

# UC Riverside

## UCR Honors Capstones 2016-2017

### Title

The Effects of Music on the Pentecostal Religious Experience

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5297b040>

### Author

Martinez, Aldo

### Publication Date

2017-12-08

THE EFFECT OF MUSIC ON THE  
PENTECOSTAL RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

By

Aldo Martinez

A capstone project submitted for  
Graduation with University Honors

May 11, 2017

University Honors  
University of California, Riverside

APPROVED

---

Dr. Deborah Wong  
Department of Music

---

Dr. Richard Cardullo, Howard H Hays Jr. Chair and Faculty Director, University Honors  
Interim Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education

## ABSTRACT

Music plays a major role in every religion and without a doubt influences the religious experience in individuals. This research will focus on the effects that music has in Pentecostal churches as well as in how music, and the specifically the musicians, affects the religious experience individual's feel during the church service. The research will consist of the observation of different churches of different ethnicities, in which I will examine how the music affects the flow of the religious service and I will observe how music shapes the church during the worship and during the preaching.

Since Pentecostal churches rely heavily on music my research will consist of observing how much does music and the musicians influence the Pentecostal churches during worship, the preaching, and the entire church service in general. Although this research will be conducted in Pentecostal churches, the location of the churches, the language and the ethnicities of the churches will be different. I will be observing and comparing a Hispanic Pentecostal church in Hemet California and a Korean Pentecostal church located in Seoul, South Korea which happens to be the worlds biggest church. My aim is to compare the churches based on location and ethnicity and observe how the music is used in each church and the amount of impact it has regarding each ethnicity and culture.

Not only will my research consist of observing different Pentecostal churches but it will also consist of interviews with the musicians. Because of the facts that the musicians make a significant contribution to the Pentecostal church services, it is important to understand their perspective in how music affects the church service and how their music influences the religious experience that the people attending the church

have. Without a doubt music has an important role in Pentecostal churches and musicians make an important part of the church service. However, how much music influences the church and most importantly, how much musicians influence the religious experience of individuals is the issue that will be addressed in this research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who I wish to acknowledge that contributed to this research. First and foremost I would like to thank my family for their love and support throughout my research. The support and encouragement I received from my Mom and Dad and brothers encouraged me to continue with my research and travel all the way to South Korea to conduct my ethnographic research. Thanks to the individuals who allowed me to interview them and who took the time to answer each and every question. I would also like to thank the church Movimiento Cristiano “Hechos” for letting me conduct my research and include my findings in this research. The church is a great community and it is an honor to be part of it as well as to study the church more in depth.

As the formation of this ethnographic research took place, Dr. Deborah Wong guided me and encouraged me to continue with my research as well as giving me advice and challenging me to bring the best out of me. For this, I deeply appreciate Dr. Wong for her support, time and efforts in helping me to complete this ethnographic research. I also want to thank Ashon Crawley for his support and availability to me. His advice and expertise in the field of research and writing was of great benefit to me throughout the research.

I am indebted to the entire Religious Studies faculty at the University of California, Riverside. Without the guidance of each every one of you I would have not had the knowledge or tools necessary to conduct my research. I am grateful for having the opportunity to have you all as my professors and for being available to guide me and share your knowledge with me.

I owe the opportunity I had to do this research to the Honors program, which positioned me and exposed me to the opportunity to do a capstone project and have a mentor. The Honors program not only encouraged me to become a scholar but it challenged me to become a more educated scholar and student. Also, I would like to thank the Honors program for the University Honors Scholarship for giving me a grant to travel to South Korea and conduct my ethnographic research. I could not have conducted the research in South Korea without the grant and would like to thank everyone who was involved in the process for the opportunity.

Thanks to everyone who helped, supported and believed in me. Without your support and guidance, this ethnographic research would not have been possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>I. INTRO</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>II. SOUTH KOREAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>III. HISPANIC PENTECOSTAL CHURCH</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>IV. WHAT IS A MINISTER OF MUSIC?</b> .....	<b>13</b>
WHAT CONSTITUTES A “MINISTER OF MUSIC” .....	13
PREPARATION .....	15
THE INSTRUMENT .....	16
THE ART .....	17
<b>V. THE “VEHICLE”</b> .....	<b>18</b>
WHAT MAKES “THE VEHICLE” .....	20
MUSIC AND MUSICIANS AS THE “VEHICLE” .....	21
HOW THE “VEHICLE” OPERATES .....	23
<i>How the “vehicle” operates in South Korean Pentecostal church</i> .....	23
<i>How the “vehicle” operates in Hispanic Pentecostal church</i> .....	25
<b>VI. HOW THE “ENERGY” CREATES THE ATMOSPHERE</b> .....	<b>27</b>
WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE THAT NEEDS TO BE CREATED .....	28
THE ATMOSPHERE IS CREATED BY THE “ENERGY” .....	29
<b>VII. CONNECTING THE DOTS</b> .....	<b>30</b>
“NOTHING” MUSIC .....	31
THE ART OF BACKING UP A PREACHER .....	33
DIFFERENT USES IN SOUTH KOREAN AND HISPANIC PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES .....	36

<b>VIII. “THE MOMENT .....</b>	<b>38</b>
HOW TO IDENTIFY AND DESCRIBE THE MOMENT .....	38
<b>IX. COMPARISONS.....</b>	<b>41</b>
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES.....	41
IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS .....	44
<b>X. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>REFERENCES CITED .....</b>	<b>49</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES



**Figure 1. Panoramic View of the Yoido Full Gospel Church  
(Photograph by Aldo Martinez)**



**Figure 2 The Congregation engaging with the music and songs in the Yoido Full Gospel Church (Photograph by Aldo Martinez)**



**Figure 4** The orchestra and choir preparing to lead the congregation in worship.  
(Photograph by Aldo Martinez)



**Figure 3** Movimiento Cristiano “Hechos” Church  
(Photograph by Aldo Martinez)



**Figure 5 The pastor delivering his sermon while the musicians accompany him and create the atmosphere for the religious experience to occur. (Photograph by Aldo Martinez)**

## **I. Intro**

Religion and music, both have the ability to reach the world regardless of race, ethnicity or language. It seems that both religion and music are some of the earliest institutions in the world and are intertwined with each other in order to create a special encounter, which can be seen in many different religions. However, in this paper I will be specifically focusing on the Pentecostal religious experience. In my hopes for the reader to fully understand the collaboration between religion and music in order to create the Pentecostal religious experience, I will give a brief explanation of the importance of music in the Pentecostal church.

Music has always been present in the Christian religion and appears throughout the Bible in various scenarios. For example, the Bible describes how King Saul was tormented with evil spirits and was relieved of the evil spirits when David played his lyre and ministered unto him. Also, the Bible has a whole book dedicated to music, the Book of Psalms, which are hymns and poems to be recited and accompanied by music. This gives us the indication that music, and the ministering of music through the musicians, has been prominently present in the Christian religion since its beginnings.

It is crucial to understand that although music has always been an important factor in the Christian religion, music is vital to the Pentecostal church; they are inseparable, as ethnomusicologist Melvin Butler writes, “no Pentecostal service is complete without music” (“Musical Style and Experience” 33). The beginning of the Pentecostal movement began in 1906 in a house located on 216 North Bonnie Brea, Los Angeles, California with the Azusa street revival where the Holy Spirit fell and filled the people with the gift of speaking in tongues. This movement led by William J. Seymour, marked the beginning

of the modern day Pentecostal movement. This Pentecostal movement was unique because when people spoke in tongues, which is understood to be the heavenly language in Pentecostalism, they shouted and sang.

The beginning of the Pentecostal movement in 1906 was distinct because not only because the people spoke in tongues but also because people of diverse ethnicities united worshipped together. At the height of the Jim Crow era, in 1906 when segregation was at its highest, the Pentecostal movement united the Whites, Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. However, the brief period of unification of the diverse ethnicities, from which the Pentecostals from the Azusa street revival claimed that the “color line had been washed away in the Blood,” it quickly dissipated because, according to Arlene M. Sanchez Walsh, “the claims of racial utopia were baseless” (Walsh xvii).

The Pentecostal movement stirred up the people and quickly spread and was soon a national movement. A resident that lived near the house in Los Angeles described the following: “The people came from everywhere. By the next morning there was no way of getting near the house. As people came in, they would fall under God’s power; and the whole city was stirred. They shouted until the foundation of the house gave way, but no one was hurt” (Synan 42). This movement grew and evolved into what is now Pentecostalism. Its music, its spontaneity, and its energetic meetings and services in which the Holy Spirit moves and influences the religious experience of the practitioners characterize the Pentecostal movement.

Music and Pentecostalism seem to have a special connection, something deeper than a regular feel-good song, hymn, or chant, which is directed towards God. Music and Pentecostalism have a special bond, a special bond that not only creates the atmosphere

of something holy or sacred, which occurs with other all religion practices, but it goes deeper and transcends the body and connects the music with the belief and creates the Pentecostal religious experience. Pentecostalism and music create a special religious experience, which is triggered by faith, the Holy Spirit and music.

This religious experience is like no other because it is induced not only by beliefs, songs, and the preaching of the pastor but also by music, which is played by the musicians, or as they are called, the “ministers of music.” Music triggers the religious experience in each believer and works hand in hand with the songs and sermon in order to create the atmosphere necessary for the Pentecostal experience to take place. It is because of this special connection between music and Pentecostalism that literally creates the religious experience. The Pentecostal religious experience is distinct because of its deep roots with music and the spontaneity of the musicians. While other religions have music involved and different forms of religious experiences, it seems as though music and Pentecostalism have an affair filled with passion, spontaneity and intimacy, which bring about the Pentecostal religious experience.

In this paper I will discuss my ethnographic research done in two very different Pentecostal churches, and I focus on how music and musicians influence the Pentecostal churches during the entire church service. Although this research was conducted in Pentecostal churches, the locations of the churches, the languages, and the ethnicities of the churches were very different. I will compare a Hispanic Pentecostal church in Hemet, California and a Korean Pentecostal mega-church in Seoul, South Korea based on location and ethnicity and analyze how the music is used in each church. Not only will I focus on the two different churches, but also because musicians make a significant

contribution to the Pentecostal church services, it is important to understand their perspective on how music affects the church service and how their music influences the religious experience that people have. In my ethnographic research, I interviewed several church musicians, and I will discuss what it means to be a “minister of music” as well as how a musician auscultates the moments in a Pentecostal church service when they make their music create energy which ultimately creates the “atmosphere” that makes a church Pentecostal.

Also, I believe it is important for me to point out that although I did ethnographic research in these two Pentecostal churches and conducted the interviews, I am also an insider. I not only did research in both churches, music and Pentecostalism, but I also grew up in a small Pentecostal church from which I have learned the history as well as the beliefs that are found in Pentecostalism. I do feel that because of my position as an “insider,” I am in a privileged position to discuss the moments in the church services, and I will do my best to describe the practices of Pentecostalism to the readers who have not yet been exposed to it. In addition to being an insider to Pentecostalism, I also am a musician myself and I am currently a “minister of music.” I say this in order for the reader to know that I am not only discussing the research I have completed, but I am also incorporating my own knowledge and experiences in the Pentecostal church and as a minister of music. My placement as an insider and as a minister of music puts me in a position of an intermediary from which I can relate to the Pentecostal movement and explain the ethnic differences between the South Korean Pentecostal church and the Hispanic Pentecostal church as well as analyze and point out the role of a minister of music is and the importance the of music is to the Pentecostal church service.

## **II. South Korean Pentecostal Church**

During the time that I was in South Korea, I visited the Yoido Full Gospel Church during nine different services. I was in South Korea for a week and made sure that I could attend as many services as possible so that I could get the essence of the church and better understand the importance of music in the Korean Pentecostal church. The first time I went to Yoido Full Gospel church was on a Saturday morning. I went looking for the church but it was relatively easy to find since it is nearly impossible to miss such a large building with a huge white cross on top. I walked in and realized that the main sanctuary was closed and that the Saturday morning service took place in a small sanctuary that was located on the other side of the building. Looking for the smaller sanctuary, I realized that the building consisted of a lobby, which led to many smaller sanctuaries that were used for various reasons, offices, a cafeteria and even vending machines selling soda and coffee. I finally found the sanctuary and walked in. The capacity of the “small” sanctuary was for about 1,000 people. However, there were only about 250 to 300 people in the sanctuary.

Looking around, it looked like I was the youngest person in the congregation. The service started and they began by singing hymns, which were sung by the choir consisting mostly of women. Despite the hymns being sung in Korean, I was able to identify some hymns, which I recall hearing from when I was a child. The Korean congregation sang hymns such as “What can wash away my sins”. After the songs, the minister did a call and response, which made me feel that I was in a Catholic church than a Pentecostal church!



After the call and response, there was a small sermon and then the congregation prayed. Now the prayer time was different than what we Westerners would imagine; the prayers were long and loud! Everyone prayed out loud and took their time with their prayer. After the communion, there was prayer, the offering, a short prayer and then the Saturday service ended. The total time of the service was 1 hour and 30 minutes.

On Sunday morning, I got up and headed towards the church. The service started at 7 AM and I found out that it was the communion service. This was the first time that I walked in the main sanctuary and the first thing that I noticed was that this was a huge church. Imagine going to a concert in a packed auditorium that holds 10,000 to 12,000 people; that's how big the church was! It reminded me of the Berlin Cathedral because of its size and multiple stories for seating. After I found a seat, the service began and the songs that were sung were all hymns and were sung while the congregation was sitting. Something particular that I noticed was that the church had a music band and a full orchestra. The band and orchestra did not play together, but rather they took turns on the songs that were sung. Despite being a Pentecostal church everything was clearly organized, how else would they be able to have seven services every Sunday, with each service having 10,000 to 12,000 people? The songs were majestically played with the orchestra with a very elegant conductor who led the musicians in worship. The service was very traditional, hymns were sung in an upbeat rhythm, and the congregation prayed many times and for long periods of time. The service was not a service one would identify as "Pentecostal", which is identified by the loudness, spontaneity, and a sense of lack of organization, which Pentecostals attribute to the move of the Holy Spirit, although during prayer some did speak in tongues.

After the songs, the preacher delivered his message in calm soothing way. The preacher did not last long and used videos and pictures in the middle of his sermon to get his point across. After the sermon, the communion was served and the music that was played throughout the communion was the pipe organ. The communion was taken and the service continued with long and loud prayer. And once again after the prayer ended, the orchestra played a piece. The orchestra was of the highest quality, and if it had not been for the big cross on top of the orchestra and choir, I would have felt that I was in an orchestra recital rather than at a church.

The total time that the service lasted was 1 hour and 11 minutes. Compared to a typical Pentecostal church, the Korean church service was short, calm, and clearly structured and organized. Even after the service ended, everything was organized because in a matter of minutes everyone was outside the building and new people were starting to come in. Because there are seven services each Sunday, the services were right after the other. So in a matter of minutes people were out and the next service was ready to start. The next services had the same structure with the same songs and some were more “alive” than others but the services had a different preacher, different singers, and different musicians and conductor.

The instruments that were used were the drums, bass, electric guitar, and three keyboards. The conductor changed but the songs were the same, as far as I could tell. The hymns that I was able to identify were “There is power in the blood”, “When the roll is called up yonder”, “When the saints go marching in” and “What can wash away my sins”. Some things I did notice that were different than a typical Pentecostal church were that the congregation was sitting throughout the songs instead of standing, also there was

a time when the conductor would turn around and instead of leading the musicians to play a song, he directed himself towards the audience and conducted the congregation to sing. Also, something that was noticeable was how the music soothed the atmosphere and, especially the pipe organ, changed the atmosphere and turned the atmosphere into a sacred environment.

All the services followed a similar structured except for the last two, which were at 5 PM and 7 PM, which had less attendance, probably because it was later in the evening. However, the structure was the same and the same songs were played. Although the Yoido Full Gospel Church is a Pentecostal church, it is quite different than the stereotypical loud, unorganized and spontaneous Pentecostal churches that we attribute to the Pentecostal churches. However, a distinction that the Yoido Full Gospel had was that they focused a lot on prayer. They prayed on multiple occasions throughout the service and spent more time in prayer than in the songs or the preaching.

### **III. Hispanic Pentecostal Church**

The Hispanic church in which I conducted my research is located in Hemet, California. The church's name is "Movimiento Cristiano Hechos" and is identified as a Pentecostal church. As a regular attendee, who visits every Sunday I asked the pastor for permission to do my research, which he generously granted.

Walking into the building, the church seems like a small to medium sized church with a capacity of about 300 people. The building is wide, but the church is small enough for you to be able to see everyone in the room and although there are many different people in the building, everyone knows each and greets each other as they come in. You

can hear the greetings and chattering before the service starts and although this is a Spanish-speaking church, you can hear that many people are having conversations in English.

As soon as the clock strikes 1 o'clock, a scripture is read by the designated person and prayer starts. This takes a couple of minutes as the speaker prays for the service before the music starts. At the time that the scripture is about to be read, everyone stands and gets ready for the music to begin. Although the music is only played in the background, the music already indirectly tells the congregation whether the first song will be upbeat or slower as it is played in the background music throughout prayer. As soon as the prayer ends, the music starts and the person who read the scripture and prayed gets off the stage while the singers begin to sing.

The songs are different every Sunday, but the number of songs stays the same, a total of four songs are typically sung on Sundays, unless it is a special service in which more or less songs are sung, depending on the occasion. The worship portion lasts about thirty minutes and the music and songs are both dynamic and animated. Both the worship team and the audience seem to be very involved throughout this portion of the service. Many times the "call and response" technique is used to get the audience involved, which is when the singers sing a phrase and the audience responds to them. Also, sometimes the music stops in the middle of the song, or plays significantly lower, in order to increase the volume of the singing from the audience. Also, since the songs are very dynamic and both upbeat and slower paced, the emotions vary and you can feel the dynamics of the service going up and down, depending on the song that is being sung at the moment.

There is no doubt that the worship is dynamic because various emotions are conveyed. For example, in slower songs you can see the reaction of some people who weep, break down and go to the altar while in up-tempo songs the atmosphere changes and the reactions are cheerful, jubilant and dancing. Each service is distinct not only because of the songs but because of the reactions of the audience. However, most times the service is very much alive and energetic; the atmosphere caused by the involvement of the audience can be felt all over the building, even if one is there only to observe.

After the animated worship, the audience sits as the announcements of the week are being read. Although during this time the songs have stopped, the piano keeps playing in the background. This background music seems to help the audience keep their mood ready and transition to the next part of the service. For example, while the announcements are being given, the background music would be playing softly so that the dynamics of the service will not end because of the silence. The background music sort of feels like “elevator music” that is not meant to distract you, but rather it is there only to transition you from one part of the service to the next and to avoid the silent moments throughout the service. The piano offers an essential means to sustain the congregation’s feeling of spiritual readiness.

Next comes the offering in which a scripture is read and a prayer is said before the offering is taken up. Once again the music starts to play in the background during the prayer and forecasts the song that will be sung throughout the time when the people will start giving. Once more, the audience becomes engaged in the song and the dynamics of the service change depending on the song.

After this, the pastor comes up and greets everyone and routinely asks everyone in the church to greet each other and to welcome anyone who is visiting the church. Everyone seems happy to see each other and greets one another while moving throughout the building in order to not forget anyone. This leads to everyone getting their spirits up and feeling content and welcomed, which subsequently leads to the pastor singing another song which, once again, engages the congregation.

The pastor then moves on to the sermon and asks the congregation to stand for the reading of the Bible. Throughout this time, the piano continues with the background music but as the pastor begins to read the scripture, the background music stops and the room turns silent while waiting for the pastor to read the scripture. The pastor then reads the scripture from the Bible in a reverent and passionate tone that captivates his audience. The reading is completed and he begins to pray before his preaching. It is during this prayer that the piano once again begins to play in the background, however, this time it is evident that the music very closely follows the pastor in his dynamics and tone of voice. If the pastor prays in a subtle voice then the piano plays in a very delicate form, careful in matching the tone of the pastor. And if the pastor changes his volume from resonance and timbre into a more energetic tone, then the piano quickly follows him and begins to play in a more dynamic form.

It is in this way that the preaching begins, the prayer ends, the music stops, and the sermon begins. Throughout the sermon, the pastor is very charismatic and dynamic in how he delivers his message. In some instances, he causes the congregation to respond with a loud “Amen” or “Halleluiah”, while in other instances, he inspires the congregation to ponder about what is being said. And since the church is a Spanish

speaking church with many of the members being fluent in both English and Spanish, the pastor sometimes says his phrases in Spanish then English as a way to captivate the attention of the younger people who might not know much Spanish or to make sure that if someone understands it in one language, they will understand it in another. The pastor delivers his message with examples, illustrations, sometimes in a quiet tone and other times in a passionate and rambunctious form. However, whatever the response, there is no doubt that that the pastor is a dynamic speaker capable of evoking the congregation's emotions.

While the pastor is ending the sermon, the piano begins to play and back him up. If the pastor built up the congregation and his sermon is getting a lot of response, then the piano plays vividly in the background and encourages the pastor to preach some more. However, if the pastor delivered a message that conveyed the congregation to weep, break down and go to the altar, then the music will be much more quiet and help the pastor finish the sermon.

As the sermon comes to a close, the music begins to play in the background, first the piano then all the other instruments, depending on the atmosphere of the service. Then depending on the service, a song might be sung in order to help the pastor conclude the sermon and altar call. After that is complete, the pastor recaps his sermon and dismisses the congregation.

Although this church is identified as a Pentecostal church, it is in no way unorganized because although it is very dynamic in the volume, timbre and atmosphere that are felt throughout the service, the church has an organized structure in the music, time and presentation. The church service is organized and has a similar structure each

time I observe it; the service begins at the same time and generally ends after two hours or two hours and fifteen minutes.

#### **IV. What is a Minister of Music?**

##### ***What Constitutes a “Minister of Music”***

For the purpose of this paper, I refer to musicians who primarily play in church as ministers of music because of the fact that they focus on ministering through their music. Also, I would like to point out that while there are men and women who are ministers of music, it is mostly men who serve as ministers of music and all the musicians whom I interviewed were male. A musician plays an important role in the church, particularly in a Pentecostal church, because the musicians are responsible for the music, which affects the religious experience. It is important to note the distinction between musicians who play in the church, who I refer to as ‘ministers of music’, and musicians who play purely for entertainment.

There is a fine line between playing for entertainment and playing to minister through music. Every church musician knows that their responsibility as a minister of music is not to entertain; rather it is to lead people into the presence of God, to have an experience with God. As a minister of music, you have to be aware that the glory does not go to you and that you are only there to minister, to lead people to God, not to get the spotlight. To minister means to attend to the needs of someone, and that requires the musicians to be humble and not self-centered.



Throughout the interviews that I conducted, it is evident that each musician was aware of the fine line between playing for entertainment and playing for ministering.

Concerning this, Jose stated:

“You want people to appreciate what you are doing and you want people to give you praise. And it’s wrong, it is because most things, when it comes to music and playing outside, playing music outside of church there is a lot of... for a lack of better words... there is no proper way of saying this but it’s a little bit self-centered... But when you play at church, its different because you are definitely worshiping God...” (Jose).

A minister of music cannot be focused on getting the spotlight if he is ministering because that would contradict what ministering is all about. Instead of focusing on the needs of others, a musician trying to get the spotlight would be feeding his own ego and would be focusing on his needs instead of the needs of the congregation, which goes against everything a minister of music should do. The minister of music should be able to meet the needs of the congregation using music as its source. Just as a motivational speaker uses words to motivate people or as a pastor would use the Bible in order to encourage the congregation, so too should the musicians be able to lead people into the presence of God using music.

There is a great distinction between a musician who plays merely for entertainment and a musician who plays to minister, although a musician can play music both to entertain and to minister. However, if a musician plays music to entertain and to minister, then the musician must be able to identify the setting in order to know whether he will be entertaining or ministering, because they cannot do both simultaneously. Despite the fact that musicians who play to entertain and musicians who play to minister both use creativity to make music and are careful to perfect their craft and to make people feel the music, one focuses on people feeling the music, while the other focuses on people feeling the presence of God. Chris made the statement: “Entertainers focus on making the music great. Ministers focus on making the experience with God great” (Chris).

### ***Preparation***

As in any other spiritual position, the preparation needed to be a minister of music requires the musician to be spiritually connected with God and sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Although being musically capable of playing the instruments is of vital importance, the spiritual preparation of each minister of music is crucial for the musician to become a minister of music. A common subject matter that arose from all the musicians I interviewed was the preparation and connection with God that is needed in order to play and minister effectively.

The way the musicians prepare and keep in touch with God is by praying and fasting. Although ministers of music practice both prayer and fasting, prayer is the most fundamental practice in order to be in touch with God. Through prayer the ministers of

music can spiritually prepare to not only play music but also to minister, be sensitive to the moment and create the atmosphere in which the congregation can connect with God and have a religious experience. Regarding the preparation needed, Jose stated that the musicians "...have to pray first and it's highly recommended that we fast. And most Sundays I do go fasting" (Jose). Although fasting is not required, it is recommended in order for the musicians to be in touch with God and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and the moments. Praying and fasting is a way of surrendering yourself to God and should be practiced by all the musicians who wish to minister to the congregation. Ideally the ministers of music "have to be in touch with God a lot, a lot, a lot, you have to be in touch with God a lot and if you are in touch with God then he can lead you in whatever way he wants" (Tim), this is what marks the difference between a musician and a minister of music.

### ***The Instrument***

A minister of music should not only be concerned about meeting the needs of others through music but he should also be concerned of letting himself be used by God. Being able to be used by God is an important aspect to church musicians since they see themselves as the vehicle in through which they bring people to the presence of God, I will expand on the idea of musicians being the "vehicle" in a later section. Because of the spirituality that comes from ministering through music, the musicians recognize that it is necessary to, "just let yourself be used by God. And let God do all the work and use you as the instrument to lead worship"(Tim). This is a rather interesting phenomenon because musicians feel they need to be one with their instruments, which indeed they are, in order

to be effective in creating the atmosphere and leading the congregation to the presence of God (a concept that I will expand on in a later section) but they also need to be led by the Spirit in order to be effective in ministering.

The musicians use their instruments in order to convey their creative ideas and emotions to the congregation by means of music. However, at the same time God is using the musicians in order to bring the congregation to his presence. It is as if the musicians are the instruments of God. Therefore the musicians act as the middleman between God and the congregation to create the atmosphere in which the congregation can have an experience with God.

In essence, the ministers of music are God's instruments in order to convey his creative ideas and emotions to the congregation by means of the music ministers. Thus God is the chief musician who uses his instruments, the ministers of music, who in turn use their instruments, in order to create a divine, transcendent and heavenly composition which can only be understood through the ears of our soul and has no explanation. Therefore, hearing and feeling God's majestic arrangement can only be described as a religious experience.

### ***The Art***

Being a minister of music can be seen as an art because of the complexity and dedication that is required in order to master the craft. However, the art of being a minister of music can be broken down into two different aspects, the art of being able to play an instrument extremely well in order to influence and stir up the emotions of the congregation, and the art of being able to be influenced by the Spirit of God in order to

guide the congregation towards God. It is knowing how to be a skillful musician while at the same time being connected to God in order to minister. It is the merging of these two abilities that produces a minister of music that is able to play under the influence of the Spirit of God.

However, in order for a musician to implement the art of being a minister of music, he must hone his musical craft, and the musician himself must have a connection with God himself in order to become an effective minister of music (refer to the section on *Preparation*). Being a minister of music is not the same as being a secular musician because being a minister of music is not for entertainment. The main goal is not to get people to dance or have a good time, but rather to get the congregation to have an encounter with God. That is the art of a minister of music, being connected to God, being sensitive to the Spirit, being attuned to the moment while having the musical ingenuity necessary to influence the religious experience through music.

## **V. The “Vehicle”**

From the musician’s perspective, they understand that they are the “vehicle” that transports the audience from their normal state into having an encounter with God through a religious experience. But what does the term “vehicle” refer to? In my ethnographic research, some musicians used the word “vehicle” to describe their role in the church service. The term “vehicle” was not only used by musicians to describe their role, but it has also been used by other ethnographic researchers. For example, in the article “Musical Style and Experience in a Brooklyn Pentecostal Church: An ‘insiders’ Perspective”, Melvin L. Butler refers to music as the “vehicle” which takes people into

the state of mind ready to receive the religious experience. Butler states, “Music in the Pentecostal church is a vehicle for praising and worshiping God and in return receiving the spiritual strength to persevere through life’s hardships” (“Musical Style and Experience 33). Butler points out the fact that music is a vehicle that is used in the Pentecostal church for praising and worshiping and that the vehicle transports the congregation into a place where they can receive spiritual strength.

However, Butler has also used the term “vehicle” in the article “Nou Kwe Nan Sentepri” in another context regarding humans being the vehicle in which the Holy Spirit is manifested. In this article Butler points out that, “congregants who have been ‘filled’ (ranpli) with the Holy Spirit or ‘have the gifts of the Spirit’ (gen don Sentepri) are the human vehicles through whom the power of God is manifested” (“Nou Kwe Nan Sentepri” 89). Although Butler uses the term “vehicle” in a different form, which includes the human body and the Holy Spirit as opposed to music and the musician, it is important to note that the term vehicle is used as a way to describe how something, or someone, can be the means of transportation of a higher power. For example, Butler used the term “vehicle” in two different forms, one which refers to the human body being a means in which the power of God manifests, and the other which refers to music being the vehicle to praise and worship. Although there can be different types of “vehicles” in a church service which function for different reasons, I will be focusing on how music and the musicians become a vehicle which transports and sets up the environment for the congregation to have a religious experience.

### ***What Makes “the Vehicle”?***

What makes the vehicle? In the interview I conducted with Chris, he pointed out the fact that music is the vehicle that helps people have a religious experience. Chris stated:

“However, when you minister you have to take your job seriously and you have to know that the main objective is not to make people feel the music, although it is important for you to do that but it's not the main thing, or to make people dance. The main objective is to be the...sort of vehicle that conduces the people to the presence of God, to help people have an experience with God, that is the objective” (Chris)

From the interview with Chris and the article from Butler, who both refer to music as the “vehicle”, a question arises: what does the “vehicle” refer to? Does it refer to the music or to the actual musician?

This dilemma can be answered only after considering how church musicians regard themselves when it comes to ministering through music in church. Ashon Crawley wrote about how the musicians and the musical object become one in order to work as an instrument. In his article, Crawley states, “‘That I may be used as an instrument in his hand’...the instrument is not the Hammond on the one hand or the musician on the other: the instrument is the sociality of the spirit filled musician with the musical object working

together” (*Blackpentecostal Breath* 254). Although Crawley referred to the Hammond organ in his article, it is applicable to any instrument that is used to minister.

The “vehicle” refers to both the musician and the musical object that is being used to transport the congregation into an atmosphere where they can have a religious experience. The “vehicle” is made up of two parts, the musician and the musical object. And the vehicle cannot operate without both parts functioning. Tim described what it is to be a musician and forming part of the vehicle by saying: “...just letting yourself be used by God. And letting God do all the work and use you as the instrument to lead in worship” (Tim). It is fascinating how the musicians have the idea of not only playing an instrument to minister to the congregation, but they believe that they are truly an instrument used by God. This leads to the conclusion that while the musician is using the instrument to create music in order to transport the congregation to have a religious experience, God is using the musician as an instrument in His hands in order to create the atmosphere in which the congregation can have an experience with God.

### ***Music and Musicians as the “Vehicle”***

It is essential to point out that it is both the musician and the instrument that make up the vehicle. The vehicle does not exist without the collaboration of both the musician and the instrument. The vehicle is composed of both the human subject and the instrument, which work together and create the music that transports the congregation into an atmosphere where they are able to have an encounter with God and have a religious experience.



From this, we understand that the vehicle is made up of both the musician and the musical object, but there is also another component to the vehicle; God is the conductor of the vehicle who ultimately uses the vehicle in order to create the atmosphere in which the congregation can have a religious experience. Ministers of music know this; they believe and know that God is using them in order to minister to the people. In fact, Tim stated in an interview, "...that's God's job, influencing others, that's God's job, and you should just let God have his way in the service and you just be a vessel for him to use you... I know that God can make all things possible and even if I am not doing a good job singing... He can make the Spirit fall" (Tim). It is God who ultimately uses the musicians as His instrument and therefore it is God who is orchestrating and conducting the vehicle.

