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ADULT LEARNING THROUGH RELIGIOUS MUSIC  
IN AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH  

DISSERTATION  

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements 
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy 
in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University  

By  

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* * * *  

The Ohio State University 
1998  

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the question is religious music educative in an African American church. The purpose of the study was to understand the ways in which religious music contributes to the learning and meaning making of African American adults within American Society. The goal was to describe and interpret the unique perspective of adult learning through religious music as heard in the African American Church.

This research project used a qualitative descriptive approach, which enabled the participants to describe in their own words, their experiences and views of learning from religious music. Retrospective biographies helped me to inductively understand how the religious musical experiences of African American adults affect learning situations. In-depth face to face interviews and focus group interviews were the primary methods of data collection. The study also included document analysis and field observation as part of the data collection. I used themes to illustrate how the participants perceived religious music as educative in the African American church.

The findings of the study revealed that religious music was educative for African American adults in this study. Religious music was perceived as educative in the African American church as a source to transmit basic biblical beliefs and theological statements that served to reinforce what was heard in the teachings, scripture readings and sermons in
the church. It was further educative for some simply as an appreciation for music as an art and cultural form in the church. The participants were taught important concepts of endurance, liberation, and unity through religious music. The Biblical beliefs and theology heard in religious music influenced their thinking and affected their view towards life, God, religion, and racial issues.
Dedicated to

My parents, who have been the wind beneath my wings

My brother, Ronnie who always inspires me and supports me

Harold & Debbie and girls

And to the

Unforgettable memories of my sister,

Jacquie
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Dr. David Boggs, for his encouragement, and unconditional support of my unconventional topic. I thank you for allowing new voices to be heard.

I wish to thank my committee members, Dr. Robert Donmoyer and Dr. Joe Heimlich for the expertise and guidance through this learning process.

I wish to thank Dr. Tonette Rocco for her assistance as not only my peer reviewer but as my friend. Thanks Tonette, I would not have made it without your encouragement, your reviews, insightful comments and interest in my study.

I wish to thank Dr. Jan McCrary for preparing me for this endeavor.

I wish to thank Ms. Gail Peters for assisting me whenever I needed her.

I wish to thank my pastor and church family for your stories, songs, and participation, and for making this project possible, I am truly appreciative.

Finally, I want to thank my parents for their support and faith in me. Thank you for giving me a song to sing.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

No other institution in the African American community has had as much impact on the social, political, cultural, and spiritual lives of African Americans as their church with its unique history and heritage (Cone, 1970; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). From the days of religious gatherings on hilltops, cotton fields, and barns to revivals in open fields or abandoned shacks to the worship services in modern stately Baptists buildings, the African American church has always been a place of worship, a place of teaching and learning, a place to develop business and leadership skills, a place to socialize as well as a place to gather in order to seek refuge from the turbulent times of slavery. The church was also the place where African Americans went to join and participate in the civil rights movement. The African American church taught religious doctrine and the scriptures to slaves and freed-slaves; however, it also taught them how to contend with difficulties and adjust to life in a society that did not value or honor them or their heritage. The belief that one can rise above his or her personal struggles, adversity, racism, poverty, etc. is a familiar refrain that echoes throughout the African American church.
The African American church has drawn heavily on the oral traditions and literature of the culture. Courlander (1976) defines the black oral literature as:

An oral literature with a special personality, often containing implicit or explicit intellectual or emotional responses to the injustices and inequalities inherent in the historic relationship of blacks to the mainstream culture. It contains elements of humor, irony, criticism and poetry that, in a literary sense, are uniquely expressed. It observes, it comments, it narrates. It ranges from humorous nonsense to profound and moving reflections on the human experience. Much of the Negro oral literature is a product of life in the cities, and reflects the struggles—and sometimes the triumphs—of the individual in the midst of a world he never made. (p. 256-257)

Walker (1984) defines the oral tradition “as the transmission by word of mouth, song, drum and folk wisdom of the mores, customs, and religious rites of African peoples that persisted through the Atlantic slave trade and influenced the worship forms and patterns of Afro-Americans” (p. 48). Stansfield (1994) states, “It is possible to use data from oral traditions to track the quality of life experiences of those living in poor white or Afro-American communities. Testimony in Afro-American churches that serve the inner-city poor can be valuable sources of data about health care, labor market activities and child rearing” (p. 185). The African American church presents a unique opportunity for those seeking insight into the psychosocial, educational, and political culture of the African American as well as his or her religious beliefs.

Because of the strong oral tradition and use of oral teaching and learning in the African American community, music naturally became an important source of teaching and learning in the African American church.

Music in the African American church taught scriptures and basic religious philosophy, but it mainly inspired, provided a sense of hope, optimism and survival. Bell
(1996) noted the power of gospel music in the lives of African Americans. He writes, "Embracing religion that was undergirded by this music helped slaves to be free in their own minds" (p. 1). He further notes, "There must be a connection between this music and how we utilized it in earlier ordeals and its potential for now. But how do I find the connection and -- assuming I can--convince others of my discovery?" (p. 11). Bell sees music as an important resource for learning and inspiration for African Americans in the nineties just as it was for their ancestors. He understands the power of music to effect change in the lives of African Americans.

Cornel West (1996) emphasizes that "the music is inseparable from the spirituality that is linked to the black church" (p. 3). The music of African Americans, with its strong rhythmic patterns and unique linguistic style, held the ability to transcend the ordinary, everyday lives of slaves and freed persons and provided them with a vision of a better land. Although the music of African Americans was studied, researched, written and re-written, and performed in many African American communities, very little is known about the educational benefits of singing and listening to religious music. Walker (1984) states, "if you listen to what Black people are singing religiously, it is a clue as to what is happening to them sociologically" (p. 47).

No longer is religious music confined within the walls of the African American church, but it has now crossed over to reach a larger audience (Jackson-Brown, 1990). Many of today's secular artists often possessing strong religious backgrounds, include religious music or inspirational songs as part of their repertoire.
Blackboard, Inc. (1997), a national book service that tracks the best-selling books among African Americans, indicates that many of the best-selling books among African American readers are always books of an inspirational, spiritual or religious nature. This trend of the increasing popularity of religious music in the African American community and inspirational and spiritual literature has significance for members of the African American church. On many of the nation’s leading college campuses, African American students are forming and participating in gospel choirs in record numbers (Bell, 1996). Gospel music has become part of the educational experience for African American students not only on historically black campuses but also on predominately white college campuses as well. This phenomenon of renewed interest in spirituality and religious growth and development can and does reveal much about the current state of African Americans and their worldview.

Problem Statement

According to a 1991 survey by the United States Department of Education, the average adult education student is white, middle-aged, and already has a college degree. The study revealed that only 23% of African Americans participated in mainstream adult education activities. However, the study did not account for participation in the various types of learning activities sponsored by the African American church, where music is an integral part of the learning process.

Briscoe & Ross (1991) emphasize the importance of non-formal education in the black community and note, “While the picture painted from an analysis of minority
participation in formal programs of adult education historically has been bleak, rich descriptions of a long tradition of lifelong learning in nonformal settings can be found. The diversity of early educational programs conducted for black adults through sources such as churches, civil rights organizations, community and parent-teacher organizations, tenant associations, and women's organizations has been reported extensively in the Journal of Negro Education (Gandy, 1945; Heiningburg, 1945; Horne & Robinson, 1945; and Neverdon-Morton, 1982) (p. 588).

Mainstream adult education literature reveals little information on learning activities of African Americans (Briscoe & Ross, 1991; Ross-Gordon, 1991), particularly those sponsored by the African American church. The religious music of the African American church has been a source of teaching and learning for American Americans. If religious music had and continues to play such a significant role in the spiritual as well as the personal, social, and educational lives of African Americans, then more should be done to learn about and understand the ways in which music contributes to the learning experiences of African American adults within the church and to the nature and extent of that learning. This study attempts to fill this gap.

Type of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand the ways in which religious music contributes to the learning and meaning making of African American adults within the American society. The goal is to describe and interpret the unique perspective of adult learning through religious music heard in the African American church.
This research project was conducted using a qualitative approach, which enabled the participants to describe in their own words their experiences and views of learning and religious music. The study examined the ways in which African American adults find meaning and knowledge in religious music and the potential of religious music to effect, empower, or transform the lives of African American adults.

Research question

Is religious music educative in the African American church?

Subsidiary questions

What do African American adults consider as a learning experience?

What life themes are raised in African American religious music?

What types of learning do African American adults embark upon as a result of singing and listening to religious music?

How is music used to facilitate individual learning and social action?

Is learning affected differently when music is used during a Sunday worship service or a formal adult education class, or Sunday school?

Does music affect or inspire learning connected with non-religious projects, such as returning to school, learning a musical instrument, or learning a craft?

How do African American adults find meaning in religious music?
Significance of the Study

This study will be useful to educators working within a variety of educational institutions and programs. It will offer a unique glimpse into an aspect of African American culture as a force for learning that has yet to be explored.

This research will be significant to adult educators for several reasons: it will (a) examine the impact of religious music on the learning experiences of African American adults; (b) assist adult educators to understand “musical ways of knowing”; (c) provide adult educators with insight into other approaches and sources to teaching and learning via affective learning; (d) explore the use of religious music to empower individuals and groups for social change; and (e) contribute another perspective on the learning and educational needs of African American learners.

The study adds to the field of adult education research by focusing on minority issues. The research may be significant for its examination of the spiritual and educational needs of African American adults and for its contribution to adult education by exploring alternative methods of teaching and learning. Adult Educators can address the needs and issues related to learning through religious music programs in the African American Church.

Limitations of the Study

This study focused on one African American church. In addition, it examined a Baptist Church with one theology, which may not be reflective of the theology of other African American Baptist Churches.
Furthermore, I had some unique concerns raised by this study. For example, I was aware that some participants might have some difficulty articulating the specific learning experiences or benefits associated with religious music. I was also aware that some participants may even experience some discomfort when having painful recollections of instances when religious music was instrumental in their personal struggles, adversities, and problems. Therefore, I was sensitive to these issues throughout the study.

Organization of the Study

The study contains five chapters: Chapter one will introduce the problem and its significance and applicability to the field of adult education. Chapter two is a review of the relevant literature, focusing on (a) adult learning, (b) music in the field of adult education, and (c) African American music. Chapter three will provide the rationale for the research methodology, ethical issues, criteria for selection of participants, procedures for data collection and analysis, as well as a discussion of the issues surrounding reliability, validity, and credibility. Chapter four is a presentation and analysis of the data. Chapter five contains the findings, conclusions and recommendations for the field of adult education and African American churches, and concludes with recommendations for future research.

Definition of Terms

Over the years, the literature contained numerous terms to identify the race of people now known as “African Americans.” Terms such as “colored, Negro, Black, Afro-American, and African American” were used to identify and describe a race of people of
African descent yet, born in America. Branch (1988) reported, “the collective and individual identity of slavery’s descendants never was a settled matter, but fluctuated with circumstances, resulting in frequent shifts of name” (p. 45). Throughout this study, the following terms will be used interchangeably to reflect the literature and writing of the times. A brief description of each term is therefore warranted.

Racial Terminology

**African American**: The term that is currently used and most often preferred by individuals who are American by birth, but of African descent.

**Afro-American**: the term that preceded African American. It was also used to refer to individuals who are American by birth, but of African descent; it was later considered an inappropriate term because it does not identify the land of origin of the people -- Africa.

**Black**: An important term to identify individuals of African descent. The term became popular particularly as a result of the “Black Pride movement” in the sixties. The term became a source of pride for those individuals who were American by birth, but of African descent. It provided a unique sense of black culture.

**Negro**: The French and Latin word for “black”. It was widely used and accepted in the late nineteenth century as an English word to refer to people of African descent. The term was later dropped and the term “black” became the preferred term.

**Colored**: The term used primarily to denote those who were not white.
Musical Terms

**Religious music:** Although the term "sacred music" is often more widely used to describe music in religious settings, it seemed hardly adequate to describe the music often sung and heard in African American churches today. The term religious music is defined for the purposes of this study, as music that inspires, motivates, uplifts, empowers African Americans. Religious music may or may not speak of religion, God, or Jesus. It may or may not be based on the scriptures, theology or any religious doctrine. The music may also reflect secular themes, such as love and romance, although it is heard in the African American church. For this study, the term “religious music” will be used to describe music from a wide array of musical styles and lyrics and themes used within the African American church. These styles include but are not limited to spirituals, hymns, traditional gospel music and contemporary gospel music. While it can be said that other types of music, such as jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, and hip-hop can also inspire African Americans, this study will focus on the use of music used in the African American church.

**Negro Spirituals:** religious songs written in a folksong style, which does not always include a religious text.

**Hymns:** songs with a religious text repeated to the same music. This study will focus on the hymns used in the official hymnbook of the church selected for this study, the *New National Baptist Hymnal.*

Gospel Music: This genre of music began in the late 1920’s and early 30’s. Thomas Dorsey is considered to be the “Father of Gospel Music” and is credited with establishing it as a distinctive musical genre. Gospel music is distinguished from other religious musical genres due to its strong emphasis on improvisation. Gospel music is noted for its unique vocal style which Southern (1983) describes as “The full throated, strained, raspy sound is sought after, special effects are practically obligatory—the growl, falsetto, humming, moaning, and similar kinds of sounds” (p. 464). Southern (1983) writes, “Gospel improvisation involves embellishment not only in terms of pitch, but also in terms of rhythm and text” (p. 465). Southern notes the strong use of syncopation as a rhythmic technique often found in religious music. “Embellishment of the text takes the form of interpolating extra words between the phrases or at the end of lines of texts or wherever the singers can fit worlds in” (p. 465).

Religious Denomination

Baptists: Odle (1962) provides a very concise definition of Baptist churches and Baptist followers: “Baptist churches seek to follow the pattern of Christ’s church in the New Testament. Baptists thus believe that their history began with Christ and the apostles” (p. 13). Odle also notes that Baptists believe “the Bible as the whole Word of God and the whole Bible as the Word of God” (p.25).
Types of Adult Learning

Formal Learning: Seaman & Fellenz (1989) defined this term as follows: “where an institution or educational agent has major decisional power over the objectives for learning and the methods by which those objectives are to be sought” (p. 24).

Informal Learning: Merriam & Caffarella (1991) state, informal learning is “experiences of everyday living from which we learn something” (p. 19). The informal learning activities in this study will focus on participants’ understanding of learning from everyday experiences.

Nonformal Learning: Coomb (1973) defined non-formal as “any organized educational activity outside the established formal system...that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives” (p. 11). In this study, non-formal educational activities include the Sunday morning sermon, Sunday and weekly Bible classes, Christian education class, seminars, workshops and other structured and planned activities by the church.

Incidental Learning: Ross-Gordon & Dowling (1995) state, incidental learning “is defined as a spontaneous action or transaction, the intention of which is task accomplishment, but which serendipitously increases particular knowledge, skills, or understanding. Incidental learning, then, includes such things as learning from mistakes, learning by doing, learning through networking, learning from a series of interpersonal experiments” (p. 315).
Self-Directed Learning: the type of learning situation where learners have the primary responsibility for what and how they learn. Merriam and Caffarella (1991) conclude that this type of learning “can take place both inside and outside of institutionally based learning programs” (p. 41).

Transformative Learning: According to Mezirow (1991), whose research has developed this theory, transformative learning is unique to adulthood. An essential component of transformative learning involves reflection of basic assumptions. According to Mezirow, “Transformative learning results in new or transformed meaning schemes or, when reflection focuses on premises, transformed meaning perspectives” (p. 6). He concludes, “It attempts to describe and analyze how adults learn to make meaning of their experience” (p. 198).
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to understand the ways in which religious music contributes to the learning and meaning making of African American adults within American society. This study will examine the everyday common phenomenon of religious music through the lens of adult education. Accordingly, this chapter will cover the following principal areas that are relevant to this study: (a) selected theories of learning, (b) music and adult education, and (c) African American music. The literature for this review was found in various fields of study, such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, music education, ethnomusicology, theology, African American studies, and adult education.

The first section provides an overview of selected adult learning theories as it relates to this study. The section will examine some of the current theories related to adult learning and learning in the church and a number of alternative approaches, such as, a holistic approach to learning and an Africentric perspective of learning. It will also examine the theory of multiple intelligence. Following the first section will be an overview of the role of music within the field of adult education. The third and final section offers a
look into African American music with a specific focus on the genres of religious music and we will explore the role of music in the African American church.

Learning

This section will explore some of the approaches to learning focusing on music and non-formal learning in the church. These theories of learning are drawn from the fields of psychology, education, sociology and adult education. Although this section will explore various approaches to adult learning, for the purposes of this study the focus will be on affective learning, holistic and whole person learning, Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence, and approaches to learning with a focus on African American learners.

Affective Learning

Affect and emotions are significant factors in the learning process for many adults. In his taxonomy of educational objectives, Bloom (1956) categorized learning into three domains: the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. The cognitive domain involves six areas: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The affective domain involves attitudes, feelings, emotions, and values. The psychomotor domain involves the coordination of physical skills, such as fine motor skills.

Havighurst (1965) explains,

Affective education and affective learning are teaching and learning in which feelings and emotions are predominant. In such education there is an explicit aim to develop emotional and moral sensitivities, and whatever factual knowledge results has minor significance. (p. 21)
Havighurst says, "affective education employs the arts and literature and other nonrational products of man rather than science and logic and the other human products that require factual knowledge and rational analysis" (p. 21). However, he further explains that "affective education is not necessarily anti-intellectual. In fact, literary and aesthetic criticism are highly intellectual activities carried on with respect to the affective side of life" (p. 21).

However, much of the teaching and learning that takes place in the church requires the use of affective education and what Havighurst refers to as "intellective education." He defines intellective education as, "teaching and learning in which rational analysis predominates. Religious conviction and religious faith are used as foundations for intellective religious education" (p. 22).

According to Havighurst (1965) "the church teaches knowledge, habits, attitudes and beliefs" (p. 11). He further explains how the church does this.

**Knowledge.** The church teaches knowledge from and concerning its Holy Book; the history of the church; the present activities of the church in other places, and its theology.

**Habits.** The church teaches certain religious habits and practices, such as prayer, communion, confession, liturgy, hymns, and the habit of church attendance. The church also teaches moral habits and avoidance of those habits it considers immoral.

**Attitudes.** Every church teaches attitudes of loyalty to the local church and to its denominations. It also teaches social-civic attitudes that it regards as productive of a wholesome and religiously oriented society. It teaches a worldview—a set of attitudes about other nations, other peoples, other churches, and about the nature and goals of world history.
Beliefs. A church teaches a set of beliefs about the supernatural, a code of ethics, and beliefs about the proper relationship between man and God. (p. 11)

Havighurst maintains that “the process by which the church teaches is better called socialization than instruction” and notes “the entire church is a teaching program”.

Colin and Preciphs (1991) note the importance of the use of the “affective domain in learning” in adult education, particularly as an important resource for adult educators working in diverse classrooms. Colin and Preciphs (1991) underscore the importance of feelings:

For learning in this domain to be effective, dialogue is required to enable individuals to get in touch with their feelings and to share these feelings with others. Furthermore, while dialogue is necessary to foster reflection, additional insights may occur from hearing the perspectives of others. (p. 68)

Wlodkowski (1993) argues that human emotions are part of every learning situation for adults. He states, “emotions put life into learning. In a figurative sense, when people are encouraged to feel as well as to think while learning, both their hearts and minds are actively involved” (p. 189).

Hayes (1989) points out that feminist pedagogy is supportive of the idea of affective and cognitive learning. She states, “traditional educational practices often focus primarily on cognitive learning, making affective learning, if even considered, a secondary outcome. In the feminist approach, expressing and understanding one’s emotions are perceived to be critical parts of the learning process” (p. 61).

Goldberger (1996) in an extension to her work to Women’s Ways of Knowing, notes the importance of religion and the black church in the lives of African American
women she interviewed. Goldberger (1996) has re-examined what it means to “know” for her sample of women and points out that knowing that comes from an expert or authority figure, is “more one of Collaborator and Coknower than Dictator” (p. 347).

Similarly, Vella (1994) discusses a holistic approach to learning by engaging what she terms “the mind, emotions and muscles” or the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. She contends that in adult learning there should not be a distinction between the cognitive, affective and psychomotor, yet more of a blending or melding to enhance learning.

**Adult Educators need for increased sensitivity to other approaches to learning**

Merriam (1987) states, “no theory has been universally acclaimed as the explanation of adult learning” (p. 189). Therefore, other approaches to adult learning should be considered. The next section will examine other approaches to adult learning.

**Adult Learning and African Americans**

Flannery (1995) argues that three of the main theories of adult education: “andragogy, self-directed learning, and perspective transformation” focus heavily on the individual and do not recognize the value of groups. She believes some racial and ethnic groups, such as African Americans place greater emphasis on ‘communal values.’ Flannery explains, “communal values include knowledge which is valued, how learning occurs, communication patterns of working together for the good of the community” (p. 153-154). Flannery contends adult learning theories must be mindful of the influence of
social, historical, and economic roles in adult education. She states, “adult learning theories must acknowledge that people and cultures vary in how they learn” (p. 156). She continues by noting that adult learning theories “must become inclusive and give voice to all people and groups, allowing missing voices (women, working-class persons, persons of color) to narrate their diverse stories of how and where they learn, and about their values of learning” (p. 156).

Colin (1994) also criticizes the current models of adult learning and development, particularly as they impact African Americans. Colin believes there are other models that should be considered when focusing on the development of African American adults. Models, as Colin (1994) explains,

Are the result of research that reflects the Africentric perspective in its focus on the development of the racial self and the bond between the individual and the racial group and the impact that racist interactions have on the development of the self-ethnic image (Colin, 1989, 1991) (p. 58).

Ross-Gordon (1991) emphasizes the need for a “multicultural perspective” in the adult education learning research. She states.

Traditionally, research is associated with the “scientific method,” an approach which assumes the superiority of a certain “way of knowing”- making judgements based on the collection and analysis of observable and, typically, quantifiable data. Yet, other modes of knowing are possible. If we are to truly listen to learners representing multicultural perspectives we must be open to looking at the world from their perspectives. We must be aware of potential conflicts between the ways of knowing commonly accepted in our academic tradition and the types of knowledge that may be respected in minority communities; we must guard against assumptions that our scientific ways of knowing are more sophisticated and thus inherently superior. (p. 10).
While the literature in adult education has explored learning and various approaches to learning, still others continue to call for additional research and note there are numerous areas of learning that need to be addressed. For instance, Brookfield (1994) calls for more research on adult learning and notes.

The predominant focus in studies of adult learning on instrumental skill development needs widening to encompass work on spiritual and significant personal learning and to understand the interconnections between these two domains. This is particularly so given the fact that in surveys of adult learning most people point to learning in workplaces, families, communities and recreational societies to be more prevalent and significant than learning undertaken within formal education. (p. 167)

Boykin (1983) argues for a holistic approach to learning from a psychological perspective that encompasses the use of spirituality, rhythmic-movement and affect to name a few. Boykin (1983) contends that African Americans are influenced by a belief system having roots in traditional African culture that influences their beliefs and worldview. This belief system integrates a system of learning and context that is unique to many theories of learning. This belief system, according to Boykin has nine dimensions. They are (a) spirituality, (b) harmony, (c) movement, (d) verve, (e) affect, (f) communa-lism, (g) expressive individualism, (h) orality and (i) social time perspective. Boykin explains these nine dimensions as follows:

**Spirituality**: This dimension speaks of a higher power that is a part of everyday living.

**Harmony**: The dimension of harmony represents man's sense of oneness with the environment.

**Movement**: Boykin explains, "Movement is actually a shorthand designation for the interwoven mosaic of movement, music, dance, percussiveness, and rhythm, personified by the musical beat. Music and dancing are ways of engaging life itself and are life-sustaining media, vital to one's psychological health. Also implied is a
rhythmic orientation toward life: a complex and multidimensional recurrent pattern that typifies one's personal conduct and self-presentation" (p. 345)

**Verve:** The verve dimension emphasizes an attraction toward things that provide excitement. There is also a tendency to focus on several things at once rather than concentrate on one particular task.

**Affect:** This dimension emphasizes the emotionality. Boykin notes, "Affect implies integration of feelings with thoughts and actions, such that it would be difficult to engage in an activity if one's feelings toward the activity ran counter to such engagement. Also implied is the importance of emotional expressiveness, the affective value of information, and a particular sensitivity to emotional cues given off by others" (p. 345)

**Communalism:** This relates to the importance interdependence of people and reflects a more social orientation to life.

**Expressive individualism:** This area focuses on a particular style or a unique aspect of an individual or as Boykin states, "putting one's own personal brand on an activity, a concern with style more than with being correct or efficient" (p. 345). This can be seen in the music and dance of African Americans.

**Orality:** This dimension places great emphasis on oral patterns of communication. From the eloquence of speech to information and knowledge transmitted verbally. Boykin, also notes the importance of the call and response method of communication and states, "to be quiet and wait one's turn to speak often implies a lack of interest in what the other is saying. Speaking is construed as a performance and not merely as a vehicle for interacting or communicating information" (p. 346).

**Social time perspective:** The social time perspective refers to less reliance on time and a flexible nature in terms of when an event would actually start or end. Time is a much more relative phenomenon.

In view of these unique cultural differences, Boykin (1983) concludes by suggesting that these styles, "may also require and imply different cognitive processes, different ways of knowing, different criteria for success, different intellectual skills, and different competencies from those in the Euro-American tradition" (p. 362).
Multiple Intelligence Theory

One theory that takes a distinct view of learning and intelligence and seeks to understand and include the plurality of knowledge is the theory of Multiple Intelligence. This theory has important implications for adult learning and particularly for African Americans, because of concerns for bias in standardized testing and IQ tests. The literature of adult education contains very little information concerning Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligence. Although Gardner’s theory and research have focused primarily on children, his theory presents a tremendous area for further research in adult education.

Howard Gardner (1983) a developmental psychologist, contends that there are many ways of knowing. He maintains that any normal human being will have varying degrees of each of the seven intelligences which work together; however, in each individual one main intelligence will be more pronounced becoming the primary method of cognition for that particular individual.

Gardner (1983) believes there are at least seven different types of intelligence, which include, (a) linguistic, (b) logical-mathematical, (c) spatial, (d) bodily kinesthetic, (e) intrapersonal and (f) interpersonal and (g) musical in every person. Gardner defines an intelligence as “the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued within one or more cultural setting” (p. x). There has been some concern that Gardner’s theory is related to learning styles, yet much of his work does mirror the theories of learning styles.
For the purposes of this study, I will focus on Howard Gardner’s theory of musical intelligence.

