

THE CHANGING ROLE OF MUSIC IN THE LITURGY OF THE AFRICAN  
AMERICAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH: GUIDELINES FOR  
IMPROVING ITS QUALITATIVE USE

by

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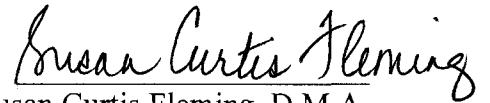
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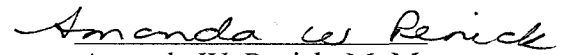
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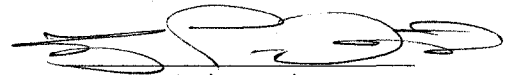
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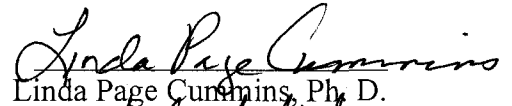
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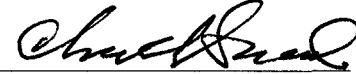


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## ABSTRACT

Historical research on the Seventh-day Adventist Church was conducted to present the roots of Adventist music in its liturgy. Comparative research of the influence of the Black Church on the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church was conducted along with an investigation of matters connected with the split into African American Regional Conferences. The present musical culture of contemporary African American Seventh-day Adventist churches was discussed in light of the influences of African culture and European culture. The contemporary issues including secular influences in the Adventist Church and the differences in worldviews of the traditional European culture and the African culture were compared.

The research attempts to bridge a range of cultural challenges that face the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church. The challenging issues considered here are drawn from three continents (Europe, Africa, and America), four cultures (traditional European, colonial American, African, and African American), and at least two different worldviews and spiritual orientations. After surveying the historical and cultural background of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and, in particular, the influences of the "Black Church" and African American culture more broadly on African American Seventh-Day Adventist congregations, this thesis put forward guidelines that respond to both denominational standards and the need to honor African-American musical culture.

## INTRODUCTION

This document addresses the use of music within the liturgy of the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church. It explores the Seventh-day Adventist Church's origins and history recognizing that the authoritative sources upon which the Church relies for guidance in decisions regarding music are the Bible and the writings of the Adventist church's prophet, Ellen White. This document considers key influences from Africa that continue to shape the denomination's African American churches, in particular, today. The historic division within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the mid-1940s, and the subsequent regional conferences with African American leadership and membership, along with contemporary influences on these African American Seventh-day Adventist Churches, receives particular attention. The purpose of this document is to develop musical guidelines that aid in finding a balance that recognizes both the Adventists' European musical heritage and its African musical heritage.

The research attempts to bridge a range of cultural challenges that face the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church. The cultural issues considered here are drawn from three continents (Europe, Africa, and America), four cultures (traditional European, colonial American, African, and African American), and at least two different worldviews and spiritual orientations; these factors inevitably result in a study that is broad in scope. Traditional protestant American religiosity emphasizes a divide between the sacred and the secular, whereas traditional African cultures embrace a more holistic



and integrated worldview; the differences are explored in relation to how they merge in the music of the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church liturgy. As a conclusion to this study, chapter four offers guidelines that support a balance of these competing influences and seek to provide additional specific principles for the denomination's African American churches that complement the already-established general guidelines in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and an African American, the writer is a blend of both histories. I am influenced by both the traditions of the Church and my relation to the African American community. I have noticed the vast change in music in the liturgy of the Church in just the past thirty years, not to mention the change since the Adventist Church's inception. Many contemporary Adventist churches have chosen to leave behind traditional liturgy and conservative practices in music—such as hymn and anthem singing—while turning to Contemporary Christian music and other more culturally popular trends in liturgy. Is it possible for the African American Seventh-day Adventist Christian to adhere to the denomination's standards for music and worship services without fully neglecting the influences of culture? Donald McAdams, former history professor at the Adventist institution, Andrews University, comments on the problems that face the Church's historical change from a sect to a church, which has implications for the music liturgy as well. The African American Seventh-day Adventist Church's challenge is “to retain the spark, commitment and message that gave the sect its original power, while accepting the institutional, structural and cultural changes that are

the inevitable concomitant of growth in the real world.”<sup>1</sup> My aim is to develop guidelines that will help the contemporary African American Seventh-day Adventist Church to move forward toward a balance that includes the musical heritage of its multiple influences.

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<sup>1</sup> Gary Land, *Adventism in America: A History* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 189.

## CHAPTER 1- DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Black Seventh-day Adventist Church in the twenty-first century has inherited a variety of influences. These include the tenants of traditional (and for the most part white) Seventh-Day Adventism—especially hymnody and other liturgical practices involving music; the Black Church in America as it has been shaped by African ritual practices; and contemporary African American culture with its use of popular music styles in contemporary worship. This document presents historical and comparative research in order to compose a balanced position among these competing contemporary influences, toward the goal of constructing sound guidelines for contemporary church musicians in the African American churches within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The origin of Seventh-day Adventism can be traced to Washington, New Hampshire, in the year 1844. Bert Haloviak, a Seventh-day Adventist historian, states that this town is the first known location where the beliefs in the Advent and the seventh-day Sabbath united.<sup>2</sup> The church in which this occurred was a Christian Connection church that was built by its members in the early 1840s. In 1843, Millerite minister Joshua Goodwin convinced the members of this church that Christ would soon return to earth, thereby instilling the “Advent” message.<sup>3</sup> Haloviak also records that a Seventh-day Baptist named Rachel Oakes convinced the New Hampshire church’s circuit minister,

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<sup>2</sup> Bert Haloviak, “A Heritage of Freedom: The Christian Connection Roots to Seventh-day Adventism,” <http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/AST/ChrConn95.pdf>, 2. Accessed 3 January 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Haloviak, 3.

Frederick Wheeler, of the seventh day Sabbath. Other members of that church accepted the teaching and the Washington, New Hampshire, Christian Connection church became the first Seventh-day Adventist church. Some of the members of this New Hampshire church were instrumental in choosing the official name, Seventh-day Adventist, in 1860.<sup>4</sup> The denomination's official website stresses three key elements that shape its history: the Church is Christian; it advocates social, organizational, and theological freedom; and it welcomes diversity within its membership.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church thus developed from a movement of believers called the Christian Connection. It was, therefore, "Christian" before developing its emphases on the "Sabbath" and the "Advent." By 1860, the Christian Connection was the fifth largest denomination in the United States. In an era when creedal statements were the basis for denominational identity, the Christians took the position of "the Bible and the Bible only" as its only creed. Discussions emerged in the Church concerning both the biblical practice of worshipping on the seventh day and the biblical passages concerning the second coming of Christ. One result of these discussions was the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Seventh-day Adventism developed out of the Christian Connection through the teaching and preaching of William Miller. Miller was a Baptist preacher who had established a reputation as a scholar of the scriptures. Among his emphases was the expectation of the second coming of Christ in the very near future—the actual date of which he had calculated based upon a careful reading of the "cleansing of the sanctuary" passage found in the Bible's book of Daniel (Daniel 8:14) in particular. Many ministers

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<sup>4</sup> Haloviak, 2.

(estimates range from 700 to 2,000) joined Miller in his proclamation that the second coming of Jesus would arrive between the spring of 1843 and the spring of 1844. After Christ did not appear during the spring of 1844, a Millerite preacher, Samuel Snow, suggested evidence that the decree to rebuild Jerusalem in Ezra 7 did not begin until the autumn of 457 B.C. This meant that the 2,300 years of expectation would come to end in the autumn, and Christ's second coming was recalculated to October 22, 1844, the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh Jewish month. Believers gave up their jobs, confessed their sins, and spent hours in prayer as the date drew nearer. Tens of thousands of "Adventists," the new name for the Millerites, met in homes and awaited Christ's coming, but there was a great disappointment. Christ did not return on that long-anticipated day. Many people gave up on the movement. Miller died in 1849, five years after the disappointment, with the same hope of the Lord's arrival on his lips.<sup>5</sup>

Hiram Edson accepted Miller's message in 1843. He was devastated along with the other believers who had gathered on Edson's farm in Port Gibson, New York, on October 22, 1844. These believers prayed and decided that there had to be an answer to this disappointment. While walking through a cornfield, Edson received a vision of a heavenly sanctuary. It was then that he realized that the "sanctuary" discussed in Daniel was referring to this sanctuary in heaven, not on earth. He continued to study and published his findings in an extra edition of the Millerite journal, the *Day-Star*, in 1846.<sup>6</sup>

In 1844, a Seventh-day Baptist woman named Rachel Oakes shared with leaders in the Millerite movement that the seventh-day biblical Sabbath should still be observed.

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<sup>5</sup> Kevin Townsend, *Keepers of the Flame* [DVD] (Hagerstown, MD: Crossview Media, 2005), episode 3.

<sup>6</sup> Townsend, episode 3.

Some historians suggest that Sabbath observance continued in various parts of the Roman Empire up to about the 5<sup>th</sup> century, but the influence of the pagan practice of sun worship and apostasy led to its gradual change to Sunday. Centuries later, during the period of the Reformation, the Sabbath or Sunday issue came under renewed scrutiny and as a result, Sabbath observance spread throughout Europe, including England. This was an issue among the Puritans in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as well. Peter Chamberlen, a doctor to James I, Charles I, and Charles II, was a Seventh-day Baptist, “a small group that had separated from the Baptist church in the early 1600s because of their convictions concerning the Sabbath.”<sup>7</sup> Steven Mumford, a Seventh-day Baptist from England, organized the first Seventh-day Baptist church in America in 1671 at Newport, Rhode Island. By 1843, Seventh-day Baptists numbered 5,500 members.

Rachel Oakes alerted her preacher, Rev. Wheeler (a Methodist pastor who had been teaching the “soon coming” of Jesus after reading Miller’s books), that he should honor the fourth commandment to “keep the seventh day holy.” Wheeler was convinced and became the first Sabbatarian Adventist minister of the former Christian Connection church in Washington, New Hampshire, in 1844. Thomas Prebble, also a Millerite preacher, was the first Sabbath-keeping Adventist to advocate the seventh-day Sabbath in printed form in 1845.<sup>8</sup> Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain, read that article and was impressed. He studied the subject with Wheeler. They then journeyed to the home of Cyrus Farnsworth, one of the early Sabbath-keeping members in Washington, New Hampshire, for a conference, and Bates later fully accepted the Sabbath. Bates devoted the rest of his life to proclaiming the news about the Sabbath. He brought about an

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<sup>7</sup> Townsend, episode 4.

<sup>8</sup> Townsend, episode 3.

awareness of the third angel's message in Revelation 14 in which the observance of the Sabbath is identified as a key element needed to avoid the mark of the beast (14:9). Bates met with Hiram Edson to discuss his views at a conference and shared the truth of the Sabbath. Edson accepted it wholeheartedly. Also discovered at an 1846 conference was a connection between the Sabbath and Christ's ministry in the Most Holy place in the Sanctuary (Revelation 11:18, 19 were studied). The new light from this study suggested that Christ was engaged in the final work as the high priest in the heavenly sanctuary; that Christ was the "Lord of the Sabbath"; and that he both observed the Sabbath himself and commanded others to do so. Also, attention was drawn to the "spirit of prophecy" that would be evident in the church.<sup>9</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has been historically an advocate for freedom. In the early episodes of the fight for the freedom of American slaves, the Seventh-day Adventist Church participated in the abolitionist movement. According to the denomination's website: "Seventh-day Adventists from their earliest days, actively sought freedom for all and worked toward abolition of slavery as well as roles for women in the church, and fostered a strong opposition to formalized church creeds." In addition to the freedom of slaves and the institution of female ministers, the Church was concerned with temperance, health reform, and religious freedom. The Church stipulates that members should not use tobacco or alcohol stating that, "proper care of the physical frame would yield a clear mind with which to perceive scriptural truths."<sup>10</sup> Religious

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<sup>9</sup> Townsend, episode 3.

<sup>10</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, "Seventh-day Adventist Church Facts and Figures: History."

[http://www.adventist.org/world\\_church/facts\\_and\\_figures/history/index.html.en](http://www.adventist.org/world_church/facts_and_figures/history/index.html.en). Accessed 31 July 2007.

freedom included separation of church and state as well as the realization that anyone could, through diligent study, come upon additional light from the scriptures. This openness to new insights meant that an official creed for the church, developing out of a “fixed tradition,” was undesirable. “The ‘present truth’ perspective assumed that new insights would arise as Seventh-day Adventists continued to study the Scriptures. The prophetic guidance of Ellen Gould Harmon [White] within the movement solidified this perspective of social, organizational, and theological freedom.”<sup>11</sup>

Ellen Harmon White was a young woman who has had the greatest influence on the establishment of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. One church history describes her this way:

In Portland, Maine, Ellen Gould Harmon, a conscientious and deeply contemplative young woman of seventeen years with a Methodist background, experienced a “vision” in December 1844. Describing this experience, she wrote that “the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world.” She saw the Advent believers moving toward the heavenly city, and some falling off the path through weariness and discouragement. But when circumstances seemed darkest, “a small black cloud appeared...which we all knew was the sign of the Son of Man.” The graves were opened, the dead arose, and all entered the cloud and ascended to heaven with Jesus. After experiencing the delights of paradise, Ellen was told: “You must go back to earth again, and relate to others what I have revealed to you.” Then an angel bore me gently down to this dark world.” In effect, the vision assured the Advent believers of eventual triumph despite the immediate despair into which they had plunged.<sup>12</sup>

Ellen White had numerous other visions and began traveling with small groups of Adventists offering assurance and guidance. One of her visions, which was widely

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<sup>11</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Seventh-day Adventist Church Facts and Figures: History.”

[http://www.adventist.org/world\\_church/facts\\_and\\_figures/history/index.html.en](http://www.adventist.org/world_church/facts_and_figures/history/index.html.en). Accessed 31 July 2007.

<sup>12</sup> Land, *Adventism in America*, 31.



disseminated, “confirmed the status of Adventists as God’s true people.”<sup>13</sup> While traveling, she met her future husband, James White, a former teacher and itinerant Millerite preacher, who accepted her visions as coming from the Lord. At a meeting now known as the Battle Creek conference, the Church made the first official statement regarding the visions of Mrs. White. The statement, drafted by Joseph Bates, Joseph Waggoner, and Merritt Cornell, and published in a denominational paper, declared that considering Ellen G. White’s visions as from God was not enough. They were to be regarded as a manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the remnant church and the Church was under obligation to abide by their teachings.<sup>14</sup> This is still taught in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Seventh-day Adventist Church still refers to books written by White for guidance in most matters today. Some of these books include *Testimonies for the Church*, volumes 1-9, *Education*, *Messages to Young People*, *Early Writings*, *Ministry of Healing*, and *Adventist Home*. Her counsel seemed to span most concerns of everyday life, including areas such as parenting, Christian principles, health and temperance, music, and much more. In many instances her counsel cautioned against following the common secular practices. Her counsel often reminded readers to go beyond what is normally expected, and of the more important spiritual goal of eternal life in heaven. For example, in an era of America’s history when parents were advised to “encourage in boys civic interest and participation and guide children in the paths of morality and virtue,” Ellen White’s counsel was to “raise children, not for the American

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<sup>13</sup> Dudley, *The Genealogy of Ellen Gould Harmon White* (Nashville: Dudley Publishing Services, 1999), 132.

<sup>14</sup> Land, 36.

republic, but for heavenly society.”<sup>15</sup> Her writings on music and musical standards referred to in this document are regarded today in the same manner as the early pioneers.

The founders associated with the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, New Hampshire, are an indication of the church’s legacy of diversity. Rachel Oakes, so influential in promoting the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath, made her opinion heard even though women’s voices were not well respected in the mid-nineteenth century. Also, the Church’s founders came from various denominations: Rachel Oakes, a Seventh-day Baptist; Thomas Preble, a Freewill Baptist; and Frederick Wheeler, a Methodist, to name a few. At least five denominations were represented in the first Sabbath-keeping Christian Adventist church. But unity prevailed over the central issues amidst this diversity.<sup>16</sup>

A brief timeline encapsulating the growth of the Church begins with the approximately 50,000 Millerite believers in the pre-Disappointment period before 1844. After the Disappointment and fragmentation of the movement, the Sabbatarian wing probably numbered less than 100 in 1849. These members were located in the area between New Hampshire, the site of the official beginnings, and Maine and Connecticut. A few former Millerites accepted the message in Michigan as a result of a visit from Joseph Bates, “Adventism’s first evangelist.”<sup>17</sup> But there was no real growth during the period between 1844 to 1851 due to both the recent humiliation of the Disappointment

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<sup>15</sup> Land, 172.

<sup>16</sup> General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Seventh-day Adventist Church Facts and Figures: History.” [http://www.adventist.org/world\\_church/facts\\_and\\_figures/history/index.html.en](http://www.adventist.org/world_church/facts_and_figures/history/index.html.en). Accessed 31 July 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 135.

and a false Shut Door Theory, abandoned in 1854, that had “terminated all mission efforts of Adventists because of their general understanding that the door of mercy was closed for humanity.”<sup>18</sup> By 1852 numbers had increased to 250 and included adherents in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Indiana. The Church held its first tent meeting in 1854 in Battle Creek, Michigan, which resulted in more recruits. Published materials and a new desire to evangelize boosted numbers to over 1,000 in 1855 and 2,000 in 1858 as the Church advanced into Iowa and Missouri.<sup>19</sup> The early members decided on adopting the name “Seventh-day Adventist” in 1860. Responding to further light from their interpretation of the biblical scriptures, they embarked on becoming a worldwide ministry to fulfill the mission to “go ye therefore and teach all nations” (Matthew 24:19 Bible, KJV). The Church was officially organized on 21 May 1863, and included 125 churches and 3,500 members.

The Church’s foundational beliefs are based on the Bible and the Bible only, under the prophetic guidance of Ellen White. The Church’s philosophy of music is also hinged on these beliefs, although music leaders sometimes follow traditions that are not necessarily supported by these two sources. The two main scriptures that are referenced in the latest edition of the Seventh-day Adventist “Philosophy of Music Guidelines” are 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Philippians 4:8. The former reads as follows: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” The latter states: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is right, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” These

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<sup>18</sup> Bull and Lockhart, 136.

<sup>19</sup> Bull and Lockhart, 136.

two scriptures stand as general pillars of a correct use of music for the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Ellen White on many occasions offered insight and guidance into the proper use of music in the liturgy. The following excerpts concerning music are from her book entitled *Education*.

Music is often perverted to serve purposes of evil, and it thus becomes one of the most alluring agencies of temptation. But rightly employed, it is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the soul.

[Music] is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth.

As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer.<sup>20</sup>

Music leaders in the Adventist Church that are impressed that music is indeed a precious gift would ideally use music and musical styles in a careful and well-planned manner. Spiritually-minded musicians would want to keep from desecrating the gift of music. Mrs. White's counsel has proven to be inspired in all areas about which she has written, including music. Her quotes above are harmonious with Biblical principles and are considered wise counsel. As previously stated, the Church recognized her counsel and visions as manifestations of the gift of prophecy, which Seventh-day Adventists believe is a necessary part of God's church; therefore, her counsel is highly regarded.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual includes sections on how music should be used in the services of the Church. Excerpts that address music use in the liturgy have been taken from the Church's manual and included in the Appendix. The

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<sup>20</sup> Ellen White, *Education* (Boise: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1852), 167-168.

<sup>21</sup> Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (New York: Seabury Press, 1983), 1.

manual makes use of Ellen White statements on music in the liturgy and supplements them with additional information recommended by the Church.

The term liturgy derives from the Greek *leitourgia* or “public work.” The common definition today is a prescribed order of public worship. The content of a liturgy is defined by the group using or following it. In Christian worship, as Dom Gregory Dix points out, liturgy is “the name given ever since the days of the apostles to the act of taking part in the solemn corporate worship of God by the ‘priestly’ society of Christians, who are the body of Christ, the church.” It is “worship that is officially organized by the church, and which is open to and offered by, or in the name of, all who are members of the church.” In his book, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dix asserts what he thinks is central to the liturgy of the Church, the Eucharist, or the Lord’s Supper. He states that is to be “particularly applied to the performance of that rite which was instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ himself to be the peculiar and distinctive worship of those who should be ‘His own’ and which has ever since been the heart and core of Christian worship and Christian living—the Eucharist or Breaking of Bread.”<sup>21</sup>

Frank Senn simply states that liturgy is what Christians have performed in their public assemblies. He seems to agree with Dix in saying that “the liturgy of a ritual system is often, but not always, its most paradigmatic, most central, most valued rite.”<sup>22</sup> Liturgy is “the activity in which the life and mission of the church are paradigmatically and centrally expressed.” There are no Christian churches without a liturgy, because each church has “an act of gathering in which its corporate life and mission are

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<sup>22</sup> Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 4.

expressed.”<sup>23</sup> Even non-liturgical churches have a liturgy. Senn states that what “non-liturgical” churches do in their meeting *is* their *leitourgia*, or “public work.”

Barry Liesch, professor of music in worship at Biola University, gives pros and cons of liturgy. He says that positively, “the liturgical service imposes discipline and a logical framework to the weekly service and adheres to the church year. It contains fixed words for confessing our sins and for receiving God’s forgiveness.”<sup>24</sup> He further explains that this requires short responses from the people, which promote participation in dialogical activity. An example of this is the pastor saying, “Lift up your hearts” and the people respond, “We lift them up to the Lord.” Liturgical services also involve lectionary scripture readings, and the sermon focuses on those readings. On the negative side, Liesch states that these predetermined, fixed responses may “feel stiff to some churched as well as non-churched participants in thematic services.”<sup>25</sup>

The Seventh-day Adventist Church manual provides two examples of a short and long liturgy that churches can use to aid them in planning of the worship service. Although the suggestions are given, it is carefully stated that churches are invited to create their own forms. “The Sabbath morning service has two main divisions: the congregational response in praise and adoration, expressed in song, prayer, and gifts, and the message from the Word of God. We do not prescribe a set form or order for public

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<sup>23</sup> Senn, 4.

<sup>24</sup> Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on music and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 77.

<sup>25</sup> Liesch, 77.

worship. A short order of service is usually better suited to the real spirit of worship.”<sup>26</sup>

The suggestions are as follows:

#### Longer Order of Worship

Musical Prelude  
 Announcements  
 Choir and Ministers Enter  
 Doxology  
 Invocation  
 Scripture Reading  
 Hymn of Praise  
 Prayer  
 Anthem or Special Music  
 Offering  
 Hymn of Consecration  
 Sermon  
 Hymn  
 Benediction  
 Congregation Standing or Seated for a Few Moments of Silent Prayer  
 Musical Postlude

#### Shorter Order of Worship

Announcements  
 Hymn  
 Prayer  
 Offering  
 Hymn or Special Music  
 Sermon  
 Hymn  
 Benediction  
 Congregation Standing or Seated for Silent Prayer<sup>27</sup>

Because of the looseness in terms of a set liturgy prescribed by the Adventist Church, the need for guidance is essential. Adventist churches are free to program extra musical selections, praise services, concerts, or other musical offerings without restriction. The inclusion of instrumental music or the choice to use music for

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<sup>26</sup> Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, *Church Manual* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2005), 80.

<sup>27</sup> Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 96.

background in the service for items such as the prayer, scripture reading, or sermons are up to the discretion of the music leader. The review of the Adventist Church's past and the research into the African American's history will do much to point the Church to proper directives for balance in its music liturgy in the future.



## CHAPTER 2-BLACK SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH-REGIONAL CONFERENCES

### *How Black Influences Developed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*

Charles Dudley, a historian of the African-American Seventh-day Adventist Church, suggests that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was attractive to Blacks because of its emphasis on healthy living and its biblical basis.<sup>28</sup> He also points to “a quiet connection between the Adventist belief in the seventh-day Sabbath and the practice of some Ethiopian Christians, unbroken since the earliest days of the church, of Saturday Sabbaths.”<sup>29</sup> Ellen White also affirms this fact in a passage in her book *The Great*

### *Controversy:*

The churches of Africa held the Sabbath as it was held by the papal church before her complete apostasy. While they kept the seventh day in obedience to the commandment of God, they abstained from labor on the Sunday in conformity to the custom of the church. Upon obtaining supreme power, Rome had trampled upon the Sabbath of God to exalt her own; but the churches of Africa, hidden for nearly a thousand years, did not share in this apostasy. When brought under the sway of Rome, they were forced to set aside the true and exalt the false Sabbath; but no sooner had they regained their independence than they returned to obedience to the fourth commandment.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Dudley, *The Genealogy of Ellen Gould Harmon White* (Nashville: Dudley Publishing Services, 1999), 132.

<sup>29</sup> Dudley, *The Genealogy of Ellen Gould Harmon*, 132.

<sup>30</sup> Ellen White, *The Great Controversy* (Boise: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 577-578.

The Adventist Church “remained largely segregated until the civil rights era of the 1950s and 60s.”<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, even some of the early pioneers of the Adventist Church were opposed to Blacks participating in religion.

The Advent (Millerite) Movement led by William Miller and others reached its peak in 1843 and 1844 as the group prepared for the coming of Jesus. However, Miller and his followers did not think that the slaves would be in heaven, neither was the gospel to be taught to them. They adopted the popular position of the apologists, who believed that Blacks were not totally human and had no souls to save.<sup>32</sup>

But surprisingly there were some Blacks in the Northern states who were influential in its pioneering movements. William Foye, a Black man born free in Maine in 1817, was given visions from God about the Adventist Church in the 1840s. Foye moved to Boston in the late 1830s to prepare for the Episcopal ministry.<sup>33</sup> He received two visions in 1842. He was twenty-three and was meeting with a group of Christians for prayer and bible study. His first of four visions on January 18, 1842, lasted for two and a half hours. Dr. Henry Cummings, a medical doctor who witnessed one of his visions, examined him and could find “no appearance of life, except around the heart.”

Foye witnessed the rewards given to the righteous at the second coming and was shown the matchless beauty of heaven. He was hesitant to share his visions, for he knew the prejudice against blacks. But less than three weeks later, he was given another vision while meeting in a crowded church. This vision, lasting twelve and a half hours, revealed the scenes of the great Judgment day.<sup>34</sup>

Charles Dudley believes that if his visions had been given notice, the Great disappointment two years later “might have been softened.” He preached these visions

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<sup>31</sup> Dudley, *The Genealogy of Ellen Gould Harmon*, 133.

<sup>32</sup> Charles E. Dudley, *Thou Who Hast Brought Us Thus Far On Our Way*, vol. 1 (Brushton: TEACH Services, 1997), 76.

<sup>33</sup> Dudley, vol. I, 75.

<sup>34</sup> Townsend, *Keepers of the Flame*, DVD, (Hagerstown: 2005), episode 4.

extensively in the coming months. Ellen White attended some of Foye's meetings held in Beethoven Hall in Portland, Maine when she was sixteen.<sup>35</sup> It was said that he could have influenced Black or White people when he was under "spiritual duress."<sup>36</sup> But Ellen White stated that he "let his color become his crossing," and stopped relaying his messages. Laws were passed in Mississippi that were also supported in other states, which forbade Blacks to preach. Dudley reports that, "Foye said of William Miller that Miller did not care for people who spoke of having visions and dreams and that he [Miller] did not care for people of his [Foye's] color."<sup>37</sup>

Hazen Foss, reportedly a "man of mixed blood," was another early influence. Born in 1819 in Portland, Maine. he too received visions, but was reluctant to share them for fear of persecution. In one vision, Foss was told that he would be released of his duty. It is reported that Hazen Foss heard Ellen White, who was to become regarded as a prophet by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, expressing the same vision that was given to him three months earlier whom he revealed to no one. When he saw her afterwards, he said, "That is the instrument on whom the Lord has laid the burden."<sup>38</sup> Foss felt that he was "lost" because of refusing to share the visions that he was given. He encouraged Ellen White to share the visions that she received.<sup>39</sup> Other Blacks who influenced the early Adventist Church were William Still, Charles Bowles, and John Lewis, recognized Black ministers who were coworkers with William Miller, Joshua V. Himes, and other

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<sup>35</sup> Dudley, vol. I, 58.

<sup>36</sup> Charles E. Dudley, Sr., *Thou Who Hast Brought Us Thus Far On Our Way*, vol. III (Brushton: TEACH Services, 2000), 128.

<sup>37</sup> Dudley, vol. III, 128.

<sup>38</sup> Dudley, vol. I, 58.

<sup>39</sup> Dudley, vol. I, 58.

Millerite leaders.<sup>40</sup> William Still was a former slave who obtained his own freedom and later was active in the Underground Railroad.<sup>41</sup> The June 7, 1843 issue of the *Signs of the Times* described John Lewis as a “highly esteemed colored preacher” for whom an offering of more than \$20 had been collected to support his preaching of the Second Advent message ‘among that much neglected class of our brethren with whom he is most closely connected.’”<sup>42</sup> Charles Bowles was a well regarded free black preacher reputed to have “preached the Millerite exposition of prophecy, despite encountering bitter opposition because of his color.”<sup>43</sup>

Dudley presents a succinct history of the attempts of the Adventist Church to cater to African Americans. The following chronology shows the first official outreach efforts to African Americans.

1. November 1887-Edgefield Junction church [Edgefield Junction, Tennessee] was organized with nine members.
2. February 16, 1890-Louisville church was organized by R.M. Kilgore with ten charter members. (This was the first Black congregation organized in the denomination and the oldest in the entire world).
3. June 13, 1891-The Bowling Green church was organized by C.M. Kinney with eight charter members. Among these members were the parents of Luther Milligan who was born after his parents became Seventh-day Adventist. (Some of the pastors who served there were W.J. Cleveland, Dr. C. A. Meyers, Sr., J. Richardson, C. David Joseph, Doc C. Hatcher, Lee A. Paschal, Albert Frazier and William O. Freeman.)
4. June 4, 1892-New Orleans, Louisiana, church was organized by C. M. Kinney with ten charter members.

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<sup>40</sup> Delbert Baker, “Black Seventh-day Adventists and the Influence of Ellen White,” in Calvin B. Rock, ed., *Perspectives: Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twentieth Century* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing, 1996), 23.

<sup>41</sup> Charles E. Bradford, “Preserve the Culture: Tell the Story,” *Regional Voice* (Summer 2005), 6.

<sup>42</sup> Doug Morgan, “Peacemaking Heritage Series: Am I My Brother’s Keeper?,” [http://www.spectrummagazine.org/blog/2008/01/12/peacemaking\\_heritage\\_series\\_am\\_i\\_my\\_brothers\\_keeper](http://www.spectrummagazine.org/blog/2008/01/12/peacemaking_heritage_series_am_i_my_brothers_keeper). Accessed 3 February 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Morgan.

5. September 15, 16, 1894-Nashville, Tennessee, church was organized by C.M. Kinney with nine charter members.
6. Fall of 1894-Elder James Edson White began work in Memphis, Tennessee, after being arrested by city authorities for using Finis Parker, a colored pilot from India, who had no license, to sail a boat in those waters. After remaining there for a period of time, he proceeded onward to Vicksburg, Natchez and Yazoo City, Mississippi.
7. June 19, 1896-Birmingham, Alabama, church was organized by Elder Hottel with 15 charter members, among whom were Judge Price Pearson and his family and his sister, Mrs. Elzira Finley.<sup>44</sup>

Despite these attempts, the racial divide has continued to exist throughout the Church's history, with various successes and failures. Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart lend insight to the climate of the Church's race relations in their book, *Seeking a Sanctuary*.

The major difference between Adventism and American society is that there are fewer whites and more blacks than in the general population. For this reason, Adventism is also exceptionally integrated. Many religious traditions have distinct black and white denominations, so most Protestants, both black and white, are members of congregations whose members are exclusively of their own racial group, whereas 69 percent of Adventist are not [a part of an exclusively homogenous congregation]- a higher proportion than any substantial religious organization save the Jehovah's Witnesses. However, within Adventist history, inclusiveness and integration have often been in tension, and the representative ethnic character of the church has led to conflict both between and within racial groups."<sup>45</sup>

#### *Identification of Particular Black Influences*

African slaves brought with them a rich heritage of religion and worship over to the New World. But there is a school of thought that asserts that most, if not all, of African practices were lost during the terrible centuries of slavery. Clifford Jones notes that E. Franklin Frazier believed "that slavery in the United States erased all the religious myths the slaves brought with them . . . . Conversely, others, among them Melville Herskovits, argue that survivals, residuals, and 'Africanisms' are still evident in African-

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<sup>44</sup> Dudley, *vol. II*, 141-2.

<sup>45</sup> Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 273.

American culture, especially its [Christian] religious practices.”<sup>46</sup> One of these influences or “Africanisms” is the African holistic view of life. Jones states,

An Africanism, for instance, that survived the “Middle Passage” and had a powerful impact on early African-American spirituality is the African understanding of life. Because Africans tend to view life holistically, the secular and the sacred are not mutually exclusive realities that exist in antagonistic tension but interconnected phenomena. Slaves held on to this understanding of life, and the result was that their worship was restricted to neither time nor place.<sup>47</sup>

Jones further explains that this African holistic view means that African American worship is inseparably bound to African American life.

Another influence on the Black church is the sense of community that exists in African-American spirituality. Jones further asserts,

Community is a grounding principle of Black worship, understood by African-Americans as an encounter involving God, the worshiper, and the broader community. For them worship is not primarily the expression of one’s private devotion to God, but is rather a community event. It is the ‘eschatological invasion of God into the gathered community of victims, empowering them with the divine Spirit from on high to keep on keeping on even though the odds might appear to be against them.’<sup>48</sup>

Celebration is another element in African-American worship. It is the “corporate celebration of what God, through Jesus Christ, has done for the community in diaspora.”<sup>49</sup> The worship tends to be less cerebral and rational and leans more to being experiential and dynamic. But this fact does not negate the African-Americans’ appeal to reason. Jones writes, “On the contrary, African-American worship has always held emotion and intellect in creative tension, rejecting the either/or for the both/and

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<sup>46</sup> Clifford R. Jones, “African American Worship: Its Heritage, Character, and Quality,” *Ministry*, 74/9 (September 2002), 5.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Jones, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Jones, 6.

paradigm.”<sup>50</sup> African-Americans tend to look forward to the “experience” or “good feeling” received from a spiritual church service. “In African-American worship people have a good time in the Lord, and it is not uncommon as they leave a service to hear them ask: ‘Didn’t we have church today?!’ Yet to *have church* is not simply to engage in hand clapping, but to experience anew the liberating presence and power of Jesus Christ.”<sup>51</sup>

Liberation is yet another one of the influences that characterize African-American spirituality. This principle is evident in the performance of vocal or instrumental music. Singers and instrumentalists seldom perform a piece of music as it is written. “Not uncommonly, they elect to search for notes and chords that strike a responsive strain in the African-American soul and experience.”<sup>52</sup> This liberation is also shown in respect to refusing to be limited to the confines of a clock that dictates the beginning or the ending of a service. Worship starts when the people gather and ends when “the Spirit” dictates.

Music, specifically the Negro Spiritual, helped to create this feeling of freedom when slaves utilized the spiritual to “beckon the faithful to a predetermined spot for worship.”<sup>53</sup> The Negro Spiritual is “uniquely and authentically American.” “Spirituals protested the social conditions in which Blacks were locked even as they pointed to a better day of freedom and justice. Almost always, they communicated on several levels at once.”<sup>54</sup>

J. Alfred Smith writes in the essay section of the African American Heritage Hymnal that the beginnings of African American church music predated the founding of

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<sup>50</sup> Jones, 6.

<sup>51</sup> Jones, 7.

<sup>52</sup> Jones, 6.

<sup>53</sup> Jones, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Jones, 8.

the denominational structures of African Americans. He states, “This music was ecumenical as a norm for our slave mothers and fathers, since it emerged from the common ground of their sufferings, sorrows, and search for survival and liberation in a land that was new, strange, and hostile.”<sup>55</sup> The Church of God in Christ, started by bishop Charles Harrison Mason in 1897, is one of the only Black churches that can claim to be originally founded by Blacks. Other denominations “adopted their denominational identity from white Christians who evangelized them.”<sup>56</sup> The African-American Seventh-day Adventist Church falls into this category. But Smith also states that “the ecumenical nature of black worship, which had its own cultural distinctiveness in the song, sermon, and shout, emanated from merging both the surviving Africanisms of the old world with the creative adaptation of the Bible of the new world into a new synthesis for liberation.”<sup>57</sup> The late Professor Wendell Whalum of Morehouse College claimed that the ecumenical nature of African American church music was carried by an oral tradition. This tradition was manifested in the spirituals. He stressed this position because he believed that, “the spiritual became the musical basis for all later [African American] church music.”<sup>58</sup>

The choral singing influence developed after the spiritual and took place at Bethel A.M.E. Church of Philadelphia between 1841 and 1842. Bishop Daniel Payne promoted the singing of hymns, especially those of Dr. Isaac Watts. It was the Baptists that “blackened” the style of singing these hymns. “A Baptist deacon would give out two

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<sup>55</sup> J. Alfred Smith, “*The Ecumenical Nature of African American Church Music*” in Delores Carpenter, ed., *African American Heritage Hymnal* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2001), 1.

<sup>56</sup> Smith, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Smith, 1.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, 2.



lines of the hymn at a time and the congregation would repeat the hymns with a cappella harmonizing. The preacher even to this day keeps the tradition alive by leading a metrical hymn or spiritual before preaching.”<sup>59</sup>

Gospel music, which has had a major contemporary influence on the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church, actually has its origins in the liturgical music and preaching of the slaves. “As slavery continued alongside freedom in a confused America, gospel music emerged within environments where spirituals and blues continued to thrive.”<sup>60</sup> The environment in which it grew was definitely urban, stemming from the movement of Blacks to these areas at the close of slavery. “New forms of abuse and humiliation all fertilized and gave birth to new sounds.”<sup>61</sup> Scholar Melva Wilson Costen defines gospel as “both a *genre* (song form) and a *style* of performance, embodying the soulful expressions of the history of Black people in and out of bondage and looking with joy to the future.”<sup>62</sup> Thomas Dorsey is credited with being its founder and giving *gospel* its name. Gospel music, characterized by “high-power” and “deep spiritual expression,” came into being between the early 1920s and 1930s. It was during this decade that Dorsey moved from “blues to the style of religious music he called the ‘gospel blues.’”<sup>63</sup> Dorsey came to Chicago after a career as a blues musician. He was influenced by the great African American gospel hymn writer Charles Tindley, and built upon this influence with his experience with the blues. “Dorsey contended that altering the rhythmic value of notes helps to emphasize parts of the text, which enhances the

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, 2.

<sup>60</sup> Melva Wilson Costen, *In Spirit and In Truth: The Music of African-American Worship* (Louisville: Westminster, 2004), 76.

<sup>61</sup> Costen, 76.

<sup>62</sup> Costen, 76.

<sup>63</sup> Costen, 83.

meaning of the message. This is much like the musical aesthetics employed in the singing and playing of the blues.”<sup>64</sup> Costen highlights a few of the characteristics of gospel that have received criticism.

Due to the so-called secular overtones that gradually consumed performance practices, this new black musical idiom soon became popular outside of the church. Among the practices considered secular was an increased and often exaggerated emphasis on vocal rhythms and vocal textures to produce greater intensity, thus drawing more attention to the singer. This was often accentuated by body rhythms and physical contortions that further drew attention to the singer rather than to the divine power of the triune God. A further new dimension to the black gospel genre was the addition of the driving percussive rhythms of instruments, which often animated both the leading singers and the community of faith into a unified dance, not unlike the dives where jazz prevailed!<sup>65</sup>

Before gospel music became prominent it reached out to neighboring sounds in the urban black community, the first of these being the blues. The blues communicated a similar “feeling of insecurity and misery” as some spirituals but tended to be “more worldly and specific, more direct in language, more expressive of an individual thought and a personal experience rather than the thoughts and experiences of a group.”<sup>66</sup> But historically speaking, the nature of gospel transcends a mixture of styles and cultures. Costen defines it as, “an aesthetic form that can be appropriated from a hymn or spiritual, or it can be composed as a new song and performed in a variety of gospel styles.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Costen, 83.

<sup>65</sup> Costen, 77.

<sup>66</sup> Costen, 78.

<sup>67</sup> Costen, 79.

Henry Mitchell stated that it is difficult to kill culture. The Africans music could not “be exterminated in a 244-year American holocaust (chattel slavery).”<sup>68</sup> Eileen Southern affirms the retentions of Africanisms in the New World.

...there were specific customs that persisted throughout the black man’s long years of acculturation into the lifestyle of the dominant society in the United States. (To be sure, the African experience was reflected as well in other areas, particularly in folk literature and religion.) The function of music as a communal activity, for example, led to the development of slave-song repertoires that provided some measure of release from the physical and spiritual brutality of slavery. Despite the interaction of African and European cultural patterns in black communities, with the resultant emergence of new, *Afro-American* patterns, there persisted among black folk musicians a predilection for certain performance practices, certain habits, certain musical instruments, and certain ways of shaping music to meet their needs in the new environment that had roots in the African experience.<sup>69</sup>

The 1950s and '60s saw a generation of African Americans that “took the songs and hymns of our ancestors into our marches, jail cells, and mass meetings and fashioned the faith of a movement that reintroduced the African drum, chant, and music in an undisguised and transforming symphony of protest and revolution.”<sup>70</sup> The African-American Seventh-day Adventist Church has definitely been influenced by this change and use of music.

*Why Black Influences Developed in the Seventh-day Adventist Church*

Alma Montgomery Blackmon, Mus.D., an African American Seventh-day Adventist musician of prominence, has reflected about why Black influences developed over time in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She states,

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<sup>68</sup> Otis J. Moss, Jr., “*African American Music and the Freedom Movement*” in Delores Carpenter, ed., *African American Heritage Hymnal* (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2001), 5.

<sup>69</sup> Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans*. (New York: Norton, 1983), 23-24.

<sup>70</sup> Moss, 5.

In Seventh-day Adventist churches the Negro spiritual has always had a place, but when Black Adventists began to look for something new that reflected Black heritage, many looked to the rhythmic gospel music that disc jockeys were beginning to play on the radio. This in many churches was viewed as performing the music of the Pentecostal Church, but Black Adventists were determined to reflect in their music the culture of their people.<sup>71</sup>

She notes this complaint about the omission of the Negro Spiritual in the Adventist hymnal.

The 1941 *Church Hymnal* contained music of various nations of the world, and even hymns sourced from other denominations, but there was no inclusion of the Negro spiritual. In fact, at certain Adventist institutions of higher learning White elitist professors of music were commenting on the inferiority of the Negro spiritual as a musical form. In this setting Black gospel music, which was very new to most Adventists, seemed a fulfillment of the African nature.<sup>72</sup>

Though she expresses discontent about this omission, she argues that the adoption of *only* Black gospel in which rhythm is the chief characteristic is the wrong choice. She defends Eurocentrism in African-American worship because the Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Protestant church whose roots lie in the Reformation. The progenitors of this movement—Martin Luther in Germany, John Wycliffe in England, John Huss in Bohemia, John Calvin in Switzerland and France, John Knox in Scotland, and others—were all Europeans.<sup>73</sup>

Blackmon defends the traditional hymn by noting that Martin Luther was the first Protestant hymn writer. “Luther, who felt that the congregation should participate and not be mere listeners, gave the people the first hymnbook in their own language... The

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<sup>71</sup> Alma Montgomery Blackmon, “Black Seventh-day Adventists and Church Music,” in Calvin B. Rock, ed., *Perspectives: Black Seventh-day Adventists Face the Twentieth Century*. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing, 1996), 183.

<sup>72</sup> Blackmon, 183.

<sup>73</sup> Blackmon, 184.

hymn, therefore, as a musical form, is Eurocentric.”<sup>74</sup> She further notes that composers developed anthems for choirs to sing because “the newly established Protestant denominations forsook the Mass as celebrated in the Roman Catholic Church and began to develop their own worship forms.”<sup>75</sup> These anthems were based on biblical texts and are European in origin as well. She exclaims, “It is the Word of God being sung, so how can we say that it is not relevant to us as a people?”<sup>76</sup>

*The Emergence of Regional Conferences within the Seventh-day Adventist Church*

Perhaps as a natural result of social upbringing, musical influences, and the inescapable racial divides, a split occurred in the regional conferences of the Seventh-day Adventist churches resulting in the separation of African American churches from the predominantly white churches in the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Factors that led to the establishment of regional conferences could be summed up with these seven objectives that Charles Dudley, a former president of one of the Seventh-day Adventist African American Regional Conferences, compiled from the work of George E. Peters, a great African-American leader in the Adventist Church.

- (1) He [Peters] wanted more employment opportunities within the denomination opened to Blacks, other than preaching and teaching.
- (2) He wanted the opportunity for mission service, especially in Africa opened to Blacks.
- (3) He was successful in getting L. B. Reynolds, a Black editor, for the Message magazine. The previous editors were White.
- (4) Elder Peters discerned upon taking up his duties at the General Conference that Blacks were barred from eating at the Review and Herald’s cafeteria, located nearby, and sought to break down this color barrier.
- (5) Peters fought to break down color barriers that excluded Black students, as well as Black instructors, from (White) colleges;

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<sup>74</sup> Blackmon, 184.

<sup>75</sup> Blackmon, 184.

<sup>76</sup> Blackmon, 184.

- (6) (Fought against) the practice of some of the sanitariums and hospitals of refusing to admit or serve Black people;  
 (7) The need to develop the medical work for and among Blacks.”<sup>77</sup>

It is evident from these objectives that the effects of segregation were present in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early to mid twentieth century. Peters, who was called to serve as the Secretary of the General Conference Negro Department in 1941, championed these causes in the face of much criticism. The historic meeting that officially resulted in the split occurred on Sunday, October 17, 1943, when the Committee For the Advancement of Worldwide Work Among Colored Seventh-day Adventists submitted an agenda to the General Conference Committee’s fall meeting at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. The response from the General Conference offered two suggestions to the assembly: “(1) to completely integrate all of the church facilities immediately or (2) to establish Black conferences for this sector of the church.” The General Conference, which was all white, voted to establish Black conferences across the North American Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was made official on April 10, 1944 by the General Conference. The West Coast members decided to keep the already established conferences.

The first request for separate conferences was actually made by Charles M. Kinney on October 2, 1889. These requests typically angered the white leadership. In 1909 the church fathers established a Negro Department in the General Conference but it was placed under white leadership.<sup>78</sup> Black and white people did not worship together, even as Adventists. Because of this, the traditions of the Black Church were continued

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<sup>77</sup> Dudley, *Thou Who Hast Brought Us Thus Far On Our Way*, vol. III (Brushton: TEACH Services, 2000), 273-274.

<sup>78</sup> Dudley, *Thou Who Hast Brought Us Thus Far On Our Way*, vol. II (Brushton: TEACH Services, 1997), 165.

within Adventism for Negroes. This was not the first split of churches in denominational history. "Before the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was officially organized in 1870, five separate colored conferences existed throughout the South. So when separate Black conferences were established in the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in 1945, it was not a new thing."<sup>79</sup> The Baptists had the National Baptist Convention (1895), Methodists had the (Colored) Christian Methodist Episcopal conferences(1870), Pentecostals had the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) (1907) which is the progenitor of many other Pentecostal denominations. The Regional Conferences for the Seventh-day Adventists came to fruition much later as it was formed in 1945.

Black Adventists felt discriminated against when it came to positions in the higher branches of the denomination. After World War II, when people from other lands, some of whom were once regarded as enemies of America, were being accepted and welcomed into the Church, the African-American constituency felt even more marginalized because of the segregation and rejection in the denomination.<sup>80</sup>

Regional Conferences may not be needed in the other world divisions of the church because in this age of nationalism, the roles of leadership in governments and denominations in most other countries of the world are held by people whose heritage is rooted in their own land. History testifies that people receive better understanding when the leadership comes from their own group.<sup>81</sup>

Other denominations and certain white Seventh-day Adventist leaders initially looked down upon the split, but the regional conferences have been very successful in church membership over the past 60 years.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Dudley, vol. II 161.

<sup>80</sup> Dudley, *Thou Who Hast Brought Us Thus Far On Our Way*, vol. III, 298.

<sup>81</sup> Dudley, vol. III, 297.

<sup>82</sup> Dudley, vol. III, 296.

### CHAPTER 3- CONTEMPORARY MUSICAL ISSUES IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Church has a variety of influences upon which to draw for its liturgical music. As noted in the previous chapter, the European hymn is a standard choice. The anthem is a larger form that is readily available in the classical choral stylings that are preferred by most conservative churches. But the more contemporary churches have also made Black gospel music a viable choice for the liturgy. Many discussions and disputes have been started over the issues of this style of music. Some of this music is characterized by secular influences and direct interpolation of “worldly” elements, such as in the case of Thomas Dorsey’s beginnings in the blues. The instrumentation, rhythm, and lyrics used in this type of music have come under heavy scrutiny. Its appropriateness in the worship service or in the lifestyle of the Seventh-day Adventist is a constant point of discussion.

Although Melva Wilson Costen, a visiting professor of Liturgical Studies at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music at Yale Divinity School, affirms the viability of gospel music, she also mentions some of the dangers of this genre. “One of the dangers that gospel music has already experienced is that once the genre left the church and went on stage, it returned to the liturgical setting insisting that it should remain in the performance mode that it was thrust into outside the church.” She believes that “this atmosphere relegates the congregation to a status of audience and not of active participants.”<sup>83</sup> There

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<sup>83</sup> Costen, 98.



is sometimes more focus placed on getting the “performance” right (hand claps, sways, vocal expression) than making sure that communal worship is occurring. Costen also warns that “off and on gospel music returns from the world to the people in worship without deliberate and careful theological scrutiny of the texts by pastors who can discern the message and determine where a song can serve the Word.”<sup>84</sup>

The late Wendell Whalum, a former professor at Morehouse College and esteemed musicologist, is another who has affirmed the importance of the concept of gospel music while offering strong criticism of the genre. He blames the clergy for sometimes abusing the use of music in the liturgy. Whalum asserts that they sometimes “impose inferior standards, for various reasons on their congregations. They do not use hymn books of good solid reference, and their choirs are made to serve as fund-raising organizations rather than to enhance the worship service.”<sup>85</sup> He is referring to the use of simple, emotional, entertaining songs that encourage the congregation to give during the offertory; these songs are not necessarily chosen with regard to the overall quality of the worship service. Whalum and other critics possess the “deep hope that authentic worship in the African American church will not be destroyed.”<sup>86</sup> Whalum feels that authentic worship in the Black Church will constitute a return to the “historical root of music of the slave experience.”<sup>87</sup> He suggests that Black Church music should have “instead of cutting away, built on the spiritual, added the lined-out hymns, anthem, gospel (with serious

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<sup>84</sup> Costen, 98.

<sup>85</sup> Costen, 100.

<sup>86</sup> Costen, 100.

<sup>87</sup> Wendell P. Whalum, “*Church Music: A Position Paper (with special consideration of music in the Black Church,*” in James Abbingon, ed., *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2002), 506.

concern for its composition, structure, and performance), and made music education an essential part of Christian education.”<sup>88</sup>

The liberalizing faction of the African American churches argues that European music is not relevant to the needs of their constituency. Mega churches are overflowing with members and the music chosen has been seen to play a great part in their success. This liberal philosophy is not far from the Frontier/Revival Worship tradition that greatly influenced the Seventh-day Adventist worship practices in its beginnings.<sup>89</sup> James F. White, in *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition*, points to Charles Finney, a premier evangelist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who felt the need to “leave the confines of liturgical Biblicism” and “employ fresh creativity in shaping the worship event.” White identifies this approach as pragmatic and says:

Finney argued in the Lectures that ‘God has established no particular measures which were pursued by the apostles and primitive preachers, “for the apostles’ only commission was “Do it the best way you can – ask wisdom from God – use the faculties He has given you.” ...Finney discarded traditions when they did not prove as effective as newer methods. The essential test then is a pragmatic one: Does it work? If so, keep it; if not, discard it. Finney and his associates represent a liturgical revolution based on pure pragmatism.’<sup>90</sup>

Dr. James Doggette, professor of theology at Oakwood College, a historically Black Seventh-day Adventist college, has written concerning the results of the philosophy of Finney and other preachers of that era.

This worship tradition birthed numerous innovations that were specifically designed to break down the sinner’s resistance to the Gospel and send him running to the altar of confession to “get saved.” With baptism of new

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<sup>88</sup> Whalum, 506.

<sup>89</sup> James Doggette, “SDA Worship,” unpublished paper delivered at Oakwood University Church, 3 December 2007, 5.

<sup>90</sup> James White, *Protestant Worship... Traditions in Transition*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 177.

converts as the ultimate objective, a tripartite worship structure emerged that included the extensive use of emotional elements. Sometimes lampooned as a “hymn sandwich,” this structure included “a song service or praise service sometimes caricatured as “preliminaries,” followed by a sermon, and then a harvest of new converts.<sup>91</sup>

Pastor James Doggette is also a pastor of Madison Mission Seventh-day Adventist church, a somewhat liberal Seventh-day Adventist Church. Comparing the early traditions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church to current trends in his paper entitled *Seventh-day Adventist Worship* he asserts, “If history really does repeat itself, a return to the original emotion of the movement is inevitable. Based on the observable liturgical revolution in a growing number of Seventh-day Adventist churches today, Seventh-day Adventism is either progressing or regressing – depending on your point of view – to its original emotional position.”<sup>92</sup> In Doggette’s extensive research on worship in the Black Seventh-day Adventist Church he has recently discovered some history about early Seventh-day Adventist music in liturgy. He writes:

Adventist pioneers were not cold, stoic, stiff liturgists as many suppose. If one could turn back the clock and listen to the music of the early church, they would hear lively music. The music wouldn’t sound quite like the upbeat music of many contemporary churches with their professional bands and peppy praise teams – today’s electronic musical instruments were largely unavailable to our pioneers – but the music definitely would not sound like typical “high church” hymn-singing either. Early Adventist music was pervasive, enthusiastic, rhythmic, and repetitious. Secular tunes were even used to sing the songs of Zion.<sup>93</sup>

Doggette believes that the singing in the Adventist Church paralleled the pragmatism of Finney and the Frontier/Revival Worship Tradition. He records the words of one pioneer, E. W. Farnsworth, who stated that, “Sabbath after Sabbath we would go to

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<sup>91</sup> Doggette, 6.

<sup>92</sup> Doggette, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Doggette, 9.

meeting, we would sing – we had a lot of pretty good singers – we would sing lustily...”<sup>94</sup> In a very familiar quote James White (Ellen White’s husband) recalled that “there was in those days a power in what was called Advent singing, such as was felt in no other.”<sup>95</sup>

The theme of most of the “catchy tunes” for Adventist services centered on the second coming of Jesus Christ. Jennie Ayars-Kellog remembers that almost all of the early Adventist services started with singing, “were full of zesty singing throughout, and ended with handshaking, hugging, and more hardy singing.”<sup>96</sup> Here are lyrics from three of the favorite Advent hymns.

**You Will See Your Lord a-Coming**

(A “Peppy” Early Advent Hymn Sung by James White)

*You will see your Lord a-coming  
You will see your Lord a-coming,  
You will see your Lord a-coming,  
In a few more days.*

*Gabriel sounds his mighty trumpet,  
Gabriel sounds his mighty trumpet,  
Gabriel sounds his mighty trumpet,  
In a few more days.*

*You will see the saints a-rising,  
You will see the saints a-rising,  
You will see the saints a-rising,  
In a few more days.*

*Angels bear them to the Savior,  
Angels bear them to the Savior,  
Angels bear them to the Savior,  
In a few more days.*

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<sup>94</sup> Doggette, 9.

<sup>95</sup> Doggette, 10.

<sup>96</sup> Doggette, 10.

*Then we'll shout, our sufferings over,  
 Then we'll shout, our sufferings over,  
 Then we'll shout, our sufferings over,  
 In a few more days.*

**Refrain**

*Hear the (heavenly) band of music,  
 Hear the (heavenly) band of music,  
 Hear the (heavenly) band of music,  
 Which is sounding thro' the air.<sup>97</sup>*

**O Brother, Be Faithful**

**(A Hymn by Uriah Smith, editor of the  
 early *Adventist Review and Herald*,  
 the official *Seventh-day Adventist Journal*)**

*O brother, be faithful! Soon Jesus will come,  
 For whom we have waited so long;  
 O, soon we shall enter our glorious home,  
 And join in the conqueror's song.  
 O brother, be faithful! For why should we prove  
 Unfaithful to Him who hath shown  
 Such deep, such unbounded and infinite love,  
 Who died to redeem us His own.*

*O brother, be faithful! The city of gold,  
 Prepared for the good and the blest,  
 Is waiting its portals of pearl to unfold,  
 And welcome thee into thy rest.  
 Then, brother, prove faithful! Not long shall we stay  
 In weariness here, and forlorn,  
 Time's dark night of sorrow is wearing away,  
 We haste to the glorious morn.*

*O brother, be faithful! He soon will descend,  
 Creation's omnipotent King,  
 While legions of angels His chariot attend  
 And palm wreaths, of victory bring,  
 O brother, be faithful! And soon shalt thou hear  
 The Saviour pronounce the glad word,*

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<sup>97</sup> General Conference Corporation, *The Church Hymnal: Official Hymnal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Takoma Park: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1941), 438.

*Well done, faithful servant, thy title is clear,  
To enter the joy of thy Lord.*

*O brother, be faithful! Eternity's years  
Shall tell for thy faithfulness now,  
When bright smiles of gladness shall scatter thy tears,  
A coronet gleam on thy brow.  
O brother, be faithful! The promise is sure,  
That waits for the faithful and tried;  
To reign with the ransomed, immortal and pure,  
And ever with Jesus abide.<sup>98</sup>*

The lyrics of these two hymns indicate what mattered the most to the early Adventists—the imminent return of Christ. James Doggette suggests that any theme that a cultural group believes is important, tends to be elevated to the level of religion. What is considered to be most important will be lifted to the level of religious music.<sup>99</sup> Hymn singing is important in the Adventist Church because the compositions chosen for the hymnal are geared towards “deepening the spiritual experience” and “proclaiming the distinct doctrines” of the Adventist Church.<sup>100</sup>

The following hymn shows the sentiment of the Adventist Church after the Great Disappointment in 1844. They realized their error in predicting the second coming of Jesus and related this mindset in the lyrics of this hymn written by F.E. Belden in 1886.

### **We Know Not The Hour**

*We know not the hour of the Master's appearing;  
Yet signs all foretell that the moment is nearing  
When He shall return, 'tis a promise most cheering  
But we know not the hour.*

*There's light for the wise who are seeking salvation;  
There's truth in the book of the Lord's revelation;*

<sup>98</sup> General Conference Corporation, 602.

<sup>99</sup> Doggette, 10.

<sup>100</sup> General Conference Corporation, 6.

*Each prophecy points to the great consummation  
But we know not the hour.*

*We'll watch and we'll pray, with our lamps trimmed and burning;  
We'll work and we'll wait till the Master's returning;  
We'll sing and rejoice, every omen discerning  
But we know not the hour.*

#### **REFRAIN**

*He will come,  
Let us watch and be ready;  
He will come,  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
He will come in the clouds  
Of His Father's bright glory  
But we know not the hour.<sup>101</sup>*

Wendall Whalum cited earlier in this chapter, that the beginning of authentic worship for the African American Church was to return to its “historical roots of music of the slave experience.” Perhaps one of the keys to finding the core of “authentic” worship in the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church is to return to the theme of the Second Advent, which remarkably may share the same themes of “deliverance.” The hymns presented above directly point to the Second Advent. This sentiment seems to be lacking in the music of a contemporary Church whose central desire -- Christ’s second return-- should be stronger now than when the Church was conceived.

Secular influences had an impact on the early Adventist Church and are very present in the modern day Church. Even in the early Christian era secular music was borrowed. Donald Grout writes, “It is likely that some of the hymns of the early church were sung to what would now be called folk melodies, and it is possible that some of

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<sup>101</sup> General Conference Corporation, 102.

these melodies eventually found their way into the official chant repertoire.”<sup>102</sup>

“Greensleeves,” a medieval example of this process, is a recognizable secular tune whose English folk melody was used for the hymn “What Child Is This.”<sup>103</sup> Early Adventist singing made liberal use of secular tunes, records Doggette: “They not only opted to discard the primary use of European hymnody for songs that gave vent to their ardent Advent hopes, they also chose to employ musical styles that were more in touch with current popular forms.”<sup>104</sup> Secular tunes were used at times to sing gospel songs. “It was not unusual for them to saddle religious lyrics to the backs of such secular tunes as “Sewanee River” and “Dixie Land.”<sup>105</sup>

This practice of borrowing from popular tunes is continued presently, but not many parishioners are aware of it. “The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal contains numerous hymns that borrow their melodies from secular songs.”<sup>106</sup> Doggette contends that this usage of secular tunes brings about two observations about the past and present Seventh-day Adventist Church. He writes,

First, early Seventh-day Adventists embraced a hermeneutic that allowed for the use of secular modalities to accomplish sacred purposes. For them the primary qualifier for a sacred song was its sacrosanct lyrical content, and not any particular religious musical style. They were liberal then in methodology while carefully conserving well-defined theological understandings.<sup>107</sup>

Doggette’s second point brings about a current racial bias that should cause some questioning about the traditions of the church. He reveals,

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<sup>102</sup> Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Norton, 1988), 13.

<sup>103</sup> Doggette, 14.

<sup>104</sup> Doggette, 13.

<sup>105</sup> Doggette, 13.

<sup>106</sup> Doggette, 14.

<sup>107</sup> Doggette, 14.



While the songs found in this official Seventh-day Adventist Church source [hymnal] draw liberally from the pool of European folk music, there is a conspicuous absence of African tunes. Most modern criticisms of “worldly music” creeping into the Church, from both Black and White critics, center on the dominant rhythm that is characteristic of African music, not the sounds of Europe. Adventists seem to have limited the list of legitimate secular melodies to the songs of Europe exclusively.<sup>108</sup>

Most scholars would agree that the culture exhibited in West Africa is distinct and diversely related to that in Western culture. Some scholars have argued that in the African culture there is no great divide between sacred and secular. Religion, as well as music was deeply imbedded in the whole of African life.<sup>109</sup> “Traditional religions pervade all aspects of life, thereby eliminating a formal distinction between the sacred and the secular.”<sup>110</sup> Teresa Reed states that “the lack of a sacred/secular dichotomy in West-African culture is directly related to the way West Africans experience those elements that in the West are considered spiritual, supernatural, religious, or pertaining to the divine.”<sup>111</sup> The Africans’ worldview is holistic and this aesthetic is shared throughout the more than one thousand cultural societies represented on the continent. Because of this, “there is also a fundamental way of knowing, symbolizing, and conceptualizing that transcends societal differences.”<sup>112</sup> In the African society, music penetrated and existed in every experience of life. Reed further states that Africans “get their spiritual revelation and inspiration from neither a book nor their oral tradition but from their lives.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Doggette, 14.

<sup>109</sup> Wendell Mapson, *The Ministry of Music in the Black Church* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1984), 12.

<sup>110</sup> Costen, 1.

<sup>111</sup> Teresa L. Reed, *The Holy Profane: Religion in Black Popular Music* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 2.

<sup>112</sup> Costen, 1.

<sup>113</sup> Reed, 2.

These differences in culture parallel the differences in the European and West African approaches to music.<sup>114</sup> Traditionally, West Africans fuse music with everyday life as they fuse the divine in everyday life. Documents from the early days of the slave trade press the point that there was much music and dancing in the rituals of the West-African societies.<sup>115</sup> African music is meant to “facilitate and intensify life experiences. It’s purpose is either to help things happen or to make things happen.” This music is very functional. European music is oftentimes done as “art for its own sake.”<sup>116</sup> “The specific function of music in African religious ritual is to facilitate communication with the spirit realm.”<sup>117</sup> Africans use dancing accompanied by instruments such as drums, rattles, and chanting to encourage the spirit to “literally enter and take control of the celebrant’s physical being. This process is commonly referred to as *spirit possession*.”<sup>118</sup>

The arrival of the African slaves to the New World was a shock to the culture of the West Africans. But the slaves brought with them “components of a culture which could not and would not be extinguished in the new land. This was due, in part, to the persistence of an oral tradition.”<sup>119</sup> This tradition is vital to understanding the continuation of the forms and practices during slavery, which did not discontinue these forms and practices. Although the slaves were separated from their family and from those that shared a common tongue, they kept their musical traditions and rhythms and were relegated to using chants and moans. In their “secret meetings” they would use a

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<sup>114</sup> Reed, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Reed, 4.

<sup>116</sup> Reed, 4.

<sup>117</sup> Reed, 4.

<sup>118</sup> Reed, 4.

<sup>119</sup> Mapson, 13.

tone that was different than their plantation owners and would connect them to their historic past.

“Call and response” was one of the characteristics of this different tone. It was antiphonal in nature and came from a direct influence of their motherland. Eileen Southern states that it consisted of:

...the alternation of solo passages and choral refrains or of two different choral passages. Typically, a song consisted of the continuous repetition of a single melody, sung alternately by the song leader and the group, or alternately by two groups. The importance of the song leader cannot be overstressed: it was he who chose the song to be sung, who embellished the basic melody and improvised appropriate verses to fit the occasion and who brought the performance to an end.<sup>120</sup>

Improvisation was another important characteristic of the music of the slaves. They could create new songs from old melodies and improvise on various themes. These features of the music of the Africans are distinct even though they have been exhibited somewhat in other cultures. Mapson affirms that “to deny that there are identifiable characteristics of black culture and religion and, therefore, music is to deny that any culture has an identity of its own. No matter how cultures may overlap and the degree to which they are assimilated, each culture has identifiable characteristics.”<sup>121</sup>

As African slaves took in West European culture they developed the tendency to maintain conceptual boundaries that separated the sacred and the secular, according to Reed.<sup>122</sup> A plantation owner’s daughter, Jeannette Robinson, wrote in 1899 that a slave “was often turned out of church for... singing a ‘fiddle sing,’ which is a secular song, but

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<sup>120</sup> Mapson, 14.

<sup>121</sup> Mapson, 15.

<sup>122</sup> Reed, 5.

he could steal all the chickens he wanted and never fall from grace.”<sup>123</sup> Slaves attended church in three different ways: as black members in white congregations, black members in black congregations with white supervision, or as black members in black congregations with black leadership. Teresa Reed states that, “all three types maintained a clear line of separation between practices that were either appropriate or inappropriate for church use.”<sup>124</sup> Even though some black congregations somehow existed in antebellum conditions, the slaves’ membership was usually in the third type listed above, or what some scholars refer to as the “Invisible Church.” This church was not resident, and did not contain the liturgies or buildings of white congregations, but the religion was carried in the slaves themselves.<sup>125</sup> Albert Raboteau, a historian who has researched slave religion in depth, argued that, “the invisible institution arose as slaves felt the need to develop their own religious thought outside oppressive structures.”<sup>126</sup> The free black church of the North co-existed with the invisible black church of the South. These free churches were “denominational spin-offs of their larger, older white counterparts.”<sup>127</sup> Their style of worship exhibited the African aesthetics of spontaneity, emotional intensity, and dance and was often criticized by white observers, who stated that their practices were “secular.”<sup>128</sup>

The postbellum Black Church was able to congregate in worship centers and this freedom of assembly enabled them to develop a culture that was “characterized by its

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<sup>123</sup> Reed, 6.

<sup>124</sup> Reed, 6.

<sup>125</sup> Reed, 6.

<sup>126</sup> Raboteau cited in Anthony B. Pinn, *Varieties of African American Religious Experience* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 197.

<sup>127</sup> Reed, 6.

<sup>128</sup> Reed, 6.

own doctrinal, behavioral, social, and musical norms.”<sup>129</sup> But their philosophies were influenced by the European belief of separating music into sacred and secular. This was experienced throughout the development of the three major religious movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century: Evangelicalism, the Holiness movement, and Pentecostalism. Evangelicals, the earliest of the three, stressed inward conversion for salvation and made the revival a main tool for accomplishing their goals. This appealed to African Americans who could relate to the revival as a form of the camp meeting “which was a common type of religious gathering for blacks during slavery.”<sup>130</sup> Evangelicals “denounced such institutions as the theater and the opera house, and practices such as dancing, card playing, drinking, and frivolous dress on the grounds that these base amusements interfered with the elevation of the soul.”<sup>131</sup> The Holiness movement started in 1867 and added the belief that true conversion was shown by “conformity to the moral and behavioral codes that distinguished believers from ‘the world.’”<sup>132</sup> The Pentecostal movement further added to these existing movements with the additional condition of “Holy Spirit baptism with the evidence of *glossolalia*, or what is commonly known as speaking in tongues, a practice first reported in the Bible in the second chapter of Acts.”<sup>133</sup> This movement attracted many adherents from the Holiness movement who would travel to the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles between 1906 and 1913 to

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<sup>129</sup> Reed, 7.

<sup>130</sup> Reed, 7.

<sup>131</sup> Reed, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Reed, 8.

<sup>133</sup> Reed, 8.

experience this “move of the spirit.”<sup>134</sup> The philosophies of these three movements helped to shape the Black Church’s philosophy and development.

The collective impact of these movements upon African Americans can be seen in the number of black denominations that developed from them around the turn of the century, including the Church of the Living God (1889), The Church of Christ (Holiness) (1907), The National Convention of the Churches of God, Holiness (1914), and the largest of them, The Church of God in Christ (1907).<sup>135</sup>

Mapson defines black theology as “how black people see God, the world, and themselves from the vantage point of the oppressed.”<sup>136</sup> He further states that “Black religion is a response to God’s initiative, articulated through the thought forms, music, art, and customs of African culture. Black music comments on the history of that pilgrimage: a journey of sorrow, joy, despair, hope, frustration, and fulfillment.” What must be considered then is how to “affirm the good in black theology and to offer correctives so that black theology may continue to address the needs of black people in light of their relationship to God and culture.”<sup>137</sup>

But there is much criticism of involving secular elements into religious music. Alma Blackmon asks concerning black Seventh-day Adventists and music: “How can we take the purity of Jesus Christ and the story of salvation and present them in such a format? If there is an African connection between rock, jazz, soul, and our gospel music, it is a connection that we should not make.”<sup>138</sup> She further points out:

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<sup>134</sup> Reed, 8.

<sup>135</sup> Reed, 8.

<sup>136</sup> Mapson, 15.

<sup>137</sup> Mapson, 16.

<sup>138</sup> Blackmon, 185.

Even though we are African-Americans and proud of that fact, we are also Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and it is incumbent upon us to select those parts of our heritage that we can safely incorporate into our faith and lifestyle. We cannot accept the whole thing, because our ethnicity is not going to save us in God's kingdom. It is, rather, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that has made salvation possible for us, and we must not offend Him.<sup>139</sup>

Blackmon believes that African American Seventh-day Adventists have replaced the spirituals with gospel music. She does acknowledge that gospel music is a "legitimate and necessary type of church music."<sup>140</sup> But she claims that the danger is in the way that the gospel song is styled and the instruments that are used. She doesn't believe that members of the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church are reaching back to their roots. Rather she claims that the Church is taking on the characteristics of Pentecostalism:

As mentioned before, synthesizers, guitars, and drums are used extensively in the field of rock music. Powerful amplification systems guarantee that the music will be loud, causing the singers to force their tone quality from their throats. Furthermore, and undue emphasis on rhythm is highlighted not only in the drumming but also in the bodies of the singers as whole choirs rock back and forth to the music. The organ of preference is the Hammond organ, which can achieve strident sound effects. If we would take the time to visit a Pentecostal church, this is exactly what we would find, proving that we are not imitating Africa. We are embracing Pentecostalism!<sup>141</sup>

While Blackmon's thoughts are to be respected, the Seventh-day Adventist Church has "embraced" many other elements, from various denominations besides the choice of instrumentation. The majority of the songs represented in the Seventh-day Adventist hymnal were written by Christians of other faiths. The number of these hymns regularly performed in Seventh-day Adventist churches also reflects the value that is placed on

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<sup>139</sup> Blackmon, 185.

