

# **Stakeholders' Perceptions of the Role of Gospel Music in Botswana**

by

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife for her support and encouragement even when it meant spending sleepless nights working on the thesis without giving her the much needed attention.

## Abstract

Gospel music can play an important role in the spiritual lives of individual church members and, consequently, the spiritual and numerical growth of the church as a whole. The aim of this study was to investigate stakeholders' perceptions about the role of gospel music in the Botswana Pentecostal church, where the stakeholders are pastors, church musicians and congregation members. The study was partly motivated by the fact that there is a gap in academic literature regarding gospel music in the Botswana context in general, or peoples' perceptions of its importance more specifically.

The data collection instrument was limited to a interviews because of constraints related to the Covid-19 Virus protocols that had to be observed, such as social distancing and uncertainties of nature and length of lock-downs. The sample size of the study comprised three strata, namely 3 pastors, 6 musicians and 12 congregation members (21 in total). The choice of the three strata was done purposively, that is, purposive sampling strategy was employed. This was based on the assumption that the three groups were conversant with the importance of gospel music and would therefore give relevant information needed to address the research questions. In this study, probability sampling in the form of simple random sampling was used to select the 21 individual research participants.

The theoretical framework in this study adopted Pass' theory that church music satisfies three separate theological functions within any act of worship, namely, *kerygmatic*; *koinoniac*; and *leitourgic* (Greek theological terms). *Kerygma* refers to imparting the gospel; *koinonia* to the community of the faithful; and *leitourgia* to the structure of church services and how ordinary people actively participate in them (Pass, 1989:91-119).

The findings of the study show that in general, the purpose of gospel music is to spread the gospel. Many interviewees perceived gospel music as more effective in this mission than preaching. Additionally, because gospel music in the church is presented in different languages and members can socialise freely while rehearsing it is a sign that it has the potential to build church community. Finally, gospel music is an integral component of the structure of normal church services, particularly when praise-and-worship songs are played in between the items of the service to fill-in the liturgical "gaps". Thus, the findings of this study support the thesis that gospel music has a positive impact on the spiritual development and growth of the church.

### **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that I have written this thesis myself and that it has not been presented or accepted in any previous format for a degree. The work, of which this is a record, has been carried out by myself unless otherwise stated and where the work is mine, it reflects personal views. All quotations have been distinguished by quotation marks and all sources of information have been acknowledged by means of references.

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Pogiso Abel Daman

April 2022

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Firstly, I thank God for all sorts of people, particularly members of my family who contributed in this research project by their well wishes, prayers, as well as their thoughtfulness. Words fail me to express my gratitude to my wife. I would never have been able to complete my dissertation without her unreserved love, care and persistent words of encouragement which took the load of anxiety off my shoulders.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study is to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the importance and role of gospel music in Botswana, where the stakeholders are pastors, church musicians and the congregation members. In the context of this study, gospel music is a genre of Christian music which came from the religious revivals tradition of the nineteenth century (Wilson-Dickson 1992:201). A more detailed definition of gospel music in relation to this thesis will follow below. This study was motivated by a lack of academic literature on perceptions of the role and importance of gospel music in churches in Botswana. The chapter below presents the motivation of the study; a detailed definition of gospel music; a literature review on Christian music general/globally, regionally and in Botswana; the importance of gospel music; the statement of the problem; and the theoretical framework. The chapter also provides discussions on the ethics of the research, particularly pertaining to data collection and a brief description of the contents of the respective chapters.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

##### **1.2.1 Study Motivation**

The researcher's interest in this topic stems from his involvement with gospel music as a local church and choir member, and a music lecturer at a College of Education in Botswana. The researcher grew up as an Assemblies of God Church member, and he is currently a member of Echoes of Joy Church in Botswana. His engagement with music at the Assemblies of God Church spans over a period of twenty-five years, and almost all of his initial music learning (or his developmental years) took place auto-didactically or by association with community musicians in this context. During these developmental years in Botswana, the researcher performed solely in the genre known as "gospel" and upon completion of his formal schooling, continued with tertiary music studies with majors in music history and ethnomusicology.

According to the researcher's contextual experience, gospel music plays an important role in soothing the troubles and tribulations for people facing social, economic and political burdens. Therefore, this has been one of the motivating factors that led him to develop an interest in investigating peoples' perceptions of gospel music in three Pentecostal churches in Gaborone and Mochudi. The other motivating factor for this study has been a lack of literature on gospel music in the Botswana context generally, or peoples' perceptions of its importance.

### **1.2.2 Location of the Study**

This study was conducted in Gaborone (population of approximately 231 626) and Mochudi (population of approximately 44 330) (Botswana Government, 2011). Gaborone is Botswana's largest city, while Mochudi is a big village which has been absorbed within Greater Gaborone. In addition, the researcher currently resides in Mochudi and, therefore, the village was also deemed a convenient place to conduct this study in terms of data collection. The researcher selected three churches, namely Echoes of Joy Church (Mochudi); the Apostolic Faith Mission (Gaborone branch); and the Assembly of God (Mochudi branch) for the current study. The three churches were chosen for several reasons: they have congregations which represent general Botswana society; they are close in proximity to each other; and they all have a long history of using gospel music for the churches' development, particularly as part of evangelism in the form crusades,<sup>1</sup> concerts and normal Sunday services. In particular, the choice was motivated by the fact that, according to the researcher's observations over the past two decades during his informal interactions and discussions with friends from Assemblies of God and Apostolic Faith Mission, the three churches perceive gospel music as an important tool for spreading the Christian message.

## **1.3 Review of Literature**

### **1.3.1. Definition of Gospel Music**

According to Cusic (2002:33) and Clement and Funmilayo (2016:57) gospel music is generally associated with a genre which developed in the United States of America, and its history can be associated with the rise of slavery in America, from around the 17th century. African-

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<sup>1</sup> A crusade in the context of Botswana Pentecostal churches is an evangelical scheduled event or gathering purposely designed to attract a large number of people in order to present God's plan of salvation to them. Some people may be drawn to the gospel crusades by the celebrity status of the gospel musicians or the preacher. The crusades are similar in nature to those by old-time leading evangelists such as Reinhard Bonnke, Billy Graham and John Wesley, although on a relatively small scale.

American communities in the late 19th century came together in their churches to give praise and sing poignant spirituals and hymns (Clement and Funmilayo, 2016:57). The development of gospel music was an evolution of this style as African-American communities moved into cities and other similar urban societies at the beginning of the 20th century (Clement and Funmilayo, 2016:57; Goff, 2002:14-16). According to Oliver, Harrison and Bolcom (1986:17) this was a continuation of their connection between music and faith, where gospel music embodied their expression of faith. Gospel music within the African-American communities was regularly performed spontaneously with hand-clapping, singing, yelling, moving, speaking in tongues and prophecy (Oliver, Harrison and Bolcom, 1986:17). This is worth noting since it is similar to African gospel music.

The researcher notes that what is called gospel music in an African context is not necessarily the same as that in the United States. For the purposes of this study gospel music is music used to worship God (Ojo, 1998:21; Chitando, 2002:5), i.e. it is music which transmits the gospel. It is worth noting that according to Ojo (1988:211) in the Nigerian context,

*‘Gospel music’ is really too sweeping, but it is used in this paper just as it is currently used by the media and by title practitioners themselves in Nigeria to mean a distinct kind of music composed and rendered by men and women who call themselves Christians, and who refer to their music as ‘ministration of the Good News in songs’. The texts are based on biblical or traditional Christian precepts. The performance is usually in the public domain, but it has equally been used within the denominational or liturgical setting. Gospel music has been used, as have traditional Christian hymns, as means of strengthening the faith of Christians, or for religious adoration or for evangelistic purposes.*

In addition, Chitando (2002:5) stated that, “Gospel music illustrates the limitation of discourses of authenticity wherein ‘African’ cultural production is consumed, judged, and analysed in terms of its ‘Africanness’”. Therefore, it is apparent that gospel music in Africa ought to be assessed on its own merit, instead of in connection with American gospel music. Indeed, the rudiments that define “gospel music” in Botswana are different from those that define gospel music in the American context. For instance, the researcher’s experience of gospel music in Botswana is similar to what Chitando (2011:11) describes in the Zimbabwean context. In particular, the singing of local gospel music is defined by elements such as call-and-response,

ululation, traditional local dancing patterns, spontaneous composition and dancing which carefully follows the cadences of the music. Thus, it is not just the words or Christian textual content which make gospel music (Chitando 2001:11), but also its local musical characteristics.

Gospel songs in Botswana form a contrasting style in relation to traditional mission or church hymns. Church hymns are songs written or notated in hymn books. Typically, in the Botswana context, people have to sing hymns while standing still, and therefore, normally hymns do not involve dancing nor improvisation. In most cases hymns are strophic or divided into metered stanzas, sometimes with a recurring chorus. Stanzas can be repetitive, often beginning with the same or similar words and phrases. Hymns may or may not include instrumental accompaniment. If there is accompaniment, it is not usually a traditional Botswana instrument, but rather a keyboard.

Over the years, the researcher has observed that in the Botswana context, gospel music incorporates local and global musical styles, various vernacular dialects and all sorts of different instruments. However, performances almost always come out in a localized way, which gives them unique attributes which resonate with Botswana people. Furthermore, besides gospel music being part of normal Christian worship, it can be part of activities or events outside the church such as revivals, outreaches, and generally, it could be disseminated through media such as radio and television.

According to Duncan (1998) the perceived presence of the Holy Spirit in gospel music helps to usher people into the presence of God, and prepare them for the sermon or the preached word. The researcher notes that it is not only in the preaching of the word that music has a role. In particular, according to researcher's experience and observation over the years, gospel music permeates every portion of Pentecostal church services. Therefore, it is not easy to separate music from the other segments of the liturgy. This makes the importance of gospel music more apparent within the church. The researcher notes that this has been one of the motivating factors to investigate the perceptions of church members in Botswana about the role and the importance of gospel music, particularly within a church environment. Thus, the next section discusses the importance of gospel music.

### **1.3.2 The Importance of Gospel Music**

Tomlinson (2012) encouraged worship leaders to develop congregational singing. Indeed, according to Warrington (2008:97), “Congregational singing is the backbone of Pentecostal worship”. Thus, gospel music could be used to attract people as a means of evangelisation through corporate singing or to prepare them for the preaching of the Word of God.

Gospel music has a purpose in the worship of God. According to Walker (1981:33), “In its highest capacity music prepares the heart of the believers for response to God and right living for God; it conditions the believers to receive God’s blessings, it sets the spiritual tone of the service...”. For instance, in Pentecostal churches it is common knowledge that evangelists often pair with musicians to have successful evangelistic crusades and revivals. Specifically, in an interview in 1959 concerning gospel music and its impact on evangelism, evangelist Billy Graham noted that,

*Hymns and gospel songs, reverently sung, establish an atmosphere for the evangelistic sermon. Indeed, they have done much more than create a mood for preaching. Many notable conversions to Christ can be credited to the power of a gospel song. In fact, both John and Charles Wesley declared that they made almost as many converts through their hymns as through their preaching.*

According to Hughes (2006), the singing of the gospel songs can bring inner strength to individuals which needed for life. In addition, Hollenweger (1997:23) noted that, “[Gospel music] is just as necessary for the ministry in the church as theology...”

It is clear from the quotes above that gospel music can be one of the necessary tools in the spiritual development of congregants. For instance, according to the researcher’s experience and observations over the years, aspects of liturgy, such as teaching, prayers and the preaching of the Word of God, very often flow smoothly from one segment to another, where occasional incorporation of gospel music in the form of praise and worship provides the smooth flow. In particular, the church worship service would normally begin with up-tempo, loud praise songs.

Usually, praise comes before worship,<sup>2</sup> even though there are times when the opposite is true. After some time, the praise music in the church congregation shifts into the worship portion of the church service. It is worth noting that songs could transform organically by adjusting an up-tempo praise song and turning it into a worship song.

### **1.3.3 Music Studies**

#### **1.3.3.1 Gospel Music Globally**

Gospel music has been researched extensively, particularly in the United States and other English-speaking nations. Thus, to review the entire literature here is a vast endeavour. Instead, I will focus on how some of these studies address the cultural context of gospel music's reception and transformation. Then I discuss some important general studies which relate to the history and analysis of gospel music.

Firstly, authors have shown that gospel music has been adapted to suit particular cultural expectations. For example, in the United States, two main strains of gospel music, that have been marketed along racial/cultural lines, are referred to as “black gospel” and “white gospel” music (Bolima, 2007; Epstein, 2018; Oliver, Harrison and Boloco, 1986). In my own study, I will be exploring how Botswana culture has impacted the gospel genre. Secondly, several authors have produced significant general studies about gospel music. Ohman (2017:1) discusses the impact of women on this genre, while Burnim (1980:63) focuses on the history of gospel music. Legg and Philpott (2015) demonstrate how the performance practice of African American gospel music can be analyzed, with special attention on the structures of improvisation.

#### **1.3.3.2 Gospel Music in Africa**

This section of the literature review highlights various African authors who discussed gospel music using different perspectives and theories. As you will see, Botswana is not represented in this literature at all.

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<sup>2</sup> In Pentecostal and Charismatic churches a distinction is usually made between praise and worship songs. Praise songs tend to be energetic rhythmically and fairly loud with texts which focus on God's greatness and majesty. Worship songs, on the other hand, are usually less rhythmically complex and tend to be more reflective in nature, with texts about repentance/forgiveness, prayer and so on.



Chitando (2002) is a well-represented author in this field. For example, in one article he concentrates on the social, political and economic centrality of gospel music in Zimbabwe during the 1990s (Chitando, 2002:2). Here he approaches music through multiple methodological lenses, namely: Christian theological perspectives; cultural perspectives (with a particular focus on popular appeal); and historiography. Interestingly, when he applied the phenomenological technique, he noticed that he needed to adjust and supplement recorded and sociological methodologies for this particular study. Chitando noted that the motivation to move towards investigating or reviewing music with Christian religious philosophy could be used to investigate or review the relationship between Christian philosophy (particularly the importance of gospel music) and mainstream society, in terms of social, political and financial aspects. For instance, Chitando (2002:5) noticed that gospel music contributes significantly to a conversation of contemporary African social creations. As he would see it, numerous scholars view African culture as a relic from some superb past (Chitando, 2002:5).

Chitando's method includes meeting various performing artists, authors, entertainers, advertisers, youngsters, cultural workers, historians, as well as a group of research participants comprised exclusively of church members. In addition, he collected the data of his study from places where gospel music was deemed to be developing fast. In terms of characteristics, he found that Zimbabwean gospel music has a danceable beat and uses political, social and financial messages to acquire prominence (Chitando, 2002:23). Thus, it is clear that there has been some research in Zimbabwean gospel music pertaining to the extent to which the gospel music has shaped the African culture. In particular, it was found that there is a connection between gospel music and the social and political setting (2002:86). Chitando's findings are valuable in relation to this thesis, because his methods have inspired aspects of current study, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Malembe (2005:8) conducted a study on South African popular gospel music in the post-Apartheid period focussed on genre, production, mediation and consumption themes. He used a qualitative approach which includes interviews, concert attendances and newspaper reviews to examine the genre of local gospel music in the context of the new democratic rule of South Africa, and popular music studies. Malembe (2005:8) found that the post-1994 South African

government laid down a foundation for musical diversity in numerous ways. In particular, he (2005:8) noted that

*...many institutions of higher learning, businesses, public structures, etc., which were previously segregated on basis of 'race', were re-structured, some merged and some even renamed. Arts and culture, music in particular, could by no means be an exception to this transformation.*

He found that since the foundation of popular democracy in 1994 South African gospel music has developed and drawn bigger crowds. Furthermore, it keeps on being one of the most preferred music genres in the country (Malembe, 2005:31). Malembe (2005:55) found that the end of politically-sanctioned racial segregation has driven the creation of South Africa gospel music to a higher level since specialists, advertisers, makers, artists and others can share thoughts across racial lines. In addition, he argued that gospel music is premised on “gospel culture”, where this culture is as a result of the production of gospel music itself (2005:47). This was in agreement with Scott’s (1998:33) assertion that music’s “meanings are bound to the people and cultures who make [and consume] it”. In addition, Malembe (2005:70) further noted that

*South African 'Gospel' music is the music of South African people and is informed and shaped by their cultures and the circumstances around them. It is true that other audiences outside South Africa can find local 'Gospel' music interesting, as suggested by the fact that local artists such as Rebecca Malope, Benjamin Dube, Joyous Celebration and many others have successfully toured internationally.*

Carl (2014:104), in her article entitled ‘The Ritualization of the Self in Ghanaian Gospel Music’, analyzed the patterns in mainstream society in Ghana and its diaspora, where she considered selected accounts of gospel music performances and ethnographic data that emerged out of her fieldwork in Accra and elsewhere in southern Ghana. The results of the study revealed that there is an obscuring of limits between the secular and the sacred music realms, and that gospel music is viewed as an enacted ritual performance (Carl, 2014:104).

Carl (2014:101) noted that charismatic churches are the ones which presented various performers and entertainers of gospel music, by reintegrating songs, dances, and styles they

learned in the public sphere into the ritualistic setting of their worship spaces. In particular, she stated that charismatic churches “...have thus created constant feedback between congregational and mass-mediated performance practices, facilitating the emergence of a common religious format and aesthetics” (2014:101). She also concluded that, “Not only does gospel music span across the secular and the sacred realm, providing forms of popular culture that integrate religious and everyday experience, but it also bridges public and intimate sociability” (2014:123).

Adedeji and Loko (2019:1) conducted a study on how gospel musicians are trained in the form of informal and formal education, and also looking at traits among contemporary Nigerian gospel musicians in order to move forward to gain improvement in the quality and effectiveness of the genre. They noticed that informal education is related to African native models, while the formal is based on Western methods (Adedeji and Loko, 2019:2). They also note that most Nigerian gospel artists like to take courses of a casual nature rather than formal ones. Adedeji and Loko found that most artists are unskilled and they do not show inclination to study formally (Adedeji and Loko 2019:3).

Adedeji and Loko (2019:3) pointed out that the ignorance of some Nigerian gospel artists caused them to accept and feel that they are called and blessed by God to be performers while they figure out how to play gospel music through musical practice, copying, gaining from others, and performance. Their study revealed that some gospel artists believe that it is not important to have formal training in light of their God-given gifts and beliefs (Adedeji and Loko 2019:4). Adedeji and Loko (2019:4) found that there are some schools which attempt to help gospel performers to figure out how to pursue and play music. However, few decided to enrol and the larger part prefer to learn music casually (Adedeji and Loko, 2019:7). Adedeji and Loko (2019:7) found that there is a requirement for more seasoned gospel performers to direct the aspiring young ones. They concluded that formal and casual preparation approaches, and the engagement of the two established gospel music schools, Bola Are School of Gospel Music and Panam College of Music Ministry, are having some constructive outcome in the preparation of indigenous African gospel artists in Nigeria (Adedeji and Loko, 2019:9).

In an article entitled 'Indigenous Gospel Music and Social Reproduction in Modern Nigeria', Ojo (1988:211) concentrated on how the progression of gospel music in Nigeria moved from the church to the public arena. His premise (1988:211) was that "Gospel music, quite apart from and beyond its performance, has a hand in and does shape other social and historical processes".

Ojo (1988:213) indicated that between 1960 and 1970, step by step, Christian music began to be acknowledged openly in spaces like theatres, public lobbies, out in the open and on private radio and TV broadcasts. Ojo (1988:216) noted that as a result, "Gospel music became popular because it created the much-needed space necessary for social reconstruction within a purely Christian milieu". He also found that the goal of gospel music in Nigeria, "is the transformation and translation of the marginalized, dis-empowered and house-bound women of African society into today's world of leadership and creativity. Thus, gospel music has put women at centre stage, and has also offered them space to shape their perception" (Ojo, 1988:220, 222).

Kidula (2010:208) explored gospel music in Kenya. She stated that "Gospel music has now taken a major market lead and... [it has] become the local music industry's savior, with songs nearly always hitting the top of the music charts" (2010:208). In the study, three artists were used as research participants to provide data using a qualitative approach involving interviews and observations, where the aim of the study was to investigate how gospel music draws large audiences. The three artists found fame with Kenyans through a weekly public television programme called 'Sing and Shine' initiated in 1984. In particular, Japheth Kassanga was an ensemble leader and guitarist/composer of an African Inland Church makwaya<sup>3</sup> group; Faustin Munishi, formerly a Tanzanian citizen now living in Kenya, used to perform generally solo; while Mary Atieno was an artist in a makwaya-style ensemble, which developed public experience on open radio in the mid-1980s (Kidula 2010:215). Kidula (2010:208) showed that gospel music has become a rewarding profession, and some of the musicians get well paid because of their hard work and achievements (2010:208). She also concluded that gospel performers have conquered the Kenyan music market and extended it beyond the church into the broader secular arena (Kidula, 2010:425).