**Musical Intelligence**

According to Gardner (1983), “of all the gifts with which individuals may be endowed, none emerges earlier than musical talent” (p. 99). Gardner also notes the existence and benefits of the arts on all cultures. He states,

While human personalities vary markedly across cultures and scientific thought differs in status and sophistication in various regions, the arts appear in roughly comparable forms in all known civilizations, and hence are pertinent to human development everywhere. Indeed, participation in the arts is so natural and integral a part of human growth that an understanding of this process should provide important clues to many pivotal questions of human development. (p. 23)

Gardner contends those persons whose dominant intelligence is musical intelligence will also use it in areas other than those associated with music. He explains these persons learn best through melody and rhythmic activities. Their learning is enhanced when the material or information is set to music, and that can be accomplished simply by singing, playing music in the background, humming, or rhythmic activities such as tapping or simply even whistling.

Haggerty (1995) explains that the musically intelligent “individuals create and draw meaning from the organization of sounds”:

- Sensitivity to rhythm, or to the patterned movement of physical sound within a space of time.
- Sensitivity to pitch (or melody), that is, to the consecutive tones of a particular rhythm, length, range, and register that make up a basic theme or tune.
Sensitivity to timbre, that is, to the characteristics qualities of a tone that allow us to distinguish the sound of a violin, say, from that of flute, piano, or human voice. (p. 11).

Gardner also notes the link between musical intelligence to the personal intelligence (interpersonal and intrapersonal) because each intelligence deals with feelings. He believes, "music can serve as a way of capturing feelings, knowledge about feelings, or knowledge about the forms of feelings, communicating them from the performer or the creator to the attentive listener" (p. 124). Therefore, musical intelligence may not only be manifest in the one with the musical ability, yet also the hearer and those who have an appreciation for the beauty of music may also possess musical intelligence.

The research on Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence continues to grow; however, more empirical research is needed on how this applies to adult learners. Some research, such as Alexander (1992) has examined the writings of Howard Gardner from the years 1970 to 1989 for its implication on programs in music education and Mitchell (1995) examined Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence as a theoretical foundation for art appreciation. Manning (1992) has also examined the literature on music with particular emphasis on Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence. Yet, there has been virtually little written specially from the field of adult education.

Broucher (1997) writes how she uses Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory to enhance adult learning in graduate level classes using music to create a “nourishing learning environment for adults” (p. 28). Since so little information is available about the use of Gardner’s theory with adults, consider an example of how one adult education class included music and why Broucher (1997) feels it is important to incorporate music. In the
example, she explains how music was used to enhance the logical/mathematical intelligence (analytical, reasoning skills) by using popular films, songs, art as a way to get students to look for “specific themes and patterns” (p. 28-29).

One specific example was a group of students who wrote, during class, a series of verses to a popular verse/chorus melody that explained each of Erik Erikson’s eight stages of psycho-social development. Each stage’s crisis was incorporated into a verse for each stage with the words of the chorus linking the verses through a restatement of the underlying theme of lifelong development”... “the group that wrote the lyrics and performed the songs demonstrated a depth of understanding that would have been difficult to elicit through class discussion. (p. 29)

The concept of multiple intelligence and the work of Howard Gardner expand the lens of what we know about learning and what it means to “know.” His theory is particularly noteworthy when exploring questions surrounding the intelligence of certain minority groups, and the cultural bias connected to many forms of intelligence testing is lessened when the plurality of knowledge and contexts of the learners are recognized.

This chapter has explored the domain of affective learning and other approaches to learning that offers a unique focus to adult learning in general. Brougher (1997) provided an example to enhance adult learning building on the musical intelligence theory of Howard Gardner. Colin and Preciphs (1994) point out there are models of adult learning that focus on the African American adult that warrant further attention. Boykin provides a unique perspective that integrates the various dimensions of the lives of African Americans in the learning process.
In the next section, I will examine music in adult education. Specifically, we will examine the role of music in the adult education literature and the role music played in important social, political and cultural movements in the United States.

Music and Adult Education

Many writers in adult education have focused their attention on music. The literature notes particularly (a) how important music is in the lives of adults and (b) the impact of music upon human development and society. Also, these writers have focused their attention on the importance of music to specific cultures. Yet, despite the importance of music in the lives of adults, very little research has been conducted linking music and adult learning.

Some early instances examining the contribution of music in adult education are described here. For instance, Zanzig (1936) raised the issue of the importance of music in society. He emphasized that “Music tends, even without the aid of teachers or courses, to be profoundly educative. It seems to reach directly to those innermost layers of our natures which the purely intellectual subjects are likely to leave untouched, and yet which are the very basis of what we are and of what we shall become” (p. 365-366). Zanzig continued by noting,

The greatest musical achievement in Adult Education during the last ten years... is the large increase in the number of people who have been made aware of fine music, who have felt its power and joy, and who want real musical eloquence and power in what they sing or play and in the concerts they hear. They have been finding the inward grace of which music is an outward sign, and they will very likely seek that grace in the arts and in literature as well as in music” (pp. 365-366).
Spofford (1936) describes music as "a moral force that must be reckoned with. It helps us to live constructively with others. The performance of music is a social act; it is saying something in a way that can be shared" (p. 366).

Van de Wall (1938) seemed to agree with Zanzig and particularly held adult educators responsible for not including music as part of the curriculum in education. Van de Wall (1938) wrote.

There is in education circles today some confusion as to the significance and place of music in Adult Education.... It is also attributable to the fact that music specialists and teachers have not escaped the isolation which seems to be the penalty for specialization; neither have all of them yet learned to exchange ideas and to work amicably side by side with educators in different fields and with other protagonists of community culture (p. V).

Van de Wall continued by asking, "What is the place of music in education? Where does music belong in the larger scheme of education?" (p. 6).

These writers have pondered the effects of music on society, human development and social and cultural awareness and found music to be an enriching experience for adults and society.

In 1957-1958, the National Guild of Community Schools produced the manual, "A Guide for the Establishment and Administration of a Community Music School." Egan (1989) recounts the development of the community music school program and its importance. Of most importance is the basic philosophy of the program as listed in the manual which read:

The Community Music School believes that music can be used as a tool to aid in one's social development by serving as a beautiful and significant unifying factor in family life. By having together people from different ethnic, economic and intellectual groups to share a common experience, music can promote an understanding and appreciation for the spiritual.
values of all peoples, as it is practical in these schools. Through the cultivation of this medium of expression, people who would otherwise be inarticulate are able to reach out and communicate meaningfully with their fellow men. By actively participating in a field of interest as well as submitting to the mental discipline required in the study of music, the individual is better equipped to meet the obligations and needs of society as an active citizen, a responsible adult and a directed human being. (pp. 90-91)

Higgins (1991) examines the impact of music and ethics and notes.

Music's psychophysiological character can influence our sense of ourselves as ethical agents and can encourage the belief that the harmonious interplay of our human powers is desirable, even gratifying. Second, music, through its engagement of our affective and (more narrowly) intellectual natures, can develop in us capacities of value in ethical comportment and attitude. And third, music's role as a symbolic object suits it to the purpose of making revelations of ethical value. (p. 140).

While music has received some attention in the literature of adult education, more attention has been given to the role of music in social and political movements. In the next section, I will examine the role of music in social and political movements.

Music and Social, Cultural and Political Movements

From the early efforts of Jane Addams, founder of the Hull House in 1886, the Traveling Chautauquas, to Myles Horton and the Highlander folk school, and the role music played in social and political movements to facilitate adult learning, Music has and continues to reflect the hopes, dreams, struggles, and learning in the lives of many adults.

Crane (1990) chronicles the music of the Chautauqua and Lyceum movements and particularly notes the role of black musicians in the traveling Chautauquas. As Crane explains, "Chautauqua was one of the biggest events of every year, with its combination of
adult education, moral uplift, entertainment, and a community-wide social gathering of a sort we no longer experience” (p. 103). Crane emphasizes the importance of the black artists, known as “Jubilee Singers” to the Chautauqua movement. According to him, these black artists offered a very diverse musical offering. He says,

The programs were by no means limited to black music or southern songs, but often included opera and oratorio selections, folk music of the various parts of the world, classical choral music, and popular songs of the day (but not including the Tin Pan Alley types) (p. 106).

Crane (1990) notes that further research of black participation in the Chautauqua and Lyceum is needed. He states, “the groups, and the individuals that made them up, present an important subject for research” (p. 106).

To understand how music is educative, one of the most noted and widely respected institutions of adult education is examined. The Highlander Folk Center is currently located in New Market, Tennessee. Its founder, Myles Horton, and his wife Zilphia included music and the arts as part of the mission and curriculum of the Highlander Folk School. Horton (1973) stated.

It should be noted that from the beginning (and in accord with the Danish Folk School tradition) music and singing have played a crucial part in all programs, including those of the Citizenship Schools. Today, as in the past, Highlander is pioneering music workshops, community musical activities, and on occasion—the rediscovery of the musical heritage often buried in the Appalachian hollows. Ballads, hymns, folk songs, and songs of protest: all these have done much to arouse people to awareness and to the sense of community. (pp. 329-330)

It was through the inclusion of music and the arts that adult learners at Highlander began to envision a new perspective. Learners were able to realize they had choices over
their life situations; they developed confidence and pride in who they were as people and they had most importantly, found hope through their learning experiences at Highlander.

Horton explored alternative methods of teaching and learning with his diverse group of adult learners and appealed to others to do the same. He asked:

Why can't we think about ways of altering decision making to the end of enabling human beings to become conscious of themselves and their real life situations - to grow, to learn, to change. If we are to think seriously about liberating people to cope with their own lives, we must refuse to limit the educational processes to what can go on only in the schools. The bars must come down; the doors must fly open; non-academic real-life must be encompassed by education. Multiple approaches must be invented, each one considered educative in its own right. (p. 331)

The literature also reveals music used in social and political movements. For instance, Jankovic and Edwards (1980) examined the use of “locality-oriented music” and found this type of music was effective in helping adults understand their cultural roots and history. They define “locality-oriented music” as

Music that historically has been used as a means to express the drama of human experience...The primary purpose of such music is to bring people together, to communicate information and/or to make political and social statements about local problems, people, and situations. (p. 6-7)

Barnwell (1993), civil rights activist and educator explain how she incorporates the music of African Americans to promote the development of community among workshop participants. She explains,

One of my greatest joys is hearing these voices raised together in glorious harmony. But an even greater joy is hearing the participants articulate how the experience of singing particular songs with other people in an accepting environment, after having gained an understanding of the source of the songs, has changed them. They had to grapple with their feelings and
behaviors related to differences, power, control, leadership, and risk taking among other things, all through the vehicle of performing the music of African American people (p. 272).

Lieberman (1989) has written about music, particularly folk songs as a political weapon. He describes music as an important tool in the fight for equality. He explains, “folk music demonstrated that people were active participants in creating their own culture. It was accessible to people and did not require the training and sophistication that art music demanded” (p. 39). In his discussion of the People’s songs, Lieberman (1989) asserts,

From People’s Songs’ point of view, songs appealed strongly to emotion as well as to intellect and encouraged participation rather than passive listening. The act of singing together created a sense of unity and strength that might not otherwise exist. Dramatic examples of the latter function of songs as a weapon include the use of songs to spread a strike, to drown out epithets of the opposition at a meeting, to build morale and attract publicity on a small picket line. (p. 81).

Lieberman’s comments echo the statements made by Horton and Barnwell of the importance of a heart and head connection for adults to take charge of their situations. Lieberman (1989) further explains,

The belief in song as a weapon implied a particular view of human beings and the process by which they became politicized. It implied that cultural products were important in shaping people’s world views; that people had to be affected emotionally as well as intellectually in order to change their political outlook; and that participation rather than passive consumption was critical to the process of changing consciousness and acting on that changed point of view. (p. 83).
From an anthropological viewpoint of music, Merriam's (1964) work with various cultures is particularly important for this study. He not only understands and brings clarity to the varied uses of music but also further defines music's functions in society. Merriam (1964) explains specifically how the power of songs affects human behavior. He says,

Song texts, then, can be used as a means of action directed toward the solution of problems which plague a community. While this can take the form of ridicule and shame, or sanctioned legal action, it is also apparent that song texts provide psychological release for the participants. Indeed, because of the freedom of expression allowed in song texts seem clearly to provide an excellent means for the investigation of the psychological processes of the people who constitute a culture. Through the study of song texts it may well be possible to strike quickly through protective mechanisms to arrive at an understanding of the "ethos" of the culture and to gain some perspective of psychological problems and processes peculiar to it. (p. 201)

Merriam (1964) summarizes the ten major functions of music in society. They are:

(a) emotional expression, (b) aesthetic enjoyment, (c) entertainment, (d) communication, (e) symbolic representation, (f) physical response, (g) enforcing conformity to social norms, (h) validation of social institutions and religious rituals, and (i) contribution to the continuity and stability of culture and (j) contributes to the integration of society (p. 219-227). Merriam concludes, "every society has occasions signaled by music which draws its members together and reminds them of their unity" (p. 227).

The aesthetic elements of music provide another aspect into musical knowing and understanding. Greene (1991) writes about a "participant kind of knowing and a
participant sort of engagement with art forms themselves” (p. 29). Greene (1991) further notes the consequence of “aesthetic questions—that arise in the course of art experiences” (p. 29).

Why do I feel spoken to by this work, excluded by that? In what sense does this song actually embody Mahler’s grief? What is it about the ‘Ode to Joy’ that makes me feel as if I am coming in touch with some transcendent reality?

Greene says, that by asking these kinds of questions we enhance the experience and that it “makes the experiences themselves more reflective, more critical, more resonant” (p. 29).

Although literature on music and adult education has been limited, there has been some attention given to this area. However, the state of music in adult education can best be summed as Wood (1940) notes in his thesis on music in adult education programs at The Ohio State University. He states, “Music as an aspect of Adult Education holds a position of prominence not recognized by the mass of educators or laymen” (p. 67).

Musical Abilities, Aptitudes, and Skills of Adults

Research studies have examined the link between adults and music from many different perspectives. However, many of these studies of adults have focused on the musical aptitudes, skills, perceptions or listening skills of adults (Cooper, 1996; Keenan, 1995; Myers, 1986, and Young, 1996). Other studies (Eicher, 1960; Gerkowski, 1968, Schwartz, 1961; and Warren, 1959) of specific public music education programs have been conducted. There are also studies that focused on adult motivation and participation.
in musical activities (Robertson, 1992; Spencer, 1996; and Tatum, 1985). This section will explore some of the empirical research that has focused on adults, adult learning and music. These studies were selected based on their inclusion of adult learning principles.

Mullee (1996) used as a theoretical base the adult learning theories of Wlodkowski’s Time Continuum Model of Motivation (1981) and Malcolm Knowles’ Andragogical Model of Motivation, and sought to develop instructional materials to assist adults in their music listening skills and expand their musical knowledge. Mullee provides recommendations on developing curriculum models for (a) aesthetic appreciation of music, (b) classical ballet, (c) imaginative literature, and (d) painting. She clearly points out that her study of “aesthetic appreciation” is for the “well-educated adult” and assumes “that the adult learner knows something about the arts, but little about the creative aspects” (p. 105). Her curriculum model in classical music examines ten musical forms, such as the fugue, the sonata, and the symphony.

Ungerleider (1987) examined the use of music to raise awareness of the threat of nuclear war. His work centers on a song writing workshop developed specifically for his study with adult participants. Ungerleider explains,

Both the emotive content of sound itself and the emotionally descriptive content of song lyrics are relevant to the affective components of nuclear consciousness raising. Experiencing emotions is but one step in a systematic process of consciousness raising. The expression of feelings, and personal thoughts, is a critical link between self-awareness and collaborative social action. (p. 30).
In a study that examined the political and social purposes of music, Ungerleider conclude that music has the potential to raise awareness. Ungerleider notes the development of problem-solving skills among the participants as they sought to write an original piece of music.

In her master's thesis, Joyce (1993) studied the act of singing as an agent of change for oppressed women. She notes the importance of singing to empower individuals and groups. She states, "The physical process of singing is an integral one that connects our learning capabilities to our will" (p. 8). Joyce also states, "Singing songs with which one recognizes her own life is one very accessible and effective tool to strengthen identity" (p. 25). Joyce (1993) notes.

Singing is a holistic experience in which learning takes place. Through its relational quality, singing is a tool for learning about the self and about others. It is also from this informal and empowered place that individuals and groups are strengthened to act on their own behalf to affect positive social change (p. 144).

Similarly, in her dissertation, Kaltoft (1990) explored how music was used as a tool to facilitate emancipatory learning in three community educational programs. During phase one of this two part study, Kaltoft notes her focus was, "to enhance understanding of how music can be used to foster the learning process and how music serves as a catalyst for social action" (p. 146). The music in her study, which was primarily folk music, represented various cultural backgrounds of the participants. Citing Apps' (1985) description of emancipatory learning as: "that which frees people from personal,
institutional, or environmental forces that prevents them from gaining control of their lives, their society, and their world” (p. 20). Kaltoft examined emancipatory learning in three community programs where music has played a crucial role.

Based on her interviews with over fifty people, participant observations, written critical incident reports with another fifty people and document analysis from the three sites selected, Kaltoft concludes, music contributes to four ways of knowing. They are,

- Participation with music enhances knowing about the self by bringing people in touch with their emotions.
- Participation with music enhances knowing about the self by enhancing expanded states of awareness.
- Singing enhances “finding one’s voice” and nurtures an intuitive knowing.
- Participation with music and singing enhances individual and group awakening through expression and movement toward an increased knowing of self-in-relationship to the world. (p. 378-381)

The significance of Kaltoft’s study to adult education is noteworthy for its breadth and depth. However, Kaltoft does note a limitation in her study, which was the lack of people of color in her study. She states, “more research is needed in multiple cultures about how music affects people’s way of knowing, how it relates to individual and socio-cultural meanings, and if and how music assists in breaking with dominant cultural expectations” (p. 389). Clearly, more research needs to be conducted with music from an adult education perspective. In the next section, I will examine the music of African Americans and the role of religious music in the African American church, community and American society.
African American Music

The field of African American music, both religious and secular, has received a great deal of interest from writers and researchers representing many fields of study. While this study will explore and examine certain aspects of African American music, time and space does not permit a full analysis and discussion of the scope of African American music, therefore, the reader would be advised to seek other sources as well for more in-depth analysis of African American music, such as Dett, 1920; Locke 1936; Fisher, 1953; Southern 1971 & 1983; Spencer 1990; 1991; 1996; Lovell 1972; Cone 1972; McClain 1990; Floyd 1995; Roach 1992, 1994 and, to name a few. These scholars have researched the performance practices, musical styles, performers, and genres of the field of Black music. This discussion of African American music focuses on some the more prominent characteristics of religious music of the African American church.

Although there has been some attention to Black music, there is still much work to be done in this area. As McGinty (1993) explains, “Despite institutional support for research and outlets for publication in journals, published works by African-American authors are still relatively few, and the gaps in our knowledge of black music are many” (p. 7-8). McGinty points out in her discussion focusing on the recruitment of black scholars to black music research, much of the work in black music has been “most frequently in the fields of music education, musicology, ethnomusicology, or folklore” (p. 8). McGinty contends the black scholar can profoundly effect black music research. She explains, “black scholars speak for themselves, of course, but they also speak as
participants in the culture, who have been exposed to it over a period of time and have learned much of the explicit and implicit truths that surround it” (p. 9).

African American music does not fit one particular mold or style and therefore is not easy to define, although many writers offer an explanation of the music of African Americans. As Cone (1972) explains.

Black music is unity music. It unites the joy and the sorrow, the love and the hate, the hope and the despair of black people; and it moves the people toward the direction of total liberation. It shapes and defines black existence and creates cultural structures for black expression. Black music is unifying because it confronts the individual with the truth of black existence and affirms that black being is possible only in a communal context. Black music is functional. Its purposes and aims are directly related to the consciousness of the black community. To be functional is to be useful in community definition, style and movement. (p.5).

Cone also explains the social, cultural and political impact of Black music. He continues by noting.

Black music is also social and political. It is social because it is black and thus articulates the separateness of the black community. It is an artistic rebellion against the humiliating deadness of western culture. Black music is political because in its rejection of white cultural values, it affirms the political “otherness” of black people. Through song, a new political consciousness is continuously created, one antithetical to the values of white society. (5-6)

Floyd (1995) contends black music is rooted in African music and posits a theory of interpretation for the critique of black music. He posits that:

African survivals exist not merely in the sense that African-American music has the same characteristics as its African counterparts, but also that the musical tendencies, the mythological beliefs and assumptions, and the interpretive strategies of African Americans are the same as those that underlie the music of the African homeland that these tendencies and beliefs continue to exist as African cultural memory, and that they continue to inform the continuity and elaboration of African-American music. (p. 5).
Floyd (1995) uses the term “cultural memory” in his examination of black music and describes its influences on African Americans. He defines “cultural memory” in the following manner.

To refer to nonfactual and nonreferential motivations, actions, and beliefs that members of a culture seem, without direct knowledge or deliberate training, to “know”—that feel unequivocally “true” and “right” when encountered, experienced, and executed. It may be defined as a repository of meanings that compromise the subjective knowledge of a people, its immanent thoughts, its structures, and its practices; these thoughts, structures and practices are transferred and understood unconsciously but become conscious and culturally objective in practice and perception. Cultural memory, obviously a subjective concept, seems to be connected with cultural forms—in the present case, music, where the “memory” drives the music and the music drives the memory. (p.8)

Floyd’s (1995) concept of “cultural memory” has significance for the aesthetic appreciation of black religious music and how it is used in the worship service of African American churches and spiritual lives of African Americans. Floyd (1995) argues “that all black-music making is driven by and permeated with the memory of things from the cultural past and that recognition of the viability of such memory should play a role in the perception and criticism of works and performances of black music” (p.10).

It is in the religious lives of African Americans and the black church where black music has had a most penetrating effect. Walker (1979) asserts.

The phenomenon of Black sacred music has nourished and sustained the black church and undergirded its search for freedom and wholeness in the midst of oppression and injustice. Without the cohesive and integrative character of the musical tradition of the Black religious experience, the Black Church might not have become a real entity, or at best, could not have provided the operations base in the struggle for personal and political freedom in the black community. (p.16-17)
Courlander (1976) notes the importance of music as a form of oral communication and notes that in the religious music there are specific elements that are important for the church. He notes, 

As for the main body of religious songs, we find in it a large number of themes projecting the Christian concepts of faith, love and humility, with considerable emphasis on salvation. Another large segment pinpoints events and stories recorded in the Old and New Testaments; if these songs are arranged in a somewhat chronological order, they are equivalent to an oral version of the Bible. Each song represents in a capsulized or dramatic form a significant Biblical moment. (p.303)

Spencer (1991) examines African American religious music from a theomusicological perspective; that is, he explores music from a theological perspective. He explains that theomusicological methodology is, “One that allows for scientific analysis, but primarily within the limits of what is normative in ethics, religion, or mythology of the community of believers being studied” (p. 4). Therefore, any discussion of African American religious music should be viewed in terms of what is “normative” for African American religious worship.

In order to fully understand the impact and the significance of religious music in the African American community it is crucial to examine the genres of African American religious music. The next section will explore various forms of African American religious music.
Spirituals

One of the oldest forms of African American music is the spiritual, which is still sung and heard in many African American churches today. While much of the musical components and performance practices of the spiritual have changed, the timelessness of the message in spirituals has anchored them in the foundation as part of the history and culture of African Americans and their music. Johnson & Johnson (1969) contend that not all spirituals are religious. They explain, “by no means religious in a narrow or special sense” (p. 12). They note, “In the spirituals the Negro did express his religious hopes and fears, his faith and his doubts. In them he also expressed his theological and ethical view, and sounded his exhortations” (p. 12).

McClain (1981) described spirituals as songs that speak of life and death, suffering and sorrow, love and judgment, grace and hope, justice and mercy. They are the songs of an unhappy people, a people weary at heart, a discontent people, and yet, they are the most beautiful expression of human experience and faith this side of the seas (p. ix).

In Lovell’s (1972) extensive research of the Afro-American spiritual, he found a prominent theme throughout many of the spirituals, namely that “the Spirituals demonstrate that the slave showed considerable flexibility in meeting problems of change” (p. 392).

The God, the Lord, the Jesus Christ of the spirituals were symbols who provided basic material necessities, yes, but, most of all they provided an unlimited horizon and an unlimited area for growth. When these slaves took their own lives in their hands and ran away; when they talked about the need for education and a chance to develop their talents, when they did
so much as think about freedom and justice, they were planning the biggest possible life. The life of the spirit. The life of the soul (p. 393).

The literature suggests that there is an inherent “message or hidden meaning in spirituals.” Although the songs may appear to convey one message in spirituals, there is usually another, implied in the songs. The attachment of personal meanings to these messages and the lessons that are gained from these songs were meant to encourage and support Blacks to persevere in their daily struggles.

For instance, Lovell (1972) demonstrates how important education was in the spiritual songs of slaves:

The attitude of the folk community toward the enlarging power of education is clearly reflected in numerous spirituals. Spirituals about books, letters, reading and writing, about souls shining in a new environment where opportunities for personal expansion are great, were enthusiastically composed in song. From thinly veiled songs like, ‘I know I would like to Read, in Fenner’s Hampton Series, to broad symbolism like ‘This little light of Mine’, ‘Oh, My Little Souls Goin’ Shine Like a Stahr’, and ‘I have a Right to the Tree of Life’ state an educational desire and determination which only the totally blind can miss. (p. 167)

Some may question whether the spiritual is relevant in contemporary society, yet the spirituals reach beyond the boundaries of time, race, socio-economic status and culture. Their impact is felt among people of all races, creeds, religious affiliation or nationality. Dett (1936) explains that in order to sing spirituals, regardless of race, educational background, socioeconomic status, the most important thing for us to remember is the heritage and the people from whom these great songs come. He instructs,

Make of them a vehicle for giving thanks to God for all his benefits, for the utterance of prayers for strength, and the betterment of their lives and the world about them; for the giving of testimony of their faith in a Divine Providence; for the projection of their hope in the successful achievement of a triumphant life after death, that the spirit of this peculiar music will be
preserved, and borne upon its wings, they will rise again from the plane of mere song—lovely as that may be—to their lovelier pristine, and rarer realms of the truly Spiritual. (p. 106-07)

Hymns

Hymns play a significant role in the musical life of the African American church. Before the common use of hymnals, hymns were taught and passed down in the African American community from generation to generation through means of oral communication.

Today, each of the major African American denominations has a hymnal, which Spencer (1992) notes, reflects their beliefs and doctrines. In his analysis of the hymnals of ten African American denominations, Spencer (1992) points out that

The hymns that black Christians sing are an essential aspect of their religious history and culture. A study of these hymns, as deposited in the collective memory and composite personality of denominational hymnbooks, is a primary means of tracing shifts and developments in a denomination's theological and doctrinal tenets and social perspectives” (p. ix).

Mapson (1984) believes much can be learned from the hymns of African American writers and believes “the study of their lives and works should be part of the religious education curriculum of every black church” (p. 47).
Anthems

The New Harvard Dictionary of Music (1986) defines anthems as, “a choral composition with a sacred or moralizing text in English, performed in a liturgical or ceremonial context” (p. 42) Hemphill-Peoples’ (1992) definition of anthems is placed in the context of the black church and states.

In the black church they are understood as works performed deliberately and strictly from music manuscript, absent of any form of improvised additives, and requiring some knowledge of and appreciation for European musical standards. The inclusion of anthems have served as a form of social and cultural status indicating that a congregation has achieved a higher level of technical, progressive, liberated and educated musical attainment distinguished from the ‘common folk’. Its presence in the black church mirrors the attainment of high Euro-American musical standards. (p. 280)

Gospel Music

While gospel music is still a relatively recent phenomenon, it has received some attention from researchers. Yet as Sacre (1995) notes, “Black American gospel music is among the most varied, rich, and diverse of genres, but among scholars, it is the most neglected. Jackson-Brown (1990) would agree and further asserts,

Scholarly interest in gospel music must continue to ensure that the gospel tradition is included as an area of inquiry in courses devoted to black music, the black church, and black religion. Gospel music be given the careful and detailed scrutiny that other musical genres have received. (p. 41).

With the advent of gospel music came numerous changes in the music of African Americans. For instance, Southern (1983) states, “In the 1940’s, gospel singers took their music out of the church into the secular world, thus raising the question as to whether gospel was religious or entertainment music (p. 472).
As Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) note, the shift from hymns to gospel music had other consequences.

The transition from congregational hymns to songs for specialized soloist and ensembles had important sociological consequences. While the former united worshipers through the collective activity of singing and declaring theological and doctrinal commonalities, the new style required the congregation to assume the role of audience. In essence, worshipers became bystanders who witnessed the preaching and personal testimonies of singers. At best the congregation was to share in those attestations by affirmative “amens,” nodding, humming, clapping, swaying, or occasionally by singing along on choruses and vamps. One unexpected consequence was that black worshipers and concertgoers often became the audience to a new homiletical gospel experience. (p. 361-362).

Burnim (1995) describes the impact of gospel music in the African American community. She states, “Gospel music is a celebration and an affirmation of life. It is through the performance of gospel music that African Americans can identify with their cultural and historical past, transcend that past, and achieve the courage and strength to move forward into the future” (p. 42). Although she does not present evidence to support the claim, Burnim also notes that “Black churches are wonderful contexts for learning, where people of any culture, age or religious background are warmly welcomed” (p. 46).

Southern notes, “In 1961 gospel reached the pinnacle of “respectability” when Mahalia Jackson was invited to sing at an inauguration party for President John F. Kennedy” (p. 473). The musical characteristics of gospel music are similar to jazz and blues and were often seen as inappropriate for church worship. Roach (1992) says, “Whether or not gospel was simply the name for church or liturgical jazz, the subject
become one of conflict mainly because of its rhythmic factors which inspired close similarity to rhythms of shouts as well as other dances" (p. 69).

Gospel music is also unique for its distinct musical characteristics. Southern (1983), one of the most widely respected and recognized authorities of Black music, points out that the early accompaniment style of gospel music can be distinguished by its instrumental improvisation. She further notes the lack of formal musical training of gospel pianists: "Most often the gospel pianist played 'by ear,' developing his skills by attending concerts of the celebrated pianists he wanted to emulate and/or by listening to their recordings. Thus he received his training in the same way as jazz pianists did" (p.464). Another significant characteristic of the performance of gospel music is what Southern describes as “body-rhythm” accents. She states, “body-rhythm” accents are essential...The main source of the clapping, tapping, swaying to and fro, and beating tambourines is of course the performance group, the choir or the quartet, but the audience always feels free to join in if it so desires” (p. 465). While gospel music holds a prominent status in African American music today, this was not always the case. Southern (1983) chronicles many of the educational activities that were related to music in the black community. She notes, The church continued to support black artists in their projects, whether they concerned concerts, dramas, workshops, or music classes. Other institutions that helped in the sponsoring of music projects were local libraries, YM and YWCA establishments, settlement houses—all of these groups operating under black directors, although receiving some financial support from the white parent organizations. Black fraternal groups began to take a more active part in promoting cultural activities. (p. 457).

A review of the literature illustrates the diversity of the genre known as “religious music” and its role in the African American church, as well as its roots in African culture.
This overview of the musical styles in the African American church reflects only some of the major styles while additional forms such as freedom songs, quartet style of singing, traditional gospel and contemporary gospel, gospel rap, and praise and worship are also part of the musical experience in the African American church.

Lincoln and Mamiya (1990) surveyed 2,150 black churches about their musical practices and programs and found some common characteristics among them. For instance, many black churches have on the average three choirs: “this average number gives an indication of how important music and singing are in black churches” (p. 378).

There was a difference in the number of choirs found in urban versus rural churches. Concerning the types of music used in the church and “approved by the pastors,” approximately 97% of the churches surveyed approved of gospel music, followed by spirituals, while other types of black music such as jazz and blues were approved by only 20.8 per cent of the pastors. Again, there was a significant difference between the number of urban pastors’ (26.6) who approved of other forms of music such as jazz or blues and the number of rural pastors’ (6.5) who approved of other forms of music.

Lincoln and Mayima (1990) state,

In most black churches music, or more precisely, singing is second only to preaching as the magnet of attraction and the primary vehicle of spiritual transport for the worshiping congregation. In some of the more traditional churches, even the sermon (and often prayers of the ministers or deacons) are still ‘sung’ in a kind of ritualistic cadence peculiar to the black church (p. 346).

Numerous research studies have focused on African American music, however three were chosen for their implications to the current study. Frissell (1985) conducted a
historical analysis of the impact of black music and its relationship to selected aspects of social, cultural and educational experiences of Black Americans from 1955-1980. Frissell concluded that Black students must be introduced to and experience black music as part of the educational curriculum. She states,

Not only will these experiences help the black student to better understand his or her cultural heritage, but more importantly, it will allow him or her to develop a more positive attitude about him-or herself. In much the same way that the “Black Pride” and the “Black consciousness movements of the 1970s provided a security base for the black person facing a competitive society, so too does learning about a vital part of black culture-black music help to promote a positive self-image. (p. 278)

Likewise, Hemphill-Peoples (1992) took a historical look at the development and influence of musical styles in selected black churches in Buffalo, New York, particularly noting the historical rise of the Black Baptists and Methodist churches. She explains that “black religious music has not received the same examination and inquiry as other musical genres, there is no uniform definition of black religious music throughout the scholarship” (p. 8).

Hemphill-Peoples defines Black Religious Music (BRM) as.

All of the musical worship expressions utilized, created and adapted by Afro-Americans for the purpose of worship in the black church. These expressions manifest themselves in the forms of singing, preaching, praying, and dance/movement. (p. 281)

Hemphill-Peoples (1992) investigated important contributions that have influenced the styles of music at selected black churches and what profoundly influences the musical life of a church. She concluded.

Whether positively or negatively, black clergymen have exercised the greatest influence over the maintenance, alteration and changes in the
religious music style of individual churches. The black preacher is the leader in matters from theology, to administration, to public and cultural activity and is, in essence, the embodiment of what the church is and it not. (p. 277)

Hemphill-Peoples' study notes the importance of examining the cultural context of black religious worship and music in helping educators understand the forces that shape the experiences and development of black children.

Townsend (1996) examined music in an African American Baptist Church. This study describes the process used in the teaching and learning of music in the church. Townsend tape-recorded choir rehearsals and Sunday church services. In addition, he conducted interviews with choir members, musicians, and with leaders of the church. An important aspect of Townsend's study was to examine the process of teaching and learning in the church as compared to the teaching and learning processes of public school music programs. Townsend concluded that many of the features found in the African American church were transferable to public school music programs, although the religious and spiritual nature of the music was not applicable to public school programs.

Summary

This chapter was an attempt to acquaint the reader and I with the relevant studies and literature related to the research question: Is religious music educative in the African American church.

This review of the literature focused on three main areas as related to this study: selected theories of adult learning, music in adult education, and African American music
with a particular focus on religious music. It began with a discussion of affective learning and the role of affective education in the church. The first section also examined adult educators need for other approaches to learning, particularly as it relates to African Americans. The second section focused on describing the role music has played in adult education, from the early efforts of the Chautauqua movement to more recent examples of music in the classrooms of adult education. Also, included was an examination of music in social and political movements. This traced how music was used as an educative tool in the teaching of social causes, human and civil rights.

From the investigation into African American music, it has been found the religious music of African Americans to be an important social force in the cultural development of spirituality. The third section acquainted the reader with important musical styles found in the religious music of African Americans and in the black church. The musical styles used in African American churches can vary significantly, from traditional music to contemporary Christian, urban contemporary, to the hip-hop sounds of rap and gospel music to a more European style. From this review of the literature, it is important to understand how music can be used to (a) assist adults in the process of learning, (b) promote a strong link to a “cultural memory” that is deeply embedded in the memory of African Americans and (c) as McGinty (1993) notes, fill in the many “gaps” that need to be addressed in black music.

In summary, whatever the style or mode of transmission, religious music in the African American church is shared and participatory, felt and touching, seen and visual, understood and heard. African Americans have a history and heritage that embraces strong
oral means of communication that is rooted in African culture. This valuable means of communication needs to be further investigated and it is the hope of this study to contribute to the understanding of music as communication.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter three presents the basic framework and construction of this study. This chapter will discuss my rationale for the methodology chosen and the literature related to the methodology. I will also provide a detailed account of the data collection and analysis procedures.

Rationale

The purpose of this study was to understand the contribution of religious music to the learning of a sample of African American adults. The study sought to understand how religious music provides meaning for African American adults and in what ways that meaning influences the thinking of African American adults regarding social, cultural, political, spiritual, and racial issues that they face in their lives. This study also attempted to determine whether religious music in the African American Church encouraged or facilitated other types of learning. For instance, did the participants learn self-confidence, develop leadership skills, pursue music lessons, or learn ancestral or cultural lessons.

Specifically, the research sought to address the following questions:
Research question

Is religious music educative in the African American church?

Subsidiary questions

What do African American adults consider as a learning experience?

What life themes are raised in African American religious music?

What types of learning do African American adults embark upon as a result of singing and listening to religious music?

How is music used to facilitate individual learning and social action?

Is learning affected differently when music is used during a Sunday worship service or a formal adult education class, or Sunday school?

Does music affect or inspire learning connected with non-religious projects, such as returning to school, learning a musical instrument, or learning a craft?

How do African American adults find meaning in religious music?

This study used a qualitative descriptive and interpretive approach. Retrospective biographies helped me to inductively understand how the religious musical experiences of African American adults affect learning situations. Van Manen (1990) explains that “the intent of biographic interests is usually the private, personal and unique events of individual lives: biography literally means ‘description of a life’” (p. 71). This study examined the lives of African American adults via their experiences with religious music. In addition, this study examines the learning that takes place in the religious musical experiences of African American adults; what do African American adults consider a learning experience? Moreover, how did they use the musical experience in their lives?
The personal and private nature of a man's or woman's interaction with God via their musical expressions is one of the most deeply felt experiences for many people. An experience not always shared with others.

This study was designed to gather information from various individuals within an African American Church, including clergy, musicians, choir members, and members of the congregation. Each individual within the Church could potentially bring a new perspective to each of the research questions.

**Methodology**

Qualitative methodology was chosen for several reasons. First, for its ability to allow the participants to express themselves freely and directly, in their own words. Second, the qualitative approach permitted me to more deeply examine and understand the participants' experiences with religious music and learning in the African American Church. Third, because there is very little information about ways in which religious music is educative for African American adults, qualitative methodology allowed a more exploratory approach to the process.

**Assumptions**

It is important for the reader of this study to understand my assumptions and how they impact the data and the stories through which the participant's musical experiences are told.
1. *It was my assumption that learning does occur through musical experiences.* I believed that adults learn by and from their participation and engagement with music. The lessons learned may not be readily discernible to the listener or participant, yet I believed, upon further reflection, adults could articulate the learning that occurs through music.

2. *It is my belief that for many African Americans adults, their religious and musical lives have greatly influenced their experiences.* These experiences have received little attention in the adult education mainstream literature, and it was my hope that this study would allow new voices to be heard and different learning perspectives to be explored.

3. *Music has received little attention in the Adult Education literature.* Although music has been studied from many perspectives, understanding how African Americans perceive music as educative has not been pursued in the Adult Education literature. This study would hopefully fill this gap.

4. *My background influences my knowledge and understanding of African American religious music.* As McGinty (1993) notes, black scholars "speak as participants in the culture, who have been exposed to it over a period of time and have learned much of the explicit and implicit truths that surround it." (p. 9).
Adult Education has not actively studied adult learning in the black church.

Learning takes place for many African American adults in many avenues. The Black church has a rich history of providing educational opportunities. Much of that history has not been documented and included in the Adult Education literature.

Selection

According to the Central Ohio Visitors Bureau (1995), there are fifty-five African American Churches listed under “Religious Institutions” in one major city in Ohio in which for convenience reasons, this study was conducted. Of these, thirty-three were identified as Baptist Churches, four were identified as Apostolic; two were identified as African Methodist Episcopal Churches; two were listed as Catholic Churches; two were listed as Presbyterian; one was listed as Lutheran; one was listed as Church of God in Christ; the remaining ten Churches represented various denominations including those whose denominational affiliation were not discernible.

The Baptist Church was selected for three reasons: First, were my strong religious affiliation to the Baptist denomination; Second, was its historical background in the life of the African American community and strong presence in the civil rights movement; Third, was its history of strong music programs and programs of adult and Christian education.

Other justifications for selecting the Baptist denomination could also be given. For instance, it is the largest religious group within the African American community (Murphy,
Melton & Ward, 1993). Martin (1992) notes "the academic, critical study of the Baptist denomination has not received as much attention as that of the African Methodist Episcopal Church." (pp. 26-27).

Sample

Patton (1990) states, "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling" (p. 169). The pastor of the church was purposively selected for this study based on his role as the religious leader of the church and for his insights into religion and the role of music in the Baptist church. The Director of Christian Education was purposively selected for this study because of his leadership role in the educational activities of the church. The musicians of the church were purposively selected because of their musical leadership role in the church. The musicians are largely responsible for the selection of music and the musical ministry of the church.

At least two voluntary participants were recruited from each of the eight choirs. In addition, in order to have representatives from the general congregation I sought and recruited a comparable number of voluntary participants from the congregation. To recruit voluntary participants for this study, I included flyers in the church bulletins on two separate occasions during the three-month period of the study. The flyers were used to announce the study and solicit voluntary participants from the choir and congregation.
Finally, there were three subject matter experts in this study. These subject matter experts were not members of the church in this study. I selected the subject matter experts after receiving strong recommendations from the pastor of the church in this study. The pastor of the church felt each of these men could provide additional insight into the phenomena under investigation. They were included in the study based on their musical experience and knowledge of religious music in the African American church.

The three African American males are pastors of an African American church. Dr. Simmons is the pastor of the Centenary United Methodist Church in Columbus, Ohio. In addition, he is a professor of church music at Trinity Theological Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Robert Simmons is also the Dean of the Academic Division of the Gospel Music Workshop of America. Dr. Charles Walker is the pastor of the 19th Street Missionary Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In addition, Dr. Walker is a world-renowned composer and pianist. The third subject matter expert was Dr. J. Wendell Mapson II. Dr. Mapson is the pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is the author of *The Ministry of Music in the Black Church* (1984). The incorporation of these subject matter experts ensured information-rich interviews as Patton recommends.

When I achieved the number of voluntary participants needed, I sorted the participants into groups. Group one was choir members. Group two was composed of non-choir members. While group three was the musicians, including minister of music, pianists, organists, and choir directors. Group four was the pastor of the church. Group five was another member of the clergy in charge of Christian Education. Although, group
four and group five contained only one participant they were classified separately based on their role in the church and as a means to cross-reference the interview data. Group six was the group of subject matter experts.

Stake (1994) writes, “Individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest the common characteristics. They may be similar or dissimilar, redundancy and variety each having voice. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (p. 237). Therefore, I chose to interview a relatively large number (for a qualitative study) and quite a diverse group of people. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) emphasize, “the multisubject approach allows the researcher to view the relationships between and among people and the differences in perspectives” (p. 118). Because every adult in the church was a potential participant, this allowed me to hear many stories from different perspectives.

Number of Participants

The minimum number of participants sought for this study was forty. This number was chosen for several reasons. First, I sought to include at least two representatives from each of the eight choirs and a comparable number of participants of non-choir members. In addition to the Pastor of the church, the Director of Christian Education, and the musicians, this would ensure at least forty participants and a substantial amount of data. Second, due to limited time and resources, it would not have been feasible for me to meet and schedule interviews with more than forty people. Each interview session was designed
to last between sixty minutes and two hours. Third, in a qualitative research study, the amount of data collected is often large and requires a tremendous amount of time in data analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest sample size should be such that the researcher no longer hears anything that has not been voiced already in the study. Therefore, I wanted to hear as many voices, stories and perspectives until I had not heard anything new.

**Access**

As a new member (more than one year at the time of the study) of the congregation I had already established contact with the church and its Pastor. Thus, I could be considered a "native" on two levels: I was a member of the congregation that I wished to research and I am African American. This combination of member of the congregation and African American enabled me to negotiate many issues that an "outsider" might not have been able to explore. Although I was a member of the congregation, I did not know or have previous contact with many of the persons involved in the study nor was I currently or had I ever been involved in any of the musical activities of the church in this study.

As Andersen (1993) elaborates by noting, "minority scholars are also less likely to experience distrust, hostility, and exclusion within minority communities. At the same time, however, the accountability and commitment of minority scholars to the communities they study pose unique problems for their research" (p. 41). This is where the researcher's sincerity in wanting to belong to the congregation for its own sake, with or
without his research interest, comes into question. It was incumbent upon me to be completely honest in my intentions to the group I wished to research. It was also essential that I establish trust by assuring the interviewees that I would share with them and seek their comments on the interview transcripts before any writing up of the results of the research. It was important that the congregation view me “as one of them” and that they regard the research as a project that will enhance, rather than detract from, the congregation or the worship experience. In short, a mutual sense of trust and respect needed to be established first.

Upon meeting with the pastor about the study, I (a) acquainted the Pastor with the nature of the study and its potential contribution to the field of Adult Education, Christian Education and to the musical ministry of the church; (b) provided the Pastor with a written statement about the study outlining the details of the study (See Appendix A); and (c) sought the Pastor’s assistance in establishing contact with the musicians, Director of Christian Education, members of the choirs and congregation and in identifying those members whom he felt would make a valuable contribution to this study.

Setting

Because this study sought to understand the phenomenon of religious music and learning within the African American Church, it was important to understand the participants and their experiences with religious music in the context and environment in which it occurs. It was important to conduct the interviews in a place where the participants felt comfortable, and free to express themselves. Therefore, the research study
occurred in the natural setting of the church with the approval of the pastor. The interviews with the three subject matter experts were conducted individually in their respective church offices.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is one of the basic ethical concerns of qualitative researchers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990). The participants in this study were informed of its purposes, and what the expectations were from them in order to have their informed consent. Confidentiality in this study needed to be addressed on two levels: The level of the religious institution and the level of the individual participants. Thus, the names of individual participants and the name of the church in this study and distinguishing characteristics were changed to protect confidentiality. Because of the personal and private nature of the participant’s experiences, their thoughts, feelings, and emotions surrounding religious music, I felt it was imperative to protect the confidentiality of all participants and the church. However, because of the prominence and expertise of the subject matter experts, they are appropriately identified.
Data Collection

The procedures used for this descriptive and interpretive study were the same as for many qualitative research studies. In-depth face-to-face interviews and focus group interviews were the primary methods of data collection. The study also included document analysis and field observation as part of data collection. In addition, I kept a personal journal throughout the study.

Interviews

Interviews are an important part of qualitative research methodology. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) the interview method allows the researcher to "to gather descriptive data in the subject's words so that the researcher can develop insights on how the subjects interpret some piece of the world" (p. 96). It was important to the study that participants are allowed to share and express their stories without concern for the words or expressions they used. By allowing the participants to express themselves, as they felt comfortable, I was able to gain more information and develop greater insights into the phenomena under investigation.

The interview method allowed me to fully explore each case in order to understand from an African American adult's perspective the role that religious music plays in learning in the African American Baptist Church and in the participants' lives. Because so little is known about what African American adults learn while listening to and singing religious music, the interviews provided a more detailed account of the individual learning experiences of adults as well establishing the type of music and the type of learning which
religious music encourages. Although it was assumed that it would be difficult for people to pinpoint where they have learned a subtle point, the interview questions were designed to overcome vagueness and to facilitate the participants’ recollection.

All interviews were recorded on audiotape and the contents were later transcribed exactly as they occurred. Each interview was designed to last from forty-five to ninety minutes depending on whether it was an individual or group interview. An announcement of the focus group interview times was placed in the Sunday church bulletin and flyers announcing the study were posted in important locations within the church (See Appendix B). The individual interview sessions with the pastor, clergy, musicians, and minister and assistant minister of music were scheduled with the participants most often at least one week in advance of the actual interview time and date. Approximately, two to four weeks following the interview, participants were given a copy of the interview transcripts to note any changes or correction. This allowed the participants to voice any concerns or provide additional comments to the interview data upon further reflection since the interview. This would also add to the authenticity and credibility of my analysis.

Focus Group Interviews: choir members and non-choir members

Because of the abstract nature of the topic of music, I attempted to conduct focus group interviews with the choir members and the non-choir members. Patton (1990) supported the use of focus groups as he stated, “participants get to hear each other’s responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say” (p. 335).
Marshall and Rossman (1995) state, "people often need to listen to others' opinions and understandings in order to form their own" (p. 84). Templeton (1987) defines a focus group as "A small, temporary community formed for the purpose of the collaborative enterprise of discovery. The assembly is based on some mutual interest..." (p. 5). Focus group interviews are often referred to as "group interviews" in qualitative research (Fontana & Frey, 1994). They both are similar in nature; however, "focus group" was a term as Fontana and Frey point out, developed by Merton, Fiske, and Kendall (1956) to apply to a situation in which the interviewer asks group members very specific questions about a topic after considerable research has already been completed" (p. 364)

**Instruments**

I used a semi-structured open-ended interview question format for the interviews. Patton (1990) recommends the open-ended interview because it "permits persons being interviewed to take whatever direction and use whatever words they want in order to represent what they have to say" (p. 297). The use of the open-ended interview approach also assisted me in making efficient use of time. In addition, the use of the interview guides provided some consistency in questioning the participants in several important and major areas. The interview guide contained general questions regarding the role of music in the Church, the importance of music in the personal and professional lives of adults. However, the open-ended interview format used permitted the information to be determined more by the participants rather than the interview questions. In addition, the interview guide sought opinions and personal assessments from participants regarding
information on learning situations where religious music is involved, significant
experiences with the emotional and educative use of religious music in an African
American Baptist Church. During some of the interviews, it was necessary to seek further
clarification, or probe for explanations. Therefore, not all of the questions were asked in
each focus group interview. In the focus groups, it was necessary for me to see how many
agreed or disagreed with information stated by another participant in the group.

For this study, I used six interview guides to reflect the perspectives of each of the
five groups within the church: (a) members of the choirs had a separate interview form
reflective of their role and personal interaction with music within the Church and their
perspective of the role of music and learning within the Church (See Appendix C); (b)
non-choir members had a slightly different interview guide (See Appendix D); (c) the
minister of music, assistant minister of music, choir directors, organists and pianists
provided another perspective of the role of music and learning in the Church (See
Appendix E); (d) the Pastor of the Church for his perspective and ideas on what the role
of music is and should be in the Church had a separate interview guide (See Appendix F);
the Director of Christian Education also had a separate interview guide (See Appendix G);
and the group of experts had a separate interview guide (See Appendix H).

**Biographical Information Sheet** In addition to the interview, each of the
participants was asked to complete a biographical information form. This information was
used to obtain biographical information such as age range of the participant, the
educational background of the participant, current or former occupational status, length of
time involved in musical organizations in the church, and any musical training or
experience (See Appendix I). Participants were asked to complete the biographical information sheet and a consent form upon arrival for the interview (See Appendix J).

**Interview Guide for Choir Members** This focus group interview guide contained ten questions. (See Appendix C). The questions were separated into categories such as the role of religious music in their personal lives, the role of music in the Church, music and learning in the Church, impact of religious music on educational experiences, and other Adult Education activities in which the participant may be currently involved. The questions also explored the ways participants use the musical experience in their lives.

**Interview Guide for Non-Choir Members** The interview guide for the non-choir members contained ten questions. It was used with members of the congregation who do not participate in any musical organization within the church (See Appendix D). The questions follow a similar format as used for the choir members.

**Interview Guide for Musicians** The interview guide for the musicians contained ten major questions. This interview guide was developed for those persons responsible for the musical ministry in the church. (See Appendix E). This group represents the minister of music, the assistant minister of music, choir directors, organists, and pianists who would offer a unique perspective because they are often most responsible for the music selected. Therefore, their choices of music may affect the messages intended, heard, and learned from religious music in the African American Church. The interview guide contained general questions about their musical background, their work as a church musician, purpose of music in the church and teaching and learning with music in the church.
Interview Guide for Pastor of the Church This interview guide was developed for the Pastor (See Appendix F). It contained nine general questions regarding his role and responsibilities as a pastor, his personal involvement with religious music and his use of music in the church and how he would define learning and learning experiences within the church.

Interview Guide for Director of Christian Education This interview guide was used with the Director of Christian Education (See Appendix G). The interview guide contained ten general questions related to his role in the church, his involvement with religious music and his personal experiences with religious music.

Interview Guide for Subject Matter Experts This interview guide was developed for the experts (See Appendix H). It contained seven primary questions about their musical activities and background, their views and thoughts on religious music and learning in the African American church.

Document Analysis

Patton (1990) asserts, “Program documents provide valuable information because of what the evaluator can learn directly by reading them; but they also provide stimulus for generating questions that can only be pursued through direct observation and interviewing” (p. 233).

Document analysis was used to further record and support the research study, which included such items as printed copies of the church programs from Sunday morning worship services and the official hymnal of the church. The church programs were used to
compare musical selections, styles of music offered, and the role of music in the worship service, and to note how frequently music was used in the worship service. The official hymnal of the church contained important information related to the Baptist tradition and theology, such as the official church covenant, scripture lessons, and readings.

Researcher

Data were also collected by the researcher himself as (a) field notes and (b) a personal research journal.

Field Notes

Field notes were recorded before, during, and after the interviews and observations were recorded to note conditions surrounding the interviews and observations, particularly describing the participants being interviewed, their mannerisms, body language, and their facial expressions. In addition, I observed three months of actual Sunday morning Church worship services focusing on how the music was used in the Church service, its impact on the congregation, and other personal observations relevant to the study as I perceived them. In addition, I kept an activity log that documented my activities in the field and the amount of time spent on each activity, etc. (See Appendix K).

Personal Journal

I maintained a personal research journal to recall and note specific information regarding the research project. The journal contained information such as, personal notes
indicating progress of the study, and methodological and theoretical problems occurring throughout the study. Also, noted in the journal was personal communication with members of my committee. The journal also included information such as any conversations between myself and the participants that are not included as part of the actual interview. I noted any personal biases, reactions to individual participants and the focus group interviews. The journal contained questions and ideas from the peer debriefers involved in the study. The journal was used for reflection of themes within the interviews. This allowed me to verify the themes over a period of time to determine whether the themes were becoming clearer in my analysis and interpretation.

The journal allowed me to note any new questions that arose during the interviews, observations, document analysis, data collection or data analysis. The journal was used to note new research ideas for future studies, as well.

Data Analysis

This study used themes as a tool to understand the educative value of religious music for African American adults. Some of the anticipated themes included the following: (1) sense of identity; (2) common and collective sense of struggle; and (3) reflection of struggles of others. Van Manen states, "theme analysis refers then to the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work" (p. 78). Van Manen (1990) provides a framework for understanding what themes are and are not. He explains, (a) Theme is the experience of focus, of meaning, of point; (b) theme formulation is at best a simplification; (c) themes
are not objects one encounters at certain points or moments in a text; and (d) theme is the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand" (p. 87).

Data analysis began once all the interviews were collected and transcribed. I checked the transcripts with the interview audiotapes to ensure accuracy. Following verification of all interview tapes, transcripts, and review of the transcripts by the participants, the process of inductively analyzing the verbatim transcripts began.

I began to look for themes to determine the different ways in which religious music has mattered in the lives of African American adults and the essence of those themes. In addition, I met with my peer debriefers who provided me with additional reflections and interpretations. Erickson (1986) notes that “the interpretive commentary points the reader to those details that are salient for the author, and to the meaning-interpretations of the author. Interpretive commentary also fills in the information beyond the story itself that is necessary for the reader to interpret the story in a way similar to that of the author” (p. 152). It was naturally to my advantage that I was a part of the congregation that I interviewed, and I was in a good position to have many interpretive comments and insights in the study.

Data Management

For this study, I used an IBM computer with Microsoft Word 6.0 to manage and organize the data. Transcriptions of the interviews were stored on a 3.5 floppy diskette. All interview transcripts were organized, kept and stored in three ring binders by each individual interview or by focus group. In addition, I used Microsoft Access to code the
data by themes. Each theme and the frequency of the theme was recorded as well as the range of thematic ideas. The use of Microsoft Access for coding of the data made for easy access, maintenance, and organization of the data.

**Timeline**

The timeline for the study is shown in appendix L. This timeline indicates the time from approval of the proposal by my committee to dissertation defense. Since I was employed full-time and held additional responsibilities, a realistic timeline for the project is shown.

**Triangulation**

Patton (1990) believes: “One important way to strengthen a study design is through triangulation, or the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs” (p. 187).

Flick (1992) explains, “Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation. But acknowledging that no observation or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen” (p. 241). In this study, the triangulation of multiple data sources included (a) interviews, (b) program documents, (c) the literature review, (d) field notes and (e) a personal journal.
The Self as Instrument

I brought to this study my particular background, my assumptions and my biases that undergird the study. In a qualitative study, the researcher is the "instrument" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Patton, 1990, Marshall & Rossman 1995). Therefore, due to this unique aspect of qualitative research study, the researcher's role and personal interaction with the participants and the settings must be considered. Janesick (1994) reports that "there is no value-free or bias-free design. The qualitative researcher early on identifies his or her biases and articulates the ideology or conceptual frame for the study. By identifying one's biases, one can see easily where the questions that guide the study are crafted" (p. 212).

Peer Debriefer

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined peer debriefing as a "process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain implicit only within the inquirer's mind" (p. 306). For this study, I used two peer debriefers. I selected the peer debriefers for their knowledge of the field of Adult Education and knowledge and experience with qualitative methodology. In addition, an assistant professor of music at The Ohio State University, with significant musical experience in the African American Baptist church also served as a peer debriefer. The insights and contributions made by the peer debriefers were invaluable to this study. Each one provided me with additional thoughts on themes reflected in the data and confirmed and discounted some of the themes I had noted.
Frame of Reference

This study is predicated on my beliefs and assumptions, background and history. These beliefs and assumptions defined how I interpreted and viewed the data. The nature of qualitative research methodology provides a set of beliefs that, as Guba and Lincoln (1994) state, "represent a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world,' the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.... The beliefs are basics in the sense that they must be accepted simply on faith (however well argued); there is no way to establish their ultimate truthfulness" (p. 107).

The selection of this research topic was greatly influenced by my personal history and background. Although religious music had been important in my life before beginning my doctoral studies, and as much as I personally believed that it was a topic worthy of scholarly research, I had some apprehension regarding the unconventional subject matter and its impact on my doctoral studies and future employment opportunities within the field of Adult Education. Often, certain topics within the arena of education, including Adult Education, are viewed as eccentric or inappropriate for academic discourse. However, upon further reflection and a review of the literature, I realized the potential application of this study to Adult Education, the African American community and the training and education of clergy far exceeded my concerns and apprehensions about the topic as worthy of scholarly research.

McGinty (1993) notes in her pursuit of black music research, the "gaps in our knowledge of black music are many" and further notes, "African American music as an
area of study is still not given a high priority in the academic world. Consequently, there have been fewer professors to draw new students into this area of research’ (p. 8-9).

As the researcher, I brought to this study a unique set of experiences and skills. First, I hold a Bachelor of Arts in Music as well as a Master of Arts degree in Music. I have taught courses in private and classroom vocal instruction, basic music appreciation classes, and have taught fundamentals of music for elementary education majors at The Ohio State University. Second, I am a singer with performance experiences as a concert artist, and I continue to perform regularly with a local music organization.

Interpretation

Patton (1990) defines interpretation as “going beyond the descriptive data. He explains, interpretation means “attaching significance to what was found, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meanings, imposing order, and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases, and data irregularities as part of testing the viability of an interpretation” (p. 423).

The study examines and identifies similarities and differences among each group of participants followed by an analysis and summary of the findings. An understanding of the lessons learned and meaning attached to experiences by the participants were carefully analyzed and cross-referenced in order to interpret the data.

Denizen (1994) would term “making sense of what has been learned” as the “art of interpretation”(p. 500). An important aspect of this part of the research study was to
describe in as much detail as possible the biographical lives of the participants via their interaction with religious music and learning experiences.

Writing


In the final stage of writing up the project, it is probably wise to avoid being overly preoccupied with method. In other words, the qualitative researcher should immediately focus on the substance of the findings. Qualitative research depends on the presentation of solid descriptive data, so that the researcher leads the reader to an understanding of the meaning of the experience under study (p. 215).

The process of writing and rewriting the analysis helped to organize and clarify the meaning of the musical experiences of the participants. This process further enhanced my understanding of themes noted in the data.

Wolcott (1990) believes this process, "is integral to qualitative inquiry, not an adjunct" (p. 48). Wolcott also provides the researcher with specific suggestions on the writing process. For instance, he emphasizes one of the most important functions in the writing process is sifting through the data to make it manageable in order to communicate only the "essence" of the data. I reflected upon the writing up of the data and discussed my writing with my peer debriefers to ensure the "essence" of the data was clear to the reader.
Description, Analysis and Interpretation

Patton (1990) states, "Description is balanced by analysis and leads into the interpretation" (p. 430). This study sought to understand how is religious music educative for African American adults in the African American church. Therefore, the analysis of the data includes not only a descriptive account, but also an analytic and interpretive account, as well using retrospective biographies of African American adults. The data in this study is described in sufficient detail to allow the reader to understand the musical experiences of the participants, their personal and private feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about religious music. The musical lives are exposed in order to understand the meaning and significance of these experiences.

Internal Validity Concerns

This section explores the issue of subjectivity and usefulness. In traditional research, internal validity is measured by the credibility of the findings. Merriam (1988) states, "internal validity deals with the questions of how one's findings match reality. Do the findings capture what is really there? Are investigators observing or measuring what they think they are measuring?" (pp. 166-67). Merriam outlined six strategies that a qualitative researcher can use to ensure internal validity: They are: (a) triangulation, (b) member checks, (c) long-term observation at the research site or repeated observation of the same phenomenon, (d) peer examination, (e) participatory modes of research and (f) researcher's biases. This study incorporated multiple methods of data collection,
debriefers, member checks, observation, and document analysis all to ensure the accuracy of the interpretation. This leads us to the question of subjectivity.

**Subjectivity**

Patton (1990) states, “the researcher is the instrument of qualitative inquiry, so the quality of the research depends heavily on the qualities of that human being” (p. 433). My background and experience shaped how the research study was conducted and the results interpreted; however, there were a number of strategies used throughout this study to reduce concerns and questions of subjectivity. For example, the study incorporated the use of multiple methods of data triangulation including the literature review, the use of peer debriefers as well as documentation and presentation of my biases to minimize any inherent biases.

Van Manen (1990) says,

Subjectivity means that one needs to be as perceptive, insightful, and discerning as one can be in order to show or disclose the object in its full richness and in its greatest depth. Subjectivity means that we are strong in our orientation to the object of study in a unique and personal way—while avoiding the danger of becoming arbitrary, self-indulgent, or of getting captivated and carried away by our unreflected preconceptions (p. 20).

**Usefulness**

There are a number of issues surrounding the usefulness of the study. For instance, the reader may wonder if such a topic is worthy of scholarly research. The reader may question how applicable this study is to members of other African American religious
groups. The reader could question how applicable the study is to other Baptist churches or other churches of other racial and religious denominational backgrounds. However, this study was carefully researched, designed and written so that the reader can determine the usefulness of the study for him or herself. Moreover, I have stated my background, biases and the framework from which the study was conceived and analyzed. Still, I believe the study will be useful for at least two reasons: First, was the opportunity for the participants to evaluate their lives, express their thoughts on religious music, their heritage, and their history. Second, people have stories to tell, and this was an opportunity for the participants to tell their stories and have them read. Yet, the reader must make the ultimate decision of usefulness of this study.

External Validity Concerns

The concepts of generalizability and transferability are discussed as external validity concerns. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that concerns of external validity in a qualitative study are parallel to transferability. Merriam (1988) states, “External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. That is, how generalizable are the results of a research study?” (p 173).

Generalizability

Patton (1990) contends that the idea of generalization in qualitative studies should not be viewed in the same manner as studies using a quantitative methodology. My goal was to provide the reader with significant breadth and depth of information and insight.
into the research project so that the reader can draw his or her own conclusions about the
generalizability of the study. This study did not seek necessarily to find and establish
commonalities among all African American adults’ experiences with religious music and
learning, or to generalize to all African American Baptist Churches.

Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that the question of whether the findings of one
study are applicable to another is not the responsibility of the original researcher, but lies
with the one who would like to make the transfer. The research design, data collection and
data analysis have been clearly stated throughout this chapter and those that follow, so the
reader can judge for him or herself, the applicability of transfer to other populations.

Audit

In this study, an auditor was used to review all interview transcripts and the
corrections made by interviewees, field notes, and my codebook noting major themes and
categories from the data. This step was taken to ensure I followed proper procedures in
the methods of qualitative research. A copy of my complete dissertation including data
analysis was given to the auditor to establish reliability.

Summary

This chapter on the methodology provides the basic framework used in this study.
A review of related literature was included to support the methodology and my rationale
for choosing the design. The research design along with a thorough description of who
what, when, where and how the study took place, the methods of data collections and data
analysis have been fully explored. In addition, the design incorporated concerns for issues
of validity, credibility, generalizability, and transferability and concerns surrounding the
study. Each step of the study was carefully planned, researched, compared with the
literature on qualitative methodology to minimize errors and to demonstrate my
knowledge and preparation for this study.

A presentation of the data and analysis are presented in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter describes the data collected from the interviews. The descriptive data from the participants and preliminary analysis are presented here. The chapter begins by situating the experience and includes church observations, document analysis and the data collected from the five groups of participants of the church. The next section will present the interview data from the subject matter experts. The intent of this chapter is to let the participants voices be heard to present a rich description of the experience.

Situating the Experience

The purpose of this study was to understand the contribution of religious music to the learning of a sample of African American adults. The study sought to understand how religious music provides meaning for African American adults and in what ways that meaning influences the social, spiritual, cultural, political, and racial issues that they face in their lives. This study also attempted to determine whether religious music in the African American church encouraged or facilitated other types of learning.

In order to understand the phenomena under investigation, it is imperative that the
reader understands and be familiar with the context, in which this study of the religious musical lives of African American adults occurred. Therefore, I have provided a reasonably detailed description of the church and the participants. The participants selected for this study belonged to an African American Baptist church in Central Ohio. The church has a total membership of more than five hundred. This church has strong ties to the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc., the Ohio Baptist General Convention, the Ohio Baptist Convention, and other Baptist Associations as well as ties to a number of other religious and professional organizations within the community.

The church in this study sponsors numerous educational programs for children and adults. Among the educational offerings are Sunday Church School classes for all ages; Adult Bible study classes; Vacation Bible School; new member classes offering instruction in Baptist beliefs and teachings for all ages; a book club that meets regularly to discuss books by contemporary authors. The church offers other activities for members such as Prayer meetings, media ministry, and a newspaper that is devoted to church activities and to highlighting the accomplishments of numerous members and organizations within the church. The church has an outreach program that hosts a lunch program for the homeless and the disadvantaged. In addition, the church has its own credit union. Another area of the outreach ministry is the scholarship program that supports members, and their families to enable them to enroll in institutions of higher education.

The musical ministry of the church played a crucial role in the history of the church. Today, the church continues to have a strong musical program that includes numerous choirs representing a variety of musical styles, age groups, and musical abilities.
For instance, one choir is made up of mostly middle-aged to older men and women whose musical style can be viewed as more European, singing traditional hymns, anthems and spirituals; another choir composed of mainly older men and women who primarily sing traditional gospel songs; a women’s ensemble made up of primarily older women who also sing primarily traditional gospel songs; a men’s chorus comprised of primarily middle-aged and older men who sing traditional gospel music, two mixed ensembles, a choir of young and middle-aged men and women who sing chiefly contemporary gospel music; and another mixed ensemble a group of young, middle-aged and older men and women who sing songs of both traditional and contemporary gospel music, hymns, and rarely anthems; a Youth Choir (composed of primarily teenage boys and girls who sing a more contemporary style of gospel music); a children’s choir mostly school-age children twelve years old and under. The church has a numerous musicians and choir directors on staff.

The musical ministry is under the direction and supervision of a Minister of Music and an Assistant Minister of Music. In addition, the church has a music committee made up of choir directors, musicians, choir presidents, the pastor and a representative from the congregation who largely guides the musical life of the church.

Each choir is assigned one Sunday per month to furnish the music for the Sunday morning service as well as any afternoon or evening services for that Sunday. In addition, each choir sings for other occasions as needed. Generally, there is more than one choir providing music for the Sunday morning worship service. There are other occasions when members of the congregation will sing with a choir for special occasions, such as Men’s Day or Women’s Day program, but these persons may not be regular members of a choir.
Church Observations

The church observations for this study took place over a three-month period, October through December of 1997. Observations were made during Sunday morning worship services. However, as a member of the church for the past two years I was able to observe the Sunday worship services on numerous occasions prior to the three-month observation period. The general attendance for a Sunday worship service was approximately two to three hundred persons. A large majority of those in attendance was age sixty-five and over with some younger families and very few teenagers. Although, there were a significant number of small children in the church. The church membership is largely middle-class African Americans, many of whom did not live in the surrounding community. Although the church is located in an urban environment, most of the members of the church do not live in the surrounding community. The church is very distinctive from other Baptist churches. For instance, there is a greater emphasis on cognitive learning than affective learning during the worship service. During the observation period the congregation displayed little emotion and rarely responded demonstratively to the choirs or the others parts of the service. The church congregation as described by some participants in the study is "reserved," and "conservative." In addition, the congregation is bi-cultural.

The church used and strictly adhered to the printed programs in most instances. There was one instance during the observation period when there was a deviation from the pre-printed program, which was on the Sunday preceding Christmas. The pastor of the
church wished to have the choirs and congregation sing Christmas carols. In addition, he asked the congregation for suggestions on which carols they would like to sing. After making their selections, the pastor, choirs and congregation sang Christmas carols for approximately twenty minutes and then continued with the service as printed in the program. The musical selections for the choirs were also printed in the church bulletin and during the three-month period of observation did not change from the printed programs. The title of the songs, the composer’s name, the soloist’s name, if there was one, as well as the musicians and choir directors names were printed in the bulletin.

The Sunday morning worship service began at 10:45 a.m., with an organ prelude while the congregation was being seated. Following the organ prelude, was a processional by the choir. This involved the choirs marching down the center aisle of the church while singing. The processional song would vary depending on which of the eight choirs was singing that particular Sunday. On most Sunday mornings there were at least two choirs providing musical selections for the congregation accompanied by the pianist, church organist and several choir directors. The largest choir in the church has approximately twenty-five members while the smallest choir has about eight members. After the processional by the choirs, a prayer followed by a scripture reading was next on the program. At this point in the service, a small offering was taken to assist students pursuing further education. Following this portion of the morning worship service, the church announcements for the week were read and there was an official welcome to visitors by the members and pastor of the church. After the initial greeting of visitors, it was the
custom of this church to greet each guest and each other with a handshake or hug during this festive time. During the greeting and welcoming of guests, the organist would play the hymn, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms."

There was music played or sung by the choirs and congregation almost continually throughout the service, except during the time of the church announcements and the pastor’s sermons.

Following the special offering to assist students, there was time set aside for the children in the church. As the children would make their way to the front altar of the church, the musicians would play softly "Jesus Loves the Little Children." One or two female members of the church facilitated this time set aside for the children. The discussion would center on a Bible verse and a story complimenting the verse. Generally, the stories were practical and spoken in a manner the children could easily understand and comprehend. The children seemed to enjoy the special time spent with them and actively participated in the discussion. Following the discussion facilitated by the coordinators, the coordinators would ask the children for a volunteer to say the closing prayers and generally, several children would eagerly volunteer to pray for the church.

In addition to the choir’s musical selections for the day, the congregation would sing four selections from the church hymnal and several musical chants at various points in the worship service. One of the choir directors would lead and direct the choir and congregation during the moments of congregational singing.

After the time spent with the children, one of the choirs would sing a musical selection, followed by another scripture and prayer. The scripture would introduce the
pastor's theme and text for his sermon. The sermons were in general about twenty minutes in length. The sermons given by the pastor of the church would best be described as a lecture with concluding moments of high spiritedness. The response to the pastor's sermons was marked with very few verbal comments from the congregation, which is known as the call and response, a common phenomenon in the black church.

Following the sermon, the pastor extended an invitation to visitors and guests to join and become a part of the church. After the invitation, there was a prayer, known as the altar call prayer. The altar call prayer was for any member or guest of the church who desired prayer and those persons would come forward to the altar. The organist would play hymns softly in the background during the altar call prayer. As the service ended, there was a closing hymn sung by choirs and congregation. The conclusion of the service was marked with an organ postlude, as the congregation would depart from the church.

The songs sung at this church provided some insight into the musical messages heard by the congregation. With the exception of the offertory hymns, very few hymns were repeated during the three-month period of observation. The following is an example of the hymns sung on one Sunday morning at the church during the three-month period of observation. The hymns were sung by the choir and congregation and were a part of either the "Opening Hymn," "Offertory," the "Invitational Hymn" or the "Closing hymn."
Opening hymn: "When We All Get to Heaven" *
Offertory: "Blessed Quietness"*
Invitational Hymn: "There Is Power In the Blood" *
Closing Hymn: "Savior, Lead Me, Lest I Stray" *

*From the New National Baptist Hymnal (1977)

The Sunday morning worship services would generally conclude at 1:00 p.m.

Document Analysis

The official hymnal used by the church in this study was The New National Baptist Hymnal (1977) which was produced by the National Baptist Publishing Board of Nashville, Tennessee. R. H. Boyd founded the National Baptist Publishing Board in 1896. The publishing company sought to make Christian education materials written by African-Americans available to the African American religious community. The Publishing Board continues to offer numerous religious products available for churches and individuals. The official hymnal was over twenty years old and had not been updated since 1977. Its preface states that it has two purposes (a) "that of enhancing all aspects of our worship services" and (b) "the preservation of our great religious heritage and musical tastes for generations to come."

There are scriptural readings taken from the Bible, which were used in this church as part of the responsive readings with the minister reading one verse and the congregation alternately reading the next verse. The scriptural readings are listed according to titles such as God, the Creator; Faith, Crucifixion of Jesus, Christian Hope.
and The Model Prayer. Some of the scriptural readings are divided into topics for special occasions such as Thanksgiving or Mother’s Day. The hymnal also includes eighteen “Articles of Faith” which states, “The Articles of Faith which should be adopted by Baptist churches at the time of organization.” These Articles of Faith articulate a variety of Baptist viewpoints towards God, religion, sin, the Bible and other theological issues. For instance, nearly all of the articles begin with the phrase, “We believe that the scriptures teach that.”

An example of one of the “Articles of Faith” appears here to illuminate the theological viewpoint of Baptist doctrine:

We believe that the Scriptures teach that in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the Gospel, and that it’s proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith, and newness in life. (p. 607)

Included in the hymnal was the “official church covenant of the Baptist Church” *(See Appendix M).* The pastor and congregation read the church covenant on each first Sunday of the month during the Sunday morning worship service.

There are five hundred and forty-five musical compositions in the hymnal. The index to the hymnal is divided into a topical index, which divides songs by special holidays, special occasions or religious themes in the church. There are hymns for children and youth, Easter, Christmas, funeral services, marriage and family, hymns for comfort and commitment. In addition, there is also a general index, which list the hymns alphabetically by title or by the first line of the hymn.
Although the National Baptist Publishing Board, an African American owned corporation produced the hymnal, the hymnal contained only twenty-five songs listed as spirituals. Among the spirituals included are, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” “Wade in the Water,” “Deep River,” “Steal Away to Jesus,” and “Go Down, Moses.” However, it should be noted that of the twenty-five spirituals listed, only the following are identified as “American Negro Melody”; Steal Away to Jesus, My Lord, What a Morning, Great Day, Great Day. There is one selection listed as African, which is “Kum Ba Yah.” However, there are other African American writers included in the hymnal.

According to Spencer (1992), African American hymn writers are included in the New National Baptist Hymnal. Among them he notes, Doris Akers, Theodore Frye, C.P. Jones, Magnolia Lewis-Butts, Charles A. Tindley, Lucie E. Campbell, Gordon Blaine Hancock, Kenneth Morris, Roberta Martin, and Margaret Douroux, to name a few. Many well-known white hymn writers are included such as Fannie J. Crosby, Issac Watts, Charles Wesley, Johnson Oatman, Jr. and John W. Work, to name a few.

Gospel Songs by the African American Gospel Legend, Thomas Dorsey included: “I Am on the Battlefield for My Lord,” “Take My Hand, Precious Lord,” “Old Ship of Zion,” “The Lord Will Make A Way Somehow,” “My Desire,” “There’ll Be Peace In The Valley,” and “When I’ve Done My Best.” Songs by more contemporary artists such as Andre Couch are also included in the hymnal.

In addition, the official hymnal contains the Negro National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” Patriotic songs are included such as “My Country ’Tis of Thee,” and the
“Star Spangled Banner.” “O Beautiful for Spacious Skies” is included. “Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “God Bless America.” “America the Beautiful” are also included in the New National Baptist Hymnal (1977).

Some of the melodies by well-known composers such as Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Franz Joseph Haydn, George F. Handel, and Ralph Vaughn Williams are included in the church hymnal.

Summary

The observation of the Sunday morning church worship services provided additional insight into the question under investigation: Is religious music educative in the African American church? The music in this church was a significant portion of the worship service that allowed churchgoer’s moments of quiet reflection, moments of praise and worship, and musical moments that enhanced the sermon. The church provided a diverse selection in the styles of music offered.

The hymnal offered additional insight into Baptist doctrines and beliefs. The church covenant contained in the hymnal provided information regarding the Baptist religious and worldview. Other important data from the official church hymnal was the “Articles of Faith” which served to implement and sustain Baptist religious beliefs. The next section will present the data collected from the five groups of participants from the church.
The Church

This section describes and analyzes the data gathered from the interviews conducted with the members of the church. The participants are referred to according to their role in the church, (a) choir members, (b) non-choir members, (c) musicians, (d) the pastor of the church, and (e) Director of Christian Education. Pseudonyms will be used throughout this section of the study. Therefore, the names of individual participants were and distinguishing characteristics were changed to protect confidentiality.

During the collection of data, my role as researcher was perceived by many persons in the study as that of an evaluator, which caused some interference with data collection. Although, I had explained the nature of my study to the participants and supplied them with my advisor’s name and telephone number, there was still some reluctance from some participants to participate fully in the study. Some of the participants thought that the pastor hired me to make recommendations for changes in the music department. This situation created some tension in the interviews that I had not anticipated. Before the study, I was not aware of some of the concerns and conflicts surrounding the music department, therefore, this situation impacted the data collected.

Choir Members

The choir member’s focus groups consisted of twenty-five members of the church who engaged in singing by taking part in one of the adult choirs. There were four different focus group interviews conducted, which yielded twenty-five participants. The participants
from this group represented persons of various ages, with the majority indicating they were 50 years of age or older. There were six males and nineteen females from the eight choirs in this study. Ten participants in this group indicated they were college graduates, while twelve had some college education and two had some type of graduate degree. One person in this group said high school was the highest level of education completed. The participants in the group had participated in their current church choir ranging from one year to thirteen years or more. Of the twenty-five participants in the group many (13) had little or no formal music training (0-1 year), while three indicated they had two to five years of training, and nine indicated having five or more years of formal music training.

Non-Choir Members

The non-choir members' focus groups consisted of thirteen members of the congregation who do not currently participate in any musical organization within the Church. Although, during the course of the interviews many of the participants indicated they had participated in a musical group or choir at some time in their lives. There were three separate focus group interviews conducted, which yielded thirteen participants. This group was composed of six males and seven females. Three held a graduate degree. Four were college graduates, while five indicated they had some college education. One person in this group indicated that high school was the highest level of education completed.
Musicians

Musicians consisted of the Minister of Music and the Assistant Minister of Music (these are paid positions), who were responsible for selection of the music as well as the teaching of music to the choirs and congregation. Also, included were various choir directors, organists, pianists, for a total of eight persons. These individuals are primarily responsible for the adult choirs and the children’s choir within the Church. Of this group, four were males and four females. This group also represented the most diversity in terms of age. Two of the participants were in their thirties, two were in their forties, one was between the ages of fifty and sixty-four and three were sixty-five or older. Of this group, seven indicated they had five years or more of musical training, only one indicated having little or no formal musical training. Six of the musicians were college graduates. One person indicated that high school was the highest level of education completed, and one person left the question regarding educational level blank. All of the interviews with the musicians were conducted individually, except in the case of a husband and wife team who elected to be interviewed together.

Pastor of the Church

The pastor of the church was interviewed individually in his church office. He had served as pastor of this congregation for almost five years, and he previously served as pastor of another Baptist church in Georgia for more than fifteen years. The pastor of the
church is a male. At the time of the research, he was fifty-two years of age. He holds a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees and an earned doctorate degree in theology. In addition, he indicated he had some formal musical training.

**Director of Christian Education**

A clergy member was responsible for the Christian Education program in the church. He is a male over the age of sixty-five. He also indicated he had some college education. He had indicated he had participated in church choirs for approximately four to seven years, although he did not participate in a musical organization within the church at the present time. He stated he had little to no formal musical training. The clergy member was interviewed individually in a small chapel in the church for this study.

Six major themes were discovered during the initial analysis of the data: (a) musical background, (b) choir participation, (c) "softening the muscles of your heart", (d) religious music and learning, (e) learning. Each major theme contains several sub-themes, which are identified within the major theme.

**Musical Background**

The musical backgrounds of the participants were important to the study to understand the musical experiences of the participants in this study. Musical background refers to any information that is relevant to understanding their thoughts, attitudes and feelings about music. In addition, I wanted to know information such as musical training,
whether they play a musical instrument, childhood experiences with music, adolescent or adult experiences with music. The sub-themes included in this section are childhood experiences, musical strand, and formal training.

**Childhood Experiences**

The majority of the choir members (nineteen) had some early musical experiences that helped shaped their present attitudes toward music. Most of the participants in this study described similar stories. For instance, one participated stated:

"I started piano lessons when I was seven and continued through my college years. And I started voice lessons when I was in high school through my college years. Didn't graduate from college, but it was going to be my major until I actually got into it. Then I decided I would make it a minor. But I still studied piano and voice." (Dottie, choir member)

Yet, another participant explained:

"Well, I don't know that my story would be any less typical. I started in music at the early age of six where I became a participant. In school, you know at least in my school, one of the courses that was mandatory was learning to read music." (Bob, choir member)

Toni shared how her involvement in the choir resulted in her bringing her parents back to the church.

"Can't remember too far back, but I guess my first memory of really understanding gospel music was when I was about 12. I was living in New York and we weren't really going to church at that time. And a neighbor invited me to go. She heard me singing or something. And she invited me to come to church. And that was the first time that I can remember singing in the choir. And then of course that experience brought my family back to church. Not that we didn't go, but we had only lived there maybe a year or so. And we weren't really involved in church. So that, by me going, you know, and if I was singing a solo or something."
and I came home and I would tell my parents. Well, come to church. I'm singing a solo. And they came to church. And I basically got my family back in church. (Toni, choir member)

Alfre recalled how she discovered her voice at about the age of 10

We were singing in the choir in school. And then I started singing in the church in the junior choir. And went on to the young adult choir in church. And you know, sang solos. Then I stopped. I didn't do a whole lot. Once I went to college, a lot of things stopped. And I sang here and there, for different functions, that kind of thing. But I never pursued singing, because I was a little shy. (Alfre, choir member)

The musical backgrounds of the non-choir members were similar to those of the choir members. However, nearly all of the non-choir members (ten) thought their musical backgrounds were inconsequential, although all of them reported they had participated in a church or school choir at some point in their lives. One of the participants, Courtney, had studied music in childhood and majored in music in college, but did not participate in any musical organization in the church.

I started piano lessons at age 4. I studied under my mother's piano teacher, unfortunately. [I say unfortunately,] because she assumed that I was the same type of student as my mother. [But] I was simply memorizing, and I'd go back to my lesson and play it for her beautifully, I wasn't reading one note. I'd go home and pick out each one, figure it out. And then memorize it and the manual memory, the physical memory, I was just blessed. (Courtney, non-choir member)

Nearly all of the other non-choir members had a similar response as Scott's, who said, "I don't play an instrument. I was in the choir when I was small. But don't have any formal music training."
As one might imagine, the musicians of the church had a significant amount of musical history and background. All of the musicians described their musical backgrounds as having begun in childhood.

The minister of music, Elaine, described how her early exposure to church music began.

My experience as a church musician started at the age of 12 in Arkansas. I played for various choirs in Arkansas and Mississippi. Those two states are right across from each other. So growing up my teen years, that’s how I got my extra spending money. Most of those churches were small and they had church every other Sunday.

Elaine studied music in college and later taught music at both the elementary and high school levels. She then went back to teach music at her old high school in Arkansas.

Aaron, the assistant minister of music described his early musical influences.

I guess I first became a musician in the church when I was with the children’s choir, which is roughly about, I must have been in about the sixth grade. When I started playing for them, I had been a member since I was in kindergarten, so I guess I’ve always been involved in church music.

Anna, the church pianist, knew at an early age that she wanted to be a musician.

Well, I really started when I was three. And the only reason why I started was my first music teacher which turned out to be my aunt later on, heard me sing at a program for Blacks at that time. And it was a tea and she heard me sing. I sang, “God Bless America,” because I loved Kate Smith... And that’s when I started piano lessons.

The oldest of nine children, Anna spoke about the positive encouragement she received from family and friends recalling fondly how her grandmother, who did not have any musical training, helped her with her music.

My grandmother would take me to my lessons. Every time I’d go, she’d always tell me you’ve got to remember, before we left home, she would always remind me, you’ve got to remember your music lesson. You’ve got
to remember this piece of music... She knew nothing about it. But all she knew was, she said well now where is the part in this particular piece that you didn't know, or you know are having trouble with? I would show her and she would open it up and put it under my pillow. And she said go to sleep now.

Anna told me she would often pass by the church as a child and dream of playing in this church one day. Her enthusiasm for her music was evident throughout the interview.

Charles, a man in his eighties and very active in the church and community, served as the director of the largest choir in the church. He had studied piano at the age of ten, but he told me he enjoyed singing, a lot more. Like the others, he spoke passionately about his association with music in the church.

I've been singing ever since I could remember. And of course before you had television, and you didn't have a problem with churches, because people didn't have anything else to do or where to go. And so in the afternoon you had teas and things. So coming up as a boy, people would find out that I sang. And so I'd be asked to sing at the teas. Sometimes I'd go to two or three teas on a Sunday afternoon. And boy, didn't have anything else to do. Go home from church and eat dinner and then I would be off to a tea.

The Director of Christian Education, Rev. Daniels, a man over the age of sixty-five, indicated he had little or no formal music training. However, he indicated he had participated in a church choir as a child. His musical experiences revolved around his love and appreciation of music. Rev. Daniels conjectured that in his experience music played a significant role in his life and in the church.
Musical Strand

The musical strand refers to the importance of family members, friends, and the church in the musical background and development for the participants in this study. For instance, one participant discussed the musical strand that runs in her family, which helped draw her to the choir.

My whole family is musical. We are not musicians. But my father believe it or not used to play the guitar. And my mother played a ukulele. And my aunt and uncle used to come up and sing duets. And my mother always had us on somebody’s program doing something, singing. (Nina, choir member)

Louis remembered his early start and explained:

I think when I look back how I got started in classical music was my grandmother. I was in the early stages of Sunday school. And after church we would go home and of course my grandmother being from the south, she believed in not working on Sunday. But she cooked her dinner on Saturday and of course, we would warm it up on Sunday to eat. And then in the afternoon after we had cleaned up the kitchen, the New York symphony orchestra comes on and my grandmother and I would sit and listen to that program every Sunday. And of course, that’s where I learned to appreciate classical music. (Louis, choir member)

Tim and Tina, a husband and wife team was responsible for one of the choirs. As young married parents in their thirties, Tim was the pianist for the choir while his wife Tina served as the choir director. However, they both shared responsibility for the choir. Tim and Tina told me they met while singing in an ensemble in high school.
Tim and Tina felt their family's impact on their musical development. Each crediting their parents for their contribution and for their appreciation of music. Tina started her formal musical training in elementary school and continued to participate in musical activities in college.

Well, as far as my musical background, as I said I grew up in a family where music was very significant. And in fact, my family has a lot of vocal musicians in it. My mother sang, my grandmother sang, my you know, on and on back. In fact, my great grandfather wrote a hymnal. He and his wife co-wrote a hymnal. And I didn't know that at first, but we have always had a very musical family where we were always singing and listening to music. (Tina, musician)

Tim, a bassoonist and pianist who played with the university symphony orchestra during his college days, holds a degree in music. During his college career, he sang in his college choir and served as assistant choir director. He accompanied numerous choirs and churches and composed music. Like Tim and Tina, Tim's parents also met while singing in a choir together. Tim described the impact of family on his musical background:

My mother was a music major in college. A fabulous singer. My grandfather, her father, was a fabulous singer. In fact, in his hometown he had a half-hour radio program where we would sing and do a variety of things. My father sang, and that's how in fact my mother [and he] finally met, singing in a choir, a local choir where they sang predominately spirituals, anthems, and those kinds of things. So I kind of got the bug at a very [young] age. (Tim, musician)

Pauline, a woman in her eighties, had served in the church since she was a small child. She is a classically trained musician, whom she told me, the church sent to school to study organ. A very active woman in the church, Pauline once served as Minister of
Music, responsible for the eight choirs, secretary of the church and the church organist, all at the same time. She currently served as pianist for two choirs in the church.

However, as Pauline explained, she always wanted to be a church musician.

My daddy was a musician, my momma was musician . . . And of course, the music was in me I guess with Daddy and Mother, Daddy was a sort of jazz musician, Mother was the church [musician]. But I veered to the church. I liked the church music better . . . When I was a kid, about eight or nine years old, I told Mother at the time I was ready to join the church, I wanted to be a Christian. And if she didn't let me come in at that time, I don't think I would have ever went this way. Christian, or into church music. I would probably went with a veer to the left. But I just had that inkling when I was [a] child. (Pauline, musician)

Tuck had been a choir director for only three years. He explained he had significant family ties to the church. He told me, "And it feels good to be able to be active and a part of the church that you have some roots in."

Tuck explained how his love for music was nurtured early on by his family. He said,

On my father's side, we stayed in the south for a long period of time in the summers. And down there, as you may know, where there are the small communities, they are really church-oriented. So I kind of grew up there within those communities. Family communities. Kind of gained that sense of attachment to music at that point. So it just transcended from adolescence on up to young adult and adult years. (Tuck, musician)

Formal Training

Formal training refers to the process of having studied music privately, or musical training in school or college or some other formal experience in which participants were involved in learning the rudiments of music.
Although, Lucinda spoke of important family influences in her musical development. She added her feelings about studying music at a local college. She said,

I have had some formal training. I was a voice student at a local university for years while I was in high school. My mother always thought that I was going to be the next Marian Anderson. I was glad she felt that way, but it wasn’t a reality for me.... But I was glad she insisted that I take voice lessons.... My uncle was a professor of music and I did take [lessons] from him a short time. But you know how family members are—better to take [lessons] from somebody else. And yet you don’t have the emotions with family members that you do with outside members, or should I say it the opposite, because when I was taking voice at the local university, I didn’t have any real emotional ties there. In fact, I was more uncomfortable than anything else, most of the time... It was the times. I saw no connection between school, the teacher, and my family and what I was doing and what I was going to do before. I just couldn’t get any connection. (Lucinda, choir member)

John had also studied music, and shared with me his inability to understand what he was studying until later.

I didn’t understand what the teachers [were] trying to tell me about the music until I got out of class. Then it finally dawned on me what they were trying to tell me about the music and I went to the college school of music and I studied there for a couple of years. (John, non-choir member)

Charles studied music throughout his years in high school. He took voice lessons and sang extensively during that time. However, Charles spoke of an incident that occurred, which almost kept him from his dream of becoming a professional singer.

According to Charles, when the opportunity for a scholarship to a music school became available, the principal of the school did not want him to receive the award.

Because I’m black. And she did not like me. She told me, in her office, she said if I could have selected anyone else, I would have. But she knew that I was the best person she could use. So I went on up there [to the music school] on a scholarship. Now it doesn’t sound like a lot, but it was $200 a year which was a whole lot then—in ’36.
Charles gave numerous recitals in black churches, which also helped him to finance his college education. He recalled being the first black student to study music at a school in New York City. While in New York City, he toured with an opera company and sang for churches and with other choirs.

All of the musicians, with the exception of Tuck had formal musical training, although Tuck indicated he had no formal musical training, he explained his instinctive love for music.

As you see, I got no formal music training. It comes well, that's that thing you had inside. But I don't know how to put this. Having grown up in that environment, where everybody down there [in the south] can sing and when they start singing, they wouldn't let me sing. How good they were. And so, I don't know, it was just that it's that feeling.

I asked Tuck why he felt he had been successful with the choir, although he had no formal training and he explained.

God needs the work done, and He's asked me to do it, you know what I mean? He's God, since it's for His glory and it ain't about me, then He's going to see that the work I do for Him. I think He's going to do what He needs to do. And I guess that's about it.

Tuck questioned the value of formal training particularly with singers, and said that perhaps something gets lost when too much attention is paid to technical accuracy at the expense of inspiration.

It took folks who were truly blessed by God, who could carry songs like that (soul singing, like Mahalia Jackson), you know, what I mean? And that kind of got lost with all this formal training we're talking about, right? So it's no more about depending upon God to lead you through this song, and you know I mean everybody coming in on time like it used to be.
When I asked Tuck what techniques and skills he used to work with the choir, he explained the importance of his having a “feel for it,” then intuitively and creatively learning what he must.

Mine would be more personally based than more training, more skilled kinds of training. But I work at what I do. Only because I got a sense for it, you got to feel it. I think there's a difference between formal training and I don't even know what the other word might be... But when you have no formal training, then you kind of rely on what we talked about earlier. What you know, what you've heard, putting it together with what you got to work with, you know what I mean. So you've got to be a little more creative, I believe, than depend upon some formal training. (Tuck, musician)

Anna also spoke of learning musical skills well enough to play songs that are not written, or “by ear.” She said she liked to prepare herself for all possible occasions, because one never knows when a particular skill may be most needed. For instance, she said,

I have tried to learn every type of music possible, every type of song possible. You got to do these things. You can't just play what you like to hear and what the church likes to hear. Because you may have a church coming in here that's going to have a choir, [and say] we don't have a pianist, can you play for us? Well they're going to say, Oh Lord, something that's... and if I can only play by [written] music, I can't do that.

Although the pastor of the church, Rev. Issac did not have a strong musical background, in his opinion, he demonstrated an appreciation for music. He explained that he had some formal training, but admitted he is an admirer of music and musicians. Rev. Issac says,

I’ve always wanted music to play more of a role in my life. To be honest, it wasn’t my desire to be a minister. I really wanted to sing. But it was never a gift of mine. In spite of the fact, when I went to college, I joined the
choir. And I was the worst, had the worst voice in the choir. And I went to the director of the choir, and said to him, I said, I'm going to get out of the choir because, I'm just not helping the choir. I am not a good singer. I mean, as much as I wanted to sing I just wasn't a singer. And so I love music, in spite of my love for it. And I worked hard at trying to be better at it. And I think I am better now than I've ever been. But I wish I could make music. But that's not been. But I love what it means and those who do make it and can make it.

(Rev. Issac. pastor)

Summary

This section examined the musical backgrounds of the choir members, non-choir members, musicians, the pastor of the church and Christian Education Director. The sub-themes in this section were (a) childhood experiences, (b) musical strand, and (c) formal training. The data indicate that participants started their musical experiences very early in life, primarily in childhood. For many, their initial start was in the children's choir of the church. While some continued their musical participation during their teen years, others decided not to continue and have not participated in any other musical organizations. The significance of these early experiences along with strong family influences and the support from the church were essential to the musical development and growth of these participants.

The data indicate whether participants started their musical experiences as a child or developed a love for music later in life, one thing was true for all the participants: they appreciated and enjoyed music as an art form.
Choir Participation

The theme of choir participation includes the sub-themes: (a) feeling guilty, (b) camaraderie and unity, (c) fulfills a need, and (d) service to God and to the church.

This section explores the reasons for participation in a church choir. Those who currently participated in one of the eight choirs in the church were asked to describe their involvement in musical activities in the church and why they participated in a choir.

Feeling Guilty

When asked to describe their involvement in musical activities in the church and why they participated, Alfre said the reason she participated was "partly because I would feel guilty." She explained she did not enjoy the overall choir experience sometimes and noted that her involvement in the church choir has been very sporadic. Being a soprano, she said, "you learn your part and then you've got to sit there for God knows how long for everybody else to learn their part."

However, most choir members stated different reasons.

Comradeship and Unity

Beatrice praised the camaraderie that draws her to the choir.

Well, you know, in our choir I think that, let's see how can I put it, the comradeship in the choir is one of the big features it has. And you deal with, for the most, a group of people, who are, and I don't want to sound snobbish or anything like that, who you relate to and you are on their same level for the most part. You understand what I'm saying? (Beatrice, choir member)
H. P. enjoyed the sharing and bonding experiences with other choir members, which gave him a sense of belonging, a place where he felt supported and encouraged. He viewed choir as a social event and recalled one specific event that established a bond with his fellow choir members.

I remember one day upstairs on Friday nights, men's chorus practice on Friday night. I was practicing a song, I had the lead. And my 8-year-old son just kept laughing and laughing and laughing. He thought it was the funniest thing in the world for me to lead this song. And all the men turned around and looked at him at the same time after the music was over. And they all said almost at the same time—said to my son in this choir we're here to support and encourage. And that just stuck with me. And I notice that whenever we sing, some people can't stand for you to look them in the eye when they're singing. But they always find a way to let you know that, they'll say something, they'll clap or they'll do something, to let you know that they're there and they support you and encourage you. And the other thing that I like is that... some people go to happy hour. They [the male choir] come to choir. So it's a social thing. For me, every choir I've been in except for one, it's been a time for me for fellowship. (H. P., choir member)

Donna shared her reasons for joining a particular choir over the other seven choirs:

When I first came here, I wanted to get in the choirs that had the least amount of people because I wanted to build them up. So the ones with the large numbers, I said they don't need my voice. So I tried to help out the ones that needed my voice. And it's just been beautiful. He's [God] just been increasing my volume and my voice and the music within me is just coming together. Each and every Sunday I can just feel myself getting stronger. The way I think the Lord want me to go... It's just like family. The smaller [the] choir, the more family atmosphere. You find out what the other person needs, the help that you can [give] them. And I think find out why are you in the choir? What has the Lord done for you? (Donna, choir member)
Fills a Spiritual Need

Bob told me others often criticized him for spending more time in choir rehearsals than on his financial or economic well being. A member of three choirs in the church, Bob told me he was also in another choir outside the church that sings only spirituals. Bob explained what singing in the choir did for him.

It fills a spiritual need I have. A void in my life. I've had people ask me why is it I rehearse or take, spend the time in rehearsing in the choir when there are other things I could do to better afford my material needs. Because it's not something you do, and it's hard to answer them in a way that they could understand. It just doesn't seem to be anything that would, as far as they're concerned, would benefit me, but it does. It lifts me when I'm down. And just gives me a little more strength to meet the problems of the day.
(Bob, choir member)

Edgar spoke about the need for young people to learn about the arts, in general, and he saw choir as one way of exposing them to the arts and awakening the love of music in them.

I regret the fact that so many of our young people have not had any musical training and the schools now don't have the same type of things that they used to have in the arts field. That they are missing out on so much and so much is being lost because they aren't going to have enough appreciation for it. Hopefully, the ones that do get that privilege will foster it in their child and that way it can be passed down, the love of music.
(Edgar, choir member)

Service to the Church

Several of the twenty-five choir members said singing in the choir was their way of contributing to the church. For instance Joy said, "I just felt that that [singing] was one way that I could serve in the church."
Like Joy, Toni considered singing in the choir a way of giving something of herself to the church.

I love to sing. And I feel like I give something back from singing God's music. I feel something from that. And it's also a meditation for me because of the words of the song. That, it helps me through the day... Well, I think that you have to remember that when you're singing in a choir, that's important. It's not a job. You are serving God through song and you have to take it seriously. (Toni, choir member)

Summary

This section on choir participation was a discussion on the various reasons choir members gave for their participation in a musical organization. A sense of bonding, comradeship, and developing a sense of unity with other choir members were reasons cited for participation. The choir members contend that the music enhanced their spirit of unity as they worked toward a common goal, such as when they presented a musical concert for the church or when they have worked diligently on a difficult piece of music for which they were proud of their accomplishment. Others cited their reason for choir participation was a way for them fill a spiritual need and to be of service to God and to the church.

“Softening the muscles of your heart”

The sub-themes in this section are (a) you're not in it by yourself (b) coping mechanism and (c) if a song is well sung. I asked participants to describe how religious
music made them feel, everyone agreed that they had positive feelings towards religious music. The responses to the question of how do religious music make you feel are described in this section.

You're not in it by yourself

When asked to describe how religious music made them feel and if they could describe that feeling, Denise, a single mother who described herself as "struggling to raise my boys" said,

I think religious music makes you feel like you're not in it by yourself. Like you can relate to the trials and tests that you're going through. And it kind of makes you realize that you're not the only one going through it. And also it kind of makes your spirit happy. It kind of, you know, puts you on a different level. Kind of eases your mind and makes you relax. (Denise, choir member)

Another participant who could hardly contain her enthusiasm just thinking about the feeling could not understand why other people did not have the same kind of emotional reaction. She tried to put into words her passion for music.

Because a lot of our ancestors, the hymns and gospel music, that's what they would sing, you can feel their pain and then their happiness. It's just the words, I don't know, maybe that's why I can't understand why some people can just say the words and can't feel it. I look at their expressions when I see them singing and I [say] this is such beautiful music, so meaningful. I mean the words are so beautiful. Why can't they feel it within them? Let it show? (Donna, choir member)

One participant noted that music engaged the emotions more than the spoken word, although this would depend on the delivery and charisma of the speaker.

I'm speaking from a, and I don't want to use the word Afro-American, but from the standpoint of, well, I will have to use Afro-American. And I guess that's the reason the contemporary music has done as much as it has done.
is emotions. And many times people don't get into emotions just listening to somebody talk. Now there are some people who can be very emotional like Martin Luther King and Jesse Jackson. But now somebody else talking, like if I would talk to somebody, they'd go to sleep. Well, [people would say] when are they going to get through? Or something like that. But now if you're singing, they may do that when I'm singing too. But in most instances, they will listen to what the word is. And they will get into the music. (Louis, choir member)

**Coping Mechanism**

Some participants talked about how much they value music, or of the times when music played a critical role in their lives. For instance, Courtney remembered how music saw her through her parent's divorce.

> Anytime there's a crisis I sing and anytime I have those depressing situations, it's music. I know during my teenage years, during my parents' divorce, one of the most difficult times in my life, that's how I kind of maintained my own personal sanity. Through music. And I expressed and released, and music was what kept me on the straight and narrow. (Courtney, non-choir member)

Although not related directly to religious music, John recalled the days following his duty in the military during World War II and the music that helped during a crisis.

> I had an experience in my life. It was Billy Eckstein who used to sing "Cottage for sale." Because in a low point in life right after World War II, something occurred in my life. And that was a song that just wanted to make me cry, but it helped me with a struggle I was going through at that time. I always remember that, Billy Eckstein used to sing a song called "Cottage for sale." (John, non-choir member)

Similar to John, Rev. Daniel spoke of specific times in his life when music was very instrumental in coping with a difficult situation. For instance, he recalled his time spent as a marine during the Second World War.

> I'm a W W II person. And we survived I think, I survived and whether this would be the testimony of many of my comrades or not, I don't know, but
just being around them and being exposed during World War II, music is the thing that encouraged us and kept us going. The old patriotic songs that we sang, "The Marine Hymn," the Air Force song, "Up We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder, Flying High into the Sun." I still remember those words. And the caisson song, "The Caissons Marching along." And then those songs about home. And the songs about loved ones missed. "The White Cliffs of Dover." And "Don't Sit under the Apple Tree with Anyone Else but Me." So there were, music. I think music for GIs became just a part of our existence from day to day. And then we looked forward to the time when we could get to a staging area away from combat, where there were loudspeakers or just the armed forces radio programs we could pick up, where the disk jockeys were playing the old familiar song . . . After crawling around in the mud, you know, missing meals, and that type of thing, yeah, it was a big boost . . . It was a remarkable experience now that I think about it. (Rev. Daniels, Christian Education Director)

Scott recalled the death of relative once, when a particular song stuck with him, because he associated it with a death.

I remember when I was really young, I had a cousin that was killed. She was 12. She was the only child of my uncle and aunt. And I remember singing "The Upper Room." And that has stayed with me. And that's been probably over 45 years and I can still hear the singing. (Scott, non-choir member)

After the death of his parents, Tuck explained that music was very helpful in his grief. He described that time as "when I couldn't get a word out. I didn't want to sing at all." However, he explained, "music becomes a way of softening the muscles of your heart, as it were. You know, so that you can be more receptive to whatever needs to go on in your life, because that was a painful period."

Pauline spoke of the soothing effect that music has on people. She said,

It does something to you. The music soothes. Like I said, when the king would be upset, he had David come in and play. Just something soothes, calms down. They say music soothes the lion. Said there's just something about music, it's just refreshing, you can't explain it. (Pauline, musician)
Rev. Daniels also explained religious music was most important to people in times of crisis.

Church music is important I think to those of us who are family people, those of us who find ourselves involved in difficult times and difficult periods. Maybe the loss of a job or loss of a loved one, loss of a child. It's those periods in our lives, or illness, when a song just comes to mind. And I would venture to say "Amazing Grace" is a song that has been sung more than any other song in the church. And "Amazing Grace" has a way of just lifting a person's spirit regardless of the situation. There's just something about that song that just lets us know that whatever the difficulty is, God is there to help us deal with it. His amazing grace is there to help us through it. How many times have I hummed and sang and I said Lord, I don't know which way to turn. And I've done all I can do and it's in your hands now.

(Rev. Daniels, Christian Education Director)

"If a Song is Well Sung"

While some participants felt the healing or therapeutic quality of religious music, others noted that their feelings with respect to religious music was dependent on their mood for the day, or some other factor such as who the performer was and how well the music was performed. For instance, Nina tried to describe the "good feeling" she gets from music.

But I have to feel it. And I don't always feel the music, but I mean I do get a good feeling when I do. It may depend upon maybe what I'm going through for that day. And then again, it may be the words... But I think it depends a lot on how I come in that day for the feeling. If the words and the music particularly fit my need for that day, it might be a little more. I might have a little more feeling about it. But I try to feel all the music.

(Nina, choir member)

Tina spoke of the impact of a singer or choir on the presentation of the musical message. She said,

If a song is well sung, then I think it has a lot more to do with how the song is sung in conjunction with the message. You know, sometimes
unfortunately, the message gets kind of lost in the delivery of the message. I think if it's well delivered, if the song is well sung, then no matter what kind of song it is, it really does minister to me. (Tina, musician)

“If a song is done well” was a phrase I heard repeatedly throughout this study. Participants noted that almost any religious music could speak to them or reach them, “if it is done well.” The choir members discussed the singer’s role as a believer in God and the impact a singer can produce in transmitting the musical message. The choir members and the musicians were most appreciative of a certain musical aesthetic. While the non-choir members shared the same sentiments, they had a difficult time defining the concept of “If a song is well sung” they nevertheless felt they would be able to identify this quality when it occurred.

Nearly all of the participants spoke of the impact religious music had on their attitude toward the sermon or the worship service. The data showed some participants have learned and developed an attitude to certain songs, certain genres of religious music, and performers because of the emotion and feelings that accompanied the music. Clearly, the emotional impact of religious music had an affect on people’s attitude toward God, religion, church and feelings about themselves.

Summary

This section discussed the range of emotions and feelings participants had towards religious music. The sub-themes reflected the participant’s attitudes toward religious music. For them, the music represented a freeing from the circumstances of life. One participant reflected on the cultural significance of the music and the struggles African
Americans have faced and survived which had an immense impact on her. While some participants described their feelings as liberating, still others described religious music as almost therapeutic or at least able to help them cope with painful situations.

The role of the singer and musician contributed in the interpretation of the music, which may affect the delivery of the message or its influence on the listener’s feelings and attitudes toward the musical selection.

Religious Music and Learning

The data indicate that African American adults do learn from religious music and that their knowledge of certain biblical truths are based on and articulated in song literature. This section will examine the types of learning from religious music participants discussed in the study. The following sub-themes are noted: (a) subconscious mind never sleeps, (b) incidental learning, (c) understanding the source, (d) theology and (e) religious music as a teaching tool.

Subconscious mind never sleeps

The participants in this study had a variety of responses when asked what they learned from religious music. Only one participant in the study indicated he did not learn anything from religious music.

Robert said,

I haven't learned anything, but it has inspired me. Where you learn is from reading the Bible, being in church or things like that, Sunday school. That's where I've learned things. I mean, again some of the scriptures are repeated
in the songs. But that's not where I learned it. That's just a personal note. When I listen to gospel music, it's purely just inspirational. (Robert, non-choir member)

Although Rev. Daniels emphasized the importance of music in the church, he clarified why music did not provide a significant learning experience:

Maybe some people can identify with words in a song that have a scripture basis. But too many of our songs today don't have scriptural basis. Especially in the gospel field. In the gospel field, you don't find the songs with scriptural basis. The anthems, yes. Those were pulled right out of the Bible. But learning from music, I think it's more or less an emotional experience that God in his own way can control a person's life. But I'm sure that the spirit is saying, well, I brought you to this point, but just move up a little bit higher. Don't become stagnant at that particular point. In order to move up higher, you need the preaching and you need Bible study, as I understand it. And this has been, part of my approach to the church, ever since I became aware of what I believe is the purpose of the church. (Rev. Daniels, Christian Education Director)

However, all of the other participants noted they did learn something from religious music.

Toni shared her learning experiences in church:

I think people learn about life. I think they learn about themselves. At least speaking on my point of view. But I think I learn a lot about myself through music, especially gospel music. Because, it speaks to the soul... Everybody's taking a different message. (Toni, choir member)

Alfre thought of music in terms of nourishing her subconscious. She felt that there were things she learned, without even realizing that she was learning them.

I think [music] can pierce and touch the hearts of men and women. And I was saying earlier, your subconscious mind never sleeps and the things that you take in stay in there. Whether you pull them up consciously or not. And so I think a lot of the [time], where there's a positive, clean, if nothing else. And they are encouraging certain things like, the verse that talks about how you can do all things through God, nothing is impossible. Those kinds of positive things coming into your mind is really good and one holds onto
something like that, it really makes a difference in life... And it gets into your ear, it gets into your soul, it becomes a belief for you and you act on what you really believe. So definitely, I think it can change a heart. (Alfre, choir member)

H.P. spoke from the experience of teaching Sunday school.

See, I teach in Sunday school, too. And I've only been teaching Sunday school for two years, so I'm learning a lot myself. But I notice that when people are talking, some people can quote phrases everywhere in the Bible. And then some people quote passages of songs. And they'll say well, I can't remember that phrase, but they'll bring the song up. (H.P., choir member)

Jeff, who described himself as a “passive listener” and one who “lets the music work on me,” told me that the learning that occurred through music would cease after you reached a certain point. He explained learning from religious music only in terms of song lyrics.

I think after awhile that educational value would leave though. Because let's say you had a song that you've been singing for 10 years now, you know it by heart. I don't think there's any educational value out of it unless you learn a new song. That new song, the process that you would use, the time spent to learn that new song, would then keep that. So educational, not each and every time, but at first, or in the beginning, or initially. (Jeff, non-choir member)

As we discussed music, learning and church worship, some non-choir members raised the question of liturgical dance as a method of learning and the use of movement.

Courtney reminded us of the necessity to recognize different means of learning.

The seven intelligences that everybody's talking about—I think that it's very important to use different means of learning. And we all learn different [ly], but I think just as with an infant, the most important thing for an infant is movement. So that the brain development happens. And I think movement becomes very important in religious growth, because it allows us to free our spirits. Movement and learning, I think movement in the brain, movement in emotions are all related. (Courtney, non-choir members)
Anna also considered liturgical dance a useful form for learning in the church, particularly as a way to reach younger people. She said,

Let them use that as a way of interpreting their feelings. I don't know I think we can learn just by looking at the moves, we can feel it within our bodies. And I think that enhances our feeling towards Christ. Because it's in the Bible, David danced. (Anna, musician)

Incidental Learning

H. P. also noted other types of learning that is not part of the music but provides learning opportunities in other areas, as well.

Another thing about the choir, and with a lot of choirs, you know, you do fund raisers. So it's more than just learning music and fellowship in the choir. You know, you sharpen up your business skills. And your social skills. Because you have to go out and things, talk to other people. And try to recruit, and raise money. In all those kind of things, you learn something. You also do work in the church. (H.P., choir member)

Understanding the source

As the participants discussed the various things they have learned through religious music, some participants talked about the ways learning could enhance the musical experience. The most frequent comments I heard were a need for some history or background information regarding a musical selection. The participants felt that this kind of information clarified the meaning in some musical selections. Louis offered this suggestion:

I think that when the congregation is learning a new song, they should be given that information about the composer and about the story, how it came about. Just like "It is well with my soul," when they were talking about this fellow's family who went down in the Titanic. When he heard about it, they took him to the area or position where the Titanic had gone
down and he resolved it. He was the one that wrote the song, "It is well with my soul." And so I think if we hear those things, it makes a difference. It helps. (Louis, choir member)

Lucinda agreed with Louis and noted the impact of a written explanation.

There is something about the written word. As long as people can read it and put [it] in their pocket, it's kind of like an acceptable type of way to introduce it. There's no conflict there. And, you know, it's all [how] they want to interpret it. You know, if they're interested, they will go further with whatever that means. If they're not interested, they'll just fold it or just pass on over it. But they've got the information. So I do believe in providing information to people so that they're seemingly they are going to be needing it sometime. Seemingly, they're going to be connected or a part of it.... I'm one of those kinds of people that I work on prevention. And prevention of the wrong thing happens so to speak. And I figure if you've got a lot of information, then you have to use caution and some brain work, and you have a lot of understanding as a total end result. Or at least you can. No guarantees. (Lucinda, choir member)

Joy voiced a particular need for some clarification with more contemporary music, where, as she described, "the musical characteristics may overshadow the message in the music." She said,

Well, I think what would help a lot of times even with the music where the young people are just hearing the beat and not the meaning, the message in the lyrics, I think sometimes it would help if we had the kind of ministry in our church where someone got up prior to the music and you know, talked about it and explained it. (Joy, choir member)

The minister of music, Elaine voiced similar concerns with contemporary gospel music, she said, "We need somebody to explain the song, you know? Maybe during the rehearsals the director could probably explain how this relates, or during the service the minister could do more explaining [of] what these songs are all about."

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Although, the Christian Education Director Rev. Daniels noted that music did not provide a significant learning experience. He contended that there were ways that music could serve a greater role in the church with some additional education about the music.

Music could be much more meaningful in the church, I think. But how do you get people interested enough to say hey, this piece had an origin somewhere! This piece had an author somewhere, you know. Why did it come into being and how did it come into being. To me, it makes a difference. (Rev. Daniels, Christian Education Director)

For Rev. Daniels, the hymns are important, but he told me what enhanced their importance for him:

I think hymns, a lot of it depends on my understanding and, and knowledge of the hymn itself and the author of the hymn. If it’s something I like, I try to get some background information as to how the song came into being. Songs by Fanny Crosby, always tremendous church songs with tremendous messages of salvation. Here is a lady who was writing out of her own experiences.

Teaching Tool

Jay noted how music could be a teaching tool in the worship service. He pointed out, that music has a transcendental quality. It can move people and it can change them, as it did King David in the Bible.

Yeah, it can be used as a vehicle for teaching. Because sometimes people learn easier from the music than they can from just by reading the text. They pick it up that way, but what are we trying to teach? Is it about the service? What are we trying to teach religiously or spiritually? The life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? What messages are we trying to pervade in the singing? So I think then the music kicks in and can be a vehicle for teaching. Then it can be just a vehicle for the emotional lift at the moment. And it doesn't transcend itself outside the framework after the song and beat has ended, then that's it. But if you take King David, King David got so into singing so that he got carried away and enjoyed [the music]. What did he do? Took off his clothes and just danced in the nude. His wife thought he was crazy, but he was glorifying God through music. So that he
had to be able to teach in a spiritual way. You know, some people come to
church, [but] they don't know what the preacher said. But they know what
the choir sang. (Jay, choir member)

Cherelle talked about music as a tool for learning. She said that “music is one
method of learning. And it's still words, but it's not a lecture, per se. It's a message, right,
it has a message and it's musical. So that could be one way of learning.”

Jeff had this to say about what music can teach people:

The words to the hymns are to the same extent that poetry teaches people,
these songs do too. Because that's all they are are poems put to music. And
so to the same extent that poetry can educate and enlighten someone, the
words to these songs can do the same thing . . . So in those words, I learn a
lot. It's almost like reading a page of any book, because after the words are
printed and you can read them. (Jeff, non-choir member)

Aaron thought religious music taught people as much as the preached word. He
explained:

I think [that] sometimes music can probably reach people
where a preached word can't. I think just whatever a
preacher can say with the preached word, choirs can say
with the sung word. The preached word is, I think primarily
should be the most important focus. So therefore, I think
the minister and the musicians or the whole music
department should be on one accord so that whatever the
minister is doing, the music should enhance that. So that, as
I said earlier, no matter who comes in, that person may not
get it from the preached word, but they might get it from
the sung word or whatever music is happening. (Aaron, musician)

Pauline shared very similar comments as Aaron on the role of the choir and their
responsibility as teachers and musical preachers in the learning process.

You're a minister in singing. The preacher's a minister in delivering the
word. Now you don't need the songs, you need that preached word. But
the sung word helps a whole lot because a lot of times they'll listen more to
a song that's sung and the word than they would to the preaching that's preached. So you have to be just as committed and just as faithful and grounded in the Lord as the pastor is. Because what you feel, you throw it out and if you don't have anything, there's nothing for anybody to feel. But if you have something, you throw it out. Lots of times a lot of people come in on the song. It's very important, you need both. Because the song really does a lot to help the minister (Pauline, musician)

Anna summarized her views of music as a vehicle to teach particularly younger members. She also noted the differences in backgrounds of the congregation. For instance, some participants have attended church all their lives, whereas others may be attending for the first time and the music can help reach and speak to everyone.

This is going back to the Bible, I have a King James, I have the Revised Standard and I have The New Living, that's it. I read the King James. But I can understand and maybe relate to the Living [Bible] a little better. And, but the only thing about it, it's saying the same thing. Because the "thee" and "thou" and the Lord, that was...97, we got to hit 97, because Honey, 2000's coming. And there are changes every day. God does not change but the way we interpret different things, it changes. It really does change. It may say the same thing. We have got to understand that. (Anna, musician)

Anna concluded her analogy by pointing out the similarities between the choir and the minister in her analogy. "You have a minister who is going to preach the word. Next to that minister is the choir. Now the choir, see that's where you can get two [versions of the word], you see, what I'm saying."

H.P. elaborated on the way that teaching and learning may be affected differently by the genres, specifically traditional gospel music versus contemporary gospel music.

I think I, if I get into older gospel music, it's the words that are so different. I think in the more contemporary, more modern gospel music, instead of getting a longer phrase of a quote from the Bible or passage from the Bible, you get it in much shorter blips and burps, bursts, rather. And so I think that the better your knowledge of the Bible, I think it's easier to understand the newer gospel. It is for me. When I was coming up, it was real easy for me to listen to guys like James Cleveland. When you listen to
gospel music, it was almost like they were pushing the sermon to you sometimes. You know, you get, they make a song out of full passages and stuff. And now it, you get a very short verse of a passage. Say if a passage was 20 words long, you might get two or three words right in the middle of that passage and then build on that. It's, the story's there. And I think what's happening now, if music is to be a medium to, if gospel music needs to be used as a medium to bring you into the church, then I think it's just enough to get your interest. Then you have to go find out. You know people do research. And I've found kids of all ages and all backgrounds will do research. If it's something they like, you know, they'll go after it and find out about it. (H. P. choir member)

Although, the pastor of the church, Rev. Issac indicated he did not have any musical talent, he believed that pastors and ministers who could sing or had some musical talent enjoyed a “great asset.” He expressed almost an envy when he discussed this benefit of being a musically inclined man of God. He noted the way music could assist in adding to the sermon.

I think it’s wonderful... there’s no question. It’s a great asset to be able to do that. I can’t. And what I do is I’ll read the words of a hymn, I intersperse hymns, words of songs or hymns, always in the sermon. And in that sense, it lets us know, especially I think in preaching, that music has a way of coloring it, you know. Because the point you want to make sometimes is made in the song. (Rev. Issac, Pastor)

According to Rev. Issac, the church must be willing to help learners no matter where they are as learners or in their spiritual development and growth. He explained that “you have to give vent to where people are. They find so much meaning in hymns and in spirituals and gospels. So singing is a vital part of the church.”

When I asked the Director of Christian Education, Rev. Daniels if he ever incorporated music as part of his ministry or in a sermon, he said, “most ministers do it.”

Somewhere in the text they’ll [ministers] reach back and find a phrase from a song, two or three phrases from a song or different songs, to add to the
message itself. Very helpful. Because people will remember songs when they don’t remember scripture texts. They can identify with it.

Theology

African American adults in this study agreed that religious music carried a message. For many, that message contained more of the theological messages than the sermon. For others, the music reinforced the scriptures, biblical teachings and the themes of the sermon. There were three types of theologies raised by participants. They are theology of our forefathers, events and stories, our roots and faith.

Theology of our forefathers

The theme theology of our forefathers was used to denote the importance of the theology that guided their ancestors through slavery. It is a perspective that many of the participants from choir members, congregation, musicians, pastor and clergy have embraced. The theology contained in religious music was important to the survival of slaves. The participants in this study thought they would be more engaged in music more fully knowing their ancestors made it by the theology articulated in music.

Jacob spoke of the trials his ancestors faced and theology that brought them through their difficulties. He said,

When I think about religious music that really brought my ancestors through hard times, through slavery, that brings people through today whenever trials and tribulations come. I often think about our forefathers whenever the way got dark and they couldn’t see their way, they would sing songs like, “Go down Moses way down in Egypt’s land. Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.” Then when they lost their loved ones, they
Jacob didn’t have a great knowledge of theology but they would sing songs like “Swing low sweet chariot, coming to carry me home.” (Jacob, non-choir member)

Jacob noted that although his ancestors did not know a great deal about theology, yet the songs served as a source of knowledge. He explained,

I would say concerning religious music, different ages relate to music in different ways. Now poor farmers could use songs in the form of theology. They didn’t know anything about the Gospel of John. But they could sing songs like “Oh, Mary don’t you weep, don’t you mourn.” And songs like that. They heard about the Bible, they didn’t have any knowledge of the Bible. But they used theology through songs and that’s what saved a lot of people was their knowledge of theology through song. James appreciated the hymns because they were important for their stability over time. I think hymns sort of keep all generations together. It started a long time ago. I hear people say, my grandmother used to sing that same song. So it’s sort of keeping the generations more in accord as far as a song.

Events and Stories

All of the participants agreed that you could learn scripture, biblical stories and basic religious beliefs through religious music.

Denise explained how she enjoyed hearing scriptures in the songs, and said that she in fact learned some of the scriptures by singing about them.

I mean a lot of scripture is in gospel music, or should be. But a lot of the songs I like, there’s a lot of scripture. So you can actually learn scripture from some of the songs and I like those. I actually, like after we sing it, and then all of a sudden, Reverend opens up to read the scripture and, ah, there’s that song right there. That’s kind of mind blowing. (Denise, choir member)

Nina felt that she receives part of her Christian education from religious music.

I can say what I think it teaches me. I can’t say what it might teach other people. It gives me a sense of maybe what the Bible is trying to teach. I
mean what we're supposed to get as far [as] biblical meanings are concerned. And peace of mind for myself. (Nina, choir member)

Louis shared his pleasure in learning the Biblical stories found in some music.

And of course, like I was listening to—coming here, I was listening to a tape and they were talking about how majestic and glorious is your name. Well, when you hear that, you think about Jesus, God, and all those things that he represents and it gives you a feeling in your soul. And of course, I think that will teach the congregation, be they the young ones to the adults, or the senior citizens. That would give them a story and maybe it would refresh them, a refresher story that they had heard when they were growing up, but they'd never thought about it, until oh, that does come up. And so that might be the thing. So I think it does have, it can tell the congregation or teach the congregation something. You learn to appreciate your neighbor. You learn to accept their differences, and you learn to love (Louis, non-choir member)

Courtney said:

That's where I learned my theology. Sunday school and the music of worship. The hymns, the anthems, that's where I memorized the majority of my biblical texts, that's where I learned and that's where my theology is really rooted. So for me that was it. Because as a young child, and even as a young adult, I didn't read the Bible the way I should. Or now know I need to. But that's how I got mine [theology]. (Courtney, non-choir member)

Courtney then shared her concerns about the theological foundation in many of the contemporary gospel songs and wondered “do we want to sacrifice our theology and our traditions?” She further elaborated,

I would really have to say that religious music is becoming more spiritual, but at the same time, it's also losing a lot of its theological foundation. You're not seeing as much of the Biblical text used. You're getting paraphrase, you're getting you know snippets and everything. But you're not getting the theology that you got in the past.
The theological foundation of the music is one criterion used for selection of music, according to Aaron, one of the church musicians. He explained the criteria used for the selection of music.

I try to make sure what is being sung is Biblically sound. That it follows particularly Baptist doctrine. But that it is scriptural. And then I also try to find out what the theme for that Sunday that we're singing is. (Aaron, Asst. minister of music)

The pastor, Rev. Issac shared his thoughts on music, he spoke of the theological foundation of music in the Black church. He maintained, “the music helps us to feel our religion. I think that’s ultimately what music does for us.”

I guess it’s as Miles Marc Fisher might have said, that our theology and who we are to a large extent is found in our music. Many of us, found our theology and who we are more in song sometimes than necessarily in scripture. And yet, songs are based on scripture. So it’s not a violation. So if someone’s theology is in a song, that does not mean it’s not scripturally based. Because songs that are not scripturally based don’t do well in the church. So music in the Black church, I want to say that in particular, is such a vital part of the worship service and the Holy Spirit in the church. I don’t know anything that we do that music is not involved in to a great extent. (Rev. Issac, Pastor)

Rev. Issac continued to elaborate on the inherently spiritual power of music and singing: “When you learn a song, you also give yourself in a way to it. And I think when we truly learn it, transformation takes place. You know, that learning process... We sing it because we believe it.”

Our Roots and Faith

Nearly all of the participants talked about the importance of music in Black culture and particularly in the Black church in America. The musical heritage of African
Americans was important not only from a secular point of view but also from a religious perspective. For the participants to know that they are part of a cultural experience and continuing that cultural experience was vitally important to participants.

Like Rev. Issac, Dottie explained that music was "especially important in the Black church, because we have different experiences so we come from a different background."

Edgar told me that in fact, if we were to go back in time, we would discover an even deeper meaning of music in the roots of Black America, one that even preceded the Black churches in the United States.

If we truly went back to our roots and discovered what role music played out there in the fields or in the slave quarters I think we would have a better appreciation of music in the church. I think we've gotten away from those roots. Like you know, we've got it made. (Edgar, choir member)

Donna noted the inspirational quality of music as part of the African American church-going experience.

There's something about the music that just keeps us going. And that's just part of our culture, part of our life, the music. And actually, we wouldn't need to have so much the piano, we could do it a capella as long as we had the voices. (Donna, choir member)

Others participants spoke of music as inspiration from a cultural perspective. Janet's perspective was similar to Edgar's, that singing is indeed "an inspiration to most Black people." She regarded singing as "a spiritual thing that they learned way back in Africa, that would give people inspiration to carry on even as slaves. The singing is what inspired them to carry on during their time." Beatrice and Lucinda echoed each other when they said, in brief, that they couldn't imagine church without the music: "We just
need to have the music in the church... Because this is the way we [African Americans] express ourselves,” said Beatrice. And Lucinda added, “most people would not come if it weren’t] for the music.”

Throughout the interview, Rev. Issac spoke about the role of music and its importance in the Black church. He said:

It’s just important in the church. Now the thing of it is that we can point out the differences of music in the Black church, traditional Black church and the White church, but it’s very important in both. Yet, It is different.

Rev. Issac noted that the congregation in the Black church often placed more emphasis on music at the expense of the sermon. As he told me, “preaching can be good, but they want good singing. Yeah, they want good music. And so music is just, its role is intertwined in all aspects of the church, the Black church.”

Rev. Issac spoke of music as an inherent function of the Black religious experience. From his observations, he noted how inseparable the two are.

Music and religion are so akin in the Black experience, we can hardly think of religion without music. Even when we didn’t have instruments, we made music. I can remember I was brought up in a small church on a farm. And we didn’t have a piano or an organ. But [with] the heels of the ladies’ shoes and movement of people in the church, there was music being made. You know when it comes to religion and music and learning and so forth in the church, that it’s all, it’s all intertwined. I don’t think we can separate it. We cannot separate it. It’s there. And anyone who would make a feeble attempt to even think of that would end up in disaster in terms of trying to do it. It’s a part of who we are, it’s a part of our religion. We cannot think in terms of a worship service without music. (Rev. Issac, Pastor)

For some, it was the genre of religious music that made more of an impact of their theological learning and understanding. Tina noted that spirituals were especially important in the worship experience and explained:
Having come from a more classical and more traditional music background, there's something about the discipline of singing a spiritual that just moves me. I enjoy all forms, [of] spiritual music, but I think that spirituals themselves, first of all because of the discipline, frankly that, I feel that they demand in singing and listening to, but also the messages, the significance of the cultural heritage and background, history behind the spiritual is also very significant. And I think that really appeals to me too. (Tina, musician)

Charles also had a special love for African American spirituals. He talked about the message in the spirituals and what they have meant to him.

They came from out of the people who used them and that's what kept them going. And that's what continued to give them hope. Was that they believed, they didn't know too much about what Christ or Jesus was, but they listened to the preacher and some things that he said they didn't go along with that you're supposed to obey your masters and the Bible quotes this and that—good slaves are supposed to obey your master. But even then, they said, Well, I guess I have to do this to exist and to eat. But I know there must be something, someone else somewhere, somebody that's much better than I. That's where I want to go. I want to go to him when I die... (Charles, musician)

I asked Charles what he thought people learned from the spirituals today and he shared how moved he feels by them, and how they take him back in time to the plantations, helping him to appreciate the life that his ancestors endured.

Well, if they listen to them, they get a religious feeling. Because all spirituals, if they're spirituals, they're based on the Bible. And so I know I think W. E. B. Dubois refers to them in some of his writings as sorrow songs, that out of this sorrow and of being in slavery and being debased and degraded, how they could develop such beautiful music. And so when people listen to it, that's it. You will listen to it... I mean, sometimes, I fill up and some of the other people will fill up. We feel those experiences that we're singing about. We feel it and think of what they went through and was able to come up with this beautiful music... And who would have heard from the Bible. And we knew they weren't trained, weren't educated. But they could put words together and put music together. (Charles, musician)
Summary

This section examined the learning experiences and the theological views of the participants related to religious music and learning. Almost two-thirds of the forty-nine participants in the study spoke of the cultural significance of spirituals and music in the Black church. In addition, nearly everyone agreed that they had learned important lessons from religious music.

Learning

One of the research questions this study sought to address was what do African American adults consider as a learning experience. The pastor of the church offered his view of learning and the church, which provide an understanding of the church's philosophy towards learning and education.

It's a Learning Institution

Rev. Issac believed that the church was a learning institution and informed me that learning and teaching took many forms. For instance, he said, "I come in contact with people who change my life all the time because of how their lives are. And so it is, it's a learning institution, there's just no question about it. It's about change, transformation."

Rev. Issac indicated preaching was part of the educational process and explained that the sermon, "not just the sermon that I preach, but the sermon that any one else preaches, is education as well. I think that [the sermon] should be a great teaching tool as well". He spoke of the importance of group learning, which he incorporated in the weekly
meetings for Sunday school teachers. He explained, "part of the reason for that is if we come to study the lesson together, one of us might be weaker than the other. If we all study together, it makes us all stronger to carry the lesson to the students." Rev. Issac spoke of the importance of learning and the role of learning in the church and referred often to transformation.

**Transformation**

Rev. Issac pointed out the need to be cognizant of the variety of levels of learning and abilities that must be acknowledged in the church:

Transformation takes place in different forms and different ways for different individuals. One of the things in the church we look for is we, all of us, like instant transformation, where someone seems to grasp it just right off. And in your institution, you know you like for people to grasp the meaning of the problems being solved. We want that. I mean we feel really good about that. But I also think that what is important for the church, and we could very well say for the institutions of higher education as well sometimes, is for us to labor with those who don't catch on so swiftly, but who clearly give great signs of great potential and great hope. And I think transformation takes place in different ways. For some people it's swiftly, for some folks, it's gradual. It's not as swift. You know, of course, we don't all have the same gifts or the same talents or the same abilities. And so it takes place differently with us. When it happens, we are never the same. We're never the same. We couldn't, even if we wanted to be. And even if we rebel and try to be, we're never the same.

Learning and growth, the pastor indicated, were important to him:

In the church, I mean, learning has to be a part of the whole fabric. If we are not in that mode of learning, you're not growing. And you can forget about any form of transformation taking place of any substance. So it's education. It has to be. And it's not something that will happen by itself. It is something that you would have to work to help to happen. It's not by accident, it should be by design that things would happen. Now of course, you know, we can't make them, we just work at it.
When I asked Rev. Issac how he defined learning, he connected it to growth that results from it.

Learning, I think, the end result of it is growth. If there's no growth, if there's no change that takes place, you can almost count learning as having been void. Now granted, there are some times that we grasp, or should I say things are put before us, and seemingly, we can regurgitate back things. But when learning takes place, results happen. I mean, we really do understand this and it has an effect on us. So change takes place. Something happens. I mean, you can't remain the same if you have really learned.

Summary

This section explored the pastor's views on learning and the church. As the key decision maker of the church his involvement and supervision of church education programs was important to understand the educational mission of the church. He described the church as a learning institution and as the pastor noted, that learning results in some type of change in the person. The pastor's attitude towards learning were positive and encouraged learning in every area of the church, including the music department.

The next section will present the interview data collected from the three subject matter experts. Because of their prominence and expertise on the subject, the three subject matter experts are appropriately identified.

Subject Matter Experts

This section represents the data gathered from three experts in the field of African American religious music. Each of the experts was selected for a number of reasons. First, each one can offer unique insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Second, each
is a pastor of an African American church. Therefore, this would afford the opportunity to provide an additional perspective to the study. Third, the three men are African American and each has an extensive knowledge of music and its role in the African American church, as well as in various musical areas. Because of their long association and history with religious music in the Black church, they were able to draw upon implicit and explicit knowledge as participants in the African American worship experience.

The data collected from these experts were used to share additional insights and reflection on music and learning in the African American church. Each of the subject-matter experts was interviewed one time and each was interviewed individually in their respective church offices. The three experts in order of the interviews conducted are: Dr. Robert M. Simmons, Pastor of the Centenary United Methodist Church in Columbus, Ohio; Dr. Charles Walker, Pastor of the 19th Street Missionary Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the third is Dr. J. Wendell Mapson II, Pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Simmons is an ordained pastor and an accomplished musician and scholar. He received his Bachelor's degree from Kentucky State University and his Master's degree from Eastern Kentucky University. Dr. Simmons received his Ph.D. from The Ohio State University in 1973. In addition, he holds a Master's of Divinity degree from United Theological Seminary. He has served as pastor in Louisville, Kentucky and Dayton, Ohio. He is the pastor of the Centenary United Methodist Church in Columbus, Ohio. In addition to his responsibilities as pastor, Dr. Simmons is also the Dean of the Academic Division of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, which boasts of some 4,500 students (Thomas,
1997). Dr. Simmons also serves on the Faculty at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. He also served as Professor of Education at Eastern Kentucky University. He is the author of such books as *Building Church Music Departments* (1974), *Helping Your Choirs to Sound Better* (1979), *The Development of Sacred Music in Black Religious Settings* (1980), and *Perspectives of Praise and Worship* (1997).

Dr. Walker is the pastor of the 19th Street Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He is an accomplished musician, having studied with Mary Parker of Parker studios in Chicago. He received a music scholarship to De Paul University where he studied with the famed Russian composers and pianists Alexander Tcherepnin and Ming Tcherepnin. Dr. Walker studied in Paris at L'Ecole Magda Taliaferro and later with Rudolf Ganz at Roosevelt University. In addition, he has played concerts in France and Germany.

Dr. Walker is the composer of Jazz Mass No. 1, Liberian Symphony and the Malcolm X suite which was written in memory of the late Malcolm X. He was commissioned to write a work in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which received its Carnegie Hall debut in 1972. In addition, Dr. Walker serves on numerous boards and organizations, both musical and religious, many with national affiliations.

Dr. J. Wendell Mapson II is the pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Dr. Mapson received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Morehouse College and his Master of Divinity degree from the Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he currently serves as an adjunct professor. He has
written two books: *The Ministry of Music in the Black Church* (1984), and *Strange Fire: A Study of Worship and Liturgy in the African American Church* (1994). In addition, Dr. Mapson is a frequent lecturer on the topics of Church and Liturgy.

**Emerging Themes**

Five major thematic categories were discovered from the data of the subject-matter experts. They are: (a) early musical background rooted in the church, (b) role of music in worship (c) theology, (d) bad theology, (e) music as a pedagogical tool, and (f) sense of unity.

**Early Musical Background Rooted in the Church**

I began the interviews by asking the subject-matter experts about their musical background. All three of the subject matter experts began their musical experiences early in life and received nurturing early in their home life. The musical background of Dr. Mapson, II and Dr. Walker are an example of the early musical experiences of the subject-matter experts. An important theme throughout their musical background was the role of the church rooted in their musical experiences.

Dr. Mapson, II explained,

Well, my ancestry is southern in background and one of the requirements of southern families of that generation was that their children should take piano lessons. And so even though I was raised in the north in Newark, New Jersey, at an early age my parents, my father is a pastor, my mother sang in the choir, played a little bit maybe for Sunday school but mostly for her own enjoyment could play the hymns, some of the hymns of the church. And so it was kind of a natural outgrowth of that upbringing that the children would be given piano lessons and so all four of us were. So I grew
up playing for the Sunday school. BTU (Baptist Training Union) as we
called it. Junior Choir and that kind of thing and then of course when I
went off to school I was able to play for some local churches, during
college. So that was my background.

When I asked Dr. Walker about his musical background, he began with his
childhood.

Well, I started studying piano when I was 11 and at age 12 I became the
organist at our church. At Providence Baptist Church in Chicago,
Reverend Lunford was the pastor. And I had a very good mentor. Odessa
Wilson, who was actually the church organist and music director who was
a very strong musical influence in my life. For instance, she arranged my
first scholarship, presented my first performance and things like that. So
she nurtured me.

Role of Music in Worship

In addition to his musical background, Dr. Mapson shared with me the origins of

I'd always said that if I did any kind of doctoral study, I wanted to deal
with music in the Black church and specifically try to look at and critique
the state of music and worship in the Black church and to offer some kind
of assessment and guideline for improvement of it . . . And as a result of
that, the book “The Ministry of Music” came into being. But I've always
been interested as I visit churches, as I preach in churches of particular
interest in the liturgy, in the worship, in the order of service. And in the
music that is being offered and you know there are some trends that are
disturbing to me that I sought to address in that book and still seek to
address now in terms of maintaining a balance.

Dr. Mapson further described what he meant by a balance in the music. He
elaborated.

Well, I think we have such a variety in the African American experience
that we should offer spirituals, anthems, gospel, hymns, all of it in worship
rather than churches being primarily churches that use only gospel music, others on the far end who have kind of taken up an attitude that if it’s too Black then it’s not right.

Dr. Mapson further noted, “I think it does say something about what kind of statements are we making by the kind of music that we offer in worship?”

One of the questions I asked the three subject-matter experts was the role of music in the African American church and its purpose in the worship experience.

Dr. Mapson spoke of the important role music played in the African American church and noted its prominence in the service,

I contend that in some form music is just about in everything we do in worship. I mean, there is something of a musical nature going on seemingly all the time...And so you know you’re talking probably 80%, which is kind of wild. I’ve never really thought about putting it on a percentage basis, but an overwhelming high percent of the worship service.

Dr. Walker explained his perspective on the role of music in the worship service.

Worship is of course giving glory and honor to God. Music is a beautiful art form; it’s a gift from God, which should be used to enhance the worship experience. Music should be not a part of the worship simply for music’s sake. All music should be pointing toward the grandeur, the majesty, and the glory of God and in a sense should help us to prepare the worshippers for receiving the word of God. Because that’s the climax of the worship experience. The proclamation of the word and our response to that word. Music that doesn’t enhance that in my opinion is not worshipful and is not really enhancing the worship experience.

I asked Dr. Walker to explain whether music is to help prepare worshipers for the sermon, or could the music impart the same message?

The music can be the word. That’s why we call it “gospel music.” You can sing the gospel. Anyway, you can get the gospel, if you receive it, in other words, in a real sense it could be preaching in a singing sense, then one receives truth and responds thereto. So but really, it is the preaching, the proclamation of the word that is the center of the worship experience that
is designed by God to call people into a faith relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul said, “Faith cometh by hearing. Hearing by the word of God. How can they hear without a preacher? How can he preach except he be sent?” I guess that’s what I mean, musicians doing the preaching. Because they are really proclaiming the gospel through music.

Dr. Simmons noted the role of one of the newer genres of religious music and how it fits with the attitudes and lifestyles of today’s churchgoers. This newer genre of religious music was “praise and worship” music. Dr. Simmons defined how praise and worship music differed from other religious music. The basic concept of praise and worship music, as he explained, was in essence, “what they’ve done is taken the whole concept of Baptist devotion and made it a whole service.” He elaborated on the procedure and said what you do is, “take a particular theological thought and summarize that and put it in one phrase and then put a simple one, four, five musical pattern to it, or another contemporary musical pattern to it.”

Dr. Simmons further explained how praise and worship music fits with contemporary society.

If I want to speak on praise and worship from a contemporary perspective, it fits with people who don’t have time. This is a day and time when, number one, people do not want to stay in church a long time. Number two, they do not want to be bothered with extensive learning and Bible study…. This is a fast paced world, microwave world, the whole bit. So they don’t want to be bothered with singing seven verses to a song, because you have to sing seven verses to get the whole theology of the song in.
Theology

All three of the subject-matter experts agreed that religious music is educative and noted that churchgoers learned theology from religious music. Dr. Mapson believed that churchgoers learned theology from music, and that music provided some foundation for theological insight. He had particular opinions about how and what people learn from religious music.

I think people primarily get theology. Theological statements from music. . . . If you think about what we learn musically from the time we enter Sunday school for instance, and even before, just as children going to church from Sunday school and those standard hymns and songs that we grew up with and that we’ve known all of our lives, you know, they contain what we believe of our statement of beliefs as Baptists or whatever denomination one may be a part of. And because it’s set to music, it is remembered and internalized in a way that perhaps even a sermon is not. And so I think that we learn about our faith, we learn about who God is, the nature of Jesus Christ, the holy spirit, you know all of the great doctrines, God, Jesus Christ, the holy spirit, doctrine of the church, doctrine of humanity, doctrine of sin, grace, you know, all of those great themes of our faith are embedded in the songs that we know. Why do we believe what we believe? Well, we’ve always believed it and we’ve always believed because we’ve been taught that through our hymns and through our songs from the time we first entered the church as children.

Dr. Simmons placed the theological learning within the context of the musical genre. For instance, he stated that in a review of the spirituals there are two types of messages or lessons in the spirituals. He said,

Go back to the original music of African Americans, which are spirituals. And you will find that the spirituals mirror the teaching of evangelists to slaves. It mirrors the learning, dissemination, and repeating of biblical stories. Also, you will find that if you go from a covert perspective, it mirrors political and social intentions put to music. So you had overt messages, which appear to be theological or evangelical. And you had covert messages that were political and social in relation to the condition of slavery in which Blacks found themselves.
In his discussion of hymn literature particularly hymns written by African Americans, Dr. Simmons reminded me that African American hymn writers often wrote about their own experiences. Dr. Simmons cited the works of the hymnist, Charles A. Tindley, who wrote such hymns as “Stand by Me,” “We’ll Understand it Better By and By,” and “Some Day” found in The New Baptist hymnal (1977).

He pointed out that such hymns had a particular focus in their message.

If you look at the social situation in which his people were in and the particular times during the period of the great migration from south to north and what they ran into in the poverty and the living conditions, then you will find that through the songs, he taught a particular theology of endurance that would keep them moving through dark times to the light. And he was a person who wrote his songs to go with his sermons. So he was doing the teaching and then writing the song to go with the teaching. So when you examine his songs, you have to look and say if I was teaching this song, what would I say? And then you will see the teaching components in the song.

Among other African American hymnists, Dr. Simmons noted Lucie Campbell. Dr. Simmons looked at the hymn, “Something within,” to illustrate how certain beliefs became apparent in Campbell’s music.

“Something within me that Holdeth the Rein.” And then see what she does, that’s the chorus. But when you get to the verse, she starts talking about preachers and teachers. “And makes their appeal, fighting as soldiers on great battlefields.” Now what does that mean? “When to their pleading my poor heart did yield, all I can say is there is something within.” Now what teaching does that give you relative to the Holy Spirit and how African Americans think in terms of the Holy Spirit from an affected perspective? It’s not the inside that I can’t explain, but then there’s something that I don’t have the vocabulary to explain.
In the interview, Dr. Simmons moved from spirituals and hymns directly into gospel music, beginning with the man known as the Father of gospel music, Thomas Dorsey. Thomas Dorsey, he explained, wrote such songs as, “The Lord will Make a Way Somehow,” “There’ll be Peace in the Valley,” and “Precious Lord.”

In his examination of the works of Thomas Dorsey, Dr. Simmons argued that when you ask yourself what is being taught, you see that there’s a particular theological perspective that’s being taught: “There’s a particular cultural experience that is being handed down, and that is being told.” Dr. Simmons noted that if you closely examine the music of Dorsey and other early gospel writers many of the religious beliefs held by African Americans are taken directly from the music. He noted such religious beliefs as, “He may not come when you want Him, but He’s right on time,” or “God won’t put no more on you than you can bear.”

According to Dr. Simmons, these basic theological statements or beliefs were found in the music that were “Biblical interpretations and sermon interpretations of people applied to everyday application and the human condition.”

Dr. Walker believed in the educational component of religious music, he was somewhat distressed over the current state of some religious music, this in his opinion posed some theological concerns for the church. He explained the reasons for this.

That’s because we are moving toward a universal-ness theological approach in the industry. Because that sells. Gospel music started as a decidedly Christian musical expression. Without apology. And it was Christian even though we dug into the roots of our Jewish association. “Did my Lord Deliver Daniel?” When Israel was in Egypt’s Land, Let My People Go.” This was the association. But Jesus was central to our theological expression in music. Well, the Black community is no longer a monolith.
Dr. Walker also noted the outside influences on the church and commented on the status of gospel music today and those who are preaching the word through song.

However, I would hazard a guess that those composers of gospel music and performers who study the word of God are in the minority. Therefore, you have a lot of bad theology in the lyrics of songs. And of course, people begin to think that. And that's why the minister has a hard time changing the theological thinking of people because they get all of these messages from records, from television and so forth. They take it as gospel truth when it is in fact error.

"Bad Theology"

Dr. Walker argued that sometimes what is learned from religious music is questionable. For him, whether a song is theologically sound was of utmost importance. He demonstrated with the following examples.

Some of its bad education because some music is theologically not very sound. For instance, there is a praise song, it's not necessarily a gospel praise song, "If I Live Right, Heaven Belongs to Me." That's bad theology. Heaven belongs to God. You don't get to heaven by living good. You get to heaven by having faith in Jesus Christ. But it's nice. It's a catchy tune. But it's bad theology.

Dr. Mapson argued learning did occur through religious music, he voiced similar concerns as Dr. Walker about the theology being learned through religious music in the church.

Again, I think in terms of education, the issue is not whether or not people are educated through music, because I think obviously they are. But I think that the other issue is what kind of education are they getting and what are they learning through hymns, songs, and whether or not there is a need for correction of some theology that just may be bad theology.
Dr. Mapson illustrated how music influenced the thought patterns of churchgoers and what they believed. He found many popular musical phrases being articulated by churchgoers without any critique of the meaning of the phrases. For example, I think it underscores that we are being educated by our songs, by music, what kind of education we’re getting, and where we are getting it from. Because there was a time when we received it from pastoral teaching, from the church, from youth directors or Sunday school teachers who came up in the tradition. Now we’re getting it from televangelists, we’re getting it from DJs on the radio, we’re getting it from gospel music, some of which is not being written or performed by Christians per se. You know, but it’s being believed because it comes from the media. And so our young people are now singing, “Alleluia is the Highest Praise.” Which is a very cute song. I like it, but what is it teaching? Again, the educational piece. So much of our learning is taking place from outside the church and is brought in, than is learned in and taken out.

In the interview with Dr. Simmons, the term “bad theology” was never brought up or discussed as he focused on the theology that African Americans learn through religious music via musical genres.

Music as a pedagogical tool

While Dr. Walker and Dr. Mapson noted the “bad theology” that has caused some concern to them as pastors, they also explained how music can be used as a tool to teach theology in the church. Dr. Walker explained he used music as a teaching tool during the worship service and added, “I frequently will explain a hymn before we sing it on Sunday morning. Go through the lines. And say now this means so and so. And then we sing it.”

Dr. Walker also provided examples of good theology:

“We’ve Come this Far by Faith.” That’s good theology. And it can educate you. It can teach us the walk of faith. “Leaning on the Lord Trusting in his Holy Word.” Faith cometh by word. “He never failed me
yet.” Yeah, I mean that is good theology. Let’s see another one. “In the upper room with Jesus” by Lucy Campbell is good salvation history. And she wrote that after she taught a class, when Jesus appeared in the upper room, and the sign was there after the resurrection. You see, when you have people writing music who study the word of God, it can be a teaching tool.

Rev. Mapson held that it would be useful to promote a forum for the discussion of music issues and texts in the church, which could be incorporated into the religious education curriculum. He advised me about how this could be brought about.

And the other part is again the value of teaching what we are singing. What it means, taking the hymns apart. Even taking gospel songs that may contain what we call bad theology, but using that as a teaching tool to say well, what’s wrong with this? We really need to start looking at what we’re singing and not just the beat and the rhythm, or the fact that everybody’s singing it. What is it saying about God, about church and about sin, about us? And how does that measure against what the Bible says? What is the biblical understanding? And I think it would be a tremendous teaching tool not only in Sunday school. Because Sunday school may not for many churches be the primary place where our children are taught. You know, it may be in the youth group now, Youth ministries, and children’s ministries. But that ought to be taught there.

A Sense of Unity

According to Dr. Mapson, another important teaching aspect of religious music in the church is the sense of bonding it promotes among the members. Music has the power to unite not only secular groups, but especially spiritual communities.

We learn a sense of unity. I think religious music unifies us. I think when we come to church, there is a sense in which music unifies us because we become a part of the same shared community of pain, sorrow, joy. And it puts us on one accord. I think in a way that nothing else does. It touches cords in us, in our souls, that breaks down barriers. All kinds of music does that anyway. But I think in particular music of our faith when we come together from different walks of life and we are coming in the same place
singing the same thing, it has an effect that nothing else does. And there is another problem I think linked to that is that we are at our best I think, when we sing congregationally.

As Dr. Mapson noted the importance of unity among the church body, he voiced some concern about the negative role of the choir in building unity. He was concerned that the congregation becomes too passive when the choir does the singing. He spoke of a time when everyone in the congregation was expected to do the singing. Now there is a greater separation between choir and congregation.

Dr. Simmons voiced similar ideas about music and unity among the church, however he saw it in more of a shift from a cognitive perspective to an affective perspective in contemporary worship services. He explained this was the reason for the popularity and appeal of praise and worship music.

[Churchgoers] want to move from the very individualistic notion of the 70s and 80s. They want to keep some of that but also move back to the notion of collectivism. They tend to want to move away from the whole notion of cognitive foundation in worship, and reclaim some of the affectivity of worship. So then you’re getting praise and worship being more attractive to your corporate, younger generation, who have been taught all of their lives to be rational and think rational and to be structured and to be corporate and to be accountable. And somehow, they have lost the notion of how can I feel . . . And they get a message of hope and a message of meditation to go along with the stress and all of this they have. And all they have to do is just sit back and think of that phrase and then the music is set so it can be internalized and remembered.

Dr. Mapson argued that the church could be more instrumental in the musical development and recruitment of musicians who are knowledgeable in church music.

I think that the church should be the training ground for young musicians, who are interested or show some interest in playing for the church. I think one of the reasons why we are lacking in musicians to play for our
churches is because we are not growing them in house. And so therefore, many who play for churches do not necessarily have any background in church.

Drs. Walker and Simmons also voiced similar concerns about the difficulty in finding church musicians who were knowledgeable about church liturgy, musical genres, and African American religious music and capable of building a strong church music program. Each of these gentlemen spoke of a search in their respective churches for a minister of music.

As each of the interviews ended I asked Dr. Mapson and Dr. Walker how they would define learning. Due to time limitations, I was not able to ask Dr. Simmons the same question.

Dr. Walker defined learning as, "receiving certain impulses and information and then integrating them into your own life's experience."

I asked Dr. Mapson how he would define learning and he responded.

I guess learning is the process of internalizing messages from our culture, from our environment. And sifting through what we learn to come out with some kind of life lessons to live by. And so of course all that we learn we do not embrace. But there is some of what we learn that will guide our direction in life.

Summary

This section described the data collected from the subject-matter experts in this study. The major themes discovered in the data were musical background rooted in the church, role of music in worship, theology, bad theology, music as a pedagogical tool, and sense of unity. All of the subject-matter experts agreed that African American adults do
learn from religious music. Religious music provides a foundation for learning biblical stories and basic theological beliefs. However, just as music can be educative, the subject matter experts are concerned about what is being learned. It may be "bad theology" as described by the subject-matter experts. The next chapter will present the summary, conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I will present a summary of the findings and the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data. The purpose of this study was to explore the question: Is religious music educative in the African American church. In addition, the study sought to address the following questions:

Subsidiary Questions

What do African American adults consider as a learning experience?

What life themes are raised in African American religious music?

What types of learning do African American adults embark upon as a result of singing and listening to religious music?

How is music used to facilitate individual learning or social action?

Is learning affected differently when music is used during a Sunday worship service or a formal adult education class, or Sunday school?

Does music affect or inspire learning connected with non-religious projects, such as returning to school, learning a musical instrument, or learning a craft?

How do African American adults find meaning in religious music?
Findings

For this study, I used themes to illustrate how religious music educative in the African American church. Figure 5.1 summarizes the findings according to the major themes that emerged from the data.

Is religious music educative in the African American church?

Figure 5.1 provides an overview of the six groups of participants in the study and the themes that were most prevalent for each group. The major themes that emerged were: (a) musical background and influences, (b) theology, (c) bad theology, (d) music as a pedagogical tool, (e) sense of unity, (f) choir participation, (g) softening the heart, (h) religious music and learning and (i) learning.

Musical Background and Influences

For five of the six groups of participants, the importance of musical background and significant family and church influences were major contributors to participant’s thoughts, feelings, and attitudes about religious music. The early musical experiences of the participants were significant for a number of reasons. First, religious music was often a shared family activity. It united and bonded the family ties of the participants. Secondly, for one person in the study, singing religious music at an early age drew her family back into the church. Other participants also spoke of being away from the church for a period, but religious music was one means of reuniting them with the church. Third, the family
was for most of the participants instrumental in their spiritual development and growth because of the early exposure to religion and religious music.

According to the participants, these early musical beginnings and family and church influences helped shaped the theological foundation by introducing Christian themes and ideas. Nearly all of the participants noted the importance of strong family and religious ties as being most instrumental in their subsequent spiritual growth and development.

**Theology**

Figure 5.1 shows all the groups, with the exception of the Director of Christian Education thought they learned theology through religious music. The Director of Christian Education said religious music was primarily an emotional outlet and good for raising the emotions of the congregation. However, he noted learning occurred in more structured activities, such as Sunday school, or Bible study. In addition, he noted the sermon was the foundation of theological understanding.

Whereas the other five groups spoke of significant theological lessons being learned from religious music.

**Bad Theology**

The subject matter experts believed African American adults often learned bad theology from the lyrics of some religious music. They noted the lack of critical analysis of music lyrics. The subject matter experts discussed religious music and learning only in
terms of the lyrics and not the music as being an educative tool. None of the subject matter experts indicated any type of learning from music without a text or spoke of learning from the affective domain.

The church participants did not voice the same concerns of "bad theology." The participants in the church were more concerned about the genre of religious music having a negative impact on the worship service and whether the lyrics contained the words God or Jesus in the lyrics. For many of the participants, if the words "God" or "Jesus" were included in the music, then the song was considered theologically sound. However, the term "bad theology" was not raised in any other groups in the study.

This issue raised additional questions: (a) Did the participants in the study critically reflect and analyze the theological soundness of the lyrics of religious music? (b) Were the participants in this study able to distinguish good theology from bad theology? (c) Was religious music an emotional lift for the participants that also providing a learning opportunity. (d) Was music selected based on how it might affect the worship service emotionally or the theological understanding of the congregation?

Music as a Pedagogical Tool

In five of the six groups of participants, religious music was seen as an important teaching tool in the church. Participants noted music was able to reach and teach a variety of learners in the church because everyone may be at different levels in their religious, spiritual growth, and development.
**Sense of Unity**

The participants viewed religious music as one way to increase the sense of unity in the church. For choir members, this was more evident. The choir members noted they learned how to bond and unite for a common cause: the music of the church. While the non-choir members did not share the same feelings of unity as the choir members, they did however note how religious music heard in the church served to create and maintain the church identity. The non-choir members not only thought the music was the basis for forming the church identity in the community, but also among other religious communities of African American churches. As a community of worshipers, religious music affected their sense of identity and how they perceived themselves in relation to other churches. The participants referred to the music in the church in the same way they described the church. For instance, many considered the music "high church," indicating a closer association with a Eurocentric higher standard of music and worship experience.

**Choir Participation**

Participation in the choir was perceived as a learning experience for the choir members. They noted learning musical skills, communication skills, and social skills from their involvement in the choir. The choir members felt they learned how to appreciate music as a means of communication. They learned lessons in diction, pronunciation, and articulation, which they felt, carried over into other areas of their lives. Learning how to interpret religious music and convey the essence and feeling, as the composer intended was a meaningful educative value for participation in the choir.
The non-choir members also noted the role of choir participation in their early musical background but did not pursue music after adolescence. The subject matter experts noted the profound impact of the choirs on the worship experience. However, the subject matter experts also noted the tendency of some choirs to be entertainers and the congregation becoming more passive in the worship experience.

**Softening the Heart**

A comparison of the themes shown in Table 5.1 illustrate softening the heart was an area all groups distinguished as educative. As an emotional aid to guide, instruct, and cope during difficult and oppressive times religious music were considered learning experiences. Another way in which religious music was educative for the participants was in learning through the experiences and emotions of another person who had endured similar situations. Often, I heard the hymn, "Amazing Grace" repeated as teaching concepts of compassion, empathy and feelings of being human. All groups thought the emotions connected with the music enhanced learning from the sermon, scriptures and prayers in the church.

**Religious Music and Learning**

The participants thought religious music was instructive and significant for their learning and spiritual growth. The following areas were particularly noted among the participants where religious music and learning are interconnected. Participants spoke of learning; (a) subconscious mind never sleeps, (b) incidental learning, (c) understanding the
source, (d) teaching tool, (e) theology, (f) theology of our forefathers, (g) events and stories, and (h) our roots and faith.

Learning

The pastor of the church shared his insights on how religious music and learning should be incorporated into every area of the church. Like the pastor, the subject matter experts argued that the church is a place of teaching and learning and this learning cannot be isolated from life. From their perspective, learning could occur through people, as well as informal and formal opportunities and through religious music.
### Table 5.1: Summary of themes: Themes most prevalent in each group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Subject matter experts</th>
<th>Choir</th>
<th>Non-choir members</th>
<th>Musicians</th>
<th>Pastor</th>
<th>Dir. of Christian Ed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musical background and influences</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad theology</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music as a pedagogical tool</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of unity</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choir participation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softening the heart</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious music and learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

Table 5.1 summarizes the themes that emerged in each of the six groups of participants. Each column represents the six groups of participants and the theme found in the data for that group. The themes are depicted in the rows.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do African American adults consider a learning experience?</td>
<td>Learning can occur through a variety of sources. Experience and learning through discovery were important learning experiences. Learning by doing or on-the-job learning. Values different ways of learning, not just formal.</td>
<td>Because participants have noted learning through experience, on-the-job, and through discovery, opportunities for learning must be created in all facets of the church worship service.</td>
<td>Churches could foster more self-directed learning in the lives of African American adults. Provide informal opportunities and formal learning opportunities using a variety of sources would enable greater learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What life themes are raised in African American religious music?</td>
<td>Themes of adversity, struggle, crisis, and death. Themes of victory, celebration. Issues of racism.</td>
<td>Although the participants spoke of personal issues and themes of adversity, and struggle, there was a notable lack of issues of social concern. The religious music of the civil rights movement with themes of great social action could aid adults in learning about social action.</td>
<td>Organize music in the church around emotional issues of the congregation or based on significant events occurring in society. Participants could examine their lives through religious music noting life themes in the music. This presents another opportunity for further research. Survey research or questionnaires may be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of learning do African American adults embark upon as a result of singing and listening to religious music?</td>
<td>The data did not elicit a response to this question.</td>
<td>Could religious music foster learning in other areas?</td>
<td>Further research is needed to see how religious music can be used to reach out and affect social and personal change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is religious music used to facilitate individual learning or social action?</td>
<td>Based on the responses to the interview question. Did not elicit a response to this question.</td>
<td>Religious music of the civil rights era facilitated individuals to social action. How can religious music facilitate greater social awareness and action?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is learning affected differently when music is used during a Sunday worship service or a formal adult education class, or Sunday school?</td>
<td>Based on the responses to the interview questions, did not illicit a response to the question, however many stated that if there wasn't any music, many would not attend church</td>
<td>An understanding of how music can affect or influence the congregation and worship service emotionally and from an educational standpoint may affect learning in the church.</td>
<td>Further research that examines the presence and absence of music in the worship service or adult education class is needed to understand the role of religious music and the impact on learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does music affect or inspire learning connected with non-religious projects, such as returning to school, learning a musical instrument, or learning a craft?</td>
<td>Based on the responses to the interview question. Did not illicit a response to this question</td>
<td>Because the subject matter experts and the pastor noted learning is not isolated, religious music could prepare listeners with opportunities for learning connected with non-religious projects</td>
<td>Further research that specifically examines the impact of religious music on adult learning that is not connected to the church or religion could facilitate ways of using religious music to inspire personal learning projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do African American adults find meaning in religious music?</td>
<td>Participants noted the strong link to their cultural heritage and ancestors through religious music and as an instructive tool for survival and answers during times of difficulty</td>
<td>Religious music presents an opportunity to explore historical, cultural, social and emotional lessons for African Americans. Educational programs for adults relating music to contemporary and social issues would prepare adults to understand the significance attached to religious music.</td>
<td>Provide learning opportunities around religious music, such as examining life history through religious music. Develop programs around favorite songs of the congregation and examine personal meanings of the songs for worshipers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on a review of the literature, it was established that African American religious music was educative. However, what is learned individually and collectively and how extensive the learning from religious music varied greatly among the participants in
this study and requires further study. It was not known how the participants were learning
and processing information related to religious music. This affords an even greater
opportunity for further research.

The music heard and sung in the church reflects the values of a church and can
unite the church or create conflict. Several participants brought to my attention the
circumstances surrounding the formation of the church. I discovered through the
interviews with participants that the church in this study was created out of a schism with
its original church over a music issue that could not be resolved. Therefore, some
members left the original church and formed this particular church in order to resolve the
conflict over music. This confirmed my assumptions about the role and importance of
music in the African American church.

In addition, the church is located in an urban setting, but seemingly draws very few
worshipers from the surrounding area. As the participants described the church and music
as being "high church" or "very reserved," and "traditional" I began to speculate if the
music may alienate potential area residents because of the type and style of music offered
and the atmosphere the music creates in the church. Religious music can serve to unite,
however as noted music can be divisive in the church. Therefore, how can religious music
be more inclusive in the church and reach out to people of all ages, backgrounds, races
presents another opportunity for further research. Many of the participants talked about
music as a tool for recruitment, learning how to use music to reach out and embrace
others in an affirming environment requires planning and dialogue about religious music
and how it can be better used in the church.
African American adults in this study perceived religious music as educative. However, as I stated earlier, the question now is to determine how they were learning, how they were processing information and how extensive learning is through religious music and how the learning affected the participants in their daily existence.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the question: Is religious music educative in the African American church? All of the participants in the study indicated the importance of music in the African American church. Nearly all of the participants spoke of the emotional influence, the educational benefits and the social aspects that the musical ministry performed in the church. The one thing all the participants agreed upon was that religious music is inspirational.

Religious music is educative in the African American church as a source to transmit basic biblical beliefs and theological statements that served to reinforce what was heard in the teachings, scriptures, and sermons in the church. It was further educative for some simply as an appreciation for music as an art and cultural form in the church. Others were taught important concepts of endurance, liberation, and unity through religious music. The Biblical beliefs and theology influenced their thinking and affected their views toward life, God, religion, and racial issues. For instance, participants believed religious music was a prayer and God would hear their prayers and answer their prayer of song. This confirmed the pastor's statement of "we sing it, because we believe it" was true for the participants in this study.
The subject matter experts focused on the lyrics and less on the music as an educative tool. However, some of the church participants focused on the music and not the lyrics. Learning from the emotions aroused by religious music was an important tool for the church participants, however there was no recognition of music as a control mechanism that might manipulate the emotions of the church.

In addition, there was a notable lack of a sense of concern for social action, which was often encouraged, in the cultural messages of early African American religious music.

**Limitation**

This study does have some limitations. For instance, there are no participants in this study under the age of thirty. However, this was reflective of the church population. Also, the church in this study reflects a congregation of a certain socio-economic status that may be different from other African American Baptist churches with different socio-economic attributes. This study focused on one church with one theology and may not be reflective of the theology of other African American Baptist Churches.

**Implications for Adult Religious Education Programs**

This study has implications for the field of adult religious education and adult education programs. Adult religious education programs have missed an opportunity to encourage learning through religious music. There are many opportunities to provide worshipers with a meaningful learning experience through religious music.
1. Religious music can provide a meaningful learning experience for adults. Provide formal and informal learning opportunities for pastors, clergy, musicians, choirs and congregation to study, analyze and critically reflect on the content of religious music in the church. This open dialogue could provide a better connection of how religious music fits with the church theology and doctrine. Learners can begin to understand how the music shapes their church identity, their personal identity, a sense of unity, and the influence of religious music in their daily living. Educational opportunities for the church to understand religious music and the theology behind the music would promote an appreciation of religious music and not view it as Christian entertainment. An explanation of "bad theology" in religious music should be noted and discussed and identify the "good" and "bad" theology in religious music. In addition, the participants could explore music without text and note how learning may occur through instrumental music.

2. It became more difficult for the participants in this study to distinguish religious music from other genres that used secular music forms with Christian themes infused in the text. Because of the difficulty in distinguishing between religious music and spiritual music, this led to the question of what effect did spiritual music have on the theology of the church. Did people understand the theology, the church teachings or religious theology in spiritual music? Because clergy generally have strong theological knowledge and greater understanding of religion, the Bible, and Baptist beliefs, they are trained to make meaning of religious music and determine the level of appropriateness for the church and discuss these issues with musicians, choirs and congregation.
3. Although religious music courses are generally offered as part of seminary curriculum, a broader view of religious music and the arts and the theological implications and religious doctrine of religious music should be analyzed and discussed in seminary instruction. Courses and workshops should be conducted to assist ministers, choir directors, and others with developing a church music department that promotes and encourages learning. This would provide religious leaders with sufficient knowledge and education about religious music and musical genres to strengthen the music program in their churches. Religious music could be a tremendous teaching tool for pastors to use in religious education programs and in his or her sermons.

4. There appears to be a need for a systematic way to train young musicians which will provide not only musical training such as piano or organ lessons but also instruction in and become acquainted with church liturgy, theology, and different musical genres.

**Implications for Adult Education**

Spirituality, religion, religious music and learning are not isolated to the domain of the church or synagogue, but can provide meaningful learning opportunities in the lives of adults. Goldberger (1996) saw the importance of religion and the Black church in the lives of African American women she interviewed in her work *Women's Ways of Knowing*. There are many ways of knowing and music can be a useful tool to unlock complex concepts and abstract theories.

Brookfield (1994) emphasized the connection of spirituality and personal learning projects in the lives of adults. He notes that “in surveys of adult learning most people point
to learning in workplaces, families, communities and recreational societies to be more prevalent and significant than learning undertaken within formal education" (p. 167).

1. Adult Education programs that focus on understanding adult development and transformative learning would benefit from understanding the affects of religious music of various cultures, ethnic groups and to identify the influence of religious music on basic beliefs and worldviews of their adult students. Exploring personal beliefs through religious music would enable adult educators, students to become engaged with religious music in a profound way, and provide, and an opportunity to learn from each other. However, using religious music to understand how it affects the lives of adults would offer another opportunity for adult educators to explore and become better acquainted with how religious music shapes the experiences of their students.

2. The potential for using religious music to expand critical thinking of basic beliefs could foster new ways of thinking and viewing the world for African American adult students. Helping adult learners to critically reflect and analyze their cultural and religious experiences is one of the main tenets of adult education.

3. Because religious music has played such an important role in the African American church and community. an opportunity exists to discuss issues related to race and gender. For instance, in what ways does religious music promote or eliminate sexism or racism? An open discussion and studies of religious music of various cultures could expand the field of adult education.

Flannery (1995) suggest, we must "acknowledge that people and cultures vary in how they learn" (p. 156). Religious music has always been an integral role in the history
and culture of African Americans and yet there is little research that explores the educative
value or its affects on African American adults. It is my hope that the current study will
assist adult educators and church leaders to inform them of the educational potential of
religious music. The next section will present recommendations for future research for
adult education and African American church music programs.

Recommendation for Future Research

Many questions became apparent from this study. The areas for recommendations
for future research are adult education, Christian Education and African American
Churches.

Because this study was an unconventional topic for adult education, there are
many opportunities for adult educators and African American churches to explore and
expand the research of religious music and adult learning.

Adult Education

How extensive is learning from religious music?

How can adult educators assist African American churches to enhance learning and
critical reflection through religious music?

How can adult educators facilitate and inspire self-directed learning connected
with religious music?

How can adult educators assist African American churches to use religious music
as a tool to reach out to the disadvantaged, homeless, those in prisons, etc?
How can religious music be used to foster perspective transformation?

How can adult educators work with African American churches to inform and instruct local and national historical societies of the cultural heritage and educational benefits of African American religious music?

In what ways can religious music be used to facilitate learning not connected to religion?

How can adult educators assist African American churches to use religious music as a tool to teach Baptist theology?

**African American Churches**

How can clergy, Christian Education Directors, and musicians facilitate and inspire self-directed learning connected with religious music?

How is religious music educative in Black churches in South Africa?

How is religious music educative in other countries?

Is religious music used differently in small storefront churches compared to larger more established churches?

Is religious music used differently in white churches compared with African American churches?

Is religious music educative for White churchgoers?

Does religious music in the church reflect and establish a standard for what is acceptable in other areas of the church?
Conclusions

The study began with my basic assumption that learning did occur through religious music in the African American church. The study proposed to investigate if religious music educative in the African American church. It was important to validate the experiences of African American adults with learning through religious music to provide Adult Educators with another perspective of adult learning.

The study contributes to the field of adult education by exploring other sources of teaching and learning and the impact of religious music on a sample of African American adults. It was my hope that the educative value of religious music would lead to a greater learning and worship experience for African American adults.
APPENDIX A

WRITTEN STATEMENT TO PASTOR
Appendix A

Michael L. Rowland has explained the research project entitled, "Religious Music and Adult Learning in an African American Church" to me and has answered my questions regarding this study.

I understand that participation in this research project will involve the following:

Permit the researcher to conduct fact-to-face interviews with members of this congregation. This will include interviews with select choir members, select members of the congregation, the minister of music, the assistant minister of music, and select members of the clergy and me. Participants will be asked to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences with religious music.

All interviews would be conducted at the church site during normal business hours of the church. The interviews with the choir and the members of the congregation would be conducted as small focus group interviews; the remaining interviews will be individual face-to-face interviews.

Tape recording all interviews and those tapes will be destroyed after the research project is completed.

Assist the researcher with names of persons in this church who might provide additional insight into the research phenomena.

Review a summary of the researcher's analysis of the interview data. This would involve an additional one to two hours for all participants. The total time commitment of all participants would be two to four hours over a three-month period.

All responses, either quotes or paraphrased, may appear in print as part of the data analysis. The researcher has stated his plans are to use the data as part of his doctoral dissertation and/or in journal articles or other publications produced by the researcher.

Understand that neither my name nor the name of this church will appear in the data analysis or be associated with this project in any way.

Upon conclusion of the research project that if I so choose, I can request a copy of the data analysis and I understand that, I may obtain a complete copy of the dissertation.
Finally, if I have any additional questions regarding the study, I can contact the researcher’s supervisor, Dr. David L. Boggs, in the Department of Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning at (614) 292-5037.

I agree to allow the researcher to conduct the above-mentioned study at this church.

________________________________________________________________________
Signature

Date:

________________________________________________________________________
Printed Name:

Telephone Number

Name of Institution
APPENDIX B

ANNOUNCEMENT OF STUDY
I invite you to participate in a research study that examines religious musical experiences and learning in the Baptist Church. Your involvement would include:

- Participate in a small group (6-8 people) interview at the church. The interview will last from sixty to ninety minutes. (Between October 1997 & December 1997)
- Share your experiences, thoughts and feelings related to religious music.
- Provide the researcher with feedback on the written summary of your experiences and the researcher's interpretation of your experiences.
- This study is strictly voluntary. You will be asked to sign a consent form indicating that you are a voluntary participant in this research.

If you might be interested in participating in this study, please contact:

Michael Rowland, Ph.D. Candidate-Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning, The Ohio State University.

Daytime Phone: (614) 292-3361 (Between 9am -5pm)
Evening Phone: (614) 237-7354 (after 5pm or messages during the day)

CONFIDENTIALITY IS ASSURED
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHOIR MEMBERS
Appendix C

CHOIR MEMBERS

1. Thinking back over your life what style of music do you most identify with and why?

2. Describe your involvement in musical activities in the church?

3. When you think about religious music how does it make you feel? (Reflection). Do you get the same feeling from all types of religious music? (Probe why or why not, agreement of disagreement from the group.)

4. If you had to describe the feelings you get from religious music with a color, what color would the feelings be and why? (Metaphor)

5. What is important to you about religious music?

Transition Question:

6. When has religious music been most important in your life? Could you describe the circumstances happening in your life at the time?

Key Questions:

7. In what ways do you think music can be used to enhance learning in the church?

8. In your opinion what is the purpose of music in the church?

9. Has anything you learned from religious music helped you in any other learning situation? Give me an example.

Ending Question:

10. What one song or songs have had the greatest impact on your learning and understanding about religion?
APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NON-CHOIR MEMBERS
Appendix D

NON-CHOIR MEMBERS

1. Thinking back over your life what style of music do you most identify with and why?

2. What is important to you about religious music?

3. When you think about religious music how does it make you feel? (Reflection) Do you get the same feelings from all types of religious music? (Probe why or why not, agreement or disagreement from the group)

4. If you had to describe the feelings or emotions you get from religious music with a color, what color would those feelings be and why? (Metaphor)

Transition Question:

5. When has religious music been most important in your life? Could you describe the circumstances happening in your life at the time?

Key Questions:

6. In your opinion what is the purpose of music in the church?

7. What do you believe you have gained from religious music?

8. Has anything you learned from religious music helped you in any other learning situation? Give me an example.

Ending Questions:

9. What one song or songs have had the greatest impact on your learning and understanding about religion? How did the song affect your learning?

10. Is there anything you would like to say as a member of the congregation about your experiences with religious music or about religious music in general?
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MUSICIANS
Appendix E

MUSICIANS

1. Tell me about your experiences as a choir director/church musician, such as
   How long have you served as a church musician?
   Have you held similar positions in other churches?
   Describe your role and responsibilities?

2. What do you like most about your work as a church musician?
   What do you like least about your work as a church musician?

3. How does religious music make you feel?
   Do you get the same feeling from all religious music?

4. If you had to describe the feelings or emotions you get from religious music with a color, what color would you choose and why?

5. What is important to you about religious music?
   What type of music do you most identify with?

6. In your opinion, what is the purpose of music in the church?

7. What opportunities for learning are there for the choir?

8. Can you describe a specific time in your life when music played a crucial role?
   What were you thinking at the time? What were you feeling at the time? Did the music help you? If so, How did music help you?

9. What can religious music teach us? Probe: How does it do this?

10. What would you like people to know about your musical experiences?
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PASTOR
Appendix F

PASTOR

1. Describe your role as pastor?
   General responsibilities
   What a typical day is like for you?
   How would you characterize this church?

2. Describe your musical background?

3. In your opinion, what is the purpose of music in the church?
   What contribution do you make to the music program?

4. What can adults learn from religious music?
   In your opinion, how can religious music encourage learning?

5. What impact has religious music had on personally?
   What style of religious music (gospel, hymns, anthems, spirituals, fast, slow) affect you more and why?
   Do you get the same feeling or emotion from all styles of religious music?
   If you had to describe the feelings or emotions you get from religious music with a color, what color would you choose and why?

6. How do you use religious music in your role as Pastor?

7. What types of educational programs for adults are offered in the church?

8. How would you define learning?

9. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences with religious music and learning in the church?
APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Appendix G

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

1. Describe for me your role in the church?
   General responsibilities
   What a typical day is like for you?

2. Describe your musical background or experiences with music growing up?

3. What impact has religious music had on you personally?

4. Do you get the same feelings or emotions from all genres of religious music?

5. If you had to describe the feelings or emotions you get from religious music with a color, what color would you choose and why?

Transition Question:

6. In your opinion, what is the purpose of music in the church?

Key Questions:

7. What can religious music teach people?

8. In what ways do you think music can be used to enhance learning in the church?

9. How would you define learning in the church?

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences with religious music?
Appendix H

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

1. Describe your musical background

2. In your opinion, what is the purpose of music in the church?
   What is your contribution to the music program?
   How would you describe the music heard in this church?

3. What do you think African American adults learn from religious music?
   In your opinion, how can religious music encourage learning?

4. What impact has religious music had on you personally?
   What style of religious music (hymns, anthems, spirituals, gospel music) affect you more and why?
   Do you get the same feelings or emotions from all styles of religious music?

5. How do you use religious music in your role as pastor?

6. How would you define learning?

7. Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences with religious music in the African American church?
APPENDIX I

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SHEET
Thank you for your participation in this music research study. This study will examine the musical experiences of African American adults. In order to obtain a profile of the participants, please complete the information listed below.

1. Name__________________________________________________________

2. Gender: (check )
   _____ Male    _____ Female

3. Age Range:
   (Please check )
       _____ 20-29 years of age
       _____ 30-39 years of age
       _____ 40-49 years of age
       _____ 50-65 years of age
       _____ 65 years of age or older

4. Current or Former Occupation: __________________________________________

5. Educational Background:
   (Check highest level completed)
       _____ Some High School
       _____ High School Graduate
       _____ Some College
       _____ Associates Degree
       _____ College Graduate
       _____ Graduate Degree
       _____ Professional Degree

6. Total No. of years in Church Choir (if applicable)
   (Check one)
       _____ Less than 1 year
       _____ 1-3 years
       _____ 4-7 years
       _____ 7-12 years
       _____ 13 or more

7. Total No. of years of formal Musical training:
   (Check if applicable)
       _____ 0-1 year
       _____ 2-5 years
       _____ 5 or more years

THANK YOU
Appendix J

CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN
SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH
PAGE TWO

RELIGIOUS MUSIC AND ADULT LEARNING
IN AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCH

Date _____________________ Signed ____________________________

( Participant)

Signed ____________________________

David L. Boggs, Professor and Principal Investigator.
The Ohio State University

Signed ____________________________

Michael L. Rowland, Ph.D. Candidate.
The Ohio State University

HS – 027 (Rev. 3/87) -- To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.
APPENDIX K

ACTIVITY LOG
## RESEARCHER ACTIVITY LOG

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<th>Activity Description</th>
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<td>NUHAN Subject Approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-13-97</td>
<td>Various preparation for Church dedication</td>
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*Note: The format of the dates is dd-mm-yyyy.*
## RESEARCHER ACTIVITY LOG

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### Church Observations

- 10/5/97: Sunday Morning Worship service - 2 1/2 hrs
- 10/12/97
- 10/19/97
- 10/26/97
- 11/2/97: Sunday Morning Worship service - 3 hrs
- 11/9/97
- 11/16/97
- 11/23/97
- 11/30/97: Sunday Morning Worship service - 3 hrs
- 12/7/97
- 12/14/97
- 12/21/97
- 12/28/97: - 2 1/2 hrs
APPENDIX L

TIMELINE
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<td>Summer 1997</td>
<td>Human Subjects Approval</td>
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<td>Schedule interviews</td>
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<td>Spring 1998</td>
<td>Dissertation Defense</td>
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APPENDIX M

CHURCH COVENANT
Appendix M

CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge and holiness; to give it a place in our affections, prayers and services above every organization of human origin; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrine; to contribute cheerfully and regularly, as God has prospered us, towards its expenses, for the support of a faithful and evangelical ministry among us, the relief of the poor and the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. In case of difference of opinion in the church, we will strive to avoid a contentious spirit, and if we cannot unanimously agree, we will cheerfully recognize the right of the majority to govern.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotion; to study diligently the word of God; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintance; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be kind and just to those in our employ, and faithful in the service we promise others; endeavoring in the purity of heart and good will towards all men to exemplify and commend our holy faith.

We further engage to watch over, to pray for, to exhort and stir up each other unto every good word and work; to guard each other's reputation, not needlessly exposing the infirmities of others; to participate in each other's joys, and with tender sympathy bear one another's burdens and sorrows; to cultivate Christian courtesy; to be slow to give or take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, being mindful of the rules of the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, to secure it without delay; and through life, amid evil report, and good report, to seek to live to the glory of God, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.

When we remove from this place, we engage as soon as possible to unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


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