The aim of the music and the musicians is to lead the congregation into the presence of God. The vehicle is supposed to transport the people from a state of being a mere spectator into interacting with the music and worship, and ultimately into the presence of God. The role of the musician is to "fill in the atmosphere and help people get to another level" (Tim). Therefore, the music is used as transportation from reality into the presence of God, from the natural to the supernatural, and from the position of a spectator to having a religious experience. Music, as the vehicle of transportation has the ability to change the atmosphere and create a moment in which the congregation can be uplifted and feel the presence of God. To put it in the simplest of terms, "Music in the Holiness churches can be used simply as a transformation of the mood and/or mind-set of the participants..." (Crawley, *Blackpentecostal Breath* 255). The vehicle is what transforms the moment from normal to sacred. It's what marks the difference between

entertainment and ministry. The vehicle is the means from which God can operate and create the atmosphere in which the congregation can be ministered to and have a religious experience.

### *How the “Vehicle” Operates*

After conducting my ethnographic research, I have come to the conclusion that there is no exact method in which the “vehicle” can successfully operate. How the vehicle is used and how effective it is depends on the setting and the moment in which the vehicle is utilized. For instance, although the goal of the musician is to set up the atmosphere in order for the congregation to have a religious experience, the methods and the strategies vary from church to church, particularly if the churches are in completely different locations, are of different ethnicities, have different languages, and are of different cultures.

Because of these differences the vehicle operates differently in the South Korean Pentecostal church and the Hispanic Pentecostal church, although the goal is the same. I will explain how the vehicle operates in each of these locations and how the vehicle differs from the two distinct churches.

### *How the “vehicle” operates in the South Korean Pentecostal church*

In the Yoido Full Gospel church In South Korea; the vehicle is very complex because of their inclusion of so many musicians that form both a band and an orchestra. Because of the many components (musicians), the vehicle is composed of the many

musicians with their particular instrument. As each of the musicians are linked with their own instruments, they collectively form the vehicle. It is only after all the parts have come together that the vehicle can be conducted and manipulated by God to create the atmosphere in which the religious experience can occur.

In South Korea, the vehicle is not only a massive mechanism but it also functions like a fine tuned watch, and since it incorporates many components that work together to make the vehicle function. The vehicle strives to work together to create a sacred moment which the congregation can identify and have an experience with. The main goal of the vehicle remains the same, to transport the people from a state of being a mere spectator into interacting with the music and worship, which leads them into the presence of God.

However, because the culture of the church strives to create a sacred moment, the vehicle strategically transports the congregations into a sacred atmosphere in which they can have a religious experience. The strategy and direction of the vehicle depends entirely on how the culture of the church believes they experience God. If the culture of the church says that in order to have an encounter with God there has to be a sacred moment, then the vehicle will transport them by creating those sacred moments and that atmosphere. However, if a church decides that the way to experience God is through participation, then the vehicle will create an atmosphere where the congregation feels part of the atmosphere that is created. The transportation of the vehicle depends on the culture of the church.

Another factor I would like to point out is that the vehicle in the South Korean Pentecostal church did not rely on spontaneity – rather, they relied on precision. Although God conducted the vehicle in the South Korean Pentecostal church, it was not

the spontaneity that influenced the atmosphere; rather it was the precision in the dynamics, the crescendos and decrescendos, and the strategic choice of the songs that influenced the atmosphere. It was the precision of each musician that contributed to the musicians, as a whole, being an effective vehicle. Just as in a fine tuned watch, where each individual part is precise in executing their role, each individual musician had to follow each other as well as the conductor in order to be in sync and exact in the music.

*How the “vehicle” operates in the Hispanic Pentecostal church*

As opposed to the South Korean church where the vehicle is made up of many musicians and many different instruments, the vehicle in the Hispanic Pentecostal church is made up of only four musicians. This is a big difference from the large amount of musicians in the South Korean Pentecostal church. The number of musicians involved had a big impact as well as the culture of the church. Despite the fact that both churches are considered Pentecostal, the culture of the churches is very much different. The Hispanic church focuses more on the attendees getting involved in the praise and worship during the service, which means that the music is geared towards transporting the congregation into the presence of God with singing, clapping and shouting.

This is a different strategy used than in the South Korean Pentecostal church, however, the method is effective in the setting in which it is used. As opposed to the South Korean Pentecostal church where the music created sacred moments because the congregation felt God through the sacred moments, the music in the Hispanic Pentecostal church strived to create moments in the service where the congregation would be allowed to participate and feel a part of the movement.

Also, another important factor that differs from the Korean Pentecostal church and the Hispanic Pentecostal church is that the vehicle in the Hispanic Pentecostal church was able to practice spontaneity more freely than having to rely on precision of the music they played. For example, because of the smaller size of the church, the setting was more intimate; this allows the musicians to connect with the congregation in a way that is not possible in a large church. Although it is not entirely impossible for musicians to be connected enough and be able to be spontaneous in a large church, it is much more difficult because of time constraints, the order of the service and the much larger space that is present in a large church.

However, in a smaller church with fewer musicians, the practice of being spontaneous is a much easier process to achieve. There are not many musicians and the congregation does not expect the music to be precise down to the last stroke. They are okay with a song being shorter or lasting longer or the music changing dynamics according to the response of the congregation. It is because of these factors that the vehicle is able to become more spontaneous and make the congregation feel God through participating in the church service.

While there are different ways in which a vehicle can operate, there is no exact method, or “correct” way in which a vehicle must operate in order to be successful in the Pentecostal church. Each different setting requires a different type of vehicle; although the concept and end goal remains the same, the variants, which include the amount of musicians who are involved, the amount of freedom the musicians have to be spontaneous and the notion of being precise in the music or spontaneous in the moment

can change depending on the setting, the different type of ethnicity or the moment in the service.

## **VI. How the “Energy” Creates the Atmosphere**

In the previous section, I considered what constitutes the vehicle and how it operates. However, without fuel, no matter how eloquent, how powerful or how luxurious a vehicle is, a vehicle cannot operate, because it is the fuel that makes the vehicle move. Therefore, we have the musician and the musical object that compose the vehicle, which is conducted by God. Energy is the fuel that makes the vehicle work.

Sonic energy begins to fill the room as people are preparing. Even before the service starts you hear phrases such as “¡Alabale que el vive!” or “¡Hallelujah!” or people praying for God to bless the service. The idea of “entering his gates with thanksgiving” is a key concept practiced in Pentecostal churches. Some churches have prayer right before the service and some put some background music on to set the mood, which begins to transmit the energy.

Just as a massive fire can begin with a small dose of heat, so too can small releases of energy, such as a quick “¡Amen!” or a sudden “¡Hallelujah!” The energy is the spark of heat that starts and lights up the fire. Energy is what generates the atmosphere. It is what provokes God to manifest; it is the verb that produces action.

### *What is the Atmosphere that Needs to be Created?*

The atmosphere needed depends on where the service is going, what is happening and what the direction is. I asked an experienced minister of music about what atmosphere needed to be created:

Me: As a musician, you can influence others based on the music you play. Do the actions of the preacher or the audience influence how you play?

Chris: Definitely, I influence people with what I play and what I play depends on the reactions that I see. So it's a back and forth type of thing, I influence them and they influence me. You have to know what the audience is doing and feeling in order to know what to play, so they do influence me. And the preacher, well of course he influences me in what I play because what I play totally depends on what he says or does. If the preacher is talking softly I play some talking music in the background. But if the preacher is talking with a loud voice then I follow him. It all depends (Chris).

There is no definite guide into what atmosphere will be needed in each specific service because it depends on many different variables. It depends on the intensity of the songs,

the reaction of the people, the sermon of the preacher, the emotions conveyed by the preacher, and the response of the congregation.

The fact that the musicians go into the service not knowing the outcome indicates that the atmosphere that needs to be created is spontaneous and unknown beforehand. Since there is no guide, the musician's responsibility is to understand and discern what atmosphere should be created and through the means of the vehicle, transport the congregation into that atmosphere.

There is the energy that the musicians and the congregation feeds off of and the musicians have a major role in setting up the atmosphere for the religious experience to occur. However, the question is, who establishes what the atmosphere should be? Who initiates the creation of the atmosphere? I asked Jose and he responded as follows:

“It all comes down to whoever is up front on stage. If the preacher is there it's definitely the preacher, if it's the musicians, if they're on their own, then it's the musicians, but if the singers are up front, they're in the spotlight per say, then yes it's their responsibility” (Jose).

### ***The Atmosphere is Created by the “Energy”***

The formation of the atmosphere is like a heart beating to the rhythm of the circulation of blood. As the blood flows across the body and makes the heart pump to the rhythm in which the blood is flowing, so too does the energy flow in the church and generates the atmosphere that corresponds to the rhythm of the energy being transmitted.



In the body, the heartbeat determines the pulse; in a church, the energy determines the atmosphere of the room. The energy flows from each individual, the congregation, the preacher, the musicians, and each feeds off the other. This interaction between the energy of each individual component ultimately creates the atmosphere in the church.

In the process of the energy feeding off of each individual component, the vehicle is at work. The vehicle, which is made up of the musician and the musical object, is conducted by God (as I discussed in a previous section). However, the vehicle at work creates the atmosphere. As Jose explained to me, “It’s like an energy that you both feed off of a little bit. But also, between that energy you can translate that into the presence of God” (Jose). Jose notes that the energy creates the presence of God, which is what I refer to as the “atmosphere” in which you can have an experience with God, a religious experience.

## **VII. Connecting the Dots**

As I discussed in the previous section, the atmosphere is created by the energy being transmitted by the congregation, preacher and musicians. Everything has to be in sync with each other. All the elements need to interact with each other because if one thing is out of sync, the vehicle cannot operate and the energy cannot flow or create the atmosphere. As in a machine where everything has to interact with each other in order for it to work, in a church service all the elements must interact and be connected in order for the energy to flow. Therefore, each element, from the little *amen!* heard before the service to the climax in the worship songs to the sermon of the preacher, is crucial for the production of the Pentecostal religious experience.

## *“Nothing” Music*

Every moment in the church service needs to flow and needs interaction from every participant; the moment between songs and the transition from each part of the service is no different. The vehicle must operate throughout the transitions and must operate in those moments where nothing is happening, the silent moments of the service. The music that plays throughout the silence is known as the background music, “talk music,” or as “nothing music.” This is common among Pentecostal churches, although it is practiced in some churches more than in others. In the two Pentecostal churches I did my research, the musicians which I interviewed stated that they played “nothing music.” As Chris put it, “...after the worship I stay to keep the atmosphere flowing by playing the piano in the background” (Chris).

The objective of “nothing music” is to keep the atmosphere afloat and alive throughout the transitions in the service. For example, “nothing music” can begin to be heard even before the service starts: it sets the mood for the service and lets the people know to get ready because the service is about to begin. The vehicle is at work and begins the flow of energy even before the first prayer or song beings.

In any Pentecostal church, the most common segment in which “nothing music” is heard is during prayer. This is the most common time in which “nothing music” is used, however, it is not the only occasion in which it is heard. It is also heard when transitioning into different songs, during the church announcements or when the pastor is talking. The instruments used in “nothing music” are the piano or the organ because they produce the most full sound and are the most expressive.

“Nothing music” is an art in of itself because although it is used as background, it should go along with the mood of what is happening in the moment. Just as the background music in a movie or a soap opera accompanies the mood of the scene, so too should “nothing music” accompany the particular moment in the church service. For example, if the pastor is speaking of something good or uplifting, the “nothing music” would be joyful. Likewise, if the message of the pastor is of conviction, the music would be a more solemn tone. The type of “nothing music” depends entirely on the moment. And since it depends on the moment, there is no way to prepare for it because you do not know what is going to happen next. That is the real art of “nothing music”: knowing what to play and how to play it in the moment.

“Nothing music” is extremely important not only because it helps with the transitions, but also because it soothes the atmosphere and keeps the interaction between all the participants going. As Ashon Crawley writes, “The musicians construct a narrative about and from nothing, through the available air compression and the changes in the environment” (*Blackpentecostal Breath* 267). Although the music is soft and subtle and might not be noticed by the congregation, it has a real effect: it keeps the service moving and the atmosphere afloat.

To sum up what “nothing music” is, I believe it is best to quote the definition which Ashon Crawley gives: “‘Nothing music’ is the connective tissue, the backgrounded sound, of Blackpentecostal church services heard before and after songs, while people are giving weekly announcements, before the preacher “tunes up” to whoop and after the service ends. Ask a musicians “what are you playing,” and-with a coy, shy smile-they’ll say, “nothing” (*Blackpentecostal Breath* 257).

### *The Art of Backing Up the Preacher*

As with “nothing music,” which helps to maintain the atmosphere and is used to keep the interaction between the participants, the music used to back up a preacher is meant to keep the interaction between the preacher, music and congregation. However, one major difference between what is played in “nothing music” and when backing up a preacher is that when backing up a preacher, the music is meant to both respond to the preacher and simultaneously influence the congregation to respond to the message as well. Chris explains this interaction:

“The preacher says something and I respond with the music, then the preacher hears that I respond and that gives him more energy to keep on preaching, because it is much easier to preach when you have some sort of response... Basically through my music, I give the preacher the energy for him to continue and my music is like the background music to his message. Just like movies have music to evoke emotions, I make the music to evoke the emotions from the audience during the preaching. So the preacher preaches and I respond, and by responding with the music, I also influence the audience to respond as well and say a hallelujah or amen. So you can say that my response with the music is a “Hallelujah” or “Amen” in the ears of the preacher” (Chris).

Backing up a preacher is spontaneous and in the moment, and as such, you cannot have any real expectations of what will occur. When backing up a preacher, the musician does not know what he is going to play: he does not know until he starts playing. Everything is spontaneous because the musician does not know what the preacher is going to say next, he might have an idea but he does not know what exactly the message will be, which is why focus is important while backing up a preacher. Not only does the musician have to be attentive to the message of the preacher but he also has to be attentive to the tone, speed of his speech, his body language, hand signals, etc. From watching the preacher and listening to the message being transmitted to the congregation, the musician plays music with his instrument, which is typically a piano or an organ, and helps the preacher transmit his message. Chris explains that,

“The best way to back up a preacher is playing an organ, but not all the churches have it so I use the piano when no organ is available. The point of backing up a preacher is to play behind what he says, so if he starts getting loud and screaming, then you start getting loud. So I help the preacher deliver his message by using the music to influence people to respond to his message as well as giving the preacher some energy he can feed off of to continue with his message” (Chris).

Because of the close relationship the music has with the message, the musician has to be attentive and follow the preacher at all times. As Jose told me, “when [the preacher] gives the point, you want to definitely support him completely behind that. It’s a lot of attention to detail and you have to constantly remind yourself over and over again to pay attention” (Jose). Throughout the end of the sermon, when the preacher is wrapping up his message, the musician plays in order to back him up. The music should not play over the preacher nor distract the congregation from the sermon; rather it should enhance the sermon by creating a dynamic of responses between the preacher, the music and the congregation.

The goal of the interaction between the sermon and the music, between the preacher and the musicians, is to get the congregation involved in order to make the energy flow, so that the atmosphere can be created, which leads to the religious experience. This is why the musicians need to be in sync with the preacher, and why the involvement of all the participants is necessary. Towards the end of the sermon, whether the preacher gets loud or whether he gets soft, backing up a preacher should be subtle; the music should feel natural, not pushed. The musicians who are skilled in backing up a preacher know that they should not force the congregation to respond or interact with the sermon; rather, they use the music to provide hints or nudge the congregation to respond and interact with the preacher. Chris put it like this:

“...when the preacher wants to get the people to respond and shout, towards the end of his message, then I play a quick chords or do a little run, that tells the audience “hey

this is the part where you can say Amen or Hallelujah or shout.” So I don’t play it too loud that I’m louder than the preacher or the audience, I need to make the people start shouting before I can get louder or play more fancier chords or runs” (Chris).

The music used to back up the preacher has a special goal, which is to get the congregation, the preacher, and the musicians feed off of each other’s energy in order to create the atmosphere. The interaction at the end of the sermons between the musician, the preacher and the congregation is a special part of the service because it is typically when everyone is most intensely engaged, the vehicle is in operation, the participants are feeding off of each other’s energy, the atmosphere has been created, and the religious experience occurs.

### ***Different Uses in South Korean and Hispanic Pentecostal Churches***

Both churches had similarities in the methods for how “nothing music” and the art of backing up a preacher influenced the church service. One of the differences was that the South Korean church did not use “nothing music” as often, and when it was used, it was very subtle. “Nothing music” was used before the service, during prayer, moments before the prayer, after the sermon, and even after the service. “Nothing music” helped with the flow and the transition of the service but there were silent moments throughout the service. However, a key moment in which “nothing music” was noticeable was during the prayer. Each time there was prayer, even a brief prayer, “nothing music”

would begin to play and influence the atmosphere. “Nothing music” was present in every prayer throughout every service in which I attended in the South Korean church.

In the Hispanic church, nothing music was used from beginning to end and was continuously present. In the Hispanic church, “nothing music” accompanied every moment in the church service. Except for the moments when the sermon was being delivered, there was literally no musical silence. From the beginning of the service to the end, music is the connective tissue that binds each part of the service together and is essential to the energy and the formation of the atmosphere of the church service (*Blackpentecostal Breath* 257).

The use of nothing music was quite similar in both churches, but instruments and sounds used were completely different. In the South Korean church, the instrument used for “nothing music” was the pipe organ and the keyboard. While the piano plays the “nothing music” in the Hispanic church, in the South Korean church, the keyboard with the sound of strings was used for “nothing music.” In the Hispanic Pentecostal church, the piano was used for “nothing music” and the keyboard with an organ sound was used when the preacher prayed, but, in the South Korean church, the pipe organ was used for “nothing music” and the keyboard with the string sound was used when the preacher was speaking before and after his sermon.

The biggest difference in how the music played behind the preacher in both churches was the style, intensity, and volume with which the preacher would deliver his message. This determined the style of music that backs up the preacher. If the style of the preacher was soft, then the music would flow in a soft, emotional, and persuasive way in order to create conviction in the listener. However, if the style of the preacher was loud,



passionate, and powerful, then the music would follow with sudden chord changes, fast runs, and rhythmic licks in order to back up the preacher.

I cannot say how different or similar nothing music or the music used to back up a preacher is in the South Korean church as opposed to the Hispanic church because of the significant differences in exposure I had to each church. I cannot be completely sure of the differences and similarities in the Korean “nothing music” and the music used to back up a preacher. I can only explain my findings based on my limited exposure.

## **VIII. The “Moment”**

### ***How to Identify and Describe the Moment***

Identifying the moment is an art in of itself. It requires focus, sensitivity and the skills necessary in order too not only identify but to act on the moment. There is no guide on how to identifying the moment: rather, it is learned through experience and exposure to the “moments.” Identifying the moment and describing the moment is a difficult task that can best be described as the climax of the service where the religious experience is most accessible. It is crucial for the ministers of music to know how to navigate in the moment because it is in this split moment where the religious experience can be attained by the congregation.

Although identifying the moment is a process that takes experience, it is also important to realize that the ability to identify the “moment” is by having a religious experience yourself (Jose). It is only after a musician understands and has experienced what he is trying to achieve that the musician can lead the congregation to that moment.

In order better describe the moment and what playing in the moment is like through the eyes of a minister of music, I will incorporate a section of the interview I conducted with Chris in which he describes how he learned to identify and act on the moment:

“I actually had the privilege to have a mentor that guided me to become a better church musician and know how to better flow with the atmosphere. I remember he used to tell me that when the preacher is preaching, my eyes should always be on him because in order to know what to play. You not only need to know what the preacher is saying but what he is doing, in what tone he talking, where he is headed with his message and you need to see his body language. So I always see the preacher, I see his body language and what he is saying, how he is saying it, where he is going with his message and what signals he is trying to give me. You really have to be connected with the preacher. You have to pay attention because it is all in the moment and you have to know what the right thing to do is at the right time. That's another thing my mentor taught me out of so many things I learned from him, that timing is important, and I'm not only talking about the tempo but about the moment. The timing is important because like I said earlier, the music gives people hints, it doesn't force

people to shout rather it gives hints and suggests them to respond to the preacher so the moment, the timing is of utmost importance. For example, in a service I was playing along with my mentor, my music director back then. And I was playing the piano and the pastor was ending his message and building up the message while the audience was on their feet and responding to his message and my mentor told me to get ready because we were going to play a particular up-tempo song that would fit the message. My mentor told me to get ready and to watch for the timing. However, being inexperienced, I did not know the timing and I missed it, and I knew I missed it because my mentor told me that I had started too late. I remember he told me that I had missed the opportunity and now we were going to take another route in the music. I couldn't believe it because it was only a couple of seconds, and the whole moment was gone. Luckily my mentor took over and we were able to finish strong. But that is when I learned that timing is everything; even a split second can determine what you play and how effective your playing will be.

Me: Based on what you are telling me it sounds like most of the worship service is spontaneous.

Chris: We have structure, we know what we are doing and what songs we are doing in what order and the order of the service but you have to know that the main objective is to get the audience to have an experience with God, that is where the spontaneous moments come in because you never know when or how God will move” (Chris).

Based on Chris’ explanation and experience, capitalizing on the moment takes place in a matter of seconds: it’s a small window of opportunity that opens for a split second and the responsibility the ministers of music have is to learn how to identify and capitalize on that precise moment in order to lead the congregation into having a religious experience. As Chris stated, it comes down to the exact second in which it is the responsibility of the musician to be sensitive and auscultate the moment in which music can influence the atmosphere and affect the religious experience of the congregation.

## **IX. Comparisons**

### ***Similarities and Differences***

The ethnographic research that I conducted took place in two different locations and although both churches identify themselves as Pentecostal, there were some significant differences in practices as well as similarities. A similarity between the two churches is the core Pentecostal belief. I will not get into much detail in what the Pentecostal belief consists of but some of the core beliefs are in the Holy Spirit, in healings and miracles, and speaking in other tongues, which is best explained as having a

personal encounter with God, a religious experience. The beliefs in both churches were the same as well as the way in which the religious experience was expressed. For example, when a person was having a religious experience, in both churches the form of expression was weeping, lifting their hands and speaking in other tongues.

Also, both churches strongly emphasized the belief in miracles and healings. The South Korean Pentecostal church prayed for all the sick and all the needs of the congregation in every service while the Hispanic church would pray for the needs of the congregation and sick individuals only if the request was made. Another similarity between the two churches was the order of the service. The order of the service was almost the same; there would be a quick prayer before the service began and right after the prayer, the songs would begin. The next phase of the service after the songs would be the announcements and offering. After the announcements and offering, the pastor would go up to the pulpit and preach his sermon. After the sermon the pastor would pray and would repeat any important announcements and then the church would be dismissed with a prayer and song. There were minor differences such as a special prayer, but overall this was the format followed by both churches.

Although the formats of the church services were similar, one main difference regarding the services was the time. The average time that the service lasted in the South Korean church was one hour and ten minutes. However, the average time that the service lasted in the Hispanic Pentecostal church was two hours. In addition, the number of people was another big difference between the two churches. The South Korean church had seven services every Sunday in which more than ten thousand people attended each

service while the Hispanic church only had one service and had an average attendance of one hundred twenty people per Sunday.

Another noticeable difference between the two churches was the music and preaching style. The music in the South Korean church was traditional. They sang more hymns than contemporary songs, and the church had a band but also had a full orchestra playing during the songs. The music in the Hispanic church was more contemporary, as in more modern songs, and the church only had a band, as opposed to a full orchestra. Also, not only was the music style and songs different, but, the preaching style was different in each church as well. In the South Korean church, the preaching style was subtle and soft while in the Hispanic church, the preaching style was energetic and loud.

Although the goal of the preachers was to deliver the message to the congregations in the most effective way possible, the methods used by them varied according to the culture of the church. In a similar manner, the style of the music was different in each church, but the goal of the music and musicians were the same, to influence the congregation to have a religious experience. An example of similar goals can be seen in the concept of the “vehicle” and “nothing music” used by both churches. In both churches, it was the musicians and the musical objects that created the vehicle. However, the methods used by the vehicle in order to create the atmosphere and to flow with “nothing music” varied. For example, the songs as well as the musical styles used in each church varied. In the South Korean church the songs were more traditional and many hymns were used in order to create the atmosphere. However, in the Hispanic church, the songs were contemporary, but even when a hymn was sung, the music and beat of the hymn was contemporary as opposed to traditional.

Also, while “nothing music” was used in both churches, the way it was practiced differed in both sound and moment. Although in both churches “nothing music” was instrumental in making the service flow and emphasizing certain parts of the service, the methods used to transmit and perceive the energy and moments differed not only by church or culture but also by each individual musician and his connection with the congregation, preacher and other musicians.

### *Importance of Music and Musicians*

Although there are similarities and differences in both Pentecostal churches, one of the crucial factors in each church was the music. The music was important in each church, provided the setting, and each church had a special way to address it. The South Korean Pentecostal church provided a band and a professional orchestra while the Hispanic church only had a band. This difference can be attributed to the difference in church size and influence; however, the differences in the types of musical styles differed based on the culture. Despite the fact that Pentecostal churches rely on music, “...Pentecostal churches vary significantly according to the type of service and church in which musical worship takes place” (“Nou Kwe Nan Sentespri” 87). Music is of utmost importance in a Pentecostal church; as Butler puts it, “no Pentecostal church is complete without music” (“Musical Style and Experience” 33). However, the type of music varies by church, culture and demographic location.

## **X. Conclusions**

The question might arise: Why did I compare and contrast a Korean Pentecostal church and a Hispanic Pentecostal church? Why did I travel all the way to the country of South Korea to do my research? People often assume that Pentecostal churches are the same regardless of the ethnicity, location and language. However, this is not true, and I wanted to show that indeed culture, language, location, and ethnicity does affect how a religion is practiced, in this case Pentecostalism, although it is the same religion with the same core beliefs.

As far as I know, no research had previously been conducted on comparing the effects of music on the Pentecostal religious experience in a Korean Pentecostal church and a Hispanic Pentecostal church. My research compared and contrasted how the different styles of music affected each church service, and I also analyzed the musician's perspective on how they affect the religious experience of the congregation. At this point, you might have the question of why I specifically chose a Korean Pentecostal church rather than comparing a Hispanic Pentecostal church with an African-American church, or a Haitian Pentecostal church, or a Caucasian Pentecostal church, or any Pentecostal church in Southern California.

My reasoning of choosing a Hispanic Pentecostal church was simply because of the fact that I was raised in a Hispanic Pentecostal church and I understand the beliefs that exist in a Hispanic Pentecostal church, thus making me an insider. However, the reason I chose to compare and contrast it with a Korean Pentecostal church was because I did not have any prior experience with the culture, ethnicity or location, which made me



a first time onlooker and made me observe how music and the religious experience differed in Pentecostalism in different cultures.

Also, because I had not been exposed to the Korean Pentecostal church before, I would not only be an “insider”, because I know the beliefs of Pentecostalism and grew up in a Pentecostal church, but it also made me an “outsider”, a first time attendee, since it was the first time I visited this different type of Pentecostal church. The ability to be both an “insider” and “outsider” simultaneously gave me the ability to not only know what was similar in both Pentecostal churches but also what was different in these two churches. Additionally, since I myself am also a “minister of music” in a Hispanic Pentecostal church, I was able to detect the difference in the type and style of music in each church and what the role of music was in each church. This unique position I had as a musician “insider” and “outsider” gave me the ability to analyze what I witnessed as a practitioner, ethnographic researcher, and as a spectator.

Although I conducted my ethnographic research in two distinct locations, I was certainly exposed much more to the Hispanic church more than the South Korean church. This led me to question how much more different or similar the Pentecostal churches are. One church of any ethnicity or culture does not wholly represent or justify all the Hispanic or South Korean Pentecostal churches. For this reason, I believe it is necessary to make it clear that the findings of this research were from one particular Hispanic Pentecostal church, out of many, and one South Korean Pentecostal church, which I attended for only two days and also happens to be the world’s largest church. I only used them as a point of reference between the two cultures. Further research and more time in different churches in each culture would be necessary in order to identify the core

differences and similarities between the effects of music in South Korean and Hispanic Pentecostal churches. In Southern California, these two ethnicities came together in the Azusa street revival in 1906. Who is to say that it will not happen again? Also, I wanted to explore how the roles of Pentecostal musicians compare. Are at least the fundamentals observed in the same ways?

I chose to compare my Hispanic Pentecostal church with the Yoido Full Gospel church, because the Yoido Full Gospel church is not only Pentecostal but is also the world's largest church. This inspired me to compare it to a Pentecostal church with which I am familiar. These two ethnic communities came together over one hundred years ago in the Azusa street revival, yet the Hispanic and South Korean communities remain socially and economically quite separate in Southern California. It is fascinating how two cultures can take an experience; such as the Pentecostal movement that emerged from Azusa street revival, and over time develop differently because of cultural differences that affect core practices, including music and the religious experience.

After conducting this ethnographic research and comparing the two churches and the effects that the music has, I was confronted with some questions that arose after my research. One question that arose from this research is whether the fundamentals of what makes a "minister of music" differ in each culture, and if so, does that influence how music affects the religious experience? I came to the realization that music not only has an effect on the religious experience, but that the musician involved in the making of the music plays a very significant role. The musician influences how music affects the religious experience because each musician has a different perspective and style depending on the church, demographic location or culture.

However, since the musical styles or perspectives of each individual musician differ, I don't know whether the fundamentals of what constitutes a "minister of music" are a constant in other cultures. In this research I discussed my findings on what makes a "minister of music," the vehicle, the energy, the atmosphere and the moment based on the two distinct Pentecostal churches. However, the relationship of each of these entities with each other, and even the fundamental composition of a minister of music, could differ based on the culture, church or location.

I believe it is critical to understand the role of the musician in the Pentecostal church in order to understand what the effects of music are in each different cultural setting. The approach of each individual musician can be different depending on different factors such as the setting, the language or the culture. However, the role of the musicians in the Pentecostal church is to use music as the vehicle as the means in which the congregation, the preacher and the musicians can be in sync with each other to produce the atmosphere necessary in each part of the service, from the songs, to the preaching, and the moments of silence, to create the moment in which the Pentecostal religious experience takes place. As Chris said to me, "Music is a vehicle that helps people have a religious experience" (Chris).

## REFERENCES CITED

- Butler, Melvin L. 2000, "Musical Style and Experience in a Brooklyn Pentecostal Church: An "Insider's" Perspective." Columbia University Academic Commons, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7916/D8028Q7K>.
- Butler, Melvin L. "'Nou Kwe Nan Sentespri' (We Believe in the Holy Spirit): Music, Ecstasy, and Identity in Haitian Pentecostal Worship." *Black Music Research Journal* 22.1 (2002): 85. Web.
- Crawley, Ashon T. *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*. New York: Fordham UP, 2017. Print.
- Crawley, Ashon. "'Let's Get It On!' Performance Theory and Black Pentecostalism (2008)." *Black Theology: An International Journal*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Jan. 2017.
- Crawley, Ashon. "Noise. Church. Flesh: Or, For Coltrane Church, For Pulse." *Los Angeles Review of Books*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 Jan. 2017.
- Harkness, Nicholas. "Words in Motion and the Semiotics of the Unseen in Two Korean Churches." *Language & Communication* 30.2 (2010): 139-58. Web.
- Hernandez, Jose. Personal interview. 2 February 2017.
- Martinez, Chris. Personal interview. 24 February 2017.
- Martinez, Tim. Personal interview. 10 February 2017.
- Plüss, Jean-Daniel. "Religious Experience in Worship: A Pentecostal Perspective." *European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism*. N.p., n.d. Web. 09 May 2017.

Titon, Jeff Todd. "Some Recent Pentecostal Revivals: A Report in Words and Photographs." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1978, pp. 579–605.

[www.jstor.org/stable/41397638](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41397638).

Sánchez-Walsh, Arlene M. *Latino Pentecostal Identity Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society*. New York: Columbia UP, 2003. Print.

Synan, Vinson (2001). *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers. pp. 42-45.