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<sup>3</sup> 'Makwaya' is a local term for choir or choral music.

Gukurume's (2017:44) article titled 'Singing Positivity: Prosperity Gospel in the Music Discourse of Popular Youth Hip-Hop gospel in Zimbabwe', shows how the new versions of born-again Christian identities are expressed through popular hip-hop gospel music. Gukurume (2017:44) observed that gospel music attracted more individuals to the congregation, and that hit songs like "Ndaita Mari" ("I have amassed wealth/money") of Mudiwa are centred on the prosperity gospel principle. He saw that this song surprised the Zimbabwean music scene as it became a most loved hit (2017:44). For instance, in his article, Gukurume (2017:44) said

*Mudiwa's narrative shows the influence of prosperity teachings, which frame born-again Christians as entitled to prosperity and its attendant earthly material manifestations. This imagining reinforces the idea that born again Christians should not wallow in poverty, but should rather enjoy the material benefits accruing to them by virtue of being children of the highest God who creates such things.*

Therefore gospel music serves to reinforce the dominant wealth and health discourse embedded in Pentecostal churches. Gukurume (2017:48) largely adopted a qualitative content analysis approach. This method helped him to get in-depth information about the production and reproduction of prosperity discourses and also the new versions of born-again Christian identities are expressed through popular hip-hop gospel music by using lyrics of Mudiwa's songs.

Nyairo (2008:71), in her article entitled 'Kenyan Gospel Soundtracks: Crossing Limits, Planning Crowds' aimed to investigate how gospel music in Kenya was created and its specific circumstances. She found that gospel music is seen among the youth in the form of local identity and that gospel music is viewed as business endeavour, not really for otherworldliness and moral salvation, but rather for amusement purposes. In addition, Nyairo (2008:71) noted that "...gospel music spreads and moves in between sacred and secular places through artists and many platforms". In particular, she found that both radio and television are the media stages which disseminate gospel music (2008:72). Furthermore, Nyairo (2008:79) stated "Gospel music is frequently heard at secular venues such as in matatus (private commuter mini-buses), restaurants, banking halls, bus termini and even at malls and supermarkets".

### **1.3.3.3 Music Studies from Botswana**

Existing literature on music in Botswana has tended to focus on music education (Kanasi, 2008; Segomotso, 2012; and Bennett, 2007), indigenous music (Franke, 2012; Mathangwane 2009; and Phibion, 2012), Facebooking religion and technologisation of religious discourse (Faimua and Behrens, 2016; and Togarasei, 2012), integration of traditional African religious music into Evangelical Lutheran liturgical church services (Lebaka, 2015), and the inner conflict individuals face when practising Christianity and local traditional religion simultaneously (Nkomazana, 2016). In this regard, research on music in Botswana does not tend to focus on the role played by gospel music, neither does it examine the significance of gospel music and praxis.

### **1.3.4 Perceptions of Gospel Music**

According to the researcher's experience and observations as a Christian and a member of a local Pentecostal church that spans over two decades, gospel music is composed and performed for several reasons, including but not limited to enjoyment or entertainment, religious or ceremonial purposes, and as a commercial amusement venture that helps people unwind, re-energize, re-invigorate. In addition, gospel music has the power to influence the mind in a more positive way such as ensuring that people connect sincerely with the words they sing, more especially when the melody/vocal aspect is appealing, thus giving both the audience and the performing artists/musicians opportunity to consider the lyrics (gospel message) all the more carefully. The researcher notes that all these are his personal perceptions.

Scholarly research articles have also recorded perceptions of gospel music and its effects. For instance, Phillips (1982) led an investigation among ordinary people, retired professors and other academics working in the field of music on how they perceived gospel music. He found that Afro-Americans have consistently viewed gospel music as a means of un-inhibiting black churches and that it improves the worship service. Furthermore, the investigation showed that perceptions of the line of boundary between "secular" gospel music and "sacred" gospel music is only slight, as Carl found in Ghana (see above). The findings of the study by Phillips (1982:168) also revealed that the purpose of gospel music is to adulate, praise, dignify, and celebrate God. It is worth noting that the study found that there were two discernible "camps". There were those who were against gospel music that was accompanied by musical instruments (pointing out that by adding drums, stepping feet, applauding hands, and so on, was not fitting

for church worship), as they felt that it could be easily corrupted by the commercial aspect of gospel music, and the vast sums of money it commanded, thereby compromising the spiritual aspect of gospel music (Phillip, 1982:170). The second camp comprised those who perceived gospel music (regardless of the use of musical instruments or not) as a necessary and legitimate form of worship music, appropriate for church (Phillip, 1982:177).

Banjo and Williams (2014) examined perceptions of listeners to gospel and contemporary Christian music genres. The purpose of the examination was to discover the impression of both listeners of gospel music and contemporary Christian music. The research participants who listened to each genre agreed that gospel music and contemporary Christian music are in agreement with their religious beliefs and values since the prevailing message in their genres is to elevate and worship God, as well as to empower a positive way of life (Banjo and Williams, 2014:125). The two groups, that is, listeners of gospel music and contemporary Christian music, opposed business components of the genres (Banjo and Williams, 2014:125). The study revealed that gospel listeners perceive that gospel music is engaging, blessing, passionate, expressive, euphoric, sensational, energetic and Godly, while on the other hand, they perceived contemporary Christian music not as engaging or passionate (Banjo and Williams, 2014:129). Contemporary Christian music listeners indicated that contemporary Christian music is heavenly, Godly and displays religious values, while on the other hand they perceived gospel music as traditional, self-centered, corrupt, crude and not blessed (Banjo and Williams, 2014:132). In summary, the findings of the study revealed that while they shared their belief in the need to maintaining faith and been connected to God, both gospel music and contemporary Christian music listeners agreed that there are fundamental differences in the two musical genres (Banjo and Williams, 2014:134). The investigation also revealed the perception (of the two groups) that gospel music is generally connected with black people, while contemporary Christian music is generally associated with white people (Banjo and Williams, 2014:122,125).

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

In analysing the perception of gospel music in the church, the researcher used a model of church music devised by David Pass (1989). In particular, the researcher used the theory that church music satisfies three separate theological functions within any act of worship, namely,

*kerygmatic*; *koinoniac*; and *leitourgic* (Pass, 1989:91). The benefit of this model is that it takes into account both the music and the content of the text as it conveys theological message.

*Kerygma* is a Greek word or theological term for imparting the gospel. *Kerygmatic* music corresponds with the church's mission to declare and teach its message. It is mono-directional and conveys a message of declaration or teaching (in other words, the "word" is declared) (Pass 1989:94-112).

*Koinonia* is also a Greek theological term meaning the "community" or "community of the faithful". *Koinoniac* music is intended to elevate the church community. It is omni-directional (everybody participates, everybody listens) and it conveys a message of communal unity and brotherhood and sisterhood (Pass 1989:112-119).

*Leitourgia* is another Greek theological word which refers to how church services work and how ordinary people actively participate in them. *Leitourgic* music reflects the community's structure and function of gospel music in worship. It is mono-directional (people singing, God listening), and it is an agent of prayer and praise (in other words, text and music which are directed Godward) (Pass 1989:119-124).

The advantage of using theological terms is that they can transfer quite easily to purely theological discussions in perceptions on gospel music in various stakeholders in the church.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

The researcher notes that the significance of this study is to fill the apparent gap in the literature on the perception of the role played by gospel music in Botswana, particularly within the church environment. Arguably, the importance of gospel music based on both the literature as well as on the researcher's experience makes the existing gap in the literature on the perception of the role played by gospel music in Botswana a disparity or problem that the current study seeks to address. The statement of the problem to be addressed herein is also informed by the theoretical framework discussed in section 1.4 above. In addition, addressing the apparent research



problem is significant venture since any information derived from the findings of the current study and the recommendations are expected to go a long way in ensuring that the stakeholders (pastors, church musicians and members of the church) have a voice within the literature. The recommendations as to how to have a sustainable good quality impact of gospel music in the church within the Botswana context are presented in this study, and these are based on the current study findings and the reviewed literature.

### **1.6 Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this study is to investigate stakeholders' perceptions of the importance of gospel music in Botswana, while the secondary objectives are as follows:

1. To investigate the perceptions of pastors with regard to gospel music in Botswana;
2. To investigate the perceptions of the musicians with regard to gospel music in Botswana;
3. To investigate the perceptions of the congregation members with regard to gospel music in Botswana; and
4. To make recommendations as to how best to address any challenges faced by gospel music practitioners such that the envisaged purpose of gospel music could be attained within the Botswana context.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

Since the objective of this study is to discover stakeholders' perspectives on gospel music in Botswana, it seeks to answer the question: What are the perspectives on gospel music of stakeholders of gospel music in selected churches in Gaborone and Mochudi? This question is supported by the following six secondary questions:

1. What are the perceptions of pastors with regard to gospel music in Botswana?
2. What are the perceptions of the musicians with regard to gospel music in Botswana?
3. What are the perceptions of the congregation members with regard to gospel music in Botswana?

4. What interventions are needed to address any challenges faced by gospel music practitioners such that the envisaged purpose of gospel music could be attained within the Botswana context?
5. What are the differences in perspectives of different stakeholders?
6. Based on the stakeholders' perspectives of gospel music in Botswana, why is it important in this context?

## **1.8 Methodology**

This section presents the methodology and design of this study. The section also includes discussion of data collection instruments, sample and sampling procedure (selection of the research participants), data collection procedure and a discussion on ethical considerations.

### **1.8.1. Research Design**

Research design is the blueprint that details how research will be carried out. According to Labaree (2013), research design is the overall strategy that a researcher chooses in order to ensure that the research questions are effectively addressed. This study employed a case study of three selected churches in Greater Gaborone under the descriptive research design. According to McLeod (2008), a case study involves an in-depth investigation of an activity or community that consists of a hypothetical or real situation. Bell (2000:10) stated that one of the advantages of a case study approach is that it "...gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale". A case study approach was most appropriate under the current time constraints due to unpredictable Covid-19 lock-down protocols. This inevitably had great potential to diminish the time for data collection due to the compliance to protocols of social-distancing and the requirements for travel and movement permits within and across zones during full lock-down periods.

The researcher adopted the qualitative approach for the current study. According to Chilisa and Preece (2006:142), qualitative research is the type of "inquiry in which the researcher carries out research about people's experiences, in natural setting, using variety of techniques such as interviews and observations, report findings mainly in words rather than statistics". Therefore, since study was interested in exploring the experiences of gospel music stakeholders, namely

pastors, musicians and church members, in respect of their perceptions on the use and importance of gospel music, the qualitative approach was indeed a suitable method for the current study.

In this study, the researcher had the opportunity to interact with the research participants within their churches or church premises, during and outside of church services. This provided an opportunity for the research participants to express their ideas and opinions freely in their natural environment with regard to their perceptions on gospel music. It is also worth noting that according to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research is essentially exploratory in design. In particular, qualitative research is used to acquire a comprehension of fundamental reasons, suppositions and inspirations regarding the phenomena under study. Indeed, according to Creswell (2013:19), qualitative research explores issues, understands phenomena and answers research questions by analysing and making sense of the form unstructured data.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the qualitative approach was suitable for this study since it allowed the researcher to explore in depth, the perceptions of the gospel music stakeholders' (research participants') perceptions regarding gospel music.

### **1.8.2 Data Collection Instrument**

A research instrument is a tool used for data collection (Patton, 1990; Rubin and Rubin 1995, and Kvale, 1996). In this study, an interview consisting of three open-ended questions was chosen as the data collection instrument. The questions were generated after a thorough review of relevant literature and scrutiny of the research problem, the theoretical framework, the research questions as well as the research objectives. Following Sarandakos (2005), the researcher used broadly unstructured face-to-face in-depth interviews, with open-ended questions to try to address the research questions. The interviews targeted specific stakeholders within church communities where gospel music formed an integral part of weekly worship sessions.

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<sup>4</sup> Unstructured interviews are so called because the interviewer does not get into the interview natural setting with a structured or planned sequence of questions for the interview. The objective of the unstructured interview is to bring up some preliminary issues concerning the study phenomenon to the surface for the researcher to determine variables that need further in-depth investigation. For example, in the initial stages of the interview, only open-ended and broad questions would be asked, and the responses to those questions would inform the researcher of the perceptions of the research participants (Sekaran, 2003:225).

In this study, the advantage of using in-depth interviews was that a small sample of respondents could ascertain general perceptions and trends. In particular, individual interviews gave a wide scope of viewpoints. In addition, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), one unique strength of an interview is that it enables the research participants to have an interpretation of their natural setting, and to have an expression of situations or phenomena from their own point of view. Furthermore, an interview enables the usage of observation of verbal cues and body language or expression (Cohen et al., 2007). Indeed, in this study the researcher noted that face-to-face interviews provided the researcher with rich verbal cues with deep meanings in addition to verbal expressions. For example, in-depth information was solicited by reading body language and through clarifying questions.

### **1.8.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure**

In this study, the selection of the three churches was motivated by the general perception that they feature prominently as places with a long history of using gospel music (as it is defined in this study) during worship. In addition, the three churches are close in proximity.

The sample size of the study is 21 participants, comprising 3 pastors, 6 musicians and 12 congregation members. These three strata (namely pastors, musicians, congregation members) were chosen using a purposive sampling strategy. According to Yin (2011:88), purposive sampling strategy ensures that the selected research participants "... yield the most relevant and plentiful data", while Kuzel (1992:37) noted that purposive sampling gives the "...broadest range of information and perspectives on the subject of study". Therefore, the participants were selected based on whether they met certain stipulated characteristics in order to provide the relevant information needed for the study. This is in agreement with Oliver (2006), who stated that purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which decision to include certain individuals as part of the sample is based upon a variety of criteria, which may be specialist knowledge of the research issue, or willingness and capacity to participate in the research. Specifically, in this study, purposeful sampling was deemed suitable because it enabled the researcher to select the research respondents on the assumption that they were conversant with the importance of gospel music and would therefore give relevant information needed to address the research questions. For instance, the selected categories of the

respondents were part of the Christian community who were familiar with the roles played by gospel music and were expected to give informed perceptions on gospel music. The pastors, by virtue of their responsibilities and roles in the church, were the drivers of the gospel music arrangements as well as the drivers of the purpose for which most of the musical items (songs) are sung, while the congregation members are responsible for singing along with the churches' gospel artists at the same time as they are being ministered to.

In this study, probability sampling in the form of simple random sampling was used to select the research participants so that each research participant had equal chance to be selected in order to minimise bias in selecting the sample of the study. This is in accordance with the assertion by Wiersma and Jurs (2005:155), who noted that simple random sampling eliminates bias in the selection of a study sample. In each church the researcher interviewed 1 pastor, 2 musicians and 4 congregation members in order to have a well balanced view of how gospel music is perceived.

#### **1.8.4 Data Collection Procedure**

According to Neuman (2014), entering the research site requires the researcher to employ common-sense judgement and relevant skills for social interaction. It is worth noting that each church is headed by a pastor. Therefore, in this study, the researcher first asked for permission from relevant respective pastors of each of the selected churches to carry out research in their churches.

After permission was granted, and the pastors had indicated which musicians and church members were eligible to participate in the study, the researcher randomly selected the required number of the research participants in each of the three categories/strata. Then the research participants were informed of the main objective of the study, asked if they were willing to participate, and a date set for the conduction the interviews. Babbie (2015) noted that studies in social research are likely to involve ethical considerations and, in such cases, the incorporation of ethical considerations in the methodology of the study is essential. Thus, in this study, the researcher considered issues such as informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. For example, the participants were informed that their names (identities) would not be disclosed to a third party, as per the suggestion by Creswell (2013:141). The participants

were also given information on the objectives of the study and the research instrument to be used for data collection, so that they could provide informed consent (Creswell, 2013:134). The research participants were also informed that their involvement in this study was voluntary, that is, they were not coerced to participate in the study, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any moment they felt uncomfortable.

It is worth noting that the identity or real names of the interviewees are concealed by means of the use of pseudonyms that match with the church for which a particular research participant is a member. In particular, the pseudonyms of the research participants from the three churches, that is, from **E**choes of Joy, **A**ssemblies of **G**od and **A**postolic **F**aith Mission have been assigned the letters E, AG and AF, respectively, for the purpose of anonymity. For ease of reference, the pseudonyms for the research participants and their gender is presented in Table 1.1 below, and these could be referred to in subsequent chapters.

**Table 1.1: Pseudonyms for the research participants and their gender**

Church	Research Participants Pseudonyms (and Gender)						
	Pastor	Musicians		Church Members			
Echoes of Joy Ministry	E (Male)	1E (female)	2E (male)	3E (male)	4E (female)	5E (male)	6E (female)
Assemblies of God	AG (Male)	1AG (male)	2AG (male)	3AG (male)	4AG (male)	5AG (female)	6AG (female)
Apostolic Faith Mission	AF (Male)	1AF (male)	2AF (male)	3AF (male)	4AF (female)	5AF (female)	6AF (female)

### 1.8.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis ensures that raw data is described and interpreted so as to obtain the pattern and meaning from it (Saunders, Lewis and Thornbill, 2007:154). In this study, data was analysed using thematic analysis, where the analysis involved transcribing the raw data, searching for themes, naming themes, and ultimately producing the report. In particular, thematic analysis entails identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006:79).

First, the researcher repeatedly read the data and listened to the recordings of the interviews in order to familiarize himself with the content, paying specific attention to occurrence of patterns. Then raw data in form of interview recordings and field notes was transcribed into a written

form and associated with particular secondary research questions (or research objectives). The transcribed data/responses with the same ideas was then grouped into categories to develop themes, where the themes represented a level of patterned response related to the research questions. In particular, reliance was more on themes that made meaningful contributions to address the research questions.

## **1.9 Structure of the Thesis**

This study was carried out sequentially in chapter form as follows:

### *Chapter One: Introduction*

Chapter 1 is the general introduction of the thesis; and has presented the definition of gospel music; the motivation of the study; a literature review on Christian music in general/globally, regionally and in Botswana; the statement of the problem; and the theoretical framework. The chapter also provides discussions on the research problem, the significance of this study, as well as research objectives, research questions and the discusses on the general research methods available to the researcher, and the reasons why particular methods were preferred and their significance for the current study. Then the ethics of the research particularly pertaining to data collection have been discussed.

### *Chapter Two: Overview of the Churches under the Study*

Chapter 2 will discusses the historical roots of the churches that the researcher chose for case study, namely, Echoes Joy Church (Mochudi), Assemblies of God Church (Mochodi) and Apostolic Faith Mission (Gaborone), and their music, and includes an investigation of the churches' important personalities, and the role that music played during each church's period of emergence and development.

### *Chapter Three: Perceptions of Pastors on Gospel Music*

Chapter 3 investigates the perceptions of pastors (in all three churches under study) on the importance of gospel music, particularly how gospel music functions within the structure and

the pattern of worship/church service and how that influences the development of the denomination.

#### *Chapter Four: Perceptions of Church Musicians on Gospel Music*

Chapter 4 investigates the perceptions of church musicians (in all three churches under study) on the importance of gospel music, particularly how gospel music functions within the structure and the pattern of worship/church service and how that influences the development of the denomination.

#### *Chapter Five: Perceptions of Church Members on Gospel Music*

Chapter 5 investigates the perceptions of church members (in all three churches under study) on the importance of gospel music, particularly how gospel music functions within the structure and the pattern of worship/church service and how that influences the development of the denomination.

#### *Chapter Six: Data Analysis and Research Findings*

Chapter 6 deals with the presentation and analysis of research data, as well as the presentation of research findings.

#### *Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Future Implications*

Chapter 7 is the final chapter that gives a summary, conclusions, and future implications for the importance of gospel music in Botswana.

### **1.10 Conclusions**

In this chapter, the aim of this study was presented, and it was noted that the research was motivated by a lack of academic literature on perceptions of the role and importance of gospel music in churches in Botswana. Based on the literature, it was stated that in the context of this



study, gospel music was considered a genre of Christian music which came from the religious revivals.

A literature review on Christian music general/globally, regionally and in Botswana was presented. In addition, the importance of gospel music in society was discussed, as well as the formal statement of the problem. Furthermore, the David Pass' theoretical framework was presented and discussed. A discussion on the ethics of the research, particularly pertaining to data collection and protection of the identity of the research participants, was presented. In the following chapter, an overview of the churches considered in this study has been presented.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **OVERVIEW OF THE CHURCHES UNDER THE STUDY**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the historical roots of the churches that the researcher chose for case study, namely, Echoes of Joy Church (Mochudi), Assemblies of God Church (Mochudi branch) and Apostolic Faith Mission Church (Gaborone branch). The discussion entails an investigation of the churches' important personalities, and any role that music played during each church's period of emergence and development.

#### **2.2 The Churches**

##### **2.2.1 Apostolic Faith Mission**

Chikane (2019) noted that the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) is a classical Pentecostal church born in May 1908 in Los Angeles, influenced by the April 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. It was also born two years before the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference. According to Chikane (2019:363), between then and now, the AFM followed a lone mission and evangelism journey outside of the ambit of the World Missionary Conferences and the conferences on World Mission and Evangelism. While the Apostolic Faith Mission was established in 1908 and Pentecostalism was brought to South Africa by American evangelists, a few elements established an ideal environment for it to spread in Southern Africa. To start with, revivals in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC) in 1860, 1874, and 1884 were characterised by a profound conviction of transgression/sin followed by change and intense supplication. Subsequently in 1908, some more seasoned DRC individuals were 'converted' and opened to Pentecostalism. Secondly, the DRC was blessed with the minister Andrew Murray, one of the revered teachers of the Word of God, who established an environment for revival. A third factor was the Zionist holy places in South Africa, driven by John Alexander Dowie from Zion City, Illinois, United States.

According to Chikane (2019), the AFM was interracial when it began, but this interracial participation was brief. In South Africa, from the 1950s to the 1980s AFM was subjected to politically-sanctioned racial segregation. However, after 1994, the white AFM moved quickly

towards unification with the black. In particular, by 1996, all the AFM houses of worship were joined in a solitary multi-racial church (Chikane, 2019).

Although the AFM grew from South Africa to six continents, its growth was encumbered by racist and colonial perspectives of mission and evangelism. Indeed, according to Chikane (2019),

*[The AFM's] first wave of missions was led by indigenous South Africans at the revival in Doornfontein and those from the neighbouring countries who worked in South African mines. The second wave included organized missions by white South Africans, who unfortunately had to pull back from Southern African countries because of intensified struggles for liberation. The third wave was by local congregations that formed hubs for missions to specific countries (India and Pakistan). The fourth wave was by Zimbabweans who left their country because of difficult economic conditions. The isolation of the black churches in South Africa based on the influence of apartheid policies allowed black members to develop their own local ecumenical perspectives, which enabled them to have a broader understanding of mission and evangelism. This helped the church to move into the ecumenical world following the unity of the church members, that is, following the unity between the white and black parts of the church.*

#### **2.2.1.1 Overview of Botswana Apostolic Faith Mission**

In the Botswana Apostolic Faith Mission pilgrimage booklet (2007:3), it has been noted that Samon Makwati, who worked in South African mines and farms, was converted over to Pentecostalism around the 1930s. Others, like Argent Curtin, were brought into the development through the ministry of Robert Moffat in Mafikeng.

The Botswana Apostolic Faith Mission the pilgrimage booklet (2007:3) further noted that AFM's coming to Botswana can be dated to the mid-1930s and 1940s. Its first activity and first places of worship were set up in Kanye, Molepolole, Mahalapye, Lobatse and Francistown during the 1950s. The first church buildings were built around the last part of the 1950s. For instance, the Kanye building was first built in 1958. William Simon Scheffers got effectively engaged with the structure of the AFM in Botswana in the mid-1970s. The Botswana Apostolic

Faith Mission pilgrimage booklet (2007:3) it noted that at that time there were assemblies (or branches) in Kanye, Molepolole, Mahalapye, Lobatse and Francistown which were fully operational under men like Simon Makwati and Pheto Ramasilabele in Molepolole, Curtin and James Mpenyu in Kanye, Blackie and James Mpenyu in Francistown, Baloi Baloi, Peter Manamela in Mahalapye and numerous others. Scheffers' significant job came in 1972 when he began efforts to restore AFM congregations in the open country. He took full-time service in 1975 and energetically began to reform the AFM in Botswana in 1975. In the Botswana Apostolic Faith Mission pilgrimage booklet (2007:3), it is further noted that this commitment of Scheffers with the assistance of those mentioned above was the start of the colossal development of the denomination we see today in Botswana. Scheffers' job was to activate and set up chapel structures essential to the development of the AFM in Botswana. The denomination currently has more than 45 ministers and more than 14 000 members all throughout the country. Today AFM is found in numerous villages, towns, and urban areas. It is one of the biggest denominations in Botswana.

#### **2.2.1.2 Apostolic Faith Mission Gaborone Church**

In the Botswana Apostolic Faith Mission pilgrimage booklet (2007:4) it is been noted that Gaborone AFM was begun in 1972 through the assistance of Pastor Simon Scheffers. Their first premises was at African Mall,<sup>5</sup> and the congregation was relocated to a Gaborone suburb (Broadhurst) in 1991, then to another (Block 7) in 2007.

Furthermore, the pilgrimage booklet (2007:4) noted that the church's administration office/building in Gaborone at first was at Charles Sulliman's private home. Scheffers' time of ministry began in 1972, and he retired from that position in 1988. Bathoen Dimo led the assembly from 1988 to 1991 in buildings which were in a declining state. In 1990, Jahannes Mentz Kgwarapi took over the leadership of the Gaborone congregation, having been transferred from the Francistown congregation, and he is currently the senior and occupant minister of the Gaborone assembly, helped by David Khumo Sithamo. Kgwarapi was the leader of the national church from 1988 to 2013.

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<sup>5</sup> African Mall is an old (long established) relatively small mall within Gaborone city centre, whose shops and restaurant are mostly owned and run by Batswana of Indian origin.

In addition, the pilgrimage booklet (2007:4) revealed that in 1991 the gathering which had a participation of around 300, moved from the African Mall to new and greater structures in Broadhurst. The congregation began to develop and grow exceptionally quickly, which eventually resulted in the Broadhurst building turning out to be excessively small for the numerical growth. From 1993 to 1994, the administration of the assemblage began searching for a greater plot that could accommodate around 5000 individual members. By then, the Botswana Ministry of Land and Housing (MLH) allocated the congregation a plot in Block 8 which the administration felt was too small. Then the church administration approached the public authority to plea for a greater plot. In 2005 the public authority offered the congregation a greater plot of about 3.5 hectares in Block 7. The Gaborone AFM had to hand back block 8 plot to MLH. The Block 7 church building, with capacity of about 1500, was completed within the proposed time frame, and the first church service at the church building was in 2007.

The pilgrimage booklet (2007:5) noted that the AFM congregation has the church board, minister's gatherings, youth group, Sunday school, kindergarten, worship and praising band/team, and individual members of the church, as well as praise-and-worship team and the team leader.

### **2.2.2 The Assemblies of God Church**

The Assemblies of God Church began from the Azusa Street Revival of the mid twentieth century, and the revival prompted the establishing, in 1914, of the Assemblies of God in the United States (Legg, 1984:41). It was not until 1988 that international cooperation took shape. As a Pentecostal cooperation, the Assemblies of God has confidence in the Pentecostal characteristic of the sanctification through the Holy Spirit with the proof of talking in tongues. According to Legg (1984:35), amongst many other socio-spiritual phenomena, the Azusa Street Revival brought unique and vibrant form or type of music sung by individuals in a state of heightened spiritual awareness, largely due to being “saved and baptised in the Holy Ghost,” physically manifested by glossolalia or speaking in tongues.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>A language that is unknown to the one who utters it, but is facilitated by the Holy Spirit. Historically, African-Americans would invite whites to attend such “revival” meetings and insisting on complete interracial

By 1914 many priests and lay people started to acknowledge how extensive the spread of the restoration/revival and Pentecostalism had become. For instance, in April 1914, subsequent to isolating from the Church of God in Christ, a division of African American initiative, comprising of about 300 white ministers and laymen from 20 states and a few outside nations met for a gathering in Hot Springs, Arkansas, United States (Legg, 1984:45). It is worth noting that according to Legg (1984:45), Charles Parham was of the group that isolated itself from the Asuza Street Pentecostal movement which became known as Assemblies of God, due to issues associated with the emotionalism which was associated singing and speaking in tongues (glossolalia), as well as issues of race and the physical expressions of the “baptism in the Holy Spirit”.

#### **2.2.2.1 Overview of Assemblies of God Church of Botswana**

In an interview which was conducted by the researcher in 2021, Tshokodu said that the Assemblies of God church was established in 1963 in Botswana by Mmusi Samoeel Makgaola and Daniel Mogotsi. In a short period of time they were joined by Pastor Monageng. The first branches emerged sometime later and these included Lobatse, Molepolole, Gaborone, and Manyana. The church kept on growing to a point whereby in 1973 a Pastor's School called Assemblies of God Bible College was formed and this school produced pastors and even chaplains. Any aspiring pastor had to go through the school before he/she could go to lead a church. The school is currently accredited by Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA) and Botswana Training Authority (BOTA). The pastoral school trains pastors for various churches too, that is, it is not only aiming to train pastors from Assemblies of God Church.

In the interview, Tshokudu (2021) further stated that the church kept on growing in terms of membership and number of branches such that Pastor Justice Monageng ended up being at Selibe-Phikwe, while Pastor Makgaola was heading a branch of the church in Gaborone, and in Lobatse a branch of the church was led by Pastor Mogotsi. Mogotsi then established a branch at Manyana and headed the two branches. By the time when Mogotsi was at Lobatse, Monageng was in the Molepolole branch. Later on, another man joined them: Jeffrey Mogome. This is how the church kept on growing, that is, growth was attained by establishing branches

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participation despite the fact that the music used reflected issues that were unique to the African-American community.

in different parts of Botswana. However, during that period the pastors were up to seven in number. Nowadays the number of pastors is 113 country-wide. Bishop Tshukudu noted that some of the current Assemblies of God church Pastors are lecturers at Assemblies Bible School.

#### **2.2.2.2 Assemblies of God Church of Mochudi Branch**

Bishop Tshukudu (2021) also stated that when a student pastor has successfully completed his or her training at the Bible School, they would normally be posted to any places where the church leadership felt that there is a need for the pastors. For instance, after Bishop Tshukudu completed his studies in 1988, he was posted to Mochudi, where he had to establish Mochudi Assemblies of God Church branch from scratch. During those years there were a lot of vacant posts (or vacancies) for newly ordained pastors, to the extent that individual pastors would be asked to indicate their preferred place for pastoring. At Mochudi, Tshukudu had no place or area for church fellowship. However, he asked for a classroom in a school called Lentswe Primary School for church fellowship. The church kept growing until they found the current place of worship, which at first was someone's plot who sold it to them, and the branch moved in from Lentswe Primary School. The church managed to secure the land for a new and bigger church building and the mission house. Before a mission house was built, a church member decided to accommodate the pastor and his family for free in her two-roomed house. The church building was smaller by then and later on, it was extended because the number of attendants had increased and could not accommodate them as it was too small for the number.

Bishop Tshokudu (2021) stated that the church is comprised of the following structure; Pastor's council, church board, church committee, church band/ praising worship team, church elders, church youth group, and Sunday school. The general membership includes all age groups.

#### **2.2.3 Echoes of Joy Ministry in Botswana**

In an interview conducted by the researcher with Pastor Master Ndimande of Echoes of Joy Ministry in 2021, the pastor said that Echoes of Joy Ministry is a non-governmental organization for Christian healing and prophecy founded and registered in 2000 by himself. In addition, Ndimande noted that the vision of Echoes of Joy Ministry is saving the lost souls at any cost and making Jesus Christ known in the local communities. In the same interview, Ndimande (2021) further noted that the church started in a sitting room in Broadhurst. Then

due to the church's expansion in terms of membership the church moved to a larger area in Tsholofelo, a suburb in Gaborone, after Ndimande prayed for a woman who was suffering from painful feet and was instantly healed. This led to increase in the number of attendants of the Sunday service cell group, as apparently more people in the locality started believing that some of their health issues could be addressed through their membership within the church. Later on, a cell group for services during the week was established. The increase in the number of attendants of the cell group led to the establishment of a Sunday service so that the prayer sessions and church service were no longer held at the family home but under a big tree at the political freedom square every day of the week.

Because of the harsh conditions in the open space under the tree, the church moved to Gaborone West and rented a hall at a Preschool called Pidipidi. It was there that the congregation grew and the church decided to find a decent place of worship in 2005. The church moved from Pidipidi Preschool to a rented warehouse in Gaborone West next to Ghantsi Beef (a local landmark). Later on, the place was sold and the church moved to and rented part of Gaborone International College of Professional Studies' premises in Mogoditshane, as well as part of Newtown Primary School premises in Gaborone. During that time the founder, Ndimande solicited a piece of land in the Kgatleng district in Malotwane village and that is where the church has made permanent structure for a place of worship to date. The church worships in different places such as Serowe, Mahalapye, Palapye and Lesanapole, where the church ends up open-cell groups and branches.

The church founder, Ndimande, holds a diploma from Rhema Training Bible Centre and a degree in Business Administration and theology from the University of South Africa.

The church is comprised of the following structure, Pastor's council, church board, church committee, church band/ praising worship team, church elders, church youth, and Sunday school. The general membership includes all age groups.



### **2.3 The Churches' Worship Participants**

Notwithstanding the fact that these churches believe that Christ is the ultimate head of the church, the musical hierarchy in the three churches is as follows: the pastor as the head or overseer of the church; followed by praise and worship team (comprising of instrumentalists and vocalists) with its own leader; and the rest of the congregation. According to Cabaniss (2010), the more trust the pastor and the praise and worship team have for one another, the more effective praise-and-worship sessions would be. The pastor articulates the set goals and vision for the church to the staff, and then to the rest of the congregation. According to Alford (2003), the pastor is the overseer of services rendered by the church's gospel music choir or praise-and-worship team. Indeed, Liesch (1996) noted that a full participation of a pastor in worship gives birth to a worshipping church. The main responsibilities for the church's praise and worship team leader entails the selection of songs in advance for church service, assisting in the smooth operation of the church service by the administration of the gospel music at regular intervals as a "fill-in" (Guthrie, 2011).

In the development of the three churches included in this study, women took positions as pastors, evangelists, and most importantly, as church musicians or praise and worship team leaders. Thus, historically, women lead songs of praise and worship in Pentecostal churches, and this is inclusive of Echoes of Joy Ministry, Apostolic Faith Mission, and Assemblies of God. Therefore, the apparent challenge in these churches had been that when these women get married in churches other than their denominations, they would leave a "vacuum" in their original church and the gospel music in their previous church tend to suffer in the process. Surely, this scenario negatively affects the quality of the ministry of gospel music in these Pentecostal churches.

Through various efforts and musical styles, the three Pentecostal churches (and other Pentecostal churches in Botswana) have used prayers, preaching, and most importantly, music since their inception to encourage people to attend church services. According to Triplett (1988), the importance of gospel music in Pentecostal churches is that "probably no other force in Christendom uses music for the glory of God and the salvation of lost souls as do the Pentecostals". It is clear that under the auspices of evangelism, it is believed that gospel music, particularly praise-and-worship songs, laid the foundation for the preaching of the gospel, and the preaching of the gospel gave people the opportunity to come to the altar towards the end of

the service. It is therefore of paramount importance that among other things, the current study investigates the importance of gospel music in so far as the preaching of the gospel message is concerned.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

The historical roots as well as churches' leadership, and the structure of musical leadership of the churches that the researcher chose for case study, namely, Echoes of Joy Church (Mochudi), Assemblies of God Church (Mochudi branch) and Apostolic Faith Mission Church (Gaborone branch), were discussed in this chapter.

The discussion of the origins of the three churches revealed that both Assemblies of God and Apostolic Faith Mission have the same origin, that is, their establishments were prompted and motivated by the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in the United States of America (Legg, 1984:41 and Chikane, 2019). Therefore, one expects the two churches to have many things in common, particularly in the area of gospel music, as well as the structure of praise and worship services within their respective churches. For instance, according to the researcher's observations and informal interactions with member friends from the two churches, both churches believe in and practice the Pentecostal characteristic of sanctification with the Holy Spirit and the gift of talking in tongues. Indeed, according to the above discussion on the origin of Assemblies of God, Legg (1984:41) noted that Assemblies of God has confidence in Pentecostal characteristic of sanctification with the Holy Spirit, amongst many other socio-spiritual phenomena. The researcher notes that such speaking in tongues often finds its way into the singing of praise and worship songs. In addition, this chapter has revealed that the Azusa Street Revival brought unique and vibrant type of music sung by individuals in a state of heightened spiritual awareness, often physically manifested by speaking in tongues as part of worship.

This chapter has revealed that the three Pentecostal churches considered in this study have used prayers, preaching, and most importantly, music since their inception to encourage to spread the Word of God (the gospel) for the salvation of souls as well as to glorify God. In this chapter, it has been clear from the information collected from the literature and the churches' leadership (or oral "historians") that gospel music, particularly praise-and-worship songs, laid the

foundation for the spreading of the gospel message. It is therefore of paramount importance that the current study investigates the pastors', musicians' and church members' perceptions of gospel music in the church. Such investigation in terms of soliciting information/data is as discussed in the next three chapters (chapters 3, 4 and 5).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **PASTORS' PERCEPTIONS ON GOSPEL MUSIC**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This research project was conducted to find out how the stakeholder perceives gospel music in the selected three churches within Botswana. The data collection focused on the following stakeholders, one pastor, two musicians, and four members from each church. This chapter focuses on the responses of the pastors of the three churches.

#### **3.2 Pastors' Role in Nurturing the Environment for Gospel Music**

By virtue of their responsibilities and roles in the church, the pastors were important as part of the research, particularly because they are viewed as the drivers of the organisation of gospel music, as well as the drivers of the purpose for which most of the gospel songs are sung. In particular, the musical hierarchy in the three churches is such that the pastor is the overseer of the church; followed by praise and worship team with its own leader; and the rest of the congregation (Alford, 2003). It is therefore evident that it is important to know what pastors think about gospel music since the pastor articulates the set goals and vision for the church to the staff, and then to the rest of the congregation.

In the following sections, the pastors' perceptions are presented in the order of their respective churches such that Echoes of Joy Ministry pastors are considered first, followed by Assemblies of God pastors and finally Apostolic Faith Mission pastors. It is important to note that this order is observed in the subsequent chapters as well.

#### **3.3 Echoes of Joy Ministry Pastor's Perspectives**

##### **3.3.1 The Perception of Gospel Music in the Church**

Pastor E (2021) remarked that gospel music is important to him in many ways because it gives life to him and the congregation; it gives a person who is discouraged hope; it brings salvation because it allows many people to come to Christ when they are weary, tired and perplexed. He

said in his church they have chosen to play gospel because of its uniqueness of timbre and simple melodies that make people like it and to listen to the lyrics of it. In addition, he said,

*When you look at the history of the slave trade in America, they used gospel music as a tool of hope and salvation. In my culture when we go for funerals or bereaved places we sing or play gospel music to get comforted and comfort the bereaved or distraught* (Pastor E 2021).

He noted that in times of difficulties gospel music is the best device to be used for healing and soothing the people who are in need, and the music helps him to teach or deliver the message easily. When the pastor was asked what part of the music brings healing and happiness, he said that, he believes that it is the lyrics because they carry messages which help one to believe and trust God for his healing power (Pastor E 2021). In addition, he noted that the act of singing together with other people helps them to enjoy gospel music and feel happy. Pastor E (2021) indicated that gospel music is one kind of music that can induce filling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. He said songs like ‘Moya’ (spirit) makes them get filled with the Holy Spirit. He said the lyrics of the song go like this,

Moya, Moya, O boitshepho Moya (Spirit, Spirit, Holy Spirit)  
Moya, Moya, Moya (Spirit, Spirit, Spirit)  
Moya, Moya, O boitshepho (Spirit, Spirit, Holy Spirit)  
Re tlatse ka maata a gago (Fill Us with Your Power)  
Moya, Moya, O boitshepho (Spirit, Spirit, Holy Spirit)  
Moya, Moya, Moya (Spirit, Spirit, Spirit)  
Moya, Moya, O boitshepho (Spirit, Spirit, Holy Spirit)  
Re tlatse ka maata a gago (Fill Us with Your Power).

He added, “*Gospel music lays the foundation for preaching the gospel, it makes people happy in the church and people get entertained while I am teaching in the church*” (Pastor E 2021).

The pastor’s response is in agreement with the assertion by Kitsiiri (2019:347), who stated that,

*Most scholars ... agree that gospel music has evolved because of three major reasons: to grow the flock, link everybody to commune with God and to reach the lost flock: all these are achieved through accommodating all the genres of music and dance styles in the music, both recorded and pulpit music. The intention behind all these reasons is*

*good and those who care for it perceive it as the only way to keep a balance within Christianity in that everybody should have a home in it.*

Importantly, though, Pastor E (2021) concedes that gospel music can be a form of entertainment. In other words, it is not only concerned with creating a spiritual atmosphere.

### **3.3.2 The message of Gospel Music**

As for the question of the message of gospel music, the pastor indicated that the message of gospel music is very clear: there is a God, a God who sees, hears, and heals. He added that it makes or encourages people to glorify God, persuading people to live in peace, and gospel music talks about salvation and deliverance from sin. He cited a song with lyrics, as one of the songs that encourages people to glorify God:

‘Re a bolela, radumela (We confess, and profess)

Re a bolela, radumela (We confess, and profess)

Re leboga maata a gago (We are thankful for Your strength)

Re ra bolele boitshpho jwa gago (We confess, that He is holy). (Repeat)

Haleluya, Haleluya (Hallelujah, Hallelujah)

Ao, re ra dumela boitshpho jwa gago (Oh, we confess, that He is holy)

Re ra bolele boitshpho jwa gago (We confess, that He is holy) (Repeat)

Re khuba ha pele gagago (We kneel before You)

Re bua bolo jwa gagwe (We magnify Your greatness)

O boitshepho (For You are holy)

Re tsholetsa matsogo (We lift our hands)

Ka gore o a tshephega (Because we only trust)

Ka maata a gawe ka sebele (In Your power alone)

Ka gore o boitshepho (Because You are holy).

Kgosi ya rona, re a leboga ka maata a gago (My Lord, we are thankful for Your power)

Re ra bolele boitshpho jwa gago (We confess that He is holy)

Kgosi ya rona, re a leboga ka maata a gago (My Saviour, we are thankful for Your power)

Re ra bolele boitshpho jwa gago (We confess that He is Holy)

Halleluya, Halleluya (Hallelujah, Hallelujah)

Re ra bolele boitshpho jwa gago (Oh, we confess, that He is Holy)

Re ra bolele boitshpho jwa gago (We confess, that He is Holy) (Repeat),

The pastor's assertion that gospel music talks about salvation and deliverance from sin is in agreement with Turne (2008:62), who stated that "*The word gospel means good news, and gospel music is the good news of the message of [salvation through] Jesus of Nazareth in song*".

### **3.3.3 Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

Pastor E (2021) perceives that the gospel is the message communicated to humankind's spirit through singing or playing gospel songs, and that listening to gospel music revives the spirit that is down, and communicates the good news message. He further stated that gospel music is communicated in many ways such as performing, playing music using different platforms such as the radio, television, and social-media platforms by chanting, reciting, and singing. This is in agreement with the assertion by Kernodle (2006:1) who pointed out that the recent marketing strategies have shown gospel music could be communicated through concerts, tours, music videos, television, radio, social media platforms as well as in the form of downloadable ring tones.

### **3.3.4 Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

As for the question of the effectiveness of communicating the intended message through gospel music, Pastor E (2021) stated, "*To me, gospel music is a very effective method of communicating the gospel message of salvation, the message of healing, the message of deliverance, and prayer*". In addition, he said, "*Throughout the generations, it has been proven*

*that it communicates the gospel message very effectively throughout history from slave era to date*” (Pastor E 2021). He also stated that gospel music reaches more people than preaching the Word of God (sermon) in a church set up, and that the music spreads the gospel message quickly as compared to preaching, and also reaches more people because it is listened to by both Christians and non-Christians. Pastor E (2021) said, *“The mode of posting gospel music in Facebook page and WhatsApp status I notice it is the way to spread gospel message quickly that is why I encourage my church members to use them”*. Indeed, Phillip (1982:7) noted that, *“With gospel music now being here in most protestant churches, in colleges and universities, in theatres and concerts halls, on recordings and radio, and movies and televisions, it is slowly becoming an integral part of world life”*.

### **3.3.5 The Creation of Community in the Church through Gospel Music**

Pastor E (2021) noted that *“Gospel music creates community in my church because it is the music of hope, peace, entertainment, enjoyment. It brings people together as a union in the church, even in any church gatherings or meetings, it maintains peace when listening to it.”*

The pastor further said that gospel music brings people together in the church community because people are coming from different communities with more or less the same problems and they need God’s intervention (Pastor E, 2021). He said that song like ‘God is able’ (Hillsongs United, 2011) play a role to sensitise people about God’s protection and work of salvation. He said the lyrics of the song are as follows:

God is able, He will never fail

He is almighty God

Greater than all we seek

Greater than all we ask

He has done great things.

#### **Chorus**

Lifted up, He defeated the grave

Raised to life, our God is able

In His name, we overcome



For the Lord, our God is able  
God is with us, God is on our side  
He will make a way  
Far above all we know  
Far above all we hope  
He has done great things.

### **Bridge**

God is with us, He will go before  
He will never leave us, He will never leave us  
God is for us, He has open arms  
He will never fail us, He will never fail us.<sup>7</sup>

Pastor E (2021) further stated that, *“When people come to the church and listen or hear the gospel music, they start to feel like they understand what one another is going through and realize that the gap is being closed by that kind of music”* (Pastor E 2021). Based on the researcher’s experience and observations over the years as a member of a local church, the implication of the pastor’s response is that the lyrics of gospel music as coined from the Word of God encourage or advocate for people to respect one another, trust each other, serve one another, and love one another, building or forming a church community in the process. Evidently, a church community develops and flourishes due to the fact that people come from different places with different socio-economic backgrounds having more or less the same problems which need God’s intervention, and therefore they find it easy to associate and identify with each other in a more relaxed and peaceful church environment. This coming together as a community would normally be more evident during gospel music practice and rehearsals when those involved in the practice sing and dance together and this very often resonates well with the rest of the church since gospel music performers interact with the rest of the congregation. Indeed, according to Williams-Jones (1975:383), *“Interaction between the*

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<sup>7</sup> Composers: Reuben Morgan and Ben Fielding (Hillsongs United, 2011).

*congregation and gospel performers is a tradition which has been observed in a similar pattern among Africans. Audience involvement and participation is vitally important in total gospel experience". Williams-Jones (1975:383) added that there is a lot music but to him, gospel music is the best and it is the only music that brings people together because it is a music of peace, harmony, joy, hope, and strength.*

### **3.3.6 Particular Way of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

Pastor E (2021) of the church acknowledged that there is a particular way of presenting gospel songs in his church. He further noted that the gospel songs are grouped into two groups, namely, worshipping songs and praising songs, where worshipping songs are normally slow and soft, while the praising songs are fast and loud. He remarked that, "*Praising songs are for praising God while worshipping songs are for worshipping and provoke the spiritual connection with God*" (Paster E 2021). A more detailed description of the distinction between praise and worshipping songs, which comes from Ghana, accords well with what Pastor E was describing:

*Praising songs are songs which have fast tempo and very loud when singing them. The tempo of the praising songs, which constitutes a seamless performance in which one chorus follows the other, usually starts at around one hundred and twenty to thirty beats per minute and then speeds up to sometimes one hundred and eighty beats per minute as people get excited and the dancing and singing becomes more and more intense, while worshipping song are slow in tempo or steady in beat and very soft in sound.*

*In stark contrast to the praise section, the music during worship, which immediately follows praises, is slow, sometimes unmetered, at other times in very slow triple or duple meter, and sometimes a cappella. Rather than dancing, people sway their bodies with their hands directed upwards, praying, some kneeling or lying with their face turned down, speaking in tongues, some breaking out into tears. The most important difference between praises and worship, as congregation members and pastors stressed, is, however, not so much the tempo of the music but generally the mind-set of worshippers (Carl, 2014:104).*

### **3.3.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

When asked about the function of gospel music within the pattern of worship, Pastor E (2021) said that in his church they start with praising songs that have a fast or very fast tempo, whereby the church is allowed to sing and dance to celebrate what has God and his Son is doing in their lives. The pastor also indicated that in the second part they present worship songs that are slow in tempo and these songs make them focus on God and think about what he has done for them. Furthermore, he remarked,

*It is normal when we go into this [second] part... we lift our hands. The worship songs lay a foundation to speak about the word of encouragement or gospel message for the day. Gospel music functions within the pattern of worship because it allows items of the service to move within a prescribed pattern (Pastor E 2021).*

The pastor also noted that gospel music in the church is presented in different languages and this is important since the congregation constitutes a community of people from different backgrounds. Such a gesture unites the church community, making them to be one body. Chitando (2002:81) concurs with the pastor when he said, “*Gospel music has provided an important avenue through which minority of languages stake their claim to be heard*”.

### **3.3.8 Bringing Structure in Worship through Gospel Music**

The pastor observed that gospel music helps bring structure to worship because it helps to focus on the mandate of the church, and that the mandate of the church is to teach or preach the message of God’s love towards humankind (salvation) through Jesus Christ (Pastor E 2021). Specifically, the mandate of the church is to encourage people to live in peace; to love their neighbours (or one another) as God loved by sending Jesus Christ to die for our salvation; and to glorify God for his good deeds. The pastor also noted that without gospel music, any church service structure or pattern is weak since gospel music is centred around Jesus Christ and God (Pastor E 2021).

### **3.4 Assembly of God Church Pastor's Perspectives**

#### **3.4.1 The Perception on the Importance of Gospel Music in the Church**

With regard to the role of gospel music in the church, Pastor AG (2021) said that the purpose of gospel music is

*To do the work of God ... using the gospel music in conjunction with the Word of God are two things that are impossible to separate. That is why there is the book of the Psalms in the Bible which specifically talks about music. The longest book in the Bible is the book of psalms and within that book, there is praise and worship message. The gospel music in my view it is a way of teaching gospel message.*

In addition, the pastor said that gospel music is a way of healing the emotions of troubled and grieved people, and that the music plays an important role in spreading the gospel message; comforting people; purifying and cleaning one's soul; entertaining Christians and non-Christians; lifting one's spiritual being (edification); and hope to the people in God's kingdom (Pastor AG 2021). When the pastor was asked to state which part of the gospel music brings happiness or healing, he indicated that he believes that the lyrics in the songs play a very important role of delivering message about God's healing power and his faithfulness in the need of his people (Pastor AG 2021). The pastor believes that people get healed because they trust God's power (Pastor AG 2021). He gave an example of a song entitled 'Exaltation', where the lyrics of the song are as follows;

He is exalted, my King is exalted on high, I will praise Him!

He is exalted, my King is exalted and I will praise His name!

He is the Lord, forever His truth shall reign.

Heaven and earth rejoicing His holy name.

He is exalted, my King is exalted on high.

Great is the Lord and worthy of glory.

Great is the Lord and worthy of praise.

Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice, now lift up your voice.

Great is the Lord, great is the Lord!

Great is the Lord, He is holy and just

By His power we trust in His love.

Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true.

By His mercy He proves He is love.<sup>8</sup>

He said the message of the lyrics is about the mercifulness and faithfulness of God. He also said, “*I view gospel music as a form of talking to the people ... Gospel music is the ministry of God which allows people to live the Christian life in times of happiness or tribulations*” (Pastor AG 2021). It is worth noting that in order for the spread of gospel message of deliverance and salvation through gospel music to be effective, it should be clear from the lyrics as to what message is being conveyed. Indeed, according to Kitsiiri (2019:347),

*Transformative perspective adherents tend to emphasize the content of music and carefully consider the weight laid in lyrics. In this case, the lyrics must be able to link and pass a clear and concise message to the listeners. By doing so, the spiritual effect is realized as an individual meditates upon the song in context. Generally, the instrumentals are considered secondary after lyrics but also the instrumentals should reflect the content.*

### **3.4.2 The Message of Gospel Music**

Pastor AG (2021) said that the message of gospel music talks about God’s grace, salvation, the kingdom of God, encourages people to live in peace, restores hope to the people, and also glorifies God for his good deeds. He added that, “One Psalmist composed a song entitled ‘Moya wame o inametse moteng’ (my soul is in the deep end) which talks about how that psalmist was in trouble”. The Pastor AG (2021) suggested that this song is one of example of songs which revive the spirit of individuals. Here are the lyrics of song:

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<sup>8</sup> Composer: Twila Paris (Publisher: Universal Music, 1994).

*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ware ee* (My soul says yes, says yes, says yes)  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ka tato ya gago* (My soul says yes, says yes to your will)  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ware ee* (My soul says yes, says yes, says yes)  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ka tato ya gago* (My soul says yes, says yes to your will).  
  
*Ha onkoga, ke tla gosala morag* (Where you lead me, I will follow)  
*Ha mpitsa, Ke go araba* (When you call me, I will answer)  
*Oo Morena wame, ke a kopa nthuta gogo itse* (Oh my Lord, please teach me how to know your way).  
  
*Ha onkoga, ke tla gosala morag* (Where you lead me, I will follow)  
*Ha mpitsa, Ke go araba* (When you call me, I will answer)  
*Oo Morena wame, ke a kopa nthuta gogo itse* (Oh my Lord, please teach me to know Your way).  
  
*Se se ka tsaya a se tsee* (Whatever it takes)  
*Kgale ke go bata* (Whenever you want)  
*Mo mothing o ke go thophile* (What moment you choose)  
*Ka nthata ya lenaneo lagago* (Whatever Your plan)  
*Oo Morena ago diragale thato ya gago mogonna* (Oh my Lord, let your will be done in me).  
  
*Nna sedi lame, nna mokaedi* (So be my light, be my guide)  
*Nna tsela ya me le thato ya gago* (Be my way, be my will)  
*Oo Morena tla o bee seatl sag ago mo thogo* (Oh my Lord, come lay your hands all over me).  
  
*Nna sedi lame le gonkela* (So be my light and be my guide)  
*Nna tsela yame le go rata gagago* (Be my way, be my will)  
*Oo Morena, tlaa o bee seatla sa gago mo thogong yame* (Oh my Lord, come lay your hand on my head).  
  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ware ee* (My soul says yes, says yes, says yes)  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ka tato ya gago* (My soul says yes, says yes to your will)  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ware ee* (My soul says yes, says yes, says yes)  
*Moy wame ware ee, ware ee, ka tato ya gago* (My soul says yes, says yes to your will).

*Sengwe le sengwe o se buang kana o se batang* (Whatever you say, whenever you want)  
*Dira thato ya gago ka tsela ya gagago* (Do it your way, do it your way)  
*Moya wame ware ee, moya ware ee, mmele wame ware ee* (My soul says yes, my spirit says yes, my body says yes).  
*Dira thato ya gago ka tsela ya gagago* (Do it Your way, do it Your way)  
*Bua lenna Morena, ntirisa Morena* (Speak to me, use me Lord).

The message of the song and what has been alluded to by the pastor imply that gospel music could be used to pour out our hearts or present our feelings before God through a gospel song as a desperate call to God for Him to restore one's peace and hope. In addition, the researcher notes that the gist of the pastor's response is in agreement with the assertion by Clement and Funmilayo (2016:57), who noted that,

*Gospel music as a genre of Christian music was composed and performed for many purposes ranging from entertainment, aesthetic and ceremonial purposes but with Christian texts. However, it varies according to culture and social context. From an African perspective, gospel music may be defined as a type of Christian music that preaches the "good news" of Jesus Christ and is made popular by public performances, the electronic media, and information technology such as radio, television the recording world, and the internet.*

### **3.4.3 Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

According to Pastor AG (2021), gospel music is like poems that are composed by the poet to spell out what troubles him or her; the "poems" spell out the gospel message in the context of the troubles. He noted that gospel music is communicated through different platforms such as composing, singing, playing a musical instrument, reciting, reading musical lyrics, media platforms, audio and visual types, and performing arts and outreach. However, Brewer (2015) emphasised the point that, "*The purpose of gospel music goes beyond mere instructions, but many ways, it allows for a direct connection with God in ways sermons can't or don't. It is therefore clear that singing allows part of our hearts to speak to God in a way that doesn't happen as we hear the spoken word*".

#### **3.4.4 Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

As for the effectiveness of communication through gospel music, the pastor said that gospel music is an effective method of communicating this message because through his observation people like music more than the teachings of gospel words. In particular, he stated that,

*We used to have outreach activities as a church. I have noticed that people stay longer during the presentation of gospel music but when the time for preaching comes you will find people leaving the gathering. Since I had observed that, I use music as a strategy to teach the Word of God. In my case, as a composer and performing artist while people think that I will preach I would have finished my preaching through gospel music and then I make an altar call pray for them (Pastor AG 2021).*

The pastor further said that according to his observation, gospel music is effective because music spreads quickly, reaches more people, teaches the Word of God better than preaching, and entertains while spreading the gospel message (Pastor AG 2021). In particular, Pastor AG (2021) said “My view is that media platform like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter play a very important role in spreading gospel message through gospel music songs because it reaches more people than church service”. Indeed, according to Van De Laar (2000:166), the development of worship components could prove to be valuable, extending the understanding of the role of worship music as a form of communication.

The pastor also pointed out that gospel music keeps on repeating from different platforms like radio, television, and social media platforms. Indeed, according to Chitando (2002:20), “Music has been an important vehicle for identifying formation, facilitating worship, and a source of entertainment across cultures”.

#### **3.4.5 The Creation of Community in the Church through Gospel Music**

Pastor AG (2021) indicated that gospel music brings and creates community in his church because people came to the church due to the influence of music. In particular, the pastor said,

*I can assure you that in many instances people came to the church because of gospel music. At one point someone would say I was passing by then the gospel music made me come into the church. In that case, they end up joining the church and becoming permanent*



*members. You will find that coming to the church due to gospel music message makes people to repent and surrender to the church (Pastor AG 2021).*

In addition, Pastor AG (2021) suggested that gospel music brings people together in his church because the music is the best maximum participation platform, and different structures such as youth, Sunday school, church band/worship and praising team, elders, and the general congregation would allow more participants to take part in respective groups which make them work as one unit. He noted that teaching is centred around one person (the preacher or the pastor), unlike music which involves many participants. Furthermore, Pastor (2021) said, *“It is also worth noting that scripture encourages us to find the music that allows our hearts to sing and connect to God. In my view the gospel has unique and compelling timbre, melodies, aesthetic and rhythmic pattern than other genre like hymns”*.

### **3.4.6 Particular Way of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

Pastor AG (2021) said that in his church, they present gospel songs in a particular form or pattern. He further said that they use worship songs for worshipping God and praise songs for praising God. The pastor also noted that the songs that are meant for worshipping songs are soft and slow in tempo, while praising songs are loud and fast in tempo, based on the different rhythmic patterns.

### **3.4.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

Pastor AG (2021) added that the existing patterns of gospel music function well within the pattern of worship in the manner that, from the beginning of the service till the end of the service gospel praise-and-worship songs are played in between the church service items to fill the gap. In particular, he stated that there is the praise-and-worship team leader who arranges the songs for that purpose and ensure that the pattern of presenting the songs is followed (Pastor AG 2021). The pastor noted that the pattern is such that the items assume the followings order; worship song, praising songs, prayer, worship songs or praising song, announcements, worship songs or praising song, thanksgiving and tithes, worship songs, Bible message or sermons by the preacher, worship songs or praising song and lastly a closing prayer (Pastor AG 2021). He also indicated that most of the time gospel music comes spontaneously while the congregation disperses. He said that in special services like Holy Communion they play worshipping songs

to make the congregation introspect themselves about the death of Jesus Christ (Pastor AG 2021).

#### **3.4.8 Bringing Structure in Worship through Gospel Music**

Pastor AG (2021) indicated that the patterns of gospel music help bring structure in worship together because they make service move or flow smoothly, to be enjoyable, as well as to have order and direction.

It is interesting to note that, thus far, two of the pastors mentioned that gospel music could be used as entertainment. When pastor AG was further probed on the question of entertainment, he said,

*Church members, particularly Christians, are always encouraged to choose listening to gospel music because it is a given fact that gospel music songs have appropriate lyrics for the soul and mind of a Christian. As Christians, we also have sentimental lives individually and collectively, such that at gatherings outside the church such as weddings and birthday parties of church members or Christians very often the occasions have an element of entertainment, and very often the Christian host would choose gospel music over other genre such as reggae or kwaito whose lyrics may not be appropriate. On the other hand, as a pastor, I feel that the lyrics of gospel songs during such celebrations are appropriate for people to listen to outside of church, and here I am talking from experience (Pastor AG 2021).*

It is clear from the pastor's response that the people will be positively influenced by the gospel music if they use it for entertainment. Therefore, it is of paramount importance to note that although gospel music could be used as part of entertainment, entertainment is not the main purpose as to why Christians should listen to it and play it. In particular, gospel music being played whether in church or other Christian platforms should first and foremost touch hearts and help individuals have communion with God through praise and worship by putting God as the centre of focus.

### **3.5 Apostolic Faith Mission Pastor's Perspectives**

#### **3.5.1 The Perception of Gospel Music in the Church**

When the pastors were asked to say what their perceptions of gospel music in the church was, Pastor AF (2021) responded by saying that it is important in the church because it is used for praising and glorifying God (Pastor AF 2021). He also noted that gospel music brings healing, encouragement, comfort, and deliverance to people, and in the process, individuals see the need or get influenced to convert to Christianity. When the pastor was asked what part of the music brings happiness and healing, he noted that, in his observation the part of music which brings happiness and healing is the lyrics, because he believes that the lyrics carry the messages which make one's mind and emotion to trust God for his faithfulness in their lives (Pastor AF 2021). In particular, he said,

*When someone comes to the church grieving and troubled, the gospel music brings happiness to the person and, and he or she gets healed or restored. Gospel music is the best way to praise and glorify God. When you read the book of Psalms in most cases it encourages people to praise and worship God through the music (Pastor AF, 2021).*

He added that for a pastor, gospel music is the best tool to make his teachings easier and also makes the listeners or congregation understand how to interpret the gospel message because gospel music message keeps on recurring and connecting to the gospel teachings. Pastor AF (2021) said that themes such as "faith" and "hope" and songs like "This is my saviour" make the teaching to be well understood or to be reinforced. The lyrics of the song entitled "This is my saviour" are as follows;

Bonang, go thagile marung (Behold is our saviour in the clouds)

Yo o shoetseng batho kgale (Who died for us long ago)

O tla tswa legodimong (He will come back from heaven)

Go phutha batho bothe (To gather his people)

Balatedi ba Jesu (The followers of Jesus)

Ba bapile le ena (Seek refuge in Him)

Matho a bona ke metsu (their eye thorn)

Ba lwelaa Morena (Fighting for the Lord) (Repeat)

## **Refrain**

Halleluya, Halleluya

Lumelang, Halleluya (Greeting) (Repeat)

Itumeleng, bana ba me (Rejoice my children)

Lona lothe bale nthatang (All you who love me)

Togelang mmu, le tholetsege (Leave the dust and arise)

Tlang go nna 'nkatamelang (Come to me, come closer). (Repeat)

Indeed, according to Clement and Funmilayo (2016:54),

*Music and religion are inseparable, be it traditional, Christianity or Islamic. It plays a vital role in the relationship between man and God. For Christians, music forms one of the fundamental elements in church liturgy and it plays an integral part in worship service. However, music has a propelling effect of inspiring one's soul to God, but it all depends on the kind and style of music performed.*

### **3.5.2 The Message of Gospel Music**

In the case of the message that gospel music carries, Pastor AF (2021) noted that the message of gospel music talks about the greatness of God; the truth and faithfulness of God; God's blessings and grace to humankind; the love of God and his compassion to the people; and God as the healer and ruler. Also, the pastor pointed out that while there are different styles of gospel song, they all carry the gospel message about the goodness of God. Indeed, Calvin (2015:14), speaking about Nigerian gospel music, agrees,

*Gospel music is a very distinct genre in the contemporary Nigerian hip-hop industry. Its distinctness is viewed in its lyrical construction as well as in the relatively morally sensitive instrumentation often adopted by its various makers. In effect, Christian music is distinct by its religious (spiritual) themes, orientation, and purposes.*

In addition to this, the message that gospel music conveys is often considered by its proponents as timeless; it pays tribute to God and contains powerful spiritual messages of worship, praise, and evangelism (Frame, 1998:25-26; Hodges, 2000:73; Ajiri, 2013:1-2; Essoh and Ending,

2014; Lewis, 2000:76). Pastor AF (2021) is in agreement with this understanding of gospel music. Furthermore, contrarily to secular music, gospel music is more than an artistic expression and emotional experience as it is, in theory, directly inspired by God (Colossians 3:16) and as such, is perceived to be loaded with divine energy and dynamism to reach to the very depths of the listener's soul and touch every aspect of his or her being (Schineller, 2003).

### **3.5.3 Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

Pastor AF (2021) said the intended message which is conveyed through gospel music is communicated using many platforms. For example, he noted that in his church they have a television screen that shows gospel lyrics during church service, and the band (praise-and-worship team) plays the music using musical instruments while people sing along with it by referring to the words or lyrics on the screen. He pointed out that gospel music reaches people through performances, concerts, social media platforms, video and audio types, and also radio stations, and television stations (Pastor AF 2021). Ojo (1988:216) also had a view similar to that of Pastor AF when he said, "*Gospel music is different from other kinds of music concerning the text, the performer, and the context. Gospel music is performed in various contexts, including revivals, outreaches, in the public - media such as radio and television; and even in churches*". Thus, Pastor AF and Ojo agree that gospel music has a place both in the church and in the secular sphere.

### **3.5.4 Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

Pastor AF (2021) perceived the use of gospel music inside and outside the church as an effective method of communicating the gospel message because music reaches more people and spreads more quickly than a sermon delivered in church; and most gospel songs are presented or performed in different languages in order to accommodate different communities or people of different backgrounds to listen to the music. He also stated that the message carried by gospel music is effective in bringing hope, peace, comforting people, encouraging, and also it builds a person as it acts as a prayer contact to God. Pastor AF (2021) noted that in the church they have a Facebook page for the purpose of playing gospel music, and he also encourages his church members to use social media like WhatsApp to post gospel music in their status in order to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ through music and for their edification. Indeed, as Chitando (1999:338) would say, it is a way of the church exploring "*alternative ways of doing theology*".

### **3.5.5 The Creation of Community in the Church through Gospel Music**

Pastor AF (2021) perceives gospel music as a catalyst for community:

*Gospel music builds the community in my church because it has different messages it portrays to the people who are coming to the church. Some of the messages delivered by gospel music are those that preach respect for one another, trusting each other, serving one another, and loving one another, and doing this in the presence of God to make Him happier. Gospel music builds the people [or a healthy community].*

Furthermore, Pastor AF (2021) noted that gospel music brings people together in his church community in many ways. He pointed out that, “*Practising and rehearsing together, singing and dancing together in the church service or activities, ensures that gospel music allows people to socialise freely*”, and that participating in singing gospel music as a church is a way of sharing the Word of God and helps members to understand the gospel better (Pastor AF 2021).

### **3.5.6 Particular Way of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

As to a particular way of presenting gospel song in the church, Pastor AF (2021), stated that,

*There is a particular way of presenting gospel songs in my church. There are praising songs that praise God and these songs lead to the worshipping songs. Praising and worshipping songs have a specific purpose in the church service. Any gospel song is administered based on a particular work [or particular church service session]. The gospel band [or praise-and-worship team] usually make a list of songs with the help of music director or pastor based on how the service will be conducted.*

In addition, he pointed out that during prayer and healing sessions they play and sing gospel songs that suit that particular session. Pastor AF (2021) also revealed that when it is time for prayer, healing, and deliverance for people they play or sing songs with themes like “healing God”, “God loves His people”, “God is able”, and “God does not segregate people”, because these gospel songs suit that particular session. Thus, Pastor AF advocates for the content of the music to align with the liturgical action.

### **3.5.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

Pastor AF (2021) noted that the function of gospel music within the pattern of worship could be observed in a normal service or special service. Gospel music is not sung just for fun in the church, but there is a plan and arrangement of how music will be administered in that particular service or activity. He also stated that the pattern is such that at the beginning of the service the church band leads the congregation by singing and playing praising songs, followed by prayer, then worshipping songs come in, then announcements, after which music led by praise-and-worship team resumes. He went on to say that after a couple of songs presented by the praise-and-worship team, the pastor or preacher presents the sermon of the of day, and while he or she is preaching they allow for gospel music to come in at certain times to ensure that there is excitement and joy in the church. These, he said, are followed by a closing prayer.

### **3.5.8 Bringing Structure in Worship through Gospel Music**

As for bringing structure in worship through gospel music, Pastor AF (2021) remarked that,

*Gospel music is helpful in bringing structure in worship because it blends all the church service activities, allowing the patterns of church proceedings to flow, makes the service delightful [or joyful], makes people connect to God, and gospel music gives peace.*

### **3.6 The Format of the Service in the Three Churches**

The discussion on the format of the service in the church as alluded by the pastors is of paramount importance since it could be referred to every time the function of gospel music is being discussed in the subsequent chapters. From the pastors' responses, it is clear that, in general, the format of the service within the church is such that the services start with several praise songs, then transitions to worship songs, where worship songs interlude prayers; then announcements, offerings, tithes and thanksgiving, and altar-calls for healing and deliverance prayers. These are followed by the sermon, where the sermon is preceeded by worshipping songs. Table 3.1 below presents the format of a typical church service activities common to the three churches.

**Table: 3.1 Church Service Activities**

Activity Order	Items
1 <sup>st</sup>	Praising song and dancing
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Worshipping songs
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Prayers and prayers items
4 <sup>th</sup>	Praising and worshipping songs
5 <sup>th</sup>	Announcements, offerings, tithes, thanksgiving
6 <sup>th</sup>	Worshipping songs
7 <sup>th</sup>	Altar-call, healing prayers, deliverance by pastor
8 <sup>th</sup>	Worshipping leading to sermons
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sermons or Sharing. Pastor will allow worship or praising songs interlude
10 <sup>th</sup>	Closing prayer and few song to allow the congregation to disperse

It has also been evident concerning the gospel music in the church, that the perception of the pastors (church overseers) is that gospel music works as a kind of glue, holding all the separate parts of the service together. In this sense, gospel music in the church is transitionary in nature, that is, it transitions one section to the next so that the change does not seem too sudden or abrupt.

### **3.7 Conclusions**

In this chapter, it was important to discuss the perceptions of pastors regarding gospel music since the pastors articulate the set goals and vision for the church to the church board, musicians (church band), and then to the rest of the congregation. It has been clear from the responses of all the pastors that the praise and worship team provide musical interludes during the church service. It was also revealed that gospel music is helpful in bringing structure in worship by blending all the church service activities. In this way services flow without unnecessary abrupt stops, thereby creating orderly church proceedings with smooth transitions between items.



In general, the pastors indicated that the message of gospel music is about God's grace of salvation and deliverance from sin, whereby within the church environment, the music lays the foundation for the preaching of the gospel or for the presentation of the sermon. Specifically, the chapter revealed that the importance of gospel music in evangelism, and nurturing (under the leadership of the pastors). In addition, the pastors' view was that the lyrics of gospel music restore hope to the people and glorify God for His good deeds. Additionally, it can be used to present our feelings before God, like the biblical psalms, as a desperate call to God to restore peace and hope.

Regarding the communication of gospel music, generally the pastors stated that the gospel music is communicated through performing, playing music using different platforms such as the radio, television, and social-media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter. The advantage of these media platforms is that gospel message spread through them reaches more people (from afar and diverse backgrounds) than church service sermons. In general, it was also noted that gospel music presented or performed in different languages inside and outside the church is an effective method of communicating the gospel message. The researcher notes that by having gospel music performed in the church using different languages accommodates different communities and encourages people of different backgrounds to listen to the music, without any language barrier.

It was also revealed that the lyrics of gospel music as coined from the Word of God encourage the people to respect one another, trust each other, serve one another, and love one another, building or forming a church community in the process since people from different places with different socio-economic backgrounds having more or less the same problems which need God's intervention are easy to associate and identify with each other in a more relaxed and peaceful church environment. In addition, when people within the church (particularly praise and worship team members) practise and rehearse together, sing and dance together they tend to socialise freely thereby forming a community of believers.

Generally, it was revealed that the part of the gospel music that play an important role in bringing happiness or healing are the lyrics in the songs since the lyrics can deliver message

about God's healing power. In particular, the lyrics carry the messages which make one's mind and emotion to trust God for his faithfulness in their lives.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE PERCEPTIONS OF CHURCH MUSCIANS ON GOSPEL MUSIC**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the perceptions on the importance and role of gospel music from various musicians in the selected churches of Gaborone and Mochudi, Botswana, is discussed. The discussion of the perceptions of the musicians is in order of their respective churches. The musicians were interviewed separately in order to have independent responses that ensure that there no biased results. In particular, individual interviews had an advantage since the individual responses could be easily/conveniently cross-checked for similar responses from musicians from the same church. It is important to note that all the interviews were conducted in English.

#### **4.2 The Perceptions of the Musicians of Echoes of Joy Ministry**

The participants from this church were members of the church's band (praise-and-worship team). The praise and worship team consists of 8 female and 5 male vocalists, 2 lead guitarists, 1 drummer, 1 keyboardist, and 1 bass guitarist. In addition to electric lead and bass guitars, musical keyboards and drums kits, there is also a tambourine which is often played/used by either one of the vocalists, praise-and-worship team leader or one of the members of the congregation. The church is responsible for financing the church band by buying and repairing the instruments, as well as providing the musicians with living allowances. The songs that are sung and played by the praise-and worship team (or the church band) are mostly from a range of different composers, both international and local, and the rest are composed by church members. Most of the band members are self-taught musicians while others learn to sing and play music to the right tunes from fellow band mates during band practicing schedules. The praise-and-worship team usually have days to practise how to play and sing gospel music songs after working hours at around 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays. The band master is the one who is responsible for the running of praise and worship team/band, particularly in ensuring that activities such as rehearsals, meetings, and the planning and selection of songs run smoothly without hindrances.

This music ensemble, hereafter referred to as the combo, serves to accompany the lead singer and congregation and also provided interludes during the church service.

#### **4.2.1 The Perception of the Importance of Gospel Music in the Church**

Musician 1E (2021) says that gospel music soothes the mind, eases tension in the body, and brings one close to God. The researcher had an opportunity to further probe musician 1E as to how gospel music soothes and revives her soul. In response, musician 1E (2021) said, *“Lyrics from a soft music with slow tempo revives and soothes my heart or my soul. Is like, all the lyrics of gospel music songs could be tailor-made to address anxiety and worries. Why do you think people who sing gospel songs when they are drunk often cry during the singing process? The answer is simple! It is partly because of the lyrics that they can associate their problems and anxieties with”*. Even the melody plays a role. Gospel music, in her view, heals the soul in times of trials, tribulations, turmoil, and persecution giving peace and stillness. For instance, she said, *“Gospel music [melodies and lyrics] revives my soul when it wearies. This makes me as a musician to continue to sing for the people and God”* (Musician 1E 2021). When she was asked how music revives her soul, she noted that, the lyrics carry the messages which makes her believe, have hope, and also to trust God for his faithfulness in her life. She said, *“For example, song like ‘Go seame’ (It is well) revives my soul and trust God for his faithfulness”* (Musician 1E 2021). She said that its lyrics go like this.

*Goseame, goseame (It is well, it is well)*

*Goseame, goseame ka thato ya gago (It is well, if it is Your will)*

*Rea go rapela, Tau ya letso la legodimo, ka gore re leohile (We pray to You, Lion of the Heavens, for we have sinned)*

*Rrara, lefatshe le kgathonong le rona, re itshwarele (Father, this world is against us, forgive us)*

*A re tsamaye le wena, re dire ditaolo tsagago (Let us walk with you, abide in you)*

*Tsa lefatshe di kgathanong le rona (That of earth is against us)*

*Sicel’ amandla phezuluRe di esela re kopa maata gotswa legodimong (We ask for strength from above)*

*Masambe nawe, s'hlale nawe A re tsamaye le wena, re dire ditaolo tsagago* (Let us walk with You, abide in You)

*Siyabonga, Siyabonga Tanki Morena, tanki Morena* (We thank You, we thank You)

*Siyabonga, ng'umusa wakho Tanki ka mautwele bothoko a gago Morena* (We thank you for Your grace). (Repeat)

In addition, musician 2E (2021) in an interview pointed out that gospel music lyrics and the beat, in his view, offer peace of mind when he is lonely or hurt. He viewed gospel music lyrics and melodies as healing tools of gospel music during times of grief and it also brings people together. When further probed by the researcher on the importance of gospel music for people with diverse socio-economic and political backgrounds, the research participant revealed that gospel music promotes unity and love amongst the church members which transcends the church physical boundaries out to social and political realm (Musician 2E 2021). This is in agreement Carren Jan (2019), who said,

*Gospel music is the music of hope and fortitude even amid the greatest of odds. It is an expressive art form that has its roots not just in religion, but politics, history and culture. It is a sound of a people brought together by their difficult circumstances, looking for others to lean on in solidarity. Gospel music has such a powerful effect that it enabled communities to mobilize and elect politicians that would fight for their interests. Until today, its power cannot be discounted.*

Musician 1E (2021) also stated that gospel music can work as a form of prayer and therefore can bring people closer to God.

#### **4.2.2 The Message of Gospel Music**

Musician 1E (2021) in an interview noted that gospel music makes the preaching or message of the gospel to be loved by ordinary people. She remarked that gospel music teaches God's faithfulness and His omnipotence. In addition, 1E (2021) said that gospel music is used as a device to send a message of salvation. She further said that gospel music allows people to sing together and spread the love of Jesus Christ. She said that there are many songs that carry or

spread the message of salvation – songs like *Lona ba ratang ho phela* (You who desired to live), whose lyric are as follows:

*Lona ba ratang ho phela* (You who desired to live)  
*Mohlapeng wa Jesu* (Within Jesus' flock/Kingdom)  
*Hopolang tsietsi tsa tsela* (Remember the trials of the way)  
*E isang ha eso.* (That leads us home)

*Ke 'mila o moosesane* (The path is narrow)  
*O hakang maoatla* (That traps the foolish)  
*Le kgoro e patisane* (The door is small/narrow)  
*E kenwa ka matla.* (That is entered by power)

*Nonyana di na le matlo* (Birds of the air have homes)  
*Di dula monateng* (That they live in harmony)  
*Ha ho moo hloho ya Jesu* (But Jesus does not have)  
*E ka sameloang teng.* (A place to rest His head)

*Ba inkele sefapano* (They must carry their own cross)  
*Mahetleng a bona* (On their shoulders)  
*Ba tle ba shoele likano* (And die for the covenant)  
*Tse ba leng ho tsona.* (That they have made)

Amen Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen, Amen, Amen.

*Ba inkele sefapano* (They must carry their own cross)  
*Mahetleng a bona* (On their shoulders)  
*Ba tle ba shoele likano* (And die for the covenant)  
*Tse ba leng ho tsona.* (That they have made)

*Nonyana di na le matlo* (Birds of the air have homes)  
*Di dula monateng* (That they live in harmony)  
*Ha ho moo hloho ya Jesu* (But Jesus does not have)  
*E ka sameloang teng.* (A resting place there)

Amen Amen, Amen, Amen

Amen, Amen, Amen

Amen Amen, Amen, Amen

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka (*Forgive me my sins*)

Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka (*Forgive me my sins*)

Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka. (*Forgive me my sins*) (*Repeat*)

Morena re hauhele (*Lord have mercy on me*)

Morena re hauhele (*Lord have mercy on me*)

Morena re hauhele. (*Lord have mercy on me*) (*Repeat*)

Indeed, according to Chitando (2002:57), for any song to qualify to be called a gospel song, it has to be connected in some way to the central message of Christianity. It is therefore clear that the responses of musician 1E concerning the message of gospel music, particularly the gospel music being viewed as a device to portray God's faithfulness as well as a device to send a message of salvation, is in agreement with the literature.

#### **4.2.3 How the Message is Communicated through Gospel Music**

Musician 1E (2021) pointed out that gospel music communicates the message by offering a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, through worshipping, which brings people close to God. She said that gospel music communicates the message through supplication as a means of surrendering unto God. She added, "*When gospel tunes are presented in any form people feel relieved and safe as the gospel music songs emphasize God's kindness, love, and protection against the devil*" (Musician 1E 2021). It is clear that the perception of Musician 1E (2021) was that music motivates people and the use of relevant lyrics gives assurance of unfailing God's protection, kindness and love.

Musician 1E (2021) further said, "*I understand that gospel music message is communicated through performing, musical instrument, media platforms, visual and audiotapes, and also reciting, singing and reading musical lyrics*". She further pointed out that she thinks that gospel

music composers compose the music for the people to listen to it to grasp the message of salvation rather than for entertainment.

According to Chitando (1999:338), “As the church in Africa ‘explore alternative ways of doing theology’, gospel music may be regarded as a developer of narrative theology”. Musician 1E assertion that gospel music is one way of spreading the word of salvation concurs with this.

#### **4.2.4 Gospel Music is an Effective Method of Communicating Gospel Message**

Musician 1E (2021) pointed out that gospel music is an effective method of communicating the message of the gospel in the sense that the message spreads quickly and is repeated again and again. She said that it draws the listener closer to God and preaches salvation and also brings deliverance from the bondages, setbacks, and afflictions. As to the question of how gospel music brings people closer to God, musician 1E (2021) indicated that the sooth of the heart and soul, peace and assurance of God’s protection and love that comes from a combination the lyrics and melodies compels the listener to be more dependent on God, thus getting closer to God. In addition, she noted that gospel music provides deliverance from sin through “*the lyrics coined directly from the Word of God about the gospel of Jesus Christ who died for our sins for us to be delivered from the bondage of fear of the devil and from the bondage of been addicted to sin*” (Musician 1E 2021).

On the other hand, musician 2E stressed that gospel music is the best and effective method of communicating the message of the gospel, and therefore, gospel music spreads quickly since generally most people prefer to listen to music than sermons, music can be repeated, thus, it allows people to understand the word better. He also pointed out that gospel music is an effective method because it centres around God’s mercy, love, and forgiveness. Indeed, according to Heard (2014), “*The power, energy, and message of the gospel music...[touches] mind, body, [and] soul*” for the listeners to get closer to God for the deliverance from sin and worries and anxiety that trouble the mind, body and soul



#### 4.2.5 Gospel Music brings People together and Create Community in the Church

Musician 1E (2021) said that gospel music creates a community in her church by allowing people to sing. She further said, *“During praise-and-worship team practices, I have observed that there is a lot of interaction among the group members. Again, the congregation enjoys singing together and listening to the gospel music presented by the church band/worship team in the church service. They are in one accord in honouring God”* (Musician 1E 2021). On further probing, musician 1E (2021) stated that the interaction of the members of the church band is mostly socialising and getting to know each other, and for some, the opportunity to identify prayer partners. She also said that the church has established certain groups or structures such as the main church band, junior band, women’s sector, men’s sector, church elders, and Sunday School which keep on growing because they allow the new members who are influenced by the gospel music to join them. She added, *“People sing together, dance and hug each other while they are singing. They sing as a team and have common understanding”* (Musician 1E 2021).

Likewise, musician 2E (2021) was of the view that gospel music does create a community in his church because people in the church socialize a lot through singing gospel music and also people sing in union or as an entity. He pointed out that the band meets mostly on Sunday to practice gospel songs which are rendered in church during church service. Therefore, the meeting together on Sundays for the purpose of practising gospel music songs is a form of creating unity since people sing as a team and the singing together allows church members to mingle with each other while singing and dancing. In particular, he said, *“During praise-and-worship team practices I have observed that there is a lot of interaction among the group members. Again, the congregation enjoys singing together and listening to the gospel music presented by the church band/worship and team in the church service”*. Jackson (1995:185) had a view similar to participant’s 2E’s view when she said,

*African American gospel music forms an important part of the community’s aesthetic expression and is a synthesis of music, dance, poetry, and drama distilled into a unified whole. While gospel music is strongly entrenched in African American ‘folk church’ tradition, it also attracts many who identify as much with its expression of African American values, ethics, and life experiences as with its expression of religion. Participation in the tradition, with varying degrees of expertise and from a wide range*

*of ages, denominational affiliations locals, readily articulate its significance in the African American community.*

Further probing revealed that evidently, musicians 1E and 2E grew up in Christian families, where their parents were staunch members of Apostolic Faith Mission and Assemblies of God, respectively. That is where their values, ethics, and life experiences within the context of Christian religion could be traced. They also revealed that during their secondary schooling they were members of Scripture Union (SU) in their respective schools, where they learnt life/Christian values. Thus, they could easily identify with gospel music sung at their respective SUs because gospel music in all SUs country-wide was influence by gospel music at Apostolic Faith Mission and Assemblies of God – an overwhelming majority of the SU members were affiliated to the two churches. Musician 1E (2021) stated that the structure of the SU service, particularly where the gospel music was used as a “fill-in” during the service, was influenced by the structures Apostolic Faith Mission and Assemblies of God. For instance, during those days at secondary schools any SU member could prepare a gospel musical item of his or her choice to be presented as a solo or a group during the service as a “special item”. According to musicians 1E and 2E the joy that came with the opportunity to participate in the singing gospel music made the gospel music more appealing and relevant to one’s life.

#### **4.2.6 The Particular Way or Pattern of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

Musician 1E (2021) said, *“There is a particular way of presenting gospel songs in the church. This pattern depends on the type of the particular activity administered. The songs are compiled in the manner that suits that service. In our church we have two types of gospel songs, worshipping songs and praising songs. Worshipping songs are soft and slow in tempo while praising songs are loud and moderate or fast tempo”*. Musician 1E (2021) further said,

*A normal church service starts with prayers, followed by praising songs which last for an hour. Some praising songs sung are songs like ‘Modimo wa rona wa direla’ (God is able) and ‘Modimo ona le maatla’ (God has power). After that follows worshipping songs, where some of these are songs like ‘Wa nkgoga’ (He leadeth me), ‘Boitshwarelo’ (Forgiveness). After at least 30 minutes of worship, the announcements and offering follow. During announcements and offering both praising and worshipping songs interlude. After announcement and offering, few worship songs are sung to let the pastor deliver the sermon or teaching of the day. During the teaching of the day the pastor would allow both praising and worshipping to interlude. At the end the pastor*

*closes with a prayer then the praise and worship band play gospel song while people disperse. From the beginning of the church service to the end of the service, the praise and worship leads the church in the presentation and singing of the musical items.*

The response of musician 2E (2021) was similar to that of musician 1E (2021) when they both independently noted that there is a particular way of presenting gospel songs in their church and that some songs are presented by the praise-and-worship team while some songs are sung by the church with the help of musical instruments from the band. Musician 2E (2021) said that the band prepares and presents a list of songs based on the theme of the day's church service, that is, the songs reinforce the theme of the sermon. The theme is presented to the church band by the pastor at least two days before the church service. It is worth noting that when further probed by the researcher to be specific as to how gospel music is presented by the church band and the church as a whole, musician 2E (2021) noted that there are songs presented by the church band only, where the congregation listens, but does not sing; and there are songs where everybody (the church as a whole) participates. He elaborated that even though the praise and worship team presents or leads in playing or singing, the church members are allowed to take part in singing and dancing the way they like or feel, and that even though songs are pre-selected, there are few occasions when songs are led by and of the church members while in the pew with the permission of either the pastor or the praise and worship team leader.

#### **4.2.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

Musician 1E (2021) noted that gospel music functions within the pattern of worship because it encourages one to focus on God in preparing one to open up to God and be ready to receive from God. This pattern allows the music to blend with the programme of the church service. She further highlighted that gospel musical items presented and sung before the sermon prepare the congregation for receiving the preached sermon. On the other hand, musician 2E (2021) provided more information on the programme of the church service. In particular, musician 2E said that at the beginning of the church service the praise and worship team leads the service of the day with a couple of worshipping and praising songs they would have chosen for the day or service depending on the theme of the sermon. He said that the pastor or preacher follows with preaching or teaching message of that day or service, and that there are some activities

such as announcements, tithes, and thanksgiving, altar call, and intercession within the service between which gospel music is played. Both musician 1E and 2E spoke about the main purpose of singing gospel music between the sermon and the announcements reinforcing the theme of the sermon, while the music sung during the tithes is about offering yourself to God such that the congregation could focus and appreciate giving to God. The two musicians also noted that worshipping songs are sung during the collection of tithes and offerings, where the congregation line up and put money into bags held by the ushers at the pulpit. Both 1E and 2E further alluded that during thanksgiving the individual church members call out to God to express their gratitude about whatever God has done for them, where their appreciation for God is also expressed through monetary offerings other than offering themselves to God. Musician 2E (2021) also highlighted that after the sermon the altar call in most cases is led by the pastor/preacher and in some instances the pastor delegates a member of the church such as one of the church elders or assistant pastors. He further said, *“The altar call is for people to come before God for either repentance from their sins, for healing or for prayer of renewal of their commitment to God, anointing them with oil or water, casting out demons, and delivering people from curses, depending on the theme of the sermon. During the altar call, the praise and worship team leads the intercession for those who would have responded to the altar call”* (Musician 2E 2021).

#### **4.2.8 The Gospel Music and Structure in Worship**

Musician 1E (2021) pointed out that gospel music is helpful because it allows all the structure within the church service such as a sermon, praise, and worship, announcements, thanksgiving, tithes, and altar-call, to flow seamlessly and to be enjoyable. Musician 2E (2021) had a similar response when she said that gospel music helps bring structure or program in the worship because songs that are sung by the praise-and-worship team make the service run smoothly. It seems that from the perspective of the both musicians 1E and 2E that gospel music works as a kind of glue, holding all the separate parts of the service together. In this sense, it is transitional in nature, that is, it transitions one section to the next so that the change does not seem too sudden or abrupt. Ester (2006:131) agreed with the above gospel musician when she said,

*Music plays a great role in the worship of a church. [It] “blends the sermon and prayers, making the worship a wonderful celebration of God's self-giving in which Christians energetically declare the worthiness of God”.*

### **4.3 The Perception of Gospel Music at Assemblies of God Church**

The individual musicians within the praise and worship team at Assemblies of God were coded as 1AG and 2AG for the purpose of anonymity. The praise and worship team has 17 members, of which 10 are female and 7 are male vocalists. The band has 3 lead guitarists, 2 drummers, 4 keyboardist, and 2 bass guitarists. Tambourines are also used. The church is responsible for financing the band by buying and repairing the instruments and even paying the musicians. Like the repertoire at Echoes of Joy, international and local music is used and other musical items are composed by church members or the praise and worship team. Most of the band members are self-taught music while others learn to play music from friends during band practising sessions. They usually have days of practising gospel music songs after working hours at around 5pm on Fridays and Saturdays. The band master/leader is the one who is responsible for leading the praise and worship team/band in activities such as rehearsals, meetings, as well as the planning and selection of songs.

#### **4.3.1 The Perception of Gospel Music in the Church**

Musician 1AG (2021) in interview stated that gospel music is important to him because it uplifts his spirit, it is attached to his belief, faith and religion, and is made to spread the gospel and the good news from the Bible. When he was asked which part of music uplift his spirit and how it is lifted, he said when the lyrics and melody enters in his mind and body it uplifts his spirit and this will make him to have belief in the faithfulness of God's divine power. Musician 1AG (2021) said *"Gospel music is the kind of music which is unique in terms of timbre, aesthetic appealing, melodies, rhythmic pattern, and its improvisation, also it suit all age group like other popular music like 'hymns' and 'Rock 'n roll' and others"*. He said that it narrates the gospel message to the people, it makes people get attached to the supreme God through worship and prayer. He said as a musician it makes him happy to teach people how to worship and pray to God using gospel music (Musician 1AG 2021).

#### **4.3.2 The Message of Gospel Music**

Musician 1AG (2021) noted that the message of gospel music is mostly derived from the Bible, it is meant to change a life, and also answer certain aspects of life. For instance, he said the lyrics of songs like a song entitled 'He leadeth me' are derived from Psalm 23. Some of the lyrics of this song are as follows:

He leadeth me! O blessed thought,  
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught;  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be,  
Still 'tis Christ's hand that leadeth me

He leadeth me! He leadeth me!  
By His own hand He leadeth me;  
His faithful follower I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me.

Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom,  
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,  
By waters still, o'er troubled sea,  
Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me.<sup>9</sup>

Musician 1AG (2021) also stated that the message of gospel music is also used as a tool for the correction of bad behaviour, to change to good morals, to unites the people, and spells out messages about God to people. He said the act of singing together in the church is essential for the unity of the church (Musician 1AG 2021). He added, *"I perceive that gospel music talks about the message of God, preaches salvation, and talks about the goodness of the Lord. It also makes people appreciate and thank God. I perceive that gospel music is a way to cry unto God and put a petition to God"* (Musician 1AG 2021). Musician 2AG (2021) was in basic agreement with the sentiments of Musician 1AG. Oikelome (2011:3) who noted that,

*According to Ojo (1995), the main theme of gospel musical composition is the propagation of the good news. The practitioners of gospel music take it to mean a kind of music composed and performed by Christian men and women who refer to their music as ministration of good news in songs. Thus, gospel music can be taken to mean songs performed to spread the gospel of God.*

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<sup>9</sup> Author: Henry Gilmore

#### **4.3.3 How the Message is Communicate through Gospel Music**

Musician 1AG (2021) said that the message communicated through gospel music is made by different composers for different reasons such as teaching, challenges, showing happiness, or grief. He further said that gospel music messages are communicated through performers, reciting, playing musical instruments, reading and teaching lyrics, outreach activities, media platforms, and concerts. Musician 2AG (2021) had a response similar to that of 1AG, but added, *“I think when you compose a song you have to look at how people live and face the challenges so that this composition or music will try to fill those gaps. Again performing, playing, singing and dancing are other forms communicating the message”*.

#### **4.3.4 Gospel Music is an Effective Method of Communicating the Gospel**

Musician 1AG (2021) said that gospel music is an effective method to communicating gospel messages because some people prefer to listen to the music rather than listen to preachers, that is, normally people are more interested in music than sermons. Musician 1AG said, *“Gospel music can be silent whereby you only hear musical instrument without lyrics but it still portrays the message as if there are lyrics. The gospel music helps to usher a person into the realm of God”* (Musician 1AG 2021). When asked as to how gospel music sends a message, musician 1AG (2021) explained that when one listens to the melody of the instruments without lyrical message one could “feel” the message of the song, and that the combination of lyrics and melodies is even more heart-felt and soothing particularly when the song is about the truthfulness and faithfulness about God as our heavenly father. In particular, he said a song such as ‘*Ke ngwana wa gago*’ (I am Your Child) conveys the message as the child of God seeks and accepts God as the redeemer. The lyrics of the song of the song are as follows:

*Modimo o tsile mo pelong yame* (God came into my heart)

*Omphile kagiso* (And gave me peace)

*Ntshara Morena, ke ngwana wagago* (He told me “My child)

*Se thole o lela* (do not cry any more)

*Ke itse matshwenyego a gago* (For I know your troubles)

*mm eke a bakanya”* (and I will solve them”)

*Konte ga Jeso , ke le hela* (Without Jesus, I am nothing)

*Bila Yesu, mimi ni mtu bure.* (Without Jesus, I am nothing)

*Mo lififing, Jeso ke lesidi* (In darkness, Jesus is the Light)

*Mo kutlobothokong, Jeso ke mogomotsi* (In sadness, Jesus is the Comforter)

*Montweng, Jeso ke botshabelo (In battle, Jesus is the Refuge)*

*Motlaleng, Jeso ke senkgwe (In famine, Jesus is the Bread of life)*

*Jeso ke Botshabelo jame, ga a kake antogela (Jesus is the Refuge, he has never left me)*

*jeso ke lifika lame, boiphito ja me. (Jesus is my Rock, my hiding place)*

Musician 2AG (2021) had a similar perception as he noted that gospel music is an effective method of communicating this gospel message because it reaches both people who are going to the church and those who are unwilling to go to church. He said gospel music spreads quickly and reaches many people, because most people prefer to listen to music than preaching, people understand lyrics of gospel music easily because they keep on recurring again and again, rather than teachings from the pastor which are sometimes difficult to understand. Musician 2AG (2021) said, *“In our church we adopted to use media platform like Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp to spread the gospel message in the form of gospel music because it has been assumed that people like gospel music than gospel teaching”*. Nyairo (2008:78) also had a view similar to the above musicians when he said,

*Again, tapping into everyday street forms becomes a powerful vehicle for stirring audiences and propelling gospel music into the popular imagination by giving it the leverage to compete alongside other popular music forms. It is also a handy instrument of familiarization as it simplifies, for youth consumption, the moral crusade and evangelizing mission that constitutes the raison d’être of gospel music.*

#### **4.3.5 Gospel Music brings People Together and Creates Community in the Church**

Musician 1AG (2021) noted that it brings people together in his church community because singing makes people unite, they mingle together, it makes them relate in a certain way. He added that when songs are presented to the congregation it makes them aware of the environment, appreciate the place of worship, the music makes people work as a team for the benefit of their church unity. He also noted that gospel music brings people together in his church community because it allows different people to showcase their talents in the church, therefore this would bring people together to copy and imitate each other. Musician 2AG (2021) shares the same view with Musician 1AG saying that gospel music brings people to church because most of the time people like music. He was asked to explain how gospel music brings people to the church, to which he responded saying that said gospel music conveys



message of love, unity and respect for one another, and this is the message God advocates and commands people to come to church and work in one accord (Musician 2AG 2021). Musician 2AG (2021) was asked by the researcher to name any song and its lyrics which talks about unity. He stated that there is a song entitled ‘One’. Its lyrics are:

I pray that they may be One  
They may be One, Spirit and mind  
I pray that they would be Love  
They will be Love, in the world.

For God so loved the world  
That He gave His only Son  
I pray that we may be Love  
We may be Love in the world.

Let us be One  
Let us be One  
Let us be One  
Let us be One.

I pray that there would be Love  
We may be One Spirit in Christ. (Repeat)

He added that people go to the church for different reasons, but gospel music is a tool that makes them attach to the church. He said, “*People enjoy staying in the church because of gospel music. The church is so affected when it has a musical instrument which produces good quality music*” (Musician 2AG 2021). He said that gospel music does bring people together in his church community because gospel songs covered a wide range of themes or topics about their life. He said this will make people want to serve God, and also be strong and firm and associate with their religion. According to Parrott (2009:24), “*Music is an important part of Christian worship, thanksgiving and celebration showing how worshippers feel towards God. Music unites the congregation so that God is worshipped with one voice*”.

#### **4.3.6 The Particular Pattern of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

Musician 1AG (2021) said that in their church there is a particular way of presenting gospel songs in the church service. 1AG (2021) said, “*Normally in our church we start with worship songs later on shift to the praise songs especially when the preacher is about to start the teaching*”. When he was asked to clarify the difference between worshipping songs and praising songs, he said worshipping songs are slow in tempo or beat, the music is soft and calm, and people do not dance but swing their bodies instead and kneel down with raised hands, while praising songs are fast or very fast in tempo or beat, dancing takes place, and people can jump and ululate to praise God. On the other hand, musician 2AG (2021) said, “*In our church, there is a particular pattern to present gospel songs, we start our service with intercession then praising songs and followed by worshipping songs. However, it will depend on the type of service to be administered. Sometimes music comes spontaneously*”. He pointed out that there is a team lead who arranges and finds the pattern of presenting songs followed (Musician 2AG 2021). In addition, he said that the pattern of the church service programme usually goes like this: praising songs, worship songs, prayer, worship songs or praise songs, announcements, worship songs or praising songs, thanksgiving and tithes, praise songs, altar call, worshipping songs, followed by the Bible message or sermons by the preacher, worship songs or praising song and lastly a closing prayer. Most of the time gospel music came spontaneously while the congregation disperses. In terms of what the opening section of praise can be like, Carl (2014:107), in a similar African context, says, “*The tempo of the praise section, which constitutes a seamless performance in which one chorus follows the other, usually starts at around one hundred and twenty to thirty beats per minute and then speeds up to sometimes one hundred and eighty beats per minute as people get excited and the dancing and singing becomes more and more intense*”.

#### **4.3.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

Musician 1AG (2021) said that gospel music functions well within the pattern of worship because the church band team plays music at the beginning of the church service and keeps playing music (praise-and-worship songs) till the end of service between items of the church service when needed, and this makes the service flow. Musician 2AG (2021) had similar response by saying,

*I observe that gospel music functions well within the pattern of worship because singing starts at the beginning of service starting with worship songs (slow tempo and soft*

*songs) and praise songs (fast tempo and loud songs), and in most of the times gospel music is playing keep in between items of the church service lead by the praise-and-worship team. Again, we would have made the list of songs before the service and those who are going to lead them in a praise-and-worship team in the church service.*

When asked why the music is played or allowed between items, he said music plays an important role to make the service pattern or programme of the day run smoothly without interruption or confusion (Musician 2AG 2021). He added that gospel music plays an important role to augment the teaching of that particular service.

#### **4.3.8 Gospel Music and Structure in Worship**

Musician 1AG (2021) said, *“Gospel music fills the gaps in the church, blending structure in worshipping and also makes the teaching or service to be delighted and joyful. The gospel music helps to blend the activities of the service, and also make the church to be focus”*. Musician 2AG (2021) agreed: *“My perspective with regard to gospel music is that the music works as a kind of glue, holding all the separate parts of the service together. In this sense, it is transitional in nature, that is, it transitions one section to the next so that the change does not seem to sudden or abrupt”*.

#### **4.4 The Perception of Gospel Music at the Apostolic Faith Mission**

The individual praise and worship team (church band) musicians at the Apostolic Faith Mission were name-coded as 1AF and 2AF, respectively. The Apostolic Faith Mission of Gaborone Branch is big church with a big praising and worship band/team. The praise and worship team has 24 members, 14 of which are female vocalists and 10 of which are male vocalists. There are 4 lead guitarists, 5 drummers, 6 keyboardists, and 4 bass guitarists. The church has a studio or control room where the sound is arranged or controlled. The instruments which the church has are electric bass guitars, electric lead guitars, keyboards, sets of drums and tambourines. The church is responsible for financing the church band by buying and repairing the instruments even providing the musicians with living allowance. Most of the gospel music songs played from internationally and locally recognised composers/bands and the rest is composed in house. Most of the band members are self-taught, while a few are professional musicians. The musicians usually have practises after working hours on Fridays.

#### 4.4.1 The Perception of Gospel Music in the Church

Musician 1AF's (2021) perception was that gospel music is very important to him because it blesses his soul and it gives him spiritual revival, most of the time he treats it as preaching. He pointed out that gospel music is a form of praising and worshiping God, it also prepares him to listen to the Word of God in the church. When asked how gospel music prepare him to the teaching of the day, he said most of the songs message usually connect with the message of the day (Musician 1AF 2021). Musician 1AF (2021) said:

*I perceive gospel music as the kind of music which allows congregation to feel happy and at ease, and also preparing the mind of the people for church service. I could say most gospel songs act as pre-teaching tool to prepare the congregation for the sermon. For example, most of our church sermons or teachings usual covers topics or themes such as salvation, forgiveness, repentance, submitting to God, trusting God and to live a godly live. My perception is that in most cases, songs like 'He leadeth me', 'Lion of Judah', 'Modimo ke lerato' (God is love), 'Bakang Modimo' (Glorify God) and other gospel songs fit well within the title or topic of the sermon most of the time.*

Musician 1AF (2021) further said that the other song that fits well in the most of the themes (more especially themes pertaining to salvation and God's protection) is a song titled '*Jeso ke Mmoloki*' (Jesus is my Saviour) and its lyrics are as follows:

*Ha le laka tsa go tseba, Ka mo ke pholositsweng* (If you all need to know, how I have been saved)

*Mamelang ha ke le jwetsa, Ke le supisa tsela* (Listen carefully as I narrate, I am showing you the way)

*Mamelang ha ke le jwetsa, Ke le supisa tsela.* (Listen carefully as I narrate, I am showing you the way)

*Jeso ke mmoloki waaka, O nkgethetse bodulo.* (Jesus is my Saviour, He secured a place for me)

*Ke a mo rata gobo a nthata, O nneile bophelo* (I love him for he loves me, He gave me life).

He also perceived gospel music as an effective healing tool that motivates his soul to invite God into his affairs/life, and the music creates an atmosphere of worshipping and praising God

while communicating the gospel message at the same time (Musician 1AF 2021). When he was further asked to pin point the part of music that heals, he said the lyrics heal because they carry messages of trusting God's power, of healing and God's faithfulness (Musician 1AF 2021). Musician 1AF (2021) added, "*Gospel music talks about how God loves his people, how God protects his people and also a point that how God has unconditional love*". In addition, he pointed that gospel music is based on Bible scripture.

Musician 2AF (2021)'s perception was that first and foremost, gospel music is the best tool to welcome the people who join the church. Elaborating, he said that the music gives people encouraging lyrics, the music is aesthetically appealing, it is easy to sing, and it helps people to dance together as a family whose members are supposed to take care of one other. In particular, Musician 2AF (2021) said, "*Gospel music is suitable for the people who go to the church in my view because gospel music is the part on how the church manifests itself*". He related that gospel music is a vehicle in which the church can market itself because in the church there are teachings which are carried out, but the best way of understanding those teachings or sermons is to combine them with gospel music. Musician 2AF (2021) further explained that most of the lyrics from the songs work as reinforcement for the sermons. Again, he noted that gospel music helps to clarify the gospel message. This is in agreement with the assertion of Calvin (2008:14), who said, "*Its distinctness is viewed in its lyrical construction as well as in the relatively morally-sensitive instrumentation often adopted by its various makers. In effect, Christian music is distinct by virtue of its religious (spiritual) themes, orientation and purposes. In addition to this, gospel music is timeless; it pays tribute to God and contains powerful spiritual messages of worship, praise and evangelization*".

#### **4.4.2 The Message of Gospel Music**

Musician 1AF (2021) said that gospel music focuses on the goodness of the Lord to his people, and the greatness of God. He added, "*The gospel music encourages people to be strong, it gives a message of encouragement and exultation in the house of the lord, it appreciates how God delivers the people from sin, and also relate the message of salvation*" (Musician 1AF 2021). Musician 1AF (2021) also noted that the message of gospel music targets people who have different challenges of life. Musician 2AF (2021) also had similar assertion when he elaborated that the message of gospel music is essentially the gospel message of salvation and deliverance,

proclaiming the greatness of the Lord, glorifying His name, encouraging peace among His people, and being firm in the Kingdom of God. He said songs like '*Jeso wa makatsa*' (Jesus is amazing) carries message of salvation, deliverance and proclaiming the goodness and greatness of the Lord. Its lyrics (which are in Sesotho) go like this:

*O fetotse pelo ya Paulo (He transformed Paul's heart)*

*Ya go bolaya batho (From killing people)*

*A e dira pelo ya lerato (Into a heart of love)*

*Ka nnete wa makatsa. (You are truly wonderful)*

*A ntsha pelo ye lejwe (He soften the heart of stone)*

*A tsenya pelo moya (Into a loving heart)*

*Jeso wa makatsa (Jesus is amazing)*

*Jeso wa makatsa. (Jesus is amazing)*

*Jeso wa makatsa (Jesus is amazing)*

*Jeso wa makatsa (Jesus is amazing)*

*Jeso wa makatsa (Jesus is amazing)*

*Jeso wa makatsa. (Jesus is amazing)*

*A ntsha pelo ye lejwe (He soften the heart of stone)*

*A tsenya pelo moya. (Into a loving heart)*

#### **4.4.3 How the Message is Communicated through Gospel Music**

Musician 1AF (2021) indicated communication of the gospel message through gospel music is done by singing and dancing, worship and praising. He noted that gospel music is presented in different contexts outside of church: television, radio, and different media gadgets. He said present gospel music depends on their personal experiences. Musician 2AF (2021) gave a similar response. He added that for a composer to take some text from the Bible to make his/her songs, they need to understand some text from Bible, and also uses his/her experience and artistic skills in order to communicate the message as effectively as possible. It is worth noting that the response from Musicians 1AF and 2AF (2021) concerning the different platforms needed for communication of the gospel message is in agreement with the assertion by Nyairo (2008:79), who noted that "gospel music is frequently heard at secular venues such as in private commuter mini-buses, restaurants, banking halls, bus termini, and even at malls and supermarkets".

#### **4.4.4 Gospel Music as an Effective Method of Communicating the Gospel**

Musician 1AF (2021) pointed out that,

*Gospel music is the best way of communicating this gospel message because people enjoy music. On the other hand they get the message of God, most people prefer gospel music than preaches or sermons, the music spread quickly and attract a larger audience, and besides, gospel music is enjoyable, soothes the heart, encourages people to live in peace with themselves and in harmony with their neighbours.*

When probed as to why gospel music is the best music to communicate the gospel message, Musician 1AF (2021) said that gospel music talks about God and it usually carries a moral message in comparison with other music like ‘Rock n Roll’. He further said in their church he tries to encourage the use of WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook to spread the gospel message posting many gospel songs, but few gospel teachings because people like to listen to gospel music rather than sermons. Musician 1AF (2021) also said, “*We as the church resorted to use these media platform gadgets because of their mass appealing and accessibility*”. Musician 2AF (2021) had similar perception as he pointed out that, “*Culturally or naturally in a setting gospel music is regarded as an effective method of communicating gospel message in the church practices as it a norm. Again, gospel music talks about the gospel, it reaches many people or audiences, spread quickly with the help of television, radios, tape-recorded cassettes and videotape, long-play, and other media platforms*”. Indeed, Nyairo (2008:79) says that, “*The spatial relocation of gospel music from churches to the broadcast and print media and ultimately, onto virtually any social place where people gather, has facilitated the transformation of modes of consumption and of the very meaning of religious texts*”. Musician 2AF (2021) also noted that gospel music is used as a form of entertainment, be it in the church or outside the church. In addition, Musician 2AF (2021) observed that gospel music is the most preferable music because it last and it does not lose its good taste when time passes. When asked why gospel music lasts and does not lose its good taste, he said Bible words do not lose meaning (Musician 2AF 2021). He said gospel music is a kind of genre which keeps on reinventing itself.

#### **4.4.5 Gospel Music Creates Community**

Musician 1AF (2021) noted that the combination of the church praise-and-worship team (church band), the youth band, and the congregation brought about by singing and dancing gospel music together creates a healthy church community. He said the groups meet on their allocated rehearsal days, and they then join the congregation on Sundays. He further said that in some instances the pastor may ask any group to sing for the church. In particular, Musician 1AF (2021) said, *“Gospel music brings people together in our church by singing and dancing together, practicing together, and it also helps people socialize while singing and dancing”*. When asked to explain which part of music bring people together, he said that its lyrics and melodies bring people together because lyrics carry encouraging themes while melodies soothe and entertains the congregation. When further probed to explain the meaning of his use of the word “entertain” in the case of gospel music, he said it is some kind of celebrating in a joyful mood of Christianity where by the people in the church dance and sing together. He also noted that gospel music acts as a tool to unite and bring people together to perform different church activities such as thanksgiving, wedding, birthday parties, and others. Thus, his perception was that gospel music plays an important role in building relationship in the church. Musician 2AF (2021) had a similar view to Musician 1AF when saying,

*Looking at the current trend that is happening now in the churches, people will prefer to go to the particular church because of music it plays and sings as good and attractive gospel music. Again, gospel music creates church community in this way, we have youth, elders, and children who have different taste in music but gospel music caters for this different taste because of which end up creating church community to be one unity.*

When asked as to how gospel music caters for all people, Musician 2AF (2021) said the music comprises different melodies, its timbre has aesthetic appeal which suits a wide range of age groups, and also the lyrics are biblically based. Musician 2AF (2021) also said that in his church different church groups regularly come together to church for practices and this creates healthy and long-lasting friendships which make everybody feel at home when they are in the church.

#### **4.4.6 The Pattern of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

Musician 1AF (2021) said that there is a particular way of presenting gospel songs in the church. He also noted that there is always a list of songs to be presented in a particular service or activity. He said that a regular church service has programme items in the order intersession,



praising songs, followed by worshipping songs which lead to opening prayer, and the prayer is followed by praising songs, then announcements, offering and tithes, altar-call, then worshipping songs which lead to sermons or teaching, followed by praising songs and the closing prayer. Like other church role players in this study, Musician 1AF recognises that there is a distinction between praise and worship songs. In particular, he stated that worshipping songs are meant for worshipping session such as sermons and altar calls, while praising songs are meant for praising God in a jubilant mood to appreciate his mercy to the people. Musician 2AF (2021) had similar contention like 1AF when said that there is a pattern to be followed when presenting gospel songs in the church, and there is a list of gospel songs and programme to be followed in the church service, but sometimes they do not follow the song list because music could come spontaneously from any member of church band or the pastor.

#### **4.4.7 The gospel music function within the pattern of worship**

Musician 1AF (2021) said, *“In this pattern or program of worship gospel music is played in between consecutive items until the end of church service. The church praise-and-worship team leads the proceedings of the church service but in some instances, individual like the pastor can lead the singing of the gospel songs”*. On the other hand, Musician 2AF (2021) pointed out that, *“The pattern can be seen in normal service or special service, and gospel music does not just come for fun in the church but there is a purpose and plan how music will be administered in the particular service or activity”*. When he was asked to explain why music should to be administered like that in their church, he said music in his church was adopted as the best tool for automatic transition for one item to another item to avoid confusion in church service. He said that the pattern is in an orderly manner such that, at the beginning of the service the praise-and-worship team leads the church by singing and playing praising songs, followed by prayer, after that worship gospel music comes in then announcements, offering, altar-call, music came in lead by the praise-and-worship team. He noted that after a couple of songs presented by the praise-and-worship team the pastor or preacher presents the sermon of the day, and while the messaged is being preached, gospel songs are allowed at certain intervals of teachings/sermon to make the church joyful and alive, and lastly there is the closing prayer.

#### **4.4.8 Gospel Music and Structure in Worship**

Musician 1AF (2021) noted that gospel music helps bring structures in worship to be glued to each other because it makes all church service items blend or flow harmoniously in order to

have a joyful environment. Musician 2AF (2021) also had a similar perception. The researcher also notes that generally, the praise and worship team for the three churches consisted of electric bass, electric guitar, keyboard, drums and a lead singer. This music ensemble served to accompany the lead singer and congregation and also provided interludes during the church service.

#### **4.5 Conclusions**

This chapter discussed the perceptions of musicians from the three churches on the importance and role of gospel music. The musicians were interviewed separately and independently in order to mitigate against bias responses. The responses from this chapter revealed that for all the churches that participated in the study, the praise and worship team consists of male and female vocalists; lead guitarists; drummers; keyboardists; and bass guitarists. In addition, the churches are responsible for financing the church band by buying and repairing the instruments as well as providing the musicians with living allowances. In addition, most of the band members (vocalists and instrumentalists) are self-taught musicians while others learn to sing and play music from fellow band mates during band practising schedules.

In general, the musicians revealed that gospel music lyrics, melody and beat revive, heal and soothe the heart, particularly for those who have broken hearts, and have worries and anxieties of life during times of grief, and look up to God for their emotional needs to be met. In particular, it was revealed that the lyrics from worship songs revive and soothe the hearts of local listeners. The musicians perceived the lyrics and melodies of gospel music, particularly worship songs, to be useful in uplifting the spirit, comforting and encouraging people, because of the intense power and undeniable spiritual connection they claim it carries.

In this chapter, the musicians revealed that singing together in the church is essential for unity and love in the church since the message conveyed by gospel music and that which God advocates in His Word is that of love, unity and respect for one another as people come to church to work in one accord. In addition, it was generally perceived that gospel music communicates the message from the Word of God and from one's heart as singers offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, through worshipping, which brings them close to God and

closer to one another as a community of believers. In particular, this chapter revealed that people appear to feel safer when they get closer to God through God's word spoken through gospel music since gospel music songs emphasize God's kindness, love, and protection against the devil.

The musicians perceived gospel music as the best and most effective method of communicating the message of the gospel, because it spreads quickly since generally most people would prefer to listen to music than sermons. In addition, music can be repeated, thus, it allows people to understand and remember the Word of God better.

As to how the praise and worship teams for the three churches present their musical items or how they lead their congregations in music during the church service, it was generally perceived that there are songs presented by the church praise and worship team only, where the congregation is expected to listen only, and there are songs where the church as a whole participates. In addition, the church members are allowed to take part in singing and dancing the way they like or feel, and that even though songs are pre-selected, there are a few occasions when songs are led by any of the church members with the permission of either the pastor or the praise and worship team leader. The researcher notes that such a gesture from the pastor and the praise and worship team leader towards the rest of the church members is indeed in the spirit of community of believers, where everyone's talent and skills (particularly in the area of singing) are appreciated, recognised and nurtured.

In terms of building a community of believers, the responses from the musicians revealed that their congregations appear to enjoy singing together and listening to the gospel music presented by the church praise and worship team in one accord as a community during the church service. In addition, the interaction of the members of the praise and worship team is mostly socialising and getting to know each other, and for some band members, that is the opportunity to identify prayer partners.

The musicians confirmed the pastors' perceptions that there are some activities, such as announcements, tithes, thanksgiving, altar call, and intercession within the service between

which gospel music is played. The musicians also perceived that the main purpose of singing gospel music between the sermon and the announcements is to reinforce the theme of the sermon of the day's church service; the music sung during the tithes is about offering oneself to God in a manner that the congregation could focus and appreciate giving to God. It was also revealed that gospel songs in the churches are selected by the praise and worship team leader in consultation with the rest of church band members and the pastor, where the role of the pastor is to provide the church band leader with the theme of next church service or the theme of the next sermon few days prior to the church service. It was revealed that the importance of knowing the theme of the sermon is that gospel music in the church is considered the best tool for automatic transition from one item (such as tithes, announcement and sermon) to another item so as to keep order and smooth-flow in the running of the church service. In that way, as rightly perceived by the musicians, gospel music is transitional in nature, that is, it works as a kind of glue, holding all the separate parts of the service together.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CHURCH MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS ON GOSPEL MUSIC**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the perspectives on gospel music from church members, other than pastors and performing artists (musicians), in selected churches of Gaborone and Mochudi is discussed. In each church there were four participants who took part in this study. Church members were deemed suitable to give their perspectives with regard to gospel music in the church since they are conversant with the importance of gospel music in their spiritual and secular lives, and would therefore give relevant information needed to address the research questions, since as congregation members, they are responsible for singing along with the churches band at the same time as they are being ministered to.

Simple random sampling was used to select the church members, with the assistance of a pastor from the respective churches. In particular, the pastor was asked to notify his church members of the purpose of the interviews and told them that their participation in the interviews was voluntary. Each pastor provided the researcher with the names of seven members of the congregation. Then the research randomly selected four research participants to be interviewed during data collection.

#### **5.2 The Perspectives of the Church Members of Echoes of Joy Church**

The church members from Echoes of Joy Ministry were coded as 3E, 4E, 5E and 6E.

##### **5.2.1 The Perception on the Importance of Gospel Music in the Church**

The research participants were asked why gospel music is important. Participant 3E (2021) said that gospel music is an important aspect in his life because the music connects him easily with the presence of God, consequently giving him inner peace and joy. When he was asked to elaborate, he said the repetition of the melody and lyrics helps him to focus and thus gives him inner peace and joy. In addition, 3E (2021) noted that gospel music prepares him or lays the

foundation to be able to receive the word of Bible preaching because the messages from songs link with the sermon of the day. Thus, in his experience gospel music is important in the church because it acts as a tool of preparation to hear the Gospel.

The researcher notes that participant 3E's response that gospel music connects him with the presence of God was also echoed by participant 4E (2021) when she stated that in addition to her enjoying gospel music, the music brings her closer God. When she was further asked as to how the music brings her closer to God, she said the lyrical worship songs and its soft melody makes her to feel the presence of God. With further probing, participant 4E (2021) suggested that the gospel music gives peace of mind and helps worshippers like herself to focus on God. She noted that it is the lyrics and the melodies of music which bring her peace. This response from participant 4E was in agreement with 6E's responses who stated that gospel music is important because it lays foundation for preaching of the Word of God. When he was asked to explain how it lays the foundation, he said because the message acts as an introduction of the day's sermon as they link.

Participant 5E (2021) stated that gospel music is important to him because it releases the power of God for healing, soothing souls and comfort. Participant 6E (2021) had similar response when she responded by saying that gospel music is important to her because it connects and aligns her with the Spirit of God; it helps to calm her down when she feels heart broken or when facing challenges of life; it purifies and cleans her soul and opens her heart for deep worship. When participant 6E (2021) was asked to explain how the music brings her closer to God, she said the lyrics and the rhythmic pattern make her feel closer to God. Participant 6E (2021) indicated that gospel music is one kind of music that can induce filling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues. She said songs like 'Moya' (Spirit) make the church members get filled with the Holy Spirit. The lyrics of the song goes like this:

Moya, Moya, Oboitshepho Moya (*Spirit, Spirit, Holy Spirit*)

Moya, Moya, Moya (*Spirit, Spirit, Spirit*)

Moya, Moya, Oboitshepho (*Spirit, Spirit, Holy Spirit*)

Re tlatse ka maata a gago. (*Fill us with Your Power*)

The researcher notes that 6E (2021) also perceived gospel music as source of entertainment, while expressing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. When she was asked why gospel music is a source of entertainment, she responded that the way gospel music is arranged is entertaining because it is aesthetically appealing, it has strong rhythmic patterns, and its melodies and timbre make people enjoy music while spreading the gospel message. She said gospel music acts as tool of entertainment because it makes people happy in the church and in public spaces.

### 5.2.2 The Message of Gospel Music

When participant 3E (2021) was asked to indicate his perception as to what the message of gospel music is, he said that gospel music talks about a message from God, particularly the goodness of God. He said the lyrics of gospel music are derived from the Bible which talks about the goodness of God. Participant 3E (2021) said, “*For example, a song like ‘Glorify God’, is one of examples of gospel songs which draws the gospel message from the Bible to persuading people to live in peace, talks about salvation, talk about the goodness of God, and deliverance from sin*”. He said the lyrics of the song goes like this:

Bonang, ho hlahile marung (*Behold is our Saviour at the clouds*)

Ea shoetseng batho khale (*Who died for us long ago*)

O tla khutla leholimong (*He will come back from heaven*)

Ho phutha batho bohle. (*To gather his people*)

Bahlabaneli ba Jesu (*The followers of Jesus*)

Ba bapile le eena (*Seek refuge in Him*)

Mahlo a bona ke metsu (*Their eyes are arrows*)

Ba loanela Morena. (*They fight for the Lord*)

#### **Chorus**

Halleluya, Halleluya

Lumelang, Halleluya. (*Rejoice, Hallelujah*)

Lumelang, bana ba me (*Rejoice my children*)

Lona bohle ba nthatang (*All you who love me*)

Sieang mobu, le phahame (*Leave the dust and arise*)

Tlong ho ‘na atamelang. (*Come to me, come closer*)

This was also echoed by Participant 3E (2021) when he stated that gospel music gives the message of how God is good, particularly God's provision of salvation and deliverance, whereby the topics on love, healing, God's goodness, peace and many more are also presented. Indeed, participant 3E (2021) also stated that gospel music could be used to preach salvation, as well as bringing our petitions to God by crying unto Him. Participant 3E (2021) said that one of the songs which talks about salvation is '*Wa fitha*' (You arrived). This song talks about how Jesus came to save the Christians and died for their sins for them to be saved. He said, "*This song can be used in worshipping when the sermon is delivered*" (Participant 3E 2021). The lyrics of the song are as follows:

*Ke a leboga, Ke a leboga* (Thank you, I thank You)  
*Wafihla gonna* (You came to me)  
*Ka hwetja bophelo bosafeleng.* (And I found eternal life) (Repeat)

*Wafihla gonna* (You came to me)  
*Ka hwetja bophelo bosafeleng.* (And I found eternal life) (Repeat)

*Wafika, wafika kimi* (You arrived, You came to me)  
*Kuthol' uphila okunaphakade.* (And I found eternal life) (Repeat)

*Wafihla gonna* (You came to me)  
*Ka hwetja bophelo bosafeleng.* (And I found eternal life) (Repeat)

When he was asked to if he can give one more example of a song which is a petition to God and how this would be used in worship, he said one example of a petition song is '*Semphete*' (Do not pass me by). He said this song asked God not to pass by, but to them help them and forgive them from sin. He said the song is one that can be sung during worship.

*Semphethe wena ya ratehang* (Please do not pass me by)  
*Mmoloki wa ka* (oh my Saviour)  
*Ha ontse osetsa babang* (While on others you are calling)  
*Semphete le nna.* (Do not pass me by)

*Jeso, Jeso, Kea O rapela* (Jesus, Jesus, hear my humble cry)  
*Ha ontse osetsa babang* (While on others you are calling)  
*Semphete le nna,* (Do not pass me by)



Furthermore, 3E (2021) said that gospel music communicates the goodness of Jesus Christ by appreciating and thanking God. When he was asked to explain how gospel music communicates, he said it carries the message of the goodness of Jesus Christ by appreciating and thanking God. For example in the New Testament in John 3:16 it is stated that God has allowed his only son die for people so that the people may be saved from wrong doing. In response, one can sing this song: ‘*Ke letlotlo Sefapanong*’ (The cross is my treasure),

*Ke Letlotlo Ho nna Sefapanong* (The cross is my treasure)

*Sa Ntloedisa Dibe* (It cleansed me from my sins)

*Ke Letlotlo Ho Nna Sefapanong.* (The cross is my treasure)

*Jeso A Thakgiswa Sefapanong* (Jesus was nailed on that cross)

*Ka Lebaka La Dibe Tsaka* (All because of my sins)

*Ho Nna Ke Bophelo* (He gave me new life)

*Ke Letlotlo Ho Nna Sefapanong.* (The cross is my treasure)

### **Chorus**

*Kere Heeee Sefapanong, Heeee Sefapanong* (We say, yes the cross)

*Sa Ntloedisa Dibe* (It cleansed me from my sins)

*Ke Letlotlo Ho Nna Sefapanong.* (The cross is my treasure)

It is clear that according to participant 3E, gospel music could be used as part of church worship session for both preaching and praying. In other words, gospel music can be a form of prayer and is used for worshipping God because the lyrics are similar to prayer.

Moving on, Participant 4E (2021) noted that gospel music is another way of preaching the Christian gospel, at the same time as encouraging people to live holy lives. When she was asked to explain how gospel music encourages people to live holy lives she said, “*The repetition of the melody and lyrics keep on recurring when play the gospel music it helps enhance message of encourages people to live holy lives. She said to holy is to do the good thing of God*” (Participant 4E 2021). She said one of the songs which encourage people to live holy lives is called ‘*Lona ba ratang ho phela*’ (You who desired to live). Its lyrics go like this:

*Lona ba ratang ho phela* (You who desired to live)  
*Mohlapeng wa Jesu* (Within Jesus' flock/Kingdom)  
*Hopolang tsietsi tsa tsela* (Remember the trials of the way)  
*E isang ha eso.* (That leads us home)

*Ke 'mila o moosesane* (The path is narrow)  
*O hakang maoatla* (That traps the foolish)  
*Le kgoro e patisane* (The door is small/narrow)  
*E kenwa ka matla.* (That is entered by power)

*Nonyana di na le matlo* (Birds of the air have homes)  
*Di dula monateng* (That they live in harmony)  
*Ha ho moo hloho ya Jesu* (But Jesus does not have)  
*E ka sameloang teng.* (A place to rest His head)

*Ba inkele sefapano* (They must carry their own cross)  
*Mahetleng a bona* (On their shoulders)  
*Ba tle ba shoele likano* (And die for the covenant)  
*Tse ba leng ho tsona.* (That they have made)

Amen Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen, Amen, Amen.

*Ba inkele sefapano* (They must carry their own cross)  
*Mahetleng a bona* (On their shoulders)  
*Ba tle ba shoele likano* (And die for the covenant)  
*Tse ba leng ho tsona.* (That they have made)

Amen Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen Amen, Amen, Amen  
Amen, Amen, Amen.

This response is in agreement with responses by Participants 5E (2021) and 6E (2021) who stated that the message of gospel music is about the gospel of salvation, and spreading of the gospel, respectively. Participant 5E (2021) also said that gospel music talks about reviving the spirit of God within Christians, and also reminds Christians of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. She said one of the songs which is about reviving is called '*Thabang le nyakalle*' (Rejoice and be Glad):

*Thabang le nyakalle* (Rejoice and be glad)

*Ba lehodimo, le thabele* (Those in the heavens)

*Le thabele baetsalibe.* (Be glad for the sinners)

*Le ba tsoang lefifi* (All those in the darkness)

*Ba tsoang timelong, Ba thabeleng* (Those that were lost)

*Ba thabeleng ba phonyohile.* (Rejoice for they have escaped)

### **Chorus**

*Bokang le rorise Modimo* (Give glory to the Lord)

*Bokang le lerato la Jeso* (Give praise also for the love of Jesus)

*Tumisang ka pina* (With joyous songs)

*Tsa khalalelo* (Give praise and worship)

*(Ke) Mohlolo ona oa mohau.* (For the miracles that are in His mercy)

On the other hand, participant 6E responded by saying that the message of gospel music is the proclamation of the name of God as the creator, saviour, deliverer and the healer. Here the music and lyrics are perceived as having a specifically *kerygmatic* role in worship.

### **5.2.3 Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

When asked how gospel music communicates the intended message, Participant 3E (2021) pointed out that it can be communicated through either pastor or church praise and worship team leading live singing and worshipping using purposely composed lyrics. This was echoed by Participant 4E (2021) when she stated that the message could be communicated by the whole church, or band, or the pastor singing songs composed using words of God from the Bible. In addition, participant 4E said that music could be presented using differed media such television, Facebook or radio.

The responses for this question from the Echoes of Joy Church band/musicians were clearly summed up by Participants 5E (2021) and 6E (2021). In particular, 5E said that gospel music communicates its message through corporate, choral or individual singing, listening, and instrumental performance by band/praise and worship team. Participant 5E further stated that in the church, messages can also be administered through gospel music by the help of the Holy Spirit in the church. When asked to give an example, he said that happened during worshipping time when feel like shaking (Participant 5E 2021). In addition, participant 6E (2021) said the message could be communicated through gospel music by singing, worshipping, performing in groups or as individuals.

#### **5.2.4 Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

When asked whether gospel music is an effective method of communicating the intended message or not, Participant 3E (2021) viewed gospel music as an effective method of communicating gospel message because, according to him, the lyrics of gospel music are easy to understand and the melodies are easy to learn from a group of performers or an individual soloist. When he was asked to give an example of songs with easy lyrics and melody, he gave this example:

*Jeso ke yena wa mathomo* (Jesus is the beginning)

*Jeso ke yena wa mafelelo* (Jesus is the end)

*Ke Alfa le Omega.* (He is the Alpha and the Omega)

*Ke Alfa le Omega.* (He is the Alpha and the Omega) (Repeat)

Another song mentioned by Participant 3E (2021) is ‘Ke laolwa ke moya’ (I am led by the Holy Spirit):

*Ke laolwa ke moya* (I am led by the Holy Spirit)

*Ke tsamaiswa ke moya* (I walk by the Spirit)

*Ga ke ’iketse* (It is not by my strength)

*Ga ke hlanye* (I have not lost my mind)

*Kelaolwa ke moya.* (I am led by the Spirit) (Repeat)

*Ke Moya Nnete* (He is the Spirit of Truth)  
*Ke Moya Maatla* (He is the Spirit of Power)  
*Wa ntaela* (He teaches me)  
*Wa mphodisa* (He heals me)  
*Ke Moya Jeso.* (He is Spirit, Jesus) (Repeat)

His perception was also that gospel music reaches many people at the same time in church services or concerts and helps people to worship cooperatively. He further explained that gospel music helps people to worship cooperatively because gospel music is for peace, unity and mutual understanding. The same point was also raised by participants 4E, 5E and 6E (2021) when they stated that gospel music is an effective method of communicating this message of gospel because music spreads quickly and reaches many people at the same time through different media platforms and outreach activities. Participant 3E (2021) noted that gospel music is an effective way of communicating within a broader social context, since it has a message for different situations, such as Christian praising and mourning, secular entertainment and addressing local social challenges.

Participant 4E (2021) pointed out that in general, many people like to listen to gospel music and that in the church normally gospel music is used to complement sermon themes. This makes it easy to understand and appreciate the sermons by watching the television and gospel videos. The researcher notes that participants 4E, 5E and 6E (2021) stated that gospel music is an effective way of communicating since songs sung in the church could be repeated outside of the church through the availability of media (audio/video) gadgets. It is perceived that a song called '*Gagona yo tshwanang le Jesu*' (There's nobody like Jesus) is an example of a gospel song which has become popular through social media in the recent past in Botswana.

#### **5.2.5 The Creation of Community in the Church through Gospel Music**

As to how gospel music creates community in the church, Participant 3E (2021) said, "*Gospel music caters for different groups within the church set-up, such as the youth, adults, band/praise and worship team, and the congregation in general, as well as and the Sunday School because gospel music fit all age listeners irrespective*". In addition, participant 3E (2021) highlighted that gospel music brings people together to become a community of

believers since people of all age groups are united as they sing as a group; they socialize while working or singing as a unit; and they commit to worship as team. Participant 1E (2021) further said that singing together encourages socialisation, and discussing the songs and also allows the sharing of different views about the gospel music.

Responses similar to that of participant 3E was given by participants 4E, 5E and 6E (2021) who said that gospel music creates community in their church because there is a band, youth group, Sunday School, and church elders, where most of the time each of these different groups practice and sing gospel music in their respective groups. All the three participants indicated that each group practices individually, and the groups practice different songs. On the other hand, participant 3E (2021) said that during the church services, when everybody comes together, the pastor may ask any of the groups to sing one or more pieces of music for the congregation. He also said that there are some instances whereby the pastor calls all groups come together to sing any song for the congregation. In addition, Participant 4E (2021) said that according to her observation, gospel music has created room for socialization among church members, at the same time as entertainment for all age groups in the church. When she was asked to explain how it creates the conditions for socialisation, she said, *“Gospel allow people to share information about gospel music, and also to interpret the lyrics of gospel song; teaching and helping each other learn the songs and helping each other to understand how gospel songs portrays the gospel message in the lives of Christians. This thus help church members to get close each other and share their experiences in life”* (Participant 4E 2021).

Participant 5E (2021) noted that gospel music has brought people together in his church, and that this community socializes for the purpose of comforting each other and worshipping God together. Indeed, participant 6E (2021) said that gospel music brings people together as a community of believers since they practice songs together, sing together and end up socializing within their respective groups. Participant 6E also noted that people worship, dance together and are actively involved in church activities, they automatically create a community.

### **5.2.6 Particular Way of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

When asked as to whether the presentation of songs in church follow a certain pattern or not, all the participants (3E, 4E, 5E and 6E) noted there is a particular way of presenting gospel song in the church, and in most cases songs are sung following the chosen pattern. For instance, participants 4E, 5E and 6E stated that the church band or praise and worship team produce a poster with a list of songs to be followed. Participants (3E, 4E, 5E and 6E) noted that normal church services start with prayers, followed by praising songs which last for an hour (including songs like '*Ke laolwa ke moya*' [I am led by the Holy Spirit], '*Modimo ona le maata*' [God has power]). After that follows worshipping songs, such as '*Wa nkgoga*' (He leads me), '*Boitshwarelo*' (Forgiveness). After worshipping songs, which would have lasted for at least 30 minutes, follows the announcements and offering. Participants (3E, 4E, 5E and 6E) said that during announcements and offering both praise and worshipping songs are sung. After announcements and offering, an altar-call is issued by the pastor which includes the singing of a few worship songs. Then follows the sermons of the day. During the teaching of the day the pastor would allow both praising and worshipping songs as interludes. At the end, the pastor closes with a prayer then the praise and worship band/team will play a song while people disperse.

One person administers the praise and worship band/team. Most of the music that is sung in the church is coordinated by the band leader with help of the pastor and praising and worship team. However, Participants 3E and 5E (2021) said that in some rare instances the band (praise and worship team) or church as a whole pick up songs spontaneously without following the set pattern.

### **5.2.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

Participant 3E (2021) noted the pattern of worship songs allows the filling of gaps created by church activities during the church service. In particular, the gaps are in between the items of the service. In addition, participant 4E (2021) said that gospel music comes in between the consecutive non-musical church sessions as a fill-in so as to make the programme of the day run smoothly.

On the other hand, in terms of the sequential pattern of worship, participant 5E (2021) noted that the pattern of gospel music for worship is such that first there are praising songs and dancing, followed by worship gospel songs, prayer, dancing gospel songs, church announcements, singing and dancing gospel songs, sermons, administering healing and deliverances while singing and dancing. According to participant 5E, this pattern ensures that gospel music gels smoothly within the desired pattern of worship, and healing and deliverances are followed by dancing gospel songs and a closing prayer.

From the researcher's observation and experience as one of the members of this church, the compatibility between the gospel music and the usual pattern of worship (within the church) was well articulated by participant 6E when she stated that at the beginning of the church service songs are lead and presented by church band (praise and worship team), followed by announcements by master of ceremonies, worship songs, offerings while singing praising songs. Participant 6E also noted that offerings are followed by sermon of the day, which is meant to lead to the healing and deliverance sessions where the two sessions are accompanied by singing and dancing, and a closing prayer ends the day's church service.

#### **5.2.8 Bringing Structure in Worship through Gospel Music**

Participants were asked to give a reason why gospel music is helpful in bringing structure in worship. In response, participants 3E, 4E and 4E (2021) noted that gospel music helps all the elements of a worship service or church service such as the opening prayer and praise and worship session, offering session, the sermon as well as the healing and deliverance sessions, blend together thematically and run smoothly as one unified church service session. The choice of songs is based on the theme of the sermon. For instance, a list of songs based on the themes 'salvation' and 'God has power' is as follows;

- i. *Ntate ke mang ya kang' ka wena?* (Father who is likened to You?)
- ii. *Go siame* (It is well)
- iii. *Kgalaletso Modimo* (Glory to God)
- iv. *Jeso Ke Tshimologo le Bokutlo* (Jesus is Alpha and Omega)
- v. *Ntata rona ya mahodimong* (Our Father in heaven)



- vi. *Bonang, ho hlahile marung* (Behold is our Saviour at the clouds)
- vii. *Lona ba ratang ho phela* (You who desired to live)
- viii. *Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka* (Forgive me my sins)

Participant 5E and 6E (2021) agreed that the existence of the pattern helps church leadership and administration to execute their respective duties easily and smoothly. Participants in the service, or leaders of the service, can move to the right place, or people can come up to the altar, etc. while there is music playing or people singing. There is thus a dual purpose for music – it serves as a way of worshipping, but it also serves to move a service forward without major interruptions so that all the participants are able to find their places without major disturbance.

### **5.3 The Perspectives of the Church Members of Assemblies of God Church**

The church members from Assemblies of God Church were coded as 3AG, 4AG, 5AG and 6AG.

#### **5.3.1 The Perception on the Importance of Gospel Music in the Church**

With regard to the importance of gospel music, Participant 3AG (2021) said that gospel music is important to him because listening to gospel music is similar to listening to the teaching of the Word of God by the pastor, and that most of the time the composition of gospel music is such that the message conveyed is able to teach, console, revive one's spiritual being, heal as well as entertain. When he was to explain how gospel music revive one's spiritual being and which part of music heals, Participant 3AG (2021) said,

*I perceive those messages from the worshipful lyric of the songs inter to my mind and soothes it, and also I believe that message inter in my body and make the body to relax and make one's' spiritual being to alive. Again, I believe that God has healing power that is why it important to listen to music gospel because the music by faith it carries healing messages. In addition, I believe that both worship and praising lyrics and melodies soothe the mind and body of individual.*

When he was asked to give an example of song which carries the message which teaches, heals and reviving spirit he mentioned the songs '*Go siame*' (It is well), '*Lona ba ratang ho phela*'

(You who desired to live) and ‘Lion of Judah, my trust is in You’. The lyric of this song ‘Lion of Judah, my trust is in You’ are as follows,

Lion of Judah, my trust is in You  
Ancient of Days, my trust is in You  
I AM that I AM God, my trust is in You  
Lily of the Valley, my trust is in You  
I put them all on You, my trust is in You. (Repeat)

Isi iyi nke ndu (*The stream of life*), my trust is in You  
Oyigiyigi Baba (*The Solid Rock, my Father*), my trust is in You  
Seriki dunia (*Master of the universe*), my trust is in You.  
Ahu....

Master of the universe, my trust is in You  
My miracle working God, my trust is in You  
King of Glory, my trust is in You  
Obadabada (*Massive God*) my Father, my trust is in You  
I put them all in You, my trust is in You. (Repeat)

Kabiye Osi Baba Kabiyesi (*Almighty God, my Father*), my trust is in You  
I put them all in You, my trust is in You. (Repeat)

The response from Participant 4AG (2021) is somewhat summed up by 3AG’s response when he stated that gospel music is a ministry. In particular, Participant 4AG (2021) noted that gospel music, when viewed as a ministry, has a big impact in the expansion or the growth in the Christian community, because the gospel music heals, encourages, entertains, teaches the Word of God, consoles those who are in grief or are hurting. When Participant 4AG (2021) was asked as to how gospel music heals and entertains, he said the lyrics carry the messages which makes him to believe, have hope, and also to trust God, while on the other hand melodies, timbre, and the rhythmic and aesthetic appeal of gospel music can entertain the Christian. He said gospel song carry different themes such as healing power, hope, love, forgiveness, and many other biblical themes. One example of a song that carries themes of love and hope is ‘*Lorato la gago le legolo*’ (Your Love is greater). The lyrics of the song are as follows:

*Lorato la gago le legolo* (Your love is greater)  
*Lorato la gao le nkgapile* (Your love captured me),  
*Ntshireletsa Morena, Morena* (Covering me, O God)  
*Ke sereletsegile ka Lorato la gago.* (I am secure in Your love) (Repeat)  
  
 Kem ang yo tshwana le wena ka lorato? (Who loves like You, Lord?)  
 Tshwara dikakanyo tsa rona (Beyond my thoughts)  
*Onkgethile* (You still choose me,)  
*Ka letsatsi, oh Ka Modimo* (Each day, O God)  
*Lorat la gago le legolo* (Your love is stronger)  
*Lorato lo gago le Molemo.* (Your love is better)  
  
 O nthatile (You love me!) (Repeat)  
 Ke a hakgamala (And I'm so amazed!) (Repeat)  
  
 Onthokometse (You keep me)  
*Keg ola ka maata* (Growing stronger)  
*Ke a hakgamala.* (And I am so amazed) (Repeat)  
  
*Kealeboga.* (Thank You)  
*Lorato la gago lea makatsa* (Your love is amazing)  
*O Mmoloki.* (Oh y Saviour) (Repeat)  
  
*Kealeboga Jeso Wame* (Thank You, my Jesus) