convey having high expectations for greatness in the five music directors because of their musicianship. However, they also expected the directors to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit, as found in Galatians 5:22–23. The participants hoped for a positive environment and overall good attitudes. However, that was not the pattern of experience for them. There were some joys, but the vast majority began the interview talking about the dramatic and traumatic episodes that took place in the church. The following sub-questions help unpack the study's findings.

RQ1: Were Any Negative Traits Associated with AT Expressed by Music Directors?

The interview question, “How good or terrible was it?” prompted an elaboration on the “terrible” side of things from the participants with references to the “*Dysfunctional*” Behaviors of the music director, such as *Anger* and *Being Overly Defensive* (emerging themes are indicated in *italics*). Participants also revealed that some in leadership positions were apparently *Unaware of the Tension* and *Conflict* occurring in the choir, while several of the choir members tried their best to *Just Stay Out of It*. However, 50 percent of the choir members referenced an awareness of *Choir Fragmentation or Conflicts* within the choir, and 3 of 4 participants in leadership listed *Conflicts Between a Director and Leadership* as reasons for the trials between 2015 and 2020. The specific negative traits of AT in which uncomfortable behaviors of one's *Emotional Highs and Lows* were displayed, creating a *Tense Atmosphere* from being “talked down to” by the choir director(s) in rehearsals. This made choir members feel as if the choir director(s) had a *Superior Attitude* while at the same time, acting *Depressed and Possibly Self-Medicating*. Several

participants referred to an overall *Tense Feeling* in the church and choir, and one mentions obvious *Tension Between the Music Director and the Accompanist*.

Many psychiatrists agree with Zaman, Agius, and Hankir who reveal, “We decided to investigate the relationship between manic-depressive illness and the artistic temperament. Research strongly suggests that, compared with the general population, writers and artists show a vastly disproportionate rate of the affective disorders manic-depressive and depressive illness.”⁴ Jamison takes this a step further and adds that certain lifestyles provide cover for deviant and bizarre behaviors and that “the arts have long given latitude to extremes in behavior and mood.” She adds that 94 percent of award-winning poets being treated for mood disorders in her study were professing Protestant believers.⁵ This is a strong indicator of the need for this study of AT in the church. With this study of AT’s characteristics emerging in participants’ experiences in the church, awareness is raised that other music directors in other churches could be at risk for AT, especially since many seem to exhibit the traits of enlarged egos/ambition and a great need for attention, which are characteristics often associated with AT.

The majority of the participants in this study said they observed *Hypomanic or Depressive Moods* displayed by the music directors at one point or another, but when questioned, they seemed to want to focus more on discussing possible reasons for a director’s hypomanic or depressive moods. Participants said they were troubled by witnessing the *Highs and Lows* of the directors and thought that one was possibly *Self-Medicating* with prescription drugs and alcohol due to physical illnesses and poor coping skills for outside

⁴ Zaman et al., “Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament,” 261.

⁵ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 5 & 75.

problems. Jamison connects characteristics of AT with manic-depressive illnesses and points out that the manic-depressive creatives and poets in her study had recurrent physical illnesses, with opiates and alcohol abuse.⁶ A choir member said she did not get the impression that they were all depressed, thus turning to alcohol to self-medicate, but she added, “There was one though, that did drink a lot.”

These characteristics are similar to Jamison’s description of Lord Byron as having an “almost textbook manner” of manic-depressive illness, showing frequent illnesses and pronounced fluctuations in mood, energy, sleep patterns, and “alcohol and other drug use.”⁷ She adds that although these episodes were disruptive when they occurred, “Byron was clinically normal most of the time; this, too, is highly characteristic of manic-depressive illness.”⁸ If one’s behaviors are normal “most of the time,” it is difficult to identify characteristics associated with personality disorders or mental illness as well as characteristics associated with AT.

Five out of six of the choir members expressed concerns that the director’s *Outside Problems* were associated with financial or marriage difficulties. One said that all the choir directors brought *Personal Problems* into the choir room which created a role reversal in which the choir members tried to help the music directors cope with outside life issues. She stated, “All of them, but two in particular, would bring a lot of their personal baggage into the choir room, and that would definitely affect [us]. It was almost as if we were trying to help him. You start to feel like you’re part of the problem, too. We didn’t know how to stop it.”

⁶ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 63–73.

⁷ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 154.

⁸ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*.

Eight of the ten participants experienced episodes of a music director having *Difficulty with Authority*, which contributed to his “moodiness” around them, while a few more references were made to a director’s *Unrealistic Expectations* of choir members, *Unprofessionalism*, and “*Neurotic*” Behaviors as attributing to *Depression*. Jamison describes similar characteristics of writers, artists, and composers diagnosed with manic-depressive illness such as angry, paranoid, delusional, extravagant, and eccentric behaviors.⁹ Within this local church, similar “dysfunctional” or “neurotic” characteristics emerged when one of the music directors was screaming angrily at the choir. “It caught us all so off guard that I don’t even remember why this person, what their main beef was, but we got completely blasted. This person, this director, was so angry [he had] a fit. Screaming, pacing, up and down in front of us, yelling at us ... all of us, the entire choir.”

RQ2: What Degree of Spiritual Maturity, Scriptural Knowledge, or Use of Strategies was Demonstrated in the Lives of the Music Directors During this Time?

Participants were not aware of any of the choir directors being *Intentional about Maintaining a Positive Environment*. Seven responded with, “No!” to this question, and only one answered in the affirmative, but even that one was more of an apologetic response. “I think they all tried.” Three talked about a director having a *Superior Attitude* in association with the context of Scripture and strategy use.

The responses are insignificant concerning any joys surrounding Scripture or strategies used to initiate and maintain a positive environment. Nine of the ten participants had no recollection of Scripture use within the context of rehearsals. One interviewee said he recalled that Scripture and prayer had indeed been a part of rehearsals by one of the directors, but three of

⁹ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 58.

those in leadership answered that a lack of *Awareness* or *Communication* on this point contributed to their negative answers. It is appropriate to conclude that in any church, a lack of Scripture's use and planned strategies would adversely affect a positive environment.

All ten participants said the music directors lacked any planned strategies, such as employing humor, fun warm-ups, or redirection to de-escalate tension in the room. In the context of discussing strategies for a positive atmosphere, eight participants took this opportunity to comment on *a Director's Inability to Take Constructive Criticism*. In this context, several referenced a time when the director was being *Negative or Critical* with them, while one participant told a story of how one choir director stood his ground and an angry choir member quit. This participant saw no fault on the part of the music director for setting some boundaries, but the result was the loss of a choir member. The participant assumed that both the music director and the disgruntled choir member demonstrated characteristics associated with AT but insisted along with several other choir members who stayed that no matter the moods of the choir director, they were going to be *Loyal to the Church, the Choir* and to singing for the Lord.

There was concern among several participants that the directors were not really invested in music as a calling so perhaps they were unprepared for the job and overwhelmed by it. They added they had knowledge that one or two of the directors had not been trained specifically to become music directors, and this was not their original vocation as musicians. O'Reilly, Dunbar, and Bentall find that people with psychotic traits have trouble maintaining a job, so they look for certain positions with fewer boundaries and less oversight.¹⁰ This could be the case for some church musicians who are offered an opportunity to use their talent with great freedom and flexibility to select music, make work schedules, office hours, programs, etc., along with perhaps

¹⁰ Thomas O'Reilly, Robin Dunbar, Richard Bentall, "Schizotypy and Creativity: An Evolutionary Connection?" *Personality and Individual Differences* 31 (2001): 1067.

little oversight or accountability. This might be bad for the choir members. This next question looks into the lived experiences of the choir members with five directors between 2015 and 2020.

RQ3: What are the Lived Experiences of Choir Members Sitting Under Directors Exhibiting any Negative Traits Associated with AT?

In association with this question, most of the participants expected their music directors to be more emotionally expressive and thus, a little “quirky.” Seven of the ten said, “Yes” to the interview question, “Do you think it is normal for a church music director to be more emotionally expressive? Why or why not?” One wavered and said, “Perhaps!” and two said, “No.” Those in the affirmative ran the gamut of reasons, such as, “They’ve got to be,” and “I think that I would expect that from any artist.” The one indifferent participant began to sway by suggesting that musicians are “maybe a little sensitive,” but both of the “No!” answers came from leadership, with one adding, “I don’t think they should be,” and the other elaborated with, “I don’t really see that that position requires more emotion [but] if that comes out of that person and it’s normal for him.” One of these “No’s” from leadership admits to having a biased opinion on this issue. Still, the remaining half of church leaders and pastors expected music directors to be more emotionally expressive. In this context, two participants referenced that a director’s negative *Commitment to His Job* was a contributing factor in whether they expected him to be more emotionally expressive. In connection with the directors’ emotional sensitivity, both former pastors revealed real *Challenges in Spiritually Mentoring Them*.

Each interviewee elaborated on stories of *Fragmentation Within the Choir, Conflict between Musicians*, and music directors holding *Unrealistic Expectations for Them*, and thus, exhibiting various forms of *Unprofessionalism and/or “Neurotic Behaviors”* from time to time.

This inability to *Read the Room* corresponds with the research findings of Gusewell and Ruch in which musicians are evaluated in five significant areas of personality traits/qualities: *judgment, perspective, teamwork, fairness, and leadership*. Gusewell and Ruch find that musicians score significantly lower than the general public in all five of these areas.¹¹ An example provided that shows a lack of judgment on the part of a director is that one would bring up negative experiences from past churches during rehearsals, while another would make unwelcomed political jokes and do impersonations of political candidates during an election. This felt uncomfortable.

Participants also attributed any resulting emotionally sensitive traits to the stress of the job and possible misplacement. Polo says that according to mental health professionals, stress creates the same triggers for those with AT as it does for people diagnosed with manic-depressive disorders.¹² Music directors bear a lot of stress—weekly performances and the hours of preparation that go into planning and executing them, seasonal music expectations in the church, unplanned funerals, weekend weddings, adult choir workshops, age-level choir trips, maintaining budgets, music libraries, accompanists and music staff, to name a few. Stress is increased if one is feeling overwhelmed and unprepared for the duties and responsibilities of a music director.

The participants seemed to want to focus on reasons for any uncomfortable moodiness but did not question the possible existence of hypomania (bipolar characteristics associated with AT) in the directors. They expected it. They revealed that some exhibited more negative traits

¹¹ Angelica Gusewell and Willibald Ruch, “Character Strengths Profiles of Musicians and Non-Musicians,” *The Journal of Arts & Humanities* 4, no. 6 (2015): 7.

¹² Polo, “The Bipolar Spectrum and the Artistic Temperament,” 5.

than others and that some exhibited the characteristics less often than others. This can be compared to the various levels and inconsistencies mental health professionals face when trying to identify bipolar disorder traits. These characteristics are difficult to identify, especially if exhibited infrequently. Schuldberg confirms that traits associated with disorders are hard to measure but that traits of hypomania (*Moodiness*), antisocial behavior (*Neurotic or “Dysfunctional”*), and impulsivity (*Rage, Overly Defensive, Conflict, Unprofessionalism, Inability to “Read The Room”*) do contribute to creativity.¹³ Schuldberg adds that these traits, coupled with a reclusive nature, could be the driving force behind creativity. This understanding, if applied to the characteristics of AT as a driving force behind creativity, could raise self-awareness in musicians that would allow them emotions of joy instead of any feelings of guilt.

Russ agrees with Schuldberg that having “emotional highs” associated with hypomania can be seen as productivity for musicians. Russ also agrees with Akiskal and Jamison but clarifies that not everyone with hypomanic mood disorders is creative, but that creatives with mood disorders may not want to own it or seek help for their symptoms because their productivity is generated by the moods. This can indicate the probability that these hypomanic characteristics associated with mood disorders can be the driving force behind productivity. Thus, the characteristics of “emotional sensitivity,” the *Highs and Lows*, can be highly productive for musicians in the church.

¹³ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 10–11.

RQ4: What Measures Were Taken by the Church Leadership to Learn More About Musicians and AT?

There are no apparent measures taken by the church leadership to learn more about musicians and AT. According to one pastor, he offered to pay for counseling for one of the directors after an obvious emotional breakdown, but the director refused it and quit without notice. The pastor showed a great deal of empathy for the choir director and discerned that he needed further counseling, but unfortunately, the choir director rejected the opportunity. While most of the emotional displays described in this study are low-key, some are described as throwing a temper tantrum, slamming doors, yelling, and screaming, which is usually a profound cry for help.

Though various levels of depression and anger emerge, no emotional instability is observed to the extent that it caused anyone in leadership or the choir to suspect a music director was in danger of attempting suicide. Emotional struggles were present to a lesser degree than listed in both Jamison's and the Mayo Clinic's descriptions of negative bipolar disorder traits that are associated with AT. With fewer episodes in the church, it can be easy for Christian leaders to gloss over them, anxious to show patience and forgiveness in the hopes that "this too shall pass." However, if someone is consistently showing any of the negative characteristics associated with AT, while possibly drinking too much or being theologically combative, steps need to be taken toward counseling efforts to understand the reasons for the behaviors, and this usually means setting time aside for more communication, mentoring, and counseling by pastors.

Counseling offered from a biblical worldview uses Scripture to demonstrate how to manage life's negative emotions while increasing awareness that we can choose how to respond to them. Solomon writes, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov.

16:18). Confidence and musical talent are much-needed qualifications in a music director, but they must be tempered with humility and complete dependence on the Holy Spirit, with talents offered to God for His glory, not the glory of oneself.

Certain marriage counselors like Ramirez and McCully remind Christians of their covenant relationship with Christ as the groom [like a marriage], and that Christians are also in a covenant relationship with others in Christ.¹⁴ Concerning conflict in the church, McCully believes that conflict in the church can create stronger bonds, also like a marriage, to engender growth.¹⁵ This aligns with Paul saying, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

The use of Scriptures in counseling does not seem to happen. The corrective application for someone struggling with anger issues was not applied, such as Proverbs 15:18: “A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.” Simple as it may be, the Word is always significant. Music directors exhibiting negative characteristics of AT need to be reminded of Scripture’s corrective powers through Christian mentoring and counseling and there is no indication that Scripture was used in counseling sessions.

RQ5: What Opportunities Were Given to Church Music Directors to Seek Understanding Counselors, Medical, Psychological, or Spiritual Help?

The pastor’s offer to personally pay for professional counseling in RQ4 represents the only indication of a music director being given the opportunity to obtain help beyond the local church for any mental health issues. In this local church, the church leadership, like most church

¹⁴ Lucas Ramirez and Mike Devito, *Designed for More, Unleashing Christ’s Vision for Unity in a Deeply Divided World* (Nashville, TN: FaithWords Hachette Book Group, 2018), 175.

¹⁵ C. McCully, “Conflict Resolution to Preserve Church Unity” (DMin diss., Portland Seminary, 2021), 95–98.

leaders, were unaware of the negative traits associated with AT and musicians, and thus, additional help was not offered by them to any of the directors, nor was it sought out by the music directors.

In today's culture with more literature available surrounding psychological problems, there are also religious articles that perceive personality disorders as a product of the world's sinful and fallen condition.¹⁶ Some could project similar judgments on musicians with the inflated egotistic characteristics associated with AT (*Superior Attitudes/pride*). The participants in this study talk about the directors exhibiting a *Superior Attitude*, and both former pastors say they observed narcissistic behaviors in the music directors. Counseling was never indicated as a need for them, either within the church or with a Christian counselor. According to the choir members, they had no knowledge of any of the music directors seeking outside help or counseling for emotional problems.

What might emotional problems or an inflated ego look like in a music director? A choir member said it showed in "Body language ... I don't know, just stressed looking ... [a] negative looking demeanor, how he sat in church services, would not partake of communion on Sunday." A pastor described an inflated ego in one director who had *Problems with Authority*. "He appeared to have narcissistic tendencies, thinking that he [the music director] knew more [than church leadership] about everything. He did not agree with the theology or the way that the church leadership did things." This reveals not only relational problems but disagreements in theology. In this regard, one of the pastors concluded: "Death to self that can only come through Christ is theirs and our only salvation," which denotes the need for pastoral counseling within the

¹⁶ Kwee et al., "Sexual Addiction and Christian College Men," 4.

church. However, this type of counseling also has to be received by a music director who is willing to humbly submit himself to it.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

The data collected from ten participants in this study is the result of a qualitative research method within the framework of a biblical worldview that is aligned with the study and guided by a phenomenological approach. The purpose is to understand what is already known about the topic of characteristics associated with AT from the literature and what could be known about the topic of characteristics associated with AT in music directors in the church from the perspectives of the lived experiences of the research participants. The rationale for the study is to determine if any emerging traits associated with AT are present within these peculiar circumstances surrounding a local church having five music directors in as many years.

The theoretical framework presented in chapter 2 emphasizes a biblical worldview, and the lens of Scripture guides the analysis of existing literature by comparing the research data of others with Scriptural teachings. This literature, in turn, provides information on the topic, which helps develop the research questions and consequent interview questions, themes, and codes. The phenomenological approach is employed to maintain the focus on making sense of participants' perceptions from their experiences during the five years from which the data was collected. The data is validated by member checking their answers and stories. An analysis of the data shows emerging characteristics associated with AT which are then organized into five categories: (I) Atmosphere, (II) Music Director behaviors, (III) Choir Member Behaviors (IV) Leadership Qualities, and (V) Use of Scripture or Use of Strategies. Each category is divided into subcategories: I A-C, II A-L, III A-E, IV A-E, and V A & B.

The findings in the current literature contribute to the deductive coding of 27 themes by the researcher for this study. They are developed from studies such as Gusewell and Ruch, who evaluated musicians and found they had low scores in *judgment (Ability to Read the Room)*, *perspective (Unrealistic Expectations)*, *teamwork (Accepting Authority or Constructive Criticism)*, *fairness (Superior Attitude)*, and *leadership (Unprofessional Behavior)*.¹⁷

The framework of a biblical worldview is necessary to help guide and explain the meaning of these shared experiences in this local church by allowing Scripture to be the final authority rather than human perception. The data is further analyzed through the lens of Scripture's authoritative truth. Scripture provides a reliable foundation upon which the researcher can sift through the 122 pages of transcripts of the ten participants. It also provides a moral compass for the study to help interpret the good or unacceptable behaviors that emerge within the data. Through the underpinnings of Scripture, the researcher can make assumptions and provide practical implications for music directors, choir members, and church leaders in the next section.

Practical Implications

When a music director left the church, the leadership hurried to hire a new one. Unfortunately, disagreements in theology between music directors and church leaders should have been caught in the vetting process of hiring, but because of the rush to fill the music director's position, they were not. Practically speaking, "The show must go on!" Along with this paradigm, "A great musician must be hired ... quickly!"

Leadership and choir members clearly expect diplomacy and professionalism from their music directors, but when circumstances demand that music positions be filled quickly with great

¹⁷ Gusewell and Ruch, "Character Strengths Profiles," 7.

musicians, the “hurry up and hire someone” syndrome takes its toll, and church leaders do not properly vet a director’s theological beliefs and spiritual maturity. Churches typically scrutinize pastors for ministry more than music directors by committees on ordination, and it is not unusual for personality and mental health tests to be administered.

In terms of “the show” and “a great musician,” one of the former pastors felt there was a real problem with the focus being more on the talent of the musician(s) than on true worship. He says:

We have gotten so far on the, “Let’s do what we can to bring people in,” that it [worship] is intended more towards entertainment than good solid biblical worship and preaching, and I’d say both, worship [music] and preaching because you don’t get any better than Nehemiah and the two choirs circling the wall.... That’s as good as it gets along with the Psalms of David, the chorus in Revelation. That’s what worship is really all about, it’s not about just wanting to preach without music. Congregations that are coming with itching ears to hear a message that makes them feel good about themselves, also want to hear the best music, the best tones, and the best voices ... that can become more about entertainment. That’s not limited to the theologically liberal church.

Both former pastors comment on a music director’s inability to work with them, which is crucial to the success of a church staff. This correlates directly with Gusewell and Ruch’s discovery of musicians scoring lower on *teamwork*, among other things.¹⁸ The main problems that emerge in this study deal with relationship issues and teamwork.

From a medical standpoint, “extraordinary and confusing fluctuations in mood, personality, thinking, and behavior” have inevitable and painful effects on relationships.¹⁹ A church staff is all about relationships—relating to one another and the members of the church. From the lens of Scripture, music directors are to do all things as unto the Lord. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” (Col. 3:23).

¹⁸ Gusewell and Ruch, “Character Strengths Profiles,” 7.

¹⁹ Jamison, *Touched with Fire*, 256–67.

The next verse adds a reward for adhering to this Scripture: “Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving” (Col. 3:24).

One of the pastors talks about these differing theologies between him and the music director, saying that “[the music director] was really trying to get a change; I’m not sure if it was to get a change from me, a pretty conservative guy as you know, [but he] was trying to move towards a more liberal theology.” One music director allowed his theological differences to show in public, “even [by] the way that [the music director] conducted himself during worship—he would sit in the front row or the choir and be asleep all the time.” Two directors reportedly slept through sermons. One must first rule out narcolepsy, but if sleeping during a sermon is intentional to indicate boredom, this shows disrespectful defiance and is in contrast to Scripture’s mandates to submit to authorities. “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established” (Rom. 13:1). This is especially important within the hierarchy of the body of Christ that places Christ as the head, like in the home, with a succession of command, not to lord over one another, but out of responsibility for one another and reverence for Christ (Eph. 5:21–33).

Kruger sees Scripture as a major component of managing personality disorders. He says, “God speaks to us primarily through his Word. If we want to be attuned to his voice, we have to first learn to listen and take in what he says.”²⁰ One must be well-grounded in God’s Word to have a meaningful life and fulfillment in music ministry. Scripture is written to help all believers manage personalities, talents, creativity, sensitivity, sensuality, and every possible human emotion.

²⁰ Kruger, *The Proper Care of Snakes*, 106.

Music directors, like everyone else, need to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and the inner peace and joy that comes as a product of his indwelling Holy Spirit—God’s own presence within the heart. Psalm 118:24 says “... Let us rejoice today and be glad,” and Philippians 4:5 reminds one to “Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.” Another Scripture includes the working of the Holy Spirit as necessary in experiencing spiritual joy: “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 15:13). These Scriptures, if put into practice, help provoke joy in tense situations to produce strength and staying power. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil. 4:13).

As previously stated in chapter 3, when one has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16), one’s responses will glorify Christ. If a believer is to apply the living Word of God to every aspect of life and be obedient to its directives, he/she needs more than just a basic knowledge of Scripture. Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God personally. By knowing Him, one understands His character and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit that exemplify the life of Christ. J. I. Packer says that we cannot know God unless he speaks and tells us about himself.²¹ He adds, “Those who look to manmade material or philosophical constructs to lead them to God are not likely to take any part of his revelation (through Scripture) as seriously as they should.”²² Thus, the use of Scripture is important.

The use of planned strategies is also important, but music directors in churches are not generally trained in classroom or group management. Music teachers are drilled in

²¹ J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1973), 49.

²² Packer, *Knowing God*, 48.

strategies to help nurture students while maintaining a positive environment within a classroom. The expectations for music directors in a church choir room are very similar to the expectations of music teachers in a classroom. However, the findings in this study are inconclusive on whether the music directors utilized planned strategies because the participants were unable to properly identify such strategies.

One cannot assume the music directors lacked differentiated classroom management training. However, if they exhibited a *superior attitude* or other negative traits associated with AT, problems were sure to emerge. Miller's description of a superior attitude amongst music directors as "High-Church snobbery" today mirrors Scripture's condemnation of such behaviors which opposes culture's full endorsement of pride.²³ Oxford English Dictionary defines *pride* as, "A high, esp. an excessively high, opinion of one's own worth or importance which gives rise to a feeling or attitude of superiority over others; inordinate self-esteem."²⁴ However, God says in Proverbs 8:13, "To fear the Lord is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech." This means God cannot condone nor is He honored through that which He hates: pride, jealousy, bragging, evil ways, and lies. These are negative traits not only associated with various personality disorders but, according to Scripture (see also Kwee), they are associated with sin as well.²⁵ Paul says, "But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

²³ Stephen Miller, *Worship Leaders, We Are Not Rock Stars* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2013), 6.

²⁴ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "pride," accessed July 18, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/pride_n1?tab=meaning_and_use#28314327.

²⁵ Kwee et al., "Sexual Addiction and Christian College Men," 4.

From a biblical worldview, this may include any acts (e.g., behaviors) that do not align with faith (one's beliefs) that rely upon aligning with Scripture.

Kruger says negative traits can become so ingrained within a personality only to appear as “attempts to pay off” emotional debts “through unhealthy behaviors.”²⁶ Mental health professionals are trained to look for signs of negative characteristics, whereas, church leaders and pastors, most likely are not. Even when one is trained to identify personality disorders, Kruger adds that to “actually say to someone, ‘You have a personality disorder,’ would be extremely counterproductive;” because of a lack of experience and training to make such a judgment along with putting the person on the defensive.²⁷ This research has taken great strides to avoid such a diagnosis and does not intend to confer the label of AT on any of the subjects of the study. Awareness and increased knowledge must not translate into activism but rather into searching the Scriptures for God's help and discernment to work with and help musicians who might exhibit any of these negative traits associated with AT. The participants and music directors in this study would have benefited from increased knowledge and understanding of characteristics associated with AT. The next section advises future implications, based on (1) what the study found and (2) what the study did not find, leading toward an increased understanding and knowledge of this topic.

Future Implications

The researcher provides an analysis of data in this study which indicates that the participants share similar experiences and that some characteristics associated with AT potentially emerged in these music directors to make the choir members feel uncomfortable. The

²⁶ Kruger, *The Proper Care of Snakes*, 18.

²⁷ Kruger, *The Proper Care of Snakes*, 12.

choir members all say they expect to enjoy rehearsals without drama and conflict. Musicians and choir members displaying any of AT's negative traits might benefit from this study as a means of raising self-awareness.

The study reveals a lack of Scripture usage by the music directors throughout the five years of conflict. The church does not seem to focus on the applicant's knowledge of Scripture or personal testimony when interviewing candidates. Music directors and church leaders need to implement more Scripture into their lives and practices to expect the Holy Spirit to speak through it. The study is inconclusive concerning the use of planned classroom management strategies in this church, but future implications might indicate that the use of more planned strategies on the part of the music director could be a means of better coping with tension and managing any negative characteristics associated with AT in group settings.

This study does not address how to assess the presence of mood disorders in the church or give insight to church leaders on how to vet music directors in the hiring process, or screen to identify characteristics associated with AT. Church leaders would benefit from more research surrounding AT's traits in the church including the use of personality evaluation instruments. Based on the secular studies of Jamison, Russ, and Gamma et al., musicians have a higher probability of mood disorders than people in general. Thus, church leaders can expect that their music hires could have a higher probability of mood disorders, too. More research is needed to help fill the gap of knowledge surrounding church musicians exhibiting traits associated with AT, or other personality disorders associated with AT.

The study also does not address ways of coping with characteristics attributed to AT already present in the church. Church leaders need more information and training on how to

encourage music directors in strategies to manage and cope with any emerging emotional highs and lows associated with AT in religious settings; thus, more research is needed.

The study does not address specific training opportunities for musicians in churches who are hired with performance degrees but have no training or experience as music directors. With more universities offering degrees in worship studies and Christian worship, more research is needed to raise awareness that musicians in the church need this type of training—to encourage, assist, counsel, and train them for music positions in the church.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

Strengths of this study include the methodological design, the theoretical framework and scope of research, data collected, and the results as a qualitative phenomenological study—to explore the lived experiences of the participants in this church surrounding the characteristics associated with AT in the church. The tendency is to pull away from the topic as a phenomenon and try to seek causes. The body of knowledge already establishes known causes of characteristics associated with AT, and it is extensively explored, but the plan of action is to collect data from the participants and explore it from the perspective of their experience to understand without assuming causes. Deductive codes and themes were developed from the current literature, and the researcher analyzed the interview transcripts, highlighting the themes that emerged with the support of Scripture and a biblical worldview to guide the analysis.

Strengths also include the highlighted themes as part of a phenomenological study, which show some traits associated with AT that emerged from the shared experiences described by the interviewees. The researcher's use of member checking helps reveal accuracy within all the transcripts of the interviews along with the test interviews that are similar to the participant interviews, thus adding reliability and validity to the study. The

participants' stories do not contradict one another, and their member checking of interview transcripts all report to the researcher as having been "accurately done."

A weakness is the inability to determine or prove any consistency of traits associated with AT on the part of the music directors. This research is not designed to diagnose these music directors. Additionally, the directors are not given the opportunity to be a part of this study to present their side of the story. The expectations of choir members and leadership are not unreasonable, but these types of high ideals cannot be reached by someone who has not had more experience or specific training. Confusion and discord are inevitable if clear expectations are not outlined to maintain a positive environment.

Another weakness is the inability to adequately measure the use of Scripture. In the church, the use of Scripture is expected, but in actual practice, participants do not remember it being used. As the main part of this study's framework, Scripture should have been measured more accurately.

There is a weakness related to the use of phenomenology because, although it is important to understand the lived experiences of the research participants, there is no way to determine if what they perceive is real. Without tests or employing mental health professionals, the findings of a phenomenology study can only help explain what participants perceive and remember.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

The most important aspect of this research is to raise awareness of the potential negative effects of AT within local church music ministries. Although secular literature is full of implications that AT has negative traits similar to bipolar disorder, it is not clearly identified by

mental health officials as a personality disorder. Therefore, Christian worship researchers and church leaders need more information to help identify traits associated with AT in the church. More research is needed on characteristics associated with AT's negative traits related to creative musicians in the church. The correlation has already been effectively made between creatives and AT in the secular world, but not within the sacred realm.

More research is needed by mental health professionals to make conclusive findings concerning AT as a possible personality disorder. Currently, one can only make assumptions when trying to identify AT associated with bipolar disorder, hypomania, or several other disorders researched in relation to AT. The researcher hopes this study will encourage future research of characteristics associated with AT within the church by mental health professionals.

More research is needed to study the possible benefits that Christian believers have with characteristics associated with AT to see how the use of Scripture potentially increases their ability to manage the traits. On those same lines, people with other personality disorders that share similar traits associated with AT would be drawn to this study of Scripture as corrective and discover the claims of the gospel of Christ.

Further research is needed to determine how church choir directors applying the strategies of music education might help them plan and maintain a positive atmosphere within the groups they lead. This research does not need to be limited to musicians but could benefit others in the church who teach a Sunday School class, youth or children's groups, etc. Affective disorders are present in all populations, so no doubt, others could benefit from group management strategies in the church.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Churches with a biblical worldview have an advantage in hiring music directors from this study of understanding the characteristics associated with AT in the church through the eyes of the choir and the lens of Scripture. With almost no study of AT in the church, church choir directors cannot fully understand its possible effects on them and others. If AT is indeed a personality disorder, church leaders need to know how to work with those who exhibit its negative traits.

Problems increase when musicians with AT try to lead other musicians with AT. In larger churches, the probability of this happening is higher if negative traits associated with AT emerge in multiple church-hired musicians. While the secular culture calls for psychotherapy or medication, the church looks through the lens of Scripture. From a biblical worldview, Scripture supports itself as a means of managing life's negative traits: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness so that the person of God may be proficient, equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Thus, this research aims to raise awareness of AT in today's churches.

Churches today need to network with local mental health agencies or Christian counseling groups in their communities to be able to refer church members or staff who exhibit characteristics associated with AT. Some larger churches may be able to house a counseling department with a certified Christian counselor on staff. Either way, there is a high probability of need in this area due to findings in the literature that indicate a church of 200 adults will have 2 paranoids, 1 schizoid, 4 schizotyps, 2 antisocials, 2 borderlines, 4 histrionics, 2 narcissists, 2 avoidants, 4 dependents, and 8 obsessive compulsives within the congregation, coping with

personality disorders.²⁸ Pastors and laity need to be aware of these general statistics and that the probabilities are even higher for personality disorders in musicians.²⁹ Churches that proactively assist members with personality disorders might also assist musicians displaying traits associated with AT on staff.

It is also important to recognize from this study that the expected training offered in churches today on the study and use of Scripture may be overlooked and undervalued. More effort is needed for church pastors and church leaders to ensure both the small group and/or personal devotional time of their staff members for spiritual growth and insight. Choir management training can only be practically implemented when recognized as a real need and supported by church administrators. The researcher has experienced characteristics associated with AT and has gained self-awareness from this study. Hopefully, the study will benefit more church musicians in the same way. Planned strategy training helps with self-control in all situations. Music educators never know when an evaluation will occur, and perhaps that is key to maintaining a positive environment. Such evaluations should be a consideration in the church as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, choir members in this local church acknowledged many problems in the choir between 2015 and 2020, while the church leaders described the conflicts with the music directors because of the pastor's conflicts with them. So, what happened in this church? The directors left, three of them with less than a year's tenure at the church. These episodes of conflict within each group of the population of this study cannot be directly attributed to the

²⁸ Kruger, *The Proper Care of Snakes*, 9.

²⁹ Akiskal and Akiskal, "Reassessing the Prevalence of Bipolar Disorders," 36.

characteristics of AT and should not. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to see *if* any of the traits associated with AT emerged ... and they did, thus indicating that ten participants with similar experiences in which several characteristics associated with AT emerged felt uncomfortable. Many experiences are troublesome, but Scripture provides guidance toward joy, and planning strategies provide comfort.³⁰

As Schuldberg suggests, there are “a variety of causal possibilities linking genius to [characteristics associated with] madness.”³¹ Schuldberg further explains that creative intelligence can be confused with divergent thinking and thought disorders of schizophrenic-like cognition, which makes it difficult to separate out and measure them or identify them. Thus, according to Schuldberg, the intelligence of creative musicians can be easily misconstrued as characteristics associated with a personality disorder. While the findings of this research suggest that the characteristics associated with AT emerged from the experiences of the participants at this church, it also recommends the need for communication between leadership, choir, and directors for proper vetting before hiring and for knowledge and understanding surrounding musicians experiencing characteristics associated with AT, especially in the church.

³⁰ Michael Linsin, *Classroom Management for Art, Music, and PE Teachers* (San Diego, CA: JME Publishing, 2014), 70.

³¹ Schuldberg, “Six Subclinical Spectrum Traits,” 7.

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Appendix A

Number of Theme References Within Each Research Question

Themes Defined in Table 2	Q. #1 Joys & Trials?	Q. #2 How Good / Bad?	Q. #3 Highs & Lows	Q. #4 Hypo/ Manic	Q. #5 Trying To be Positive	Q. #6 AT as Normal	Q. #7 Bible Use	Q. #8 Use of Strategies
IA	2	2	4	3	1	0	3(-)	3(-)
IB	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
IC	8	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
II A	2	3	1	1	0	2	1	3
II B	2	3	0	1	0	0	2	0
II C	4	3	2	3	3	0	3	0
II D	3	8	3	0	1	0	5	2
II E	1	2	1	6	0	0	1	0
II F	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
II G	7	2	1	5	1	0	0	1
II H	2	0	3	6	0	0	2	0
II I	7	3	3	4	2	0	1	1
II J	0	0	0	0	6(-)1(+)	0	1 (-)	0
II K	2 (-)	2 (-)	0	2	0	0	1 (-)	5 (-)1(+)
II L	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	8
III A	6	1(+) 1(-)	1	4	2	8(+) 2(-)	0	0
III B	0	4	2	1	0	0	0	2
III C	5	0	2	4	1	0	0	2
III D	6	5	3	1	2	1	1	5
III E	3	2	2	1	2	0	0	0
IV A	4	1	0	1	1	3 (-)	0	0
IV B	1(+) 2(-)	1(+) 3(-)	1	1	0	0	1(+) 2(-)	1(-)
IV C	1(-) 2(+)	1	3	4	0	1	0	0
IV D	1(-) 2(+)	3	3	2	0	0	0	0
IV E	1(-)	0	5	1	0	0	0	0
V A	0	0	0	1	0	0	9(-) 1(+)	0
V B	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	10(-)

Appendix B: IRB Consent Letter

Information Sheet

Title of the Project: Understanding the Artistic Temperament in the Church
Through the Eyes of the Choir Members and the Lens of Scripture: A Case Study
Principal Investigator: Deborah A. McIlrath, Ph.D. student of Liberty School of Music, Liberty University.

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years of age or older, and a choir member at Wesley between the years of 2015-2020, or you must have been in a church leadership or pastoral role during those years. If participating as a choir member, you must also be a current member of the Wesley Church choir. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to discover if any negative traits of the Artistic Temperament (AT) were exhibited by music directors at Wesley between 2015-2020. Since at this time, Wesley experienced a turn-over of five music directors in five years, so to help church leaders and music directors in the future, it is important to understand if any of AT's behaviors were apparent.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. There will be a face-to-face or telephone, audio-recorded interview lasting 30-45 minutes.
2. Depending on emerging information, a follow-up interview may be necessary for clarification of data.
3. You may be asked to provide any correspondence, i.e., emails, texts or documents associated with negative reactions or traits of AT exhibited by the music directors during 2015-2020.
4. After the initial and/or follow-up interviews, participants will be asked to review their interview transcripts to ensure accuracy.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study other than a raised awareness of the Artistic Temperament (AT) within the church.

Benefits to society include helping those tasked with hiring musicians in the church understand the symptoms and traits of AT. By use of a qualitative study which documents your stories, this

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Approved on 1-30-2024

research will help identify negative traits of AT. Since musicians with AT may behave in unpredictable ways that are incompatible with Scripture, this study help raise awareness and provide understanding of the phenomena of AT so that churches can make responsible decisions when hiring or working with musicians. If current musicians in the church display traits of AT, the information from this study may help increase self-awareness and allow for musicians to obtain proper counseling or possible medical assistance.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The risks involved in this study include the possibility of psychological stress from being asked to recall and discuss prior trauma. To reduce risk, I will monitor participants, discontinue the interview if needed, and provide referral information for counseling services.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted, and all hardcopy records will be shredded.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years/until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts. The researcher and members of her doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as the choir director of the choir members. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Wesley Church at Frederica. If you decide

to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Deborah McIlrath. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Brenda Widger at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University

Appendix C: Participant Permission Request

Dear [Recipient],

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The title of my research project is Understanding the Artistic Temperament in the Church through the Eyes of the Choir Members and the Lens of Scripture: A Case Study and the purpose of my research is to identify any traits of AT that might emerge from the lived experiences of the choir members at this church between 2015-2025.

I am writing to request your permission to access and utilize any emails or text messages that might indicate a display of negative AT traits, i.e., extreme high or low moods. The data will be used to help determine if any of the negative traits of AT can be detected as a possible motivation for the emails or text messages. An example would be an email where the music director insisted, he/she was not included in the social activities of members of the church or the choir. This could indicate the deep paranoia of AT. Extremely angry and rude correspondence could show not only poor judgment, but high levels of anger which is also attributed to AT.

The data that emerges from these documents, text messages, or emails will help corroborate the stories of lived experiences by the participants interviewed. Further along in the study, as all the data collected is reviewed, compared, and analyzed, corrective measures through Scripture may be applicable as a possible way to manage the negative traits of AT.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email stating that you give this researcher permission to access and utilize any emails or text messages from you that might shed light on AT in the church.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. McIlrath
Director of Sacred Arts

Appendix D: Recruitment Email

Dear Potential Participant:

As a graduate student in the School of Music at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Ph.D. degree. The purpose of my research is to see what aspects of artistic temperament (AT) were demonstrated by the music directors at this church between the years of 2015-2020, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and must have been a choir member during the time frame, 2015-2020. Several choir members, church leadership personnel, and senior pastors will be asked to participate in the study. All participants, if willing, will be asked to provide answers to interview questions concerning lived experiences in the choir during that time. The interview will be conducted either in-person or via telephone, and it should take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. The interview will be audio-recorded. As information emerges, similar follow-up interviews might be necessary. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but participant identities will not be disclosed.

As the Director of Sacred Arts and the choir director for several of the participants, participants can be assured by the author when analyzing, submitting participant stories, or keeping confidentiality regarding the study. Every effort will be taken to ensure that there is no undue influence or coercion on the part of the researcher during the interview process or during future rehearsals or events together at this church. As individual participants in the study, the utmost care will be taken to keep your identities confidential. Participants will be asked not to discuss the study outside of the interview process, but it will be up to the participants to abide by this request, and it is not something that this researcher can fully guarantee.

To participate, please reply to this email and list the best days and time of day for your interview.

An information sheet will be given to you at the interview if you choose to participate. The information sheet contains additional information about my research. You do not need to sign and return the information sheet unless you would prefer to do so.

Sincerely,

Deborah A. McIlrath
Director of Sacred Arts

Appendix E: Curriculum Vitae

Deborah A. McIlrath

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Liberty University (4.0)	2024
M. Music Ed.	Valdosta State University (4.0)	1996
B. A. Music/Piano	Georgia Southern University (3.89)	1989

* Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society * Gamma Beta Phi National Honor Society

COLLEGIATE POSITION

Georgia Southwestern University, Americus, GA

Adjunct Piano Instructor, 2002–2006

Courses Taught

- Applied piano lessons (Beg./Intermed./Adv.) – Prepare syllabus, Create weekly schedule for all lessons
 - Select appropriate repertoire for students
 - Give weekly lessons to each student and prepare them for upcoming performances.
- Perform as a soloist and collaborative pianist on all “Faculty Showcase” concerts
- Attend faculty meetings (weekly - monthly, depending on need)
- Adjudicate Juries
- Collaborative pianist for vocal and instrumental undergraduate and graduate students
 - Rehearse, attend weekly lessons, and perform a variety of different styles and genres of music on any and all instruments

Glynn County Schools, K-8, 2011–2021 (Retired from public school teaching after 28 years)

Sterling Elementary School K-5 Music Teacher 2012–2021

- Select curriculum for K-5 general music classes
 - Teach 6 classes general music, develop appropriate age-level lesson plans and curriculum
 - COVID, produce weekly music videos for students
 - Select and perform 5 PTA music programs per year
- Select musicals and perform 2 concerts/ musicals per year (i.e. *Annie Jr.*, *Peter Pan Jr.*, *Aladdin Jr.*, *Cinderella Jr.*, *The Little Mermaid Jr.*)
 - Audition 3–5 students for Mustang Chorale & Sterling Steppers
 - After-school choral performance group (GMEA – Superiors)
 - Select appropriate repertoire to rehearse and successfully perform at PTA or community events
 - After school dance group
 - Select appropriate repertoire to rehearse and successfully perform at PTA or community events

Glynn County Lead Teacher/Honor Chorus Registrar, 2013–2020

- Facilitate monthly teacher collaborative meetings (10 schools)'
- In-person, and after COVID, Google Classroom meetings
- Facilitate yearly Honor Chorus (14 schools)
- Host Honor Chorus rehearsals
- Select and host Honor Chorus clinicians and accompanists
- Accompany honor chorus rehearsals and performances (Middle School)

Glynn County Arts Committee

- Collaborate with MCSD music and art teachers and Coastal College
- Provide and assimilate information to K-5 MCSD music teachers

GMEA District Children's Director, 2019–2021

- Facilitate K-5 GMEA teacher meetings
- Coordinate GMEA District events for K-5 music teachers
- Attend quarterly GMEA meetings & conferences
- Assist and mentor new teachers in the county and district

GCSD Workshop Facilitator Pre-Planning (2020)

- Taught Middle and High School Teachers Solfege Sight Singing methods

21st Century After School Music Director (4 schools) (2011–2012)

- Select appropriate repertoire for 3 elementary schools & 1 middle school
- Collaborate with the program's teachers to schedule classes and 4 concerts a year
- Rehearse weekly music and choreography to successfully perform in 4 concerts

Americus High School/Middle School Chorus Instructor, 2009–2010

- Show Choir Director, Conductor, rehearsal and performance for concerts, community events, competitions, (NYC, Atlanta Star Festival, GMEA LGPE)
- Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced Chorus
 - Prepare music with singers and accompanists, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform for concerts.

Peach County High School/Middle School, 2007–2010

- Music Composition & Theory Class
 - Prepare syllabus, select curriculum, teach composition & theory to advanced students to successfully present music compositions and arrangements
- Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced Chorus
 - Prepare syllabus and music with singers and accompanists, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform for concerts.
- Music Director, Conductor, rehearsal and performance for Musicals (*Little Shop of Horrors*)
 - Prepare music with singers and orchestra, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform with the cast and music technicians
 - Collaborated with drama and band teachers
- Fort Valley University Student Teacher Facilitator
 - Attended training
 - Facilitated music student observers
- Music Director, Conductor, rehearsal and performance *USO Show*
 - Prepare music with singers and orchestra, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform with the cast and orchestra
 - Collaborated with drama and band teachers

Shaw High School (Muscoogie County School District), 1999–2007

- Fine Arts Department Chair
 - Attend weekly school council meetings
 - Facilitate hiring of new Fine Arts department teachers
 - Distribute school and district information to the Fine Arts Department teachers
 - Assist principal with teacher documentation and evaluations
 - Assist and mentor new teachers
- Beginner/Intermediate/Advanced Chorus
 - Prepare syllabus and music with singers and accompanists, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform for concerts.

- Music Director, Conductor, rehearsal and performance for Musicals (*Annie*)
 - Prepare music with singers and orchestra, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform with the cast and orchestra
- Music Director for festival/ competition/ GMEA LGPE performances (many 1st place & superior ratings, received national first place for highest scores at Southern Star festivals 2007)
 - Select appropriate competition repertoire, rehearse and successfully perform at LGPE, and High School Choral competitions in Gospel Choir, Mixed Choir, Women's Choir, and Men's Choir (2 competitions in NYC, 8 competitions in Atlanta GA)
- Supervising Teacher for Columbus State University student teachers and supervised student observation hours
 - Supervised students undergraduate and graduate student teachers
 - Adjudicated their progress
 - Taught student teachers how to prepare and implement lesson plans
 - Taught student teachers how to select repertoire/curriculum
 - Taught student teachers how to direct chorus, prepare and rehearse students for successful concert/adjudication and competitive performances
 - Facilitated student observer hours from CSU (40 hrs. per semester)
- Music Director, Conductor, rehearsal and performance 2 Concerts per year
 - Collaborate with the orchestra teacher to rehearse and successfully perform semester concerts
 - Prepare music with singers and orchestra, rehearse and reinforce music, and successfully perform with the school orchestra

Early Teaching at Elementary Schools, 1993–1999

River Road Elementary K-5, 1997–1999

- Select curriculum for K-5 general music classes
 - Teach 6 classes general music, develop appropriate age-level lesson plans and curriculum
 - Hosted and led Orff workshop for elementary teachers in 3 counties
 - Select musicals and perform 5 PTA programs per year
 - Auditioned 3-5 students for after-school performance group
 - Selected appropriate music, attended GMEA as the *River Roadies*
 - Performed for community events
 - Selected students and Participated in County Honor Chorus

Cuthbert Elementary School, K-5, 1996–1997

- Select curriculum for K-5 general music classes
 - Teach 6 classes general music, develop appropriate age-level lesson plans and curriculum
 - Select musicals and perform 5 PTA programs per year
 - Worked with Andrew College music students for observation credits, facilitating teacher training in the school

Blackshear Trail Elementary School, K-5, 1993–1996

- Received Orff Training in Atlanta, Paces Ferry
- Received Education/methods/teacher certification (M. M. Ed) to teach
- Select curriculum for K-5 general music classes
 - Teach 6 classes general music, develop appropriate age-level lesson plans and curriculum
 - Select musicals and perform 5 PTA programs per year
 - Auditioned after schools group (Orffestra)
 - Selected appropriate music and performed at PTA and throughout the community

PROFESSIONAL COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (Selected/Recent)

Director of Sacred Arts at Wesley Church, 2020–2024

- Select repertoire and rehearse adult choirs for successful performances each Sunday and 2 main Concerts per year, Easter and Christmas
- Meet monthly with Choral Council for yearly church budget and choir programming
- Work with pastors/church staff/attend staff meetings
- Create & facilitate choir rehearsals/parties/fellowship opportunities for adult choirs and ensembles
 - Select repertoire for weekly anthems
 - Select repertoire for weekly preludes/postludes
 - Audition and facilitate music staff/pianists/organists
- Invoice salaries and contracted technical and music workers
- Select and invoice visiting musicians and artists
- Direct handbells
 - Select repertoire and rehearse Wesley Ringers once a week to successfully perform preludes and offertories in church services 2-3 times per quarter
- Select seasonal music and perform Maundy Thursday reenactment of the Lord's Supper
 - Coordinate with drama volunteers
 - Select and rehearse instruments and choral musicians
 - Work with worship committee to serve communion
- Select worship music for weekly services and facilitate bulletin/ proofread and assist pastors in worship programs

- Coordinate Christmas reveal party for adult choir to recruit new members in August
- Work with age-level coordinators on musicals (2 per year for Children)
- Young Voice Choirs meet weekly with auditioned groups of children and youth.
 - Select repertoire and rehearse children and youth to successfully sing in concerts and community events
 - Meet weekly with non-auditioned children's after-school choirs (2)
 - Select repertoire for 2 performances per year (Christmas and Palm Sunday)
 - Direct Handbells or Orff instruments for children during after-school program
- Direct yearly summer music camp for children K-6 (Summer of '21 – '24)
 - Select musical
 - Coordinate and facilitate volunteers
 - Create music camp schedule
 - Maintain registration/ fees/ music budget

Executive Music Director for Sally Weston Hawie Concert Series, Wesley Church, St. Simons, GA, 2020–2024

- 5 concerts per year
- Select and facilitate performers
- Create and facilitate programs and concert publicity
- Meet with concert series board four times a year

Board member, Golden Isles Youth Orchestra, 2021–2024

- Attend board meetings
- Promote GIYO in the community and in churches to help raise funds
- Facilitate String-On (teaching all 5th graders in the county) violin lessons for 1 week
 - Working with principals and music teachers to schedule String-On each year
 - Assisting String-On violin teachers in the classroom for performance on Friday
 - Providing piano accompaniment for classroom end-performances on Friday

Board member, Golden Isles Live Artist Series, 2021–2024

- Attend board meetings
- Promote GIL in the community and in the church to increase patronage
- Facilitate concerts at Wesley Church (5 per year)
- Facilitate Student Outreach at Wesley church (2 per year)
- Work with principals and music teachers in Glynn County schools to send students to Student outreach concerts
- Help select performers for each yearly concert series

Norma Lucas Academy of Fine Arts, 2022–2024

- Wesley Church Pre-school music classes (Kinder and Orff music training)
- Applied voice for adults (individual coaching)
 - Select repertoire and give 1 hr. lessons
 - Select performance times (Wesley church services or community events)

Workshop/Masterclasses for Wesley Church Music Staff, 2021–2024

- Coordinate lunch and programs
- Prepare PowerPoint presentations on selected topics concerning contemporary/traditional worship leaders
- One session per semester

Full-time Children/Youth and Music Director, Waynesboro UMC, 1989–93

- Adult, youth, and children’s choirs
 - preschool music, children, youth, private lessons, coaching sessions, and adult choirs, facilitate community choir
- Coordinate and facilitate children and youth ministries

Part-time Church Music Positions

- Ft. Frederica Presbyterian Church (2017–2020)
- Brunswick First United Methodist Church (interim 2 different times)
- Wesley UMC (6 months interim)
- Americus First UMC (2 years 9 months interim 2 different times between 2004–2008)
- St. Mark UMC Columbus, GA (2 years 9 months, interim 2 different times between 1996–2002)
- Reidsville UMC (1984–89)

PUBLICATIONS:

- *From A Window: Anticipation*, John T. Eber, Sr., Editor, Eber & Wein Publishing, PA, 2011, “All Is Calm,” poem by Deborah A. McIlrath, p. 178.
- *Forever Spoken: The International Library of Poetry*, Howard Ely, Editor, 2007, “Your Mercy,” poem by Deborah A. McIlrath, pg. 3.
- “A Review of Models of the Teaching/Learning Process” (1995) Deborah A. McIlrath & William C. Huitt