<sup>140</sup> Blackmon, 185.

<sup>141</sup> Blackmon, 185.

contributions from other denominations. In addition, Matthew Waggoner argues that Pentecostalism itself is African. Waggoner's study asserts "comparative study of the performative elements of early American Pentecostalism confirms the rationale for placing it squarely within the lineage of African-derived expressive traditions."<sup>142</sup> But assumedly, Blackmon would not agree to adopt all Africanisms.

Blackmon also refers to a much-discussed occurrence among white Adventists at a camp meeting in 1900 in Muncie, Indiana. S.N. Haskell, the speaker for that morning service, was alarmed by the music that was rendered by a "fanatical holy flesh" group. Blackmon describes the event as follows: "Using musical instruments, they had sung sacred words to dance tunes, and the people had danced, shouted, and jerked themselves about until they had become hysterical."<sup>143</sup> An unidentified writer in Ellen White's book, *Selected Messages*, offers a more detailed description of the event.

"The Doctrine of Holy Flesh" was started in 1900 in Indiana, carrying away the conference president and various workers. Claiming that when Christ passed through the agony of Gethsemane He obtained holy flesh such as Adam possessed before his fall, this theory alleged that those who follow the Savior must also acquire the same state of physical sinlessness as an essential preparation for translation. Eyewitness accounts report that in their services the fanatics worked up a high pitch of excitement by use of musical instruments such as organs, flutes, fiddles, tambourines, horns, and even a big bass drum. They sought a physical demonstration and shouted and prayed and sang until someone in the congregation would fall, prostrate and unconscious, from his seat. One or two men, walking up and down the aisle for the purpose, would drag the fallen person up on the rostrum. Then about a dozen individuals would gather around the prostrate body, some singing, some shouting, and some praying, all at the same time. When the subject revived, he was counted among those who had passed through the Gethsemane experience, had obtained holy flesh, and had translation faith. Thereafter, it was asserted, he could not sin and

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<sup>142</sup> Matthew Waggoner, "Early American Pentecostalism: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Anticipation," in Theodore Louis Trost, ed., *The African Diaspora and the Study of Religion* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 193.

<sup>143</sup> Blackmon, 185.



would never die. Elders S. N. Haskell and A.J. Breed, two of our leading denominational ministers, were sent to the camp meeting held in Muncie, Indiana, from September 13 to 23, 1900, to meet this fanaticism. These developments were revealed to Mrs. White while she was in Australia in January, 1900, and she bore testimony of warning and reproof against it...

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Ellen White had seen this occurrence six months earlier in a vision. Paul Hamel quotes segments of Ellen White's response to letters that she received:

The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time. Better never have the worship of God blended with music than to use musical instruments to do the work which last January was represented to me would be brought into our camp meetings. The truth for this time needs nothing of this kind in its work of converting souls. A bedlam of noise shocks the sense and perverts that which if conducted aright might be a blessing. The powers of satanic agencies blend with the din and noise, to have a carnival, and this is termed the Holy Spirit's working....

No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship. The same kind of influence came in after the passing of the time in 1844. The same kind of representations were made. Men became excited, and were worked by a power thought to be the power of God.

The Holy Spirit has nothing to do with such a confusion of noise and multitude of sounds as passed before me last January. Satan works amid the din and confusion *of such music, which, properly conducted,* would be a praise and glory to God. He makes its effect like the poison sting of the serpent.

Those things which have been in the past will be in the future. Satan will make music a snare *by the way in which it is conducted.* God calls upon His people, who have the light before them in the Word and in the Testimonies, to read and consider, and to take heed. Clear and definite instruction has been given in order that all may understand. But the

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<sup>144</sup> Cited in Ellen White, *Selected Messages, Book 2* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986), 31.

itching desire to originate something new results in strange doctrines, and largely destroys the influence of those who would be a power for good.

Many such movements will arise at this time, when the Lord's work should stand elevated, pure, unadulterated with superstition and fables. We need to be on our guard, to maintain a close connection with Christ, that we be not deceived by Satan's devices.<sup>145</sup>

This counsel from a prophetic voice in the Seventh-day Adventist Church must be respected by the membership. It calls for the music leaders to be the deciding factor in ensuring that our music liturgy is "properly conducted." Ellen White gives further counsel on the proper place of music in the liturgy:

The Lord desires to have in His service order and discipline, not excitement and confusion. We are not now able to describe with accuracy the scenes to be enacted in our world in the future; but this we do know, that this is a time when we must watch unto prayer; for the great day of the Lord is at hand. Satan is rallying his forces. We need to be thoughtful and still, and to contemplate the truths of revelation. Excitement is not favorable to growth in grace, to true purity and sanctification of the Spirit....

God calls upon His people to walk with sobriety and holy consistency. They should be very careful not to misrepresent and dishonor the holy doctrines of truth by strange performances, by confusion and tumult. By this, unbelievers are led to think that Seventh-day Adventists are a set of fanatics. Thus prejudice is created that prevents souls from receiving the message for this time. When believers speak the truth as it is in Jesus, they reveal a holy, sensible calm, not a storm of confusion.<sup>146</sup>

Paul Hamel, former chairman of the music department at Andrews University, further explains that Ellen White had no problem with music in the liturgy. "She sought only to have it used wisely and in proper balance. Time and again she urged that music be used

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<sup>145</sup> Paul Hamel, *Ellen White and Music* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976), 44-45.

<sup>146</sup> Hamel, 46.

to help gather souls to Christ, for Bible reading, prayer, and singing will touch the hearts of unbelievers.”<sup>147</sup>

Pastor James Doggette gives more clarity to the Muncie, Indiana, occurrence. Noting that this incident is often used to condemn gospel music, he categorizes Mrs. White’s warning against these developments into three major areas of concern: bizarre behavior that makes the Adventist Church look foolish to the world; emotional worship that overpowers the mind and mutes the voice of reason; and misinterpreting emotional reactions to be the moving of the Holy Spirit.<sup>148</sup>

Doggette contends that the bizarre behavior present at the camp meeting would have left a terrible impression on an attending unbeliever. He states, “It wasn’t so much that there was shouting, or that there was singing accompanied with various instruments, or that there was praying. The problem was that the poor soul who was dragged up on stage was surrounded by a dozen frenzied worshippers who shouted, prayed, played musical instruments and sang loudly **all at the same time!**”<sup>149</sup> Doggette also argues that to identify shouting or the usage of any particular musical instrument as being the “beldam of noise” to which Ellen White was referring, would be to use a false hermeneutic. “Adopting that hermeneutic would logically lead one to conclude that praying is also a bedlam of noise, and we know better than that.”<sup>150</sup> He refers to the scriptures Matthew 21:13 and Psalm 47:1 to show that both the Bible and Ellen G. White were supportive of both of these actions in worship. In support of the use of musical instruments, Ellen White said: “In the meetings held let a number be chosen to take part

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<sup>147</sup> Hamel, 48.

<sup>148</sup> Doggette, 26.

<sup>149</sup> Doggette, 27.

<sup>150</sup> Doggette, 27.

in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted, for it is the praise of God in song.”<sup>151</sup>

Concerning the overpowering emotional worship, Doggette states: “The heretical belief that those who passed through the ‘holy flesh’ experience were no longer capable of sinning and that they had achieved immortality came flying in beneath the radar of rational scrutiny while attention was largely focused on the emotional stimuli. In this case, the medium overpowered the message.”<sup>152</sup> This can be made relevant to current trends in church worship when the music is so loud that the lyrics can’t be heard.

James Doggette’s third point involves seeking emotional reaction as the goal of worship. The Indiana Holy Flesh Movement sought an emotional demonstration. This they would claim as the touch of God. “If an emotional demonstration is the objective evidence of God’s touch, then the church should study the world to discover ingenious ways of stirring the emotions, because the world has cornered the market for arousing the flesh!”<sup>153</sup> Unfortunately, some modern day churches have done just that. They hire actors, scriptwriters, and creative consultants to outline the weekly “worship production,” which results in large crowds and great reviews. It tends to be mere entertainment. Ellen White warned against this trend:

If we work to create an excitement of feeling, we shall have all we want, and more than we can possibly know how to manage. Calmly and clearly “Preach the word.” We must not regard it as our work to create an excitement.

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<sup>151</sup> Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol.9 (Boise: Pacific Press Publishing, 1948), 144.

<sup>152</sup> Doggette, 28.

<sup>153</sup> Doggette, 27.

The Holy Spirit of God alone can create a healthy enthusiasm. Let God work, and let the human agent walk softly before Him, watching, waiting, praying, looking unto Jesus every moment, led and controlled by the precious Spirit, which is light and life.<sup>154</sup>

Doggette further states that it is perfectly fine to get emotional, “but sacred emotion is a byproduct and not the product of a genuine spiritual experience. What should excite the child of God are the mighty acts and attributes of God as described in the Holy Bible and experienced in the lives of His children, not artificial emotional stimuli.”<sup>155</sup> This is important for musicians to understand, who are able to “stir up” the spirit of emotionalism from the manner in which they play. It really is a matter of balance and being deliberate in one’s concern for a liturgy pleasing to God. There is plenty in the manner of quotes from authoritative sources in the Seventh-day Adventist Church to support both sides, be it formal or informal. Ellen White addressed the ills of formalism in worship in her *Testimonies for the Church*:

Many who profess to be Christians become excited over worldly enterprises, and their interest is awakened for new and exciting amusements, while they are coldhearted, and appear as if frozen, in the cause of God. Here is a theme, poor formalist, which is of sufficient importance to excite you. Eternal interests are here involved. Upon this theme it is sin to be calm and unimpassioned. The scenes of Calvary call for the deepest emotion. Upon this subject you will be excusable if you manifest enthusiasm. That Christ, so excellent, so innocent, should suffer such a painful death, bearing the weight of the sins of the world, our thoughts and imaginations can never fully comprehend. The length, the breadth, the height, the depth, of such amazing love we cannot fathom. The contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love should fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character.<sup>156</sup> (Ellen White, 1948, 212-13)

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<sup>154</sup> White, *Selected Messages, Book 2*, (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1986), 16-17.

<sup>155</sup> Doggette, 29.

<sup>156</sup> White, *Testimonies*, 212-213.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church came from emotional roots. But the post-Great Disappointment Church evolved into a more conservative worshipping community. Although the pendulum is swinging towards a more emotional approach in the liturgy today, the Church must be careful that this emotion is not artificially induced. But the church should not fear “sanctified emotion.”<sup>157</sup> That qualification occurs almost every time worshippers think about what God has done for them.

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<sup>157</sup> Doggette, 29.

CHAPTER 4- GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITATIVE USE OF  
MUSIC IN THE BLACK SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH LITURGY (THE  
WRITER'S GUIDELINES ARE NUMBERED)

This writer's passion for wanting to create guidelines for the African-American Seventh-day Adventist Church, stems from observing the Church in worship without any direction. Ellen White signaled this problem over one hundred years ago.

Unless correct ideas of true worship and true reverence are impressed upon the people, there will be a growing tendency to place the sacred and eternal on a level with common things, and those professing the truth will be an offense to God and a disgrace to religion. They can never, with their uncultivated ideas, appreciate a pure and holy heaven, and be prepared to join with the worshipers in the heavenly courts above, where all is purity and perfection, where every being has perfect reverence for God and His holiness.<sup>158</sup>

Many individuals venture out to become music ministers, instrumentalists, and vocalists in the service of the Lord but little instruction is being given regarding the use of music in our churches. Almost anyone can become a critic of what is and what is not supposed to be done in the liturgy. Stan Cantrell is a retired, Caucasian Seventh-day Adventist pastor and singing evangelist. Concerning the direction music is taking in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, he declares:

[It] scares me to death. I don't think that Ellen White who heard the angels sing...they don't sing like we are singing. She said it's beautiful. We have rock musicians that have become Sabbath keepers and they tell us that what they are getting in some of this Christian rock music, is the African, heathen melodies and rhythm and it's coming into Christian music and it's Satan worship. That's the problem. The devil makes it so enticing. I'm wondering what the angels think.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> White, *Testimonies*, 500.

<sup>159</sup> Stan Cantrell, interview by Wayne Bucknor, 4 August 2007.

*Criteria for Selection of Worship Leader, Musician, and Instrumentation*

1. Select a spiritual music leader.

I disagree with Pastor Cantrell's generalizations, but I do agree with the following statement concerning *the importance of the selection of a spiritual worship leader* made by Melva Costen in her book, *Spirit and in Truth*:

The answer lies not so much in the form as in the persons responsible for worship. It should always remain clear that the Word of God in Scripture is the determining factor for the "work of the people," the liturgy of the church. God uses the worship planners, the team that will take seriously both God's Word and the needs and concerns of the people, to help maintain the balance. There is no African American liturgy without God and without the people who have always relied upon the almighty power of God to keep in tension the innate power of African American music and God's call upon the people to praise God through artistic forms.<sup>160</sup>

There has been erroneous information advanced through tradition and indiscriminate action taken by music ministers who perform what they feel like performing or what they are accustomed to performing. Nevertheless, there remains much counsel on music that comes from the Seventh-day Adventist Church's only authoritative sources: the Bible first, and then the writings of Ellen G. White.

Instruments, such as the drum, have been banned from some conservative churches, with the claim that it is linked with African "voodoo" practices, on the one hand, and is also discredited by Ellen G. White, on the other. Both claims are inaccurate. "Rhythm is foundational for ritual action among African people," states Costen.<sup>161</sup> She points out that drumming, dancing, and singing happen in most gatherings "including

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<sup>160</sup> Costen, 100-101.

<sup>161</sup> Costen, 17.



worship and other times of communal ritual expression.”<sup>162</sup> Historians suggest that drums were used in the worship of the early Ethiopian Orthodox Church as revealed in a statement made in 1627 by Jerome Lobo, a Jesuit priest: “The instruments of music are little drums that they hang about their necks and beat with both of their hands; these are carried even by the Chief Men, and by the gravest of their Ecclesiastics. . . .”<sup>163</sup> Lobo also spoke of members striking the ground with sticks which was accompanied with the sway of their bodies, stamping their feet on the ground and playing gently on their instruments, and also leaping, dancing, and clapping their hands.<sup>164</sup>

The drum continues to be controversial in the broader Adventist realm, including both Black and white churches. Historically, the Negro slave had an “African” identity that was symbolically tied to the drum. Keeping the drum meant keeping a symbol of power while in Anglo communities. Melva Costen notes that “the process of stripping African slaves of their humanity included taking away the drums that were so basic to life, especially in West Africa.”<sup>165</sup> Appealing to biblical precedent, Larry Lichtenwalter notes that David used all the instruments that were available to him in his era: “The musical instruments that [David] used include the full repertoire of his day—percussion (castanet, tambourine, timbrel, and triangle); strings (harp, lute, lyre, and 10-stringed instruments; and winds (flute, horn, and trumpet).”<sup>166</sup> Yet David was sure to choose leaders for the music ministry (1 Chronicles. 25: 1-7). These leaders would be trained to

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<sup>162</sup> Costen, 17.

<sup>163</sup> Costen, 22.

<sup>164</sup> Costen, 23.

<sup>165</sup> Costen, 103.

<sup>166</sup> Larry Lichtenwalter, *David: A Heart Like His* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing, 2003), 60.

lead the worship. The point should be clear that the discretion must be made in the *selection of the musician and the music leader*, more than the instrument used.

Phillip Williams, minister of music at Oakwood College Church, in a letter to the church's board members entitled "Use Drums in Worship? Why Not?" argued that Ellen White makes only one negative statement about musical instruments in all of her writings.

The things you have described as taking place in Indiana, the Lord has shown me would take place just before the close of probation. Every uncouth thing will be demonstrated. There will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.<sup>167</sup>

This statement refers to the Indiana Conference camp meeting discussed earlier in Chapter Three. It was also White's only statement using the word "drums." Williams also discusses an action taken by the Church that has given that one statement much longevity: "The compilers of her many books have not helped either. Her one statement on the subject has been printed some eight times in different books, giving it an emphasis that she may not have intended and giving the impression that she had much to say about the subject."<sup>168</sup> In addition, the General Conference Task Force on the Philosophy of Music, in the 1972 Music guidelines listed in the appendix, further confused this issue. Concerning the camp meeting incident, the committee

cited the words of Stephen Haskell, his wife, and Burton Wade, eyewitnesses to the Indiana Conference camp meeting in the same manner as it cited Ellen G. White's words giving the impression that their recollections and impressions were hers. A cursory reading of the document would suggest that Ellen White spoke on the subject of joining

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<sup>167</sup> White, *Selected Messages, Book 2*, 36-37.

<sup>168</sup> Phillip Williams, Letter to the Oakwood College Church Board, 25 April 2007.

sacred words with dance tunes or the use of a big bass drum when she says nothing about these things!<sup>169</sup>

It has been stated previously that one of the authoritative sources of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is the Bible. One of the most influential and key contributors to the field of sacred music is David, the King of Israel, and the writer of the Psalms according to tradition. Larry Lichtenwalter has given valuable insight into David's life in a chapter of his book entitled *David: A Heart Like His*. It suggests why establishing guidelines for music in the liturgy is so important. When faced with the dilemma of a crazed king Saul possessed with an evil spirit, his servants suggested that David play music for him to heal him. The chapter of the Bible, 1 Samuel 16, indicates that the ancients understood the power and value of music.

They knew how to use it to promote harmony and well-being in their lives. For them music was not just a form of entertainment- it was also a source of health, containing chords of rhythm and melody that harmonized and rebalanced the human organism, draining away its impurities. They believed that "music soothed passions, healed mental diseases, and even held in check riots and tumults."<sup>170</sup>

2. Selection of instruments should be appropriate to the section of the liturgy.

Lichtenwalter offers three criteria that were used in the selection of David as the musician to soothe Saul. He remarks that firstly, they needed a specific type of music.

He states,

As a general rule, different instruments affect particular parts of our makeup—physical body, emotions, soul, mind. This was not time for percussion, brass, or the heavy sound of bass notes... The servants imagine, rather, the gentle haunting rhythms of a hand-stroked string instrument—the *kinnor*, a musical instrument having strings and a wooden

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<sup>169</sup> Williams, 2.

<sup>170</sup> Lichtenwalter, 51.

frame. We'd call it a harp. Harp music has long been known for its haunting, soul-touching gentleness and rhythms.<sup>171</sup>

The second requirement was that the musician needed to be highly skilled such that he or she would have an immediate and captivating effect on the ailing king. Lastly the chosen musician would need to be “someone whose personal life and ethic conveyed the influence and presence of God.”<sup>172</sup>

David's music was effective. According to a biblical account: “Whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, ...David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him” (NKJV, 1 Sam 16:23). This passage suggests that there is a need for discretion and for guidelines for music ministers to use in determining what music, what musicians, and even what instruments are used in the service of God. Perhaps contemporary churches that make frequent use of synthesizers and keyboards should carefully *contemplate the selection of sounds used in different parts of the liturgy*. Soft string patches are very appropriate for contemplative sections such as the prayer, and the invitation/appeal. Brass instruments, acoustic or synthesized are utilized in celebration or creating an arousal that would signify some sort of action in the liturgy (i.e. Offering, or commissioning of some sort).

3. The purpose of music is to glorify God.

Dr. Eurydice Osterman, professor at Oakwood College, a historically Black Seventh-day Adventist college in Huntsville, Alabama, authored a book entitled, *What God Says About Music*. She promotes this general guideline in her book, “Knowing that

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<sup>171</sup> Lichtenwalter, 52.

<sup>172</sup> Lichtenwalter, 52.

the enemy of our souls is out to destroy us, the church, sacred music, and everything else associated therewith, we then must be careful of our musical choices, being ever mindful of God's original intent for its function and purpose within our lives."<sup>173</sup> Dr. Osterman believes that for Christians the function of all music, sacred or secular, is to glorify God. This principle would go far in helping the Christian to develop proper listening and performing habits of music. Melva Costen is in agreement with the purpose of secular and sacred music being to glorify God but adds that it is difficult to manage the flow of traffic between the two. This is partially because of the African holistic view of life, which sees God in everything, with no line of demarcation between the secular and the sacred. She suggests that one must "return to the actual worship setting, remembering that the line between the sacred and secular is an imaginary division placed there by humans in every age."<sup>174</sup>

4. If tunes are borrowed from secular music, the lyrics of the secular song should be uplifting and not degrading.

I am in basic agreement with the suggestion in the 2005 guidelines that, "Sacred music should not evoke secular associations or invite conformity to worldly behavioral patterns of thinking or acting." Religious music that has borrowed musical lines from secular works is sometimes distracting to the purpose of glorifying God. It has the ability to take the attention of those who are aware of its origins, sometimes bringing on inappropriate memories for a worship service. These songs should be altered, revised or left out of the liturgy. Furthermore, I would argue that if a Christian writer is to include

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<sup>173</sup> Eurydice Osterman, "What God Says About Music" (Huntsville, AL: ASAWHM Music, 1998), 15.

<sup>174</sup> Costen, 101.

interpolations of a secular tune, the secular tune should be uplifting and not degrading in its original lyrics. For example, the popular gospel song *He Looked Beyond My Faults and Saw My Need*, written by Dottie Rambo, is composed to the tune of *Danny Boy*, an old Irish love song. The lyrics of this secular song are honorable and not lewd in any manner. Any association brought about by the use of this secular tune does not take away from the meaning of the song in its liturgical setting.

*Guidance in Music Liturgy from Ellen G. White*

5. When singing or playing keep the message and lyrics as the focal point.

There are invaluable quotes from the writings of Ellen White that will help to shape the liturgical philosophy of the African-American Seventh-day Adventist music minister. I would like to consider several of them here. To begin:

Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble, and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God. What a contrast between the ancient custom and the uses to which music is now too often devoted! How many employ this gift to exalt self, instead of using it to glorify God! A love for music leads the unwary to unite with world lovers in pleasure gatherings where God has forbidden His children to go. Thus, that which is a great blessing when rightly used, becomes one of the most successful agencies by which Satan allures the mind from duty and from the contemplation of eternal things.<sup>175</sup>

Uplifting, inspirational music, sacred or secular, is the requirement for the Adventist musician or music listener. More specifically, concerning music's use in the liturgy, Adventist musicians must be mindful to not draw attention to themselves with their vocal or instrumental prowess in worship. There exists a fine line between the worship of God with excellence and the glorification of one's self. This problem presents itself often in the African American community because of the tendency to "bend notes" and to

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<sup>175</sup> Ellen White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 594.

improvise harmonically or melodically. But this can be done tastefully. Altering notes or chords for a specific purpose, perhaps to provide emphasis to an important word or point, is very appropriate. Even the untrained ear easily recognizes a bad performance when someone is doing a “bit too much.” With vocalists it occurs when melismas, sometimes termed “runs,” or extra bends occur with emphasis on a word or phrase that is not particularly important to the text. Adventist musicians/keyboardists sometime tend to “experiment” harmonically at the wrong part of the service (i.e. prayer, appeal) or when there is vocal harmony present (i.e. a hymn or anthem) which needs the support of the “correct” or written harmony. A guide to the Adventist musician that helps to define the “fine line” is to *keep the message as the focal point*. Coinciding with that point is the suggestion to always actively “worship” while singing or playing, rather than thinking about ways to embellish the music.

6. Use music in the liturgy that quotes directly from Scripture.

Returning to Ellen White's writings:

There are few means more effective for fixing [God's] words in the memory than repeating them in song. And such song has wonderful power. It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort. The value of song as a means of education should never be lost sight of. . . <sup>176</sup>

Ellen White here gives possible remedies and aids in memorizing scripture.

Inherent in this admonition is also the value of the use of music in the church liturgy that *quotes directly from the scripture*. Employing this guideline will assist the music minister in his or her selection of songs for the worship service. Choices of repertoire are too

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<sup>176</sup> Ellen White, *Education* (Boise: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1852), 167-168.

often made according to what “sounds good” or is appealing to the listener and not always according to the lyrical content, which is of even higher value when it helps to commit to memory what has been recorded in scripture.

Concerning the importance of reverence in the music liturgy, Ellen White writes:

The melody of song is one of God’s instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies.<sup>177</sup>

If this latter statement were adhered to, the level of attentiveness would rise in church choir rehearsals. Often members take this time to socialize and it is not regarded as the religious service that it is. Members should learn to practice the presence of God even in rehearsals.

I saw singing to the glory of God often drove [away] the enemy, and praising God would beat him back and give us the victory.<sup>178</sup>

Let all who are connected with the service of God be guarded, lest by desire for display they lead others into indulgence and self-glorification...therefore anyone of you to bring into his presence a marred sacrifice a sacrifice that cost neither study nor prayer. Such an offering God cannot accept.<sup>179</sup>

Too often, choirs in the gospel tradition are used to learning quick, simple songs for church that have taken no time or “sacrifice” to learn. Memorization seems to be too hard a task with hymn learning or any genre that takes one out of his or her “comfort zone.”

#### 7. Pitch songs in the natural ranges of the voice.

Great improvement can be made in singing. Some think that the louder they sing the more music they make; but noise is not music. Good singing is like the music of the birds—subdued and melodious. In some of our

<sup>177</sup> White, *Testimonies*, vol. 5, 493.

<sup>178</sup> White, *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, 332.

<sup>179</sup> Osterman, 28.



churches I have heard solos that were altogether unsuitable for the service of the Lord's house... They [angels] delight to hear the simple songs of praise sung in a natural tone. The songs in which every word is uttered clearly, in a music tone, are the songs that they join us in singing. They take up the refrain that is sung from the heart with the spirit and the understanding.<sup>180</sup>

It is interesting to note that Mrs. White's criticism is of singing performances in more of a "classical" style and not a contemporary "pop" style. It even seems like a promotion of some of the simpler "praise songs" that are gaining popularity in current years. But with that "simplicity" music ministers must be sure to *pitch these songs in keys that are suitable for the natural ranges of the voices*. Selections in the contemporary liturgies are often reproduced from recordings of artists with extraordinary voices and ranges and result in vocal damage to the less talented who attempt to imitate the sound and pitch. At times, unfortunately, the music is pitched high to "sell" or to get an emotional shock, a worldly practice that does not necessarily belong in the liturgy.

*Biblical Standards for Liturgical Guidelines*

8. *Promote a balance of musical styles.*

The biblical standards must be employed as guidelines as well. A frequently cited verse from Ephesians 5:19 advocates a healthy *balance of music styles* in the liturgy. The apostle Paul admonishes the church to edify each other with "hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs." A hymn is defined as being "a religious song or poem, typically of praise to God..."<sup>181</sup> Oftentimes hymns include doctrinal beliefs and are used in educating the members about the fundamentals of their faith. This is the reason for the many different denominational hymnals that have been published for the various bodies of

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<sup>180</sup> White, *Evangelism*, 510.

<sup>181</sup> "Hymn," in Dictionary, v.1.0.2, Apple Computer Dictionary, Cupertino, CA: Apple Computer, 2005.

faith. Psalms are defined as a sacred song or hymn, in particular any of those contained in the biblical Book of Psalms. In a more general sense, this term could refer to other psalm-like songs throughout scripture. Spiritual songs are songs about the Christian experience, or what some would term “gospel songs.”

Barry Liesch discusses different liturgical formats that contemporary churches are using in his book, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church*. These worship practices include a variation of an outlined liturgy, thematic worship planning, and open/free worship. He observes that there is no prescribed order of worship written down in scripture. But scripture does dictate that “revelation and response are basic acts of worship.”<sup>182</sup> Some pastors and denominations have followed the theophany of Isaiah 6, which is called the “divine-human model.” This passage about Isaiah seeing the glory of God is generally outlined as follows: praise, confession, forgiveness, and commitment. Robert Webber, an evangelical Episcopalian, proposes an interesting worship model based on Isaiah 6:

- I. The Preparation (Six elements)
  - Opening Hymn
  - The Call to Worship
  - The Invocation
  - The Acknowledgement of God
  - The Confession of Sin
  - The Words of Forgiveness
- II. Reading, Preaching, and Response to the Word
- III. Lord’s Supper
- IV. The Dismissal<sup>183</sup>

In this liturgical structure “confession and words of forgiveness occur early in the service, clearing the way for joy in worship.”<sup>184</sup> Also there is time for a response after the sermon,

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<sup>182</sup> Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 72.

<sup>183</sup> Liesch, 73.

in which the offering and announcements are placed. In most thematic services, after the sermon is performed there is an abrupt end to the service.

Thematic worship planning is the most popular design among evangelical churches. The pastor will choose a theme for his sermon topic. He or she is not constricted to preach on a set topic set up by a church year. The sermon is the impetus that drives the rest of the service. But Donald P. Hustad, Senior Professor of Church Music at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, believes that this can be carried too far, stating that this makes the “sermon and its response the only significant acts of worship for these planners.”<sup>185</sup> The free church worship planning is also susceptible to lack of planning, too little time devoted to prayer, insufficiently prominent scripture readings, and meager congregational response opportunities.<sup>186</sup>

Thematic planning has worked in some worship communities. It requires that the pastor and worship leader communicate early in the week. Liesch proposes that these questions be asked in planning:

1. What is the target of the service? The goal is for the point of the hour to be crystal clear even before the sermon
2. What are the givens? (Examples are congregational praise, scripture reading, offering, etc.)
3. What resources are available? (Examples are a fresh testimony, a letter, a solo, or any opportunity to enhance the service.)
4. What sequence of events would give the service a logical progression and be psychologically sound?
5. What title or captions would integrate the service?<sup>187</sup>

Liesch’s definition of open worship (*koinonia*) is worship where “rather than keeping strictly and exclusively to the preplanned program [note: there is preplanning], all the

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<sup>184</sup> Liesch, 73.

<sup>185</sup> Liesch, 76.

<sup>186</sup> Cited in Liesch, 76.

<sup>187</sup> Liesch, 74.

participants are seeking to be led creatively by the Spirit into a flow of events unique to that group of people at that point in time.”<sup>188</sup> This type of liturgy is based upon 1 Corinthians 14:26 which reads: “How is it then brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.”<sup>189</sup> According to the Nelson’s Study Bible, the text states that “if each person brings to the meeting the special ability that God has given, and if everything is done for edification, the church as a whole will benefit.”<sup>190</sup> Graham Kendrick states that the church must “expect the unexpected” and “be free to alter or abandon the plans we have made.”<sup>191</sup>

My own philosophy of music has been supported and challenged while doing the research for this essay. I am a minister of music in the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church. The various liturgies of this Church are not unfamiliar to me. This Church has a long-standing position of traditional evangelical liturgy and music. This example of a “traditional” liturgy has been my experience in several African American Seventh-day Adventist churches during my upbringing and would proceed as follows. The traditional service begins with the introit, sung as the hymn, “The Lord is in His Holy Temple.” This is followed by an Invocation—a short, personal prayer, not necessarily calling God to worship with the congregation (but it was probably meant for that purpose). Next comes the Affirmation of Faith, which consists of reciting the fourth commandment from memory. This distinguishing moment focuses on God’s command to rest on the seventh day as a commemoration of his creation. There follows a special

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<sup>188</sup> Liesch, 80.

<sup>189</sup> Bible, NKJV.

<sup>190</sup> *The Nelson Study Bible, NKJV* (Nashville: Nelson, 1997), 1935.

<sup>191</sup> Liesch, 80.

music selection (freely chosen, and rehearsed). Next come the announcements followed by the Pastoral remarks. The congregation, prompted to stand, then sings the morning hymn. Then there is a reading from scripture. This passage could be directly related to the pastor's sermon, or it could be some other freely chosen Bible verses. The reading could be done in an expository manner or read responsively, alternating between the leader and the congregation. Following the scripture is the intercessory prayer: a longer prayer that does not invite the congregation to approach the altar. It is a general prayer for the whole congregation that includes praying for the entire congregation, lifting up the names of members that are physically sick, and a blessing for the "speaker of the hour." A hymn or other response by the congregation follows, perhaps "Oh Thou Who Hearest Every Heart Felt Prayer" or possibly "Hear Our Prayer O Lord." An offering follows this prayer. During the taking of an offering, some scripture is read. At the conclusion of the offering, the leader—with his hands raised and the congregation standing—reads Malachi 3:8,9,10: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse...". There is a prayer for the offering followed by a sung offertory response from the congregation, "We give Thee but Thine Own." Following this is a hymn of meditation sung by a soloist or choir. This selection is typically performed at a slower tempo and rehearsed by the performer. Next comes the sermon by the pastor or guest preacher, which is followed by an appeal or invitation for people to join the church. Communion is celebrated once every quarter, four times a year, and usually done during the regular church service. The responsorial hymns listed in this liturgy are chosen from twenty possible suggestions in the *Sentences and Responses* section in the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal published in 1941.

Surprisingly enough, in the contemporary-styled, thematically planned worship of my current church, many of the items in the traditional Seventh-day Adventist liturgy are preserved. At Madison Mission Seventh-day Adventist Church, where I am the minister of music, the main change in the liturgy is the order in which parts are performed, with instrumental/vocal music prevalent throughout. For instance, after the introit is sung, there is the “intercessory prayer.” This is again a prayer for the congregation, but often the leader will call for those worshippers to come to the front who need prayer for a specific situation— thanksgiving, intercession, healing, etc. Other main differences include more contemporary music selections, a praise and worship congregational singing section, announcements done before the main service, and a formal but yet relaxed atmosphere.

9. Perform one or more songs whose lyrics are directly related to Scripture.

I support a somewhat contemporary thematic worship service, but throughout this research, certain practices in my own church have raised some questions. I have noticed that this church has shied away from formal scripture readings. Music should be based on the Word and this practice should be reinstated. According to Martin Luther, “As the word of God can be recovered, so it can be lost.”<sup>192</sup> The scripture reading should not be one of the options in the liturgy. The Word of God is too fundamental to the Christian’s belief system especially in a Protestant context. This is a step backwards and resembles the earlier pitfalls of the liturgy when the clergy did everything. I have taken steps involving consultation with the pastor about this topic, and as a result the pastor has

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<sup>192</sup> Senn, 303.

incorporated this into the service. Moreover, as music minister, I have a responsibility to include scripture in the music performed in liturgy.

10. Use music to address the needs of the congregation, using Biblical principles.

Another practice observed in the research of liturgy is the tendency of liturgy to include prayers for general subjects such as forgiveness or thanksgiving. It is important to realize that the sermon is not the end-all for the service. It is not the only area of liturgy that addresses a congregation's problems. A prayer for forgiveness may reach a soul more than an expository sermon for that day. For that matter, since liturgy is formed by the people, the needs of that particular congregation should be assessed and anything that is needed should be added to the general liturgy. For instance, if there seems to be an epidemic of broken marriages in a church, a prayer for marriages should be added to the liturgy. In like manner, songs performed may address issues of the people from a Biblical view, incorporating the use of scripture and musical style to impress the message upon the listener.

Os Guinness asks the question in his book, *Dining With The Devil*, "What is the church's decisive authority?" He answers this question succinctly in saying: "Behind this question lies the fact that the church of God 'lets God be God' and is the church only when she lives and thrives finally by God's truths and God's resources. If the church makes anything else the decisive principle of her existence, Christians risk living unauthorized lives of faith, exercising unauthorized ministries, and proclaiming an unauthorized gospel."<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Os Guinness, *Dining With The Devil: The Megachurch Movement Flirts with Modernity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 37.

Following Guinness, I would suggest further that one must do everything that God has instructed in his Word in regard to liturgy or anything else. One should indeed first and foremost, through the scriptures, seek to find what God wants included in His worship. The examples that structure the liturgy itself—Isaiah 6 and I Corinthians 14 – exemplify this concern. But there must be admission that there is no direct outline in the Bible of the ideal liturgy. The changing role of music in the African American Seventh-day Adventist liturgy in this sense is consistent with the Church’s theological principle of continuing revelation.

Some liturgical principles are beyond dispute. Without a doubt, all Christians must realize that God is the one who is worshipped. Anything done to convey this meaning—architecture, paintings, stained glass, or ornate instruments, etc.—contribute to this concern. The purpose of worship should always be to make God known. The construction of many church edifices and “worship centers” today lack the luster that would aid in revealing the greatness of God. In reference to his collage technique, Olivier Messiaen said, “[Stained glass]... is Nature itself in its most extraordinary manifestation: it is light, captured by man to glorify the most noble functional places, the buildings intended for worship.”<sup>194</sup> Churches should strive to construct buildings that will evoke the effect “of bringing God and man together when a moment of eternity invades the temporal and we are given a ‘glimpse of the New Jerusalem.’”<sup>195</sup>

The Bible also affirms that God should be worshipped for His attributes and acts, for who He is and what He has done. He is the creator, the source, the originator. He is

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<sup>194</sup> Faythe Freese, “The Symbolism and Liturgical Effects of the Jerusalem Windows by Marc Chagall and the Stained Glass Technique of Olivier Messiaen,” unpublished paper delivered at Indiana University 2 May 1986, 18.

<sup>195</sup> Freese, 20.



the giver of every good gift. He redeemed us. The psalms list His attributes as being faithful and good. Liturgy must convey these truths about God. If there is a false concept of who God is, that would essentially be idol worship. If we sing songs or preach sermons that depict God as a God of prosperity only, this would be false worship. If one thinks that God is only there to bring prosperity, then an incomplete view of God would be advanced, (which is quickly corrected in the book of Job); indeed, this would be a form of manipulating God toward a desired human end—in other words, idolatry.

My approach is anchored in the conviction that music directors must constantly evaluate what we are doing theologically to see if what we do is casting light on the true Star of worship. Liturgy is a work of the people, but the people don't control God. The church controls the symbols of God, in terms of the acts, ways, or liturgies in which God is represented in worship. These symbols must be carefully selected for worship. I do not believe in many static forms of worship because symbols are dynamic; because they are dynamic, the liturgy will constantly evolve. Music is symbolic and has obviously changed since its inception at the beginning of time when the first notes were sounded—perhaps when Adam sang the first song: “This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!” (Genesis 2:23). The nature of musical symbols causes listeners in the current century to not be offended by chords or rhythms that would have proved insanity in earlier centuries. A current example could be how a husband chooses to express love to his wife. If there is a certain act or gift given that her husband does to show his love for his wife and it is always done in the same manner it would get stale. This is probably why the Bible speaks of singing a “new song unto the Lord.” The old and new liturgies have their place. Senn states that, “Catholic liturgy has conveyed a sense of the

continuity of God's people down through the centuries..." but, "the evangelical critique reminds us that the true continuity of the people of God is found in the living faith of its members."<sup>196</sup>

*Guidelines for Balance in the Music Liturgy*

11. Eradicate the practice of excluding the Bass voice range in the liturgy.

A commendable value to strive for in worship is *balance*. Worship should be intellectual and emotional. It is the leader's job to strive to achieve the balance of these two. If music is too loud in a service, that hinders the ability of thinking. If there are too many new songs in a praise service it negates the congregational participation, because of lack of familiarity, and regresses to pre-Reformation practices. Oddly enough, one factor of gospel music excludes a portion of the worshiping community. Most of the gospel compositions and arrangements are written in 3-part harmony encompassing the voice types of the soprano, alto, and tenor, to the exclusion of the bass. This is a practice that must be adjusted. From the writers of this genre of music to the performers of this style, the *bass voice must no longer be left out*. There is nothing wrong with having an arrangement for just SAT voices, but it is an injustice to the general body to perpetuate the exclusion of one of its members. Four-part harmony itself is an important symbol of inclusion. The Bible proclaims that the church consists of members of one body, and currently that body is missing some members in the music liturgy. It is an enormous task, but skilled music ministers can easily develop or arrange bass parts for existing compositions and demand that future compositions for the African American liturgy

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<sup>196</sup> Senn, 47.

consider the 4-part vocal structure. The Church should strive for four-part harmony in their choral works, praise team, and congregational singing.

12. Realize that worship must include all members, allowing all to participate.

An additional guideline to the contemporary church is for its music leaders to understand the balance between the worshippers leading out in front and the worshippers in the congregation. The overall *volume from the music leaders should not overpower the volume from the congregation*. The leaders should not be the focus. The worship leaders in the front are there to aid the congregation in worshipping God. When an imbalance in volume exists, it helps in aiding the unwanted element of entertainment.

To help achieve balance in the music of the African-American Seventh-day Adventist liturgy, consider the following suggestions based upon Ephesians 5:19, which advocates the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs:

a. *Sing at least one hymn for the service in four part harmony*; pre-select this hymn and post one week early, suggesting that families learn the parts during their family worship for the upcoming week. Teach the parts to the choir during all choir rehearsals for that week. An anthem based on a hymn could be substituted for, or added to, this hymn for variety in the liturgy.

b. *Perform at least one spiritual or spirit-filled song that possesses an emotional nature and close affinity to the black culture*. This could vary from being a classically arranged African-American spiritual, a traditional black gospel song, or even a Watt's styled hymn-lining.

c. *Perform one song whose lyrics are directly related to a scriptural verse*.

The main component in any of these performances is excellence. The best must be used and chosen for the liturgy. A central guideline which must be renewed in the contemporary Adventist Church is (d) *include song selections each week that promote the two facets of the denomination's name, the Second Coming of Christ and the belief in the seventh day Sabbath.*

A *balance in terms of genres of music presented* must be considered. African-Americans do not all have the same culture. Some have been raised in primarily European cultures and are slightly uncomfortable with present-day Africanisms. Surprisingly, Adventists with roots in the Caribbean are among those that often are more accustomed to the European liturgical culture. All members of the body should share in the ministry being put forth. Present a mixture in styles in choral selections, responses, and instrumental offerings. This will also help to bridge the age gap that is occurring in our churches today. In regards to this widening gap of age and preferences Melva Costen notes:

We are at the cutting edge of taking seriously the fact that music for worship in spirit and in truth must also help prepare an aging population that is living longer and experiencing the variety of problems that occur with age. We must seek and acknowledge the truth about adequate worship preparations for moments when *spirit* no longer means activity and *truth* cannot be measured by an alert mind. The freedom of God—the Spirit that we constantly seek – allows the kind of recall as one approaches the silent halls of death that allows one to sing the faith freely. The amazement of all of this is that God's *Spirit* and *truth* prevail even as one experiences the loss of mental acuity and physical prowess. If worship has demonstrated both spirit and truth, we as the body of Christ have experienced life at its fullest.

Therefore, planning for such life-fulfilling worship must be done by worship leaders, preachers, musicians, teachers, the young, and the aging, who all understand that the true meaning of *spirit* and *truth* remains as always as God in action among seekers.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Costen, 205.

Thoughtful planning in teaching some “older” music to the younger choirs and adding some contemporary selections to the more senior choirs could actually bring these groups to a better understanding of each other.

13. Plan music to be used in liturgy in accordance with the subject of the sermon, whenever possible.

Another guideline for improving music’s use in the liturgy is “planning for a desired effect,” or rather, to *plan the music around the sermon subjects*.<sup>198</sup> This is not a new concept, but an action that must be consistently and deliberately requested of the senior pastor. Frank Hale gives an example of an extremely poignant service that was told to him by a former student named Robert D. Taylor, Jr. It was a sermon dealing with race relations at a very tense time in the Adventist Church. “While members of the university administration had curbed their tongues in discussing the problems of race on campus,” Taylor writes, “God intervened in a spectacular way.” On 13 June 1964, Dr. Sakae Kubo gave the eleven o’clock sermon at Pioneer Memorial Church on the Andrews University campus. His subject was race relations. Taylor commented, “Much weight was added to the presentation of this sermon by the fact that it was presented by one who was neither Caucasian nor Negroid; it was given by a respected seminary professor and New Testament scholar.” Taylor was also encouraged by the fact that the entire service appeared tailored to squarely face the issue. The Scripture reading, the special music (“The Pharisee and the Publican”), and the closing hymn (“In Christ There

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<sup>198</sup> Frank Hale, *Out of The Trash Came Truth* (Columbus, OH: Frank W. Hale, Jr., 2007), 46.

is no East nor West”), all indicated planning for a decided effect. Dr Kubo’s sermon was favorably received, “even from members of the staff and administration.”<sup>199</sup>

The thematic worship planning experience works best in my opinion. The example by Liesch is interesting and is worthy of experimentation. This liturgy and mode of planning gives the music ministry a mission-oriented focus but keeps the liturgy dynamic. The free-flowing, open worship experience of not planning and just allowing “the Spirit to take control” seems to be a little overboard. Of course, I agree with allowing the Holy Spirit free reign at all times. But the Spirit can also be present in the planning. All must worship in “spirit and in truth” as the Bible declares, but sometimes this can be distorted. The freedom of the spirit means that the Holy Spirit may fall differently from one week to the next. We should not expect the same result each week from a praise service or sermon to believe that the “spirit was there.” The Spirit is free to make one stand, sit, be expressive, or be very contemplative. Costen believes that “along the way, we have adapted the terms *spirit* and *truth* to suit our own localized interpretations, so that we can place parameters around their initial meanings and sit in judgment of others.”<sup>200</sup> Leaders should not coerce people to act a certain way just because that particular action is how they feel the spirit should be evidenced.

The 2005 “Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music-Guidelines” can be found in the Appendix of this document. After careful study of these guidelines, I do not have any conceptual disagreements with these carefully considered principles. However, the structure of the Guidelines and proposed application of them do not “fit” as succinctly as the Guideline’s writers may have assumed. At least, the fit leaves much to be desired

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<sup>199</sup> Hale, 46.

<sup>200</sup> Costen, 204.

from the point of view of the African American Seventh-day Adventist Church. The generation of African American Seventh-day Adventists that is moving into leadership roles presently is a young generation which has encountered the world, not just their own community, at a younger age than its parent generation. The wording at times does not encourage practical application. Words such as “authenticity” and “balance” may not mean much without reflecting back on the roots of the African American Church and the beginnings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Ulrich Frikart, president of the Euro-African region of Seventh-day Adventists, agrees:

This document [Seventh-day Adventist Guidelines] could say a lot, but the language does not show to me the main target audience for this document is our young people. I feel a lack of sensitivity for our young people and this is a concern for me. I would like a document in which we would express that we understand their struggle. ... The culture of our young people in music is a major way of communication. As it is, it will be of no use. Our main target will not ... identify with this. We have to guide them...<sup>201</sup>

The guidelines set forth in this document propose to assist the younger music minister, as well as the older one, in situations that the writer has observed from actual experience and to give more practical directives than those that are expressed in the general Seventh-day Adventist Guidelines.

Principle #9 in the 2005 Guidelines is an important one for the general Church to enforce. This principle promotes the recognition and acknowledgement of different cultural contributions to the field of religious music. It is sad to say that even some African Americans look down on their culturally-inspired music. It is not entirely their fault. Most African American Seventh-day Adventists have grown up in a society that

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<sup>201</sup> “World Church: Adventist Music Philosophy Guidelines Voted,” Adventist News Network, <http://news.adventist.or/data/2004/1097702492/index.html.en>. Accessed 3 February 2008.

has indirectly accepted the notion that “white is right.” Even after years of Afrocentrism and promotion of the African-American culture, some live on with the numbing inheritance of slavery, slave mentality, and segregation. These famous words of W.E.B. DuBois from his book *The Souls of Black Folk* capture the essence of the duality of the African American:

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, --a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself...through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, --an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife, -- this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American.<sup>202</sup>

The African American music minister has to manage this dilemma of duality and apply it to the additional dualism of the music liturgy in a traditionally European Seventh-day Adventist Church. Dr. Clifford Jones, in an article entitled “African-American Worship: Its Heritage, Character, and Quality,” espouses some general guidelines that can be used for the African-American Seventh-day Adventist Church. He does assert that there is “an undeniable difference between the way American Blacks worship and the worship of other racial and ethnic groups. Rooted in their unique social history in America, the difference is more one of function and experience than proof that

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<sup>202</sup> W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Dover, 1994), 9.



one style is superior to another.”<sup>203</sup> It is with this premise that he gives these words of advice:

With no pretensions to being exhaustive, the following are some contemporary tasks of African-American worship. It must continue:

1. To reflect the communal experience of African Americans without minimizing the ultimate focus of worship—adoration of and for God!
2. To hold in creative tension its unambiguous emphasis on correcting the injustices and inequities in this world with an eschatological focus on the life to come.
3. To strike a balance between spontaneity and order.
4. To be celebrator without succumbing to emotionalism.
5. To liven up worship and celebrate Christ.”<sup>204</sup>

Costen also suggests some planning ideas for the African-American Church that will help to make this possible. She asserts that these should be utilized with “care and creativity” using both the genres and styles of African American music, as well as hymns, anthems, and instrumental music.

-Make use of resources provided by your denomination in the planning and ordering of services of worship. Allow the resources to serve as your guide rather than as demands.<sup>205</sup>

14. Use resources offered by the denomination as a partial guide and as an education tool.
15. Realize the responsibility of the African American music minister to be educated in the history of African American music.

The Adventist music leader should make it a point to *attend the music workshops offered by the Church* to assist in the ministry of the church. Recently the Church has answered the need to provide supplemental materials to music leaders and now the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists sponsors three national music seminars per year: The United Christian Artists Association (more geared towards African Americans); Andrews University Music and Worship Conference; and the Denver First

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<sup>203</sup> Jones, 5.

<sup>204</sup> Jones, 9.

<sup>205</sup> Costen, 200.

Adventist Church Worship and the Arts Conference. An additional recommendation to establish a position in the local conference of Music Ministry coordinator would do well to aid the many churches without guidance.

-Become committed to constantly expanding your own knowledge of key factors in African American music history and practice. Keep helpful resources in the church library or in your office.<sup>206</sup>

The music ministers of the African American churches must continue to *gain knowledge about the historical roots of African American music*. Education to the members of the ministry and congregation should be constant throughout the year, but February, “Black History month,” is an excellent time to bring weekly focus to this history and to also highlight the roots of Caribbean and African music.

-Seek to understand “what’s going on” before adopting any new trend just because it makes one “feel good.”<sup>207</sup> (Costen, 200)

An African American Adventist music minister’s responsibility is a critical one. Fads and new trends in music are happening quickly and changes in the music’s role in the liturgy can almost occur without notice in this post-modern era. One should not be quick to adopt a change without research into the origin of the trend and confirmation of its appropriateness. For example, with some gospel compositions, their content, be it melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic, is an exact reproduction of a secular song with negative connotation within the lyrical content. By no means should the music minister seek to foster that kind of distraction in the worship service, permitting the possibility of inappropriate association in the liturgy.

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<sup>206</sup> Costen, 200.

<sup>207</sup> Costen, 200.

In conclusion, we must concede that the area of liturgy is an imperfect arena, because it is the public work of human beings. We must strive to use the best structures, forms, and genres to reveal and invoke a response to God. We have often used symbols from the profane and the sacred. A handshake used to be a pagan way of drawing energy from the sun and conveying it to another. But time is a factor in life and liturgy. We must always search for the symbols that open up the truth. The work of the liturgy will be an evolving one. Symbols are not reality. We handle imperfect symbols trying to reveal a perfect God.

Songs chosen for the liturgy must have meaning and be performed in a manner to bring back that old sense of “Advent” singing that was talked about in an earlier quote by James White, who is known for speaking of the great power in Advent singing in those early days. “African American music has suffered from efforts to negate its history and usefulness. But it has survived and remains a vehicle through which God shapes and reshapes the people.”<sup>208</sup> Training must be provided by the minister of music to his or her staff that will keep alive the legacy of Seventh-day Adventist Christian music. Much of this training can be fashioned around the basic tenets proposed in the Church Manual. The change of the role of music in the liturgy is inevitable; but African American Seventh-day Adventist music ministers should shape that change based upon solid guidelines from the Word of God and the writings of Ellen White.

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<sup>208</sup> Costen, 203-204.

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## APPENDIX I

### Guidelines Toward An SDA Philosophy of Music

Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee  
October 14-29, 1972, Mexico City

#### **Voted: That the following guidelines for a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music be adopted:**

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has come into existence in fulfillment of prophecy to be God's instrument in a worldwide proclamation of the Good News of salvation through faith in the atoning sacrifice of God's Son and of obedience to His commands in preparation for our Lord's return. The lives of those who accept this responsibility must be as distinctive as their message. This calls for total commitment by each church member to the ideals and objectives of the Church. Such commitment will affect every department of church life and will certainly influence the music used by the Church in fulfillment of its God-given commission.

Music is one of God's great gifts to man and is one of the most important elements in a spiritual program. It is an avenue of communication with God, and "is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth" (Education, p. 168). Dealing as it does with matters of eternal consequence, it is essential that music's tremendous power be kept clearly in mind. It has the power to uplift or degrade; it can be used in the service of good or evil. "It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and to awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort" (ibid., pp. 167-168).

Those, therefore, who select music for the distinctive purposes of this Church must exercise a high degree of discrimination in its choice and in its use. In their endeavors to meet these ideals, more than human wisdom is needed. Turning then to revelation for guidance, the following general principles are revealed:

The music should

1. Bring glory to God and assist us in acceptably worshiping Him (1 Cor. 10:31).
2. Ennoble, uplift, and purify the Christian's thoughts (Phil 4:8; Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 594).
3. Effectively influence the Christian in the development of Christ's character in his life and in that of others (MS 57, 1906).

4. Have a text [words, lyric, message] which is in harmony with the scriptural teachings of the Church (Review and Herald, June 6, 1912).
5. Reveal a compatibility between the message conveyed by the words and the music, avoiding a mixture of the sacred and the profane.
6. Shun theatricality and prideful display (Evangelism, p. 137; Review and Herald, November 30, 1900).
7. Give precedence to the message of the text, which should not be overpowered by accompanying musical elements (Gospel Workers, pp. 357-358).
8. Maintain a judicious balance of the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual elements (Review and Herald, November 14, 1899).
9. Never compromise high principles of dignity and excellence in efforts to reach people just where they are (Testimonies for the Church, 9:143; Evangelism, p. 137).
10. Be appropriate for the occasion, the setting, and the audience for which it is intended (Evangelism, pp. 507-508).

There is much that is spiritually uplifting and religiously valid in the music of the various cultural and ethnic groups; however, the musical tastes and practices of all should conform to the universal value of Christ-like character, and all should strive for oneness in the spirit and purpose of the gospel, which calls for unity rather than uniformity. Care must be exercised that worldly values in music which fail to express the high ideals of the Christian faith be avoided.

The above principles will serve as effective guidelines in the choice and use of music for the varied needs of the Church. Certain musical forms, such as jazz, rock, and their related hybrid forms, are considered by the Church as incompatible with these principles. Responsible persons involved in the Church's broad-ranging music activities, either as leaders or performers, will find little trouble in applying these principles in some areas. Certain other areas are much more complex, and a more detailed discussion of the factors involved follows.

## I. CHURCH MUSIC

**Music in the Worship Service.** Worship should be the primary and eternal activity of mankind. Man's highest end is to glorify God. As the worshiper comes to the house of God to offer a sacrifice of praise, let it be with the best possible music. Careful planning of every musical element of the service is essential so that the congregation is led to be a participant and not a spectator.

The hymns used for this service should be directed to God, emphasizing praise and utilizing the great hymns of our heritage. They should have strong, singable melodies and worthy poetry. The pastor should take a keen interest in increasing the quality and fervor of congregational singing. "Singing is seldom to be done by a few" (Counsels on Health, pp. 481-482). Christian experience will be immeasurably enriched by the learning and use of new hymns.

Where there is a choir, meaningful anthems chosen from master composers of the past and present, sung by dedicated and well-prepared musicians, will add much to the service and assist in elevating the quality of worship.

Instrumental music, including organ or piano, should harmonize with the lofty ideals of worship and be chosen carefully from the best materials consistent with the ability and training of the player. The instrumentalist responsible for accompanying congregational singing has an especially great responsibility to set the right standard in all his contributions, be they preludes or postludes, offertories or other voluntaries, or accompaniment of hymns. He is in a unique position to raise the level of worship music in his church. If in the service there should be vocal solos or other special music, preference should be given to material with scriptural texts and music that is within the singer's range of ability, and be presented to the Lord without display of vocal prowess. The communication of the message should be paramount.

Music in Evangelism. Music used in evangelism may also include gospel music, witness music, or testimony music; but there should be no compromise with the high principles of dignity and excellence characteristic of our message to ready the people for the second coming of Christ. The music chosen should

1. Direct the hearer to Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
2. Prepare the way for the presentation of the message from God's Word, or continue its appeal, evoking a response from the hearers.
3. Be played and sung by those whose lives are consistent with the message they bear.
4. Be a vehicle for the deep impression of Bible truth, which will inspire a positive change in the life.
5. Be presented in a carefully planned, orderly manner.
6. Be simple and melodic and presented without emphasis on personal display.
7. Give precedence to the preaching of the Word, both in emphasis and in allotment of time.
8. Maintain a balanced appeal to the emotion and intellect and not just charm the senses.
9. Be understandable and meaningful in content and style for the largest possible cross section of the audience.

### Music in Youth Evangelism

In the field of youth witnessing, most of the above suggestions apply. Consideration also needs to be given to certain aspects that are unique to this area. Young people tend to identify closely with the music of the contemporary youth culture. The desire to reach these youth where they are with the gospel of Christ sometimes leads to the use of certain questionable musical idioms. In all these idioms, the element which brings the most problems is rhythm, or "the beat."

Of all the musical elements, rhythm evokes the strongest physical response. Satan's greatest successes have often come through his appeal to the physical nature. Showing

keen awareness of the dangers involved in this approach to youth, Ellen G. White said, "They have a keen ear for music, and Satan knows what organs to excite, to animate, engross, and charm the mind so that Christ is not desired. The spiritual longings of the soul for divine knowledge, for a growth in grace, are wanting [i.e., lacking]" (Testimonies for the Church, 1:497). This is a strong indictment of the way in which music may be put to a use that is in direct opposition to God's plan. The previously mentioned jazz, rock, and related hybrid forms are well-known for creating this sensuous response in masses of people.

On the other hand, we have many traditional folk-music idioms which have been respected as legitimate branches of the musical stream. Some of these are acceptable as vehicles for expressing the Christian witness. Others, which might find acceptance in a Christian secular atmosphere, may be inappropriate for bearing the Saviour's name. Still others may fall completely outside the Christian's experience. It must be clear, then, that any form of "folk" musical expression must be judged by the same general principles as all other types discussed in this document.

"Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God's ideal for His children" (Education, p. 18). Those who strive for this high ideal and who lead in youth witnessing will find guidance through prayerful study of music by the aid of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to the problem of rhythm, other factors affect the spiritual qualities of the music:

**Vocal Treatment.** The raucous style common to rock, the suggestive, sentimental, breathy, crooning style of the night-club performer, and other distortions of the human voice should be avoided.

**Harmonic Treatment.** Music should be avoided that is saturated with the 7th, 9th, 11th, and 13th chords as well as other lush sonorities. These chords, when used with restraint, produce beauty, but when used to excess distract from the true spiritual quality of the text.

**Visual Presentation.** Anything which calls undue attention to the performer(s), such as excessive, affected bodily movement or inappropriate dress, should find no place in witnessing.

**Amplification.** Great care should be exercised to avoid excessive instrumental and vocal amplification. When amplifying music there should be a sensitivity to the spiritual needs of those giving the witness and of those who are to receive it. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of instruments for amplification.

**Performances.** The primary objective in the performance of all sacred music should be to exalt Christ rather than to exalt the musician or to provide entertainment.

## Music in the Home

1. Music education and appreciation should begin early in the life of the child through (a) The introduction to great hymns and gospel songs in the informal happy experience of family worship; (b) The establishment of right listening habits through home audio equipment, which includes carefully selected music; (c) Attendance with the family at music concerts with standards conforming to those outlined in this document; (d) The proper example and influence of parents.

2. Family singing and participation in family music instrumental ensembles should be encouraged.

3. Experiments in writing poetry and song compositions might be encouraged.

4. A home music library of wisely selected materials should be established.

5. It must be recognized that Satan is engaged in a battle for the mind and that changes may be effected imperceptibly upon the mind to alter perceptions and values for good and evil. Extreme care must therefore be exercised in the type of programming and music listened to on radio and TV, especially avoiding that which is vulgar, enticing, cheap, immoral, theatrical and identifiable with trends in the counter culture.

## Music in the School

1. In preparing and presenting music for religious functions, school administrators and teachers should work with the students in a way that will uphold the musical standards of the Church.

2. Witnessing and folk-music groups going out from campuses should receive sponsorship and guidance from those appointed by the administration, be they music-faculty members or others.

3. Directors of radio stations on Seventh-day Adventist campuses and those who are responsible for the selection of music played over institutional public-address systems should choose music that is in conformity with the philosophy of music as expressed in this document.

4. Music teachers in school ensembles and in private teaching activities should make positive efforts to teach music literature that may be used in church and in soul-winning activities.

5. Because one of the primary objectives of school music-appreciation courses is to teach discrimination in the light of divine revelation, instructors in these classes on all educational levels are urged to include information in the art of making qualitative value judgment in the area of religious music.

6. Efforts should be made by the local church and conference to close the culture gap. To this end the trained music personnel of the schools should be used in musical training and activities so that the lofty ideals of worship be effectively promoted.

7. Musical presentations in Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions should conform to the standards of the Church. This applies to local talent as well as to visiting artists, ensembles, and music on entertainment films.

## II. SECULAR MUSIC

Music “rightly employed, . . . is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the soul” (Education, p. 167).

The Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle demands that the individual Christian exercise a high degree of discrimination and individual responsibility in the selection of secular music for personal use, solo, or group performance. All such music should be evaluated in the light of the instruction given in Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” He will also keep in mind the warning given by Ellen G. White in Testimonies for the Church, vol. 1, p. 497:

“I was shown that the youth must take a higher stand, and make the Word of God the man of their counsel and their guide. Solemn responsibilities rest upon the young, which they lightly regard. The introduction of music into their homes, instead of inciting to holiness and spirituality, has been the means of diverting their minds from the truth. Frivolous songs and the popular sheet music of the day seem congenial to their taste. The instruments of music have taken time which should have been devoted to prayer. Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse.”

The Christian will not sing songs that are incompatible with the ideals of truth, honesty, and purity. He will avoid elements that give the appearance of making evil desirable or goodness appear trivial. He will try to avoid compositions containing trite phrasing, poor poetry, nonsense, sentimentality, or frivolity, which lead away from the counsel and teachings found in scripture and in the Spirit of Prophecy.

He will consider music such as blues, jazz, the rock idiom, and similar forms as inimical to the development of Christian character, because it opens the mind to impure thoughts and leads to unholy behavior. Such music has a distinct relationship to the permissiveness of contemporary society. The distortion of rhythm, melody, and harmony as employed by these styles and their excessive amplification dulls the sensibilities and eventually destroys the appreciation for that which is good and holy.

Care should be exercised when using a secular tune wedded to sacred lyrics, so that the profane connotation of the music will not outweigh the message of the text. Moreover, the discerning Christian, when selecting any secular music for listening or performing which is not included in the above categories [blues, jazz, rock, etc.] will subject such music to the test of the principles given in the general principles outlined in this Philosophy of Music.

The true Christian is able to witness to others by his choice of secular music for social occasions. He will, through diligent search and careful selection, seek out that type of music which will be compatible with his social needs and his Christian principles.



“There must be a living connection with God in prayer, a living connection with God in songs of praise and thanksgiving” (Evangelism, p. 498).

Official Action of the Autumn Council of the General Conference Committee, October 14-19, 1972, Mexico City, Mexico.

NOTE: Punctuation slightly altered. Bracketed text supplied.

Note: General Conference Committee Meeting Minutes transcript of above action can be viewed at the General Conference Archives (see page 72-1200).

## APPENDIX II

### **A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music – Guidelines**

#### **Autumn Council**

**October 7-12, 2005**

VOTED, To approve as guidelines the document, A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music, which reads as follows:

#### A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music - Guidelines

God has woven music into the very fabric of His creation. When He made all things “the morning stars sang together and the angels shouted for joy.”—Job 38:7 The book of Revelation portrays heaven as a place of ceaseless praise, with songs of adoration to God and the Lamb resounding from all.—Rev 4:9-11; 5:9-13; 7:10-12; 12:10-12; 14:1-3; 15:2-4; 19:1-8

Because God made humans in His image, we share a love and appreciation for music with all His created beings. In fact, music can touch and move us with a power that goes beyond words or most other types of communication. [1] At its purest and best, music lifts our beings into the very presence of God where angels and unfallen beings worship Him in song.

But sin has cast blight over the Creation. The divine image has been marred and well-nigh obliterated; in all aspects this world and God’s gifts come to us with a mingling of good and evil. Music is not morally and spiritually neutral. Some may move us to the most exalted human experience, some may be used by the prince of evil to debase and degrade us, to stir up lust, passion, despair, anger, and hatred.

The Lord’s messenger, Ellen G White, continually counsels us to raise our sights in music. She tells us, “Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when it is put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse”. [2] “Rightly employed, . . . [music] is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the souls.” [3]

Of the power of song, she writes: “It is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth. How often to the soul hard-pressed and ready to despair, memory recalls some word of God’s,—the long-forgotten burden of a childhood song,—and temptations lose their power, life takes on new meaning and new purpose, and courage and gladness are imparted to other souls! . . . As a part of religious service, singing is as much an act of worship as is prayer. Indeed, many a song is prayer. . . . As our Redeemer leads us to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the glory of God, we may catch the themes of praise and thanksgiving from the heavenly choir round about the throne; and as the echo of the angels’ song is awakened in our earthly homes, hearts will be drawn closer to the heavenly singers. Heaven’s communion begins on earth. We learn here the keynote of its praise.”[4]

As Seventh-day Adventists, we believe and preach that Jesus is coming again soon. In our worldwide proclamation of the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14:6-12 we call all peoples to accept the everlasting gospel, to worship God the Creator, and to prepare to meet our soon-returning Lord. We challenge all to choose the good and not the bad, to “say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”—Titus 2:12, 13

We believe that the gospel impacts all areas of life. We therefore hold that, given the vast potential of music for good or ill, we cannot be indifferent to it. While realizing that tastes in music vary greatly from individual to individual, we believe that the Scriptures and the writings of Ellen G White suggest principles that can inform our choices.

In this document the phrase “sacred music”—sometimes referred to as religious music—designates music that focuses on God and on biblical and Christian themes. In most cases, it is music composed and intended for worship service, evangelistic meetings, or private devotion and may be both vocal and instrumental music. However, not all sacred/religious music may be acceptable for an Adventist. Sacred music should not evoke secular associations or invite conformity to worldly behavioral patterns of thinking or acting.

“Secular music” is music composed for settings other than the worship service or private devotion. It speaks to the common issues of life and basic human emotions. It comes out of our very being, expressing the human spirit’s reaction to life, love, and the world in which the Lord has placed us. It can be morally uplifting or degrading. Although it does not directly praise and adore God, nevertheless it could have a legitimate place in the life of the Christian. In its selection the principles discussed in this document should be followed.

Principles to Guide the Christian

The music that Christians enjoy should be regulated by the following principles:

1. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes, whether sacred or secular, will glorify God: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”—1 Corinthians 10:31 This is the over-riding biblical principle. Anything that cannot meet this high standard will weaken our experience with the Lord.

2. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes, whether sacred or secular, should be the noblest and the best: “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is right, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”—Phil 4:8 As followers of Jesus Christ who hope and expect to join the heavenly choirs, we view life on this earth as a preparation for, and foretaste of, the life to come.

On these two foundations—glorifying God in all things and choosing the noblest and the best—depend the other principles listed below for the selection of music by Christians.

3. It is characterized by quality, balance, appropriateness, and authenticity. Music fosters our spiritual, psychological, and social sensitivity, and our intellectual growth.

4. It appeals to both the intellect and the emotions and impacts the body in a positive way. It is wholistic.

5. Music reveals creativity in that it draws from quality melodies. If harmonized,[5] it uses harmonies in an interesting and artistic way, and employs rhythm that complements them.

6. Vocal music employs lyrics that positively stimulate intellectual abilities as well as our emotions and our will power. Good lyrics are creative, rich in content, and of good composition. They focus on the positive and reflect moral values; they educate and uplift; and they correspond with sound biblical theology.

7. Musical and lyrical elements should work together harmoniously to influence thinking and behavior in harmony with biblical values.

8. It maintains a judicious balance of spiritual, intellectual, and emotional elements.

9. We should recognize and acknowledge the contribution of different cultures in worshipping God. Musical forms and instruments vary greatly in the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family, and music drawn from one culture may sound strange to someone from a different culture.

Seventh-day Adventist music-making means to choose the best and above all to draw close to our Creator and Lord and glorify Him. Let us rise to the challenge of a viable alternative musical vision and, as part of our wholistic and prophetic message, make a unique Adventist musical contribution as a witness to the world regarding a people awaiting Christ's soon coming.

[1]"It [music] is one of the most effective means of impressing the heart with spiritual truth" (Education, p. 168).

[2]Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 497. She also states that in the future, "just before the close of probation," "there will be shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an invention of Satan to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the pure, sincere, elevating, ennobling, sanctifying truth for this time" (1 SM 37).

[3]Education, p. 167.

[4]Education, p. 168.

[5]We acknowledge that in some cultures harmonies are not as important as in other cultures. (iamaonline.com)

### APPENDIX III

#### Excerpts on music from the Seventh-day Adventist *Church Manual*

**Place of Music in Worship-** “Music can be a great power for good, yet we do not make the most of this branch of worship. The singing is generally done from impulse or to meet special cases, and at other times those who sing are left to blunder along, and the music loses its proper effect upon the minds of those present. Music should have beauty, pathos, and power. Let the voices be lifted in songs of praise and devotion. Call to your aid, if practicable, instrumental music, and let the glorious harmony ascend to God, an acceptable offering”-*Testimonies*, vol.4, p. 71.

**Sing With the Spirit and the Understanding-** “In their efforts to reach the people, the Lord’s messengers are not to follow the ways of the world. In the meetings that are held, they are not to depend on worldly singers and theatrical display to awaken an interest. How can those who have no interest in the word of God, who have never read His word with a sincere desire to understand its truths, be expected to sing with the spirit and the understanding? How can their hearts be in harmony with the words of sacred song? How can the heavenly choir join in music that is only a form?...

“In the meetings held let a number be chosen to take part in the song service. And let the singing be accompanied with musical instruments skillfully handled. We are not to oppose the use of instrumental music in our work. This part of the service is to be carefully conducted, for it is the praise of God in song.

“The singing is not always to be done by a few. As often as possible, let the entire congregation join.” -*Testimonies*, vol.9, pp. 143, 144.

**Selecting Choir Leaders**—Great care should be used in selecting the choir leaders or those who have charge of the music in the services of the church. Only those who are known to be thoroughly consecrated should be chosen for this part of the church work. Untold harm may be done by selecting unconsecrated leaders. Those lacking in judgment as to the selection of proper and appropriate music for divine worship should not be chosen. Secular music or that of a doubtful or questionable nature should never be introduced into our services.

Choir leaders should work in close collaboration with the pastor or church elder in order that the special musical selections harmonize with the theme of the sermon. The choir leader is under the direction of the pastor or elders of the church and does not work independently of them. The choir leader should counsel with them, not only as to the music to be rendered, but also concerning the selection of singers and musicians. The choir leader is not an ex officio member of the church board.

**Providers of Church Music**—Sacred music is an important part of public worship. The church needs to exercise care in the selecting of choir members and other musicians who will rightly represent the principles of the church. Choir members and other musicians occupy a conspicuous place in the services of the church. Their musical ability is only one of the qualifications they should have. It is preferable that they be members of the church, or the Sabbath School, or the Adventist Youth Society, and in their personal appearance and manner of dress set an example in modesty and decorum. Consecrated individuals with exemplary characters, appropriately attired, provide a positive influence when involved in the musical features of the services. Any plan concerning the wearing of choir robes is optional on the part of the church.

Churches may choose to have multiple choirs. The organization of children's choirs is to be encouraged as an effective means of spiritual nurture, bonding to the church family, and outreach. (Church Manual, 78-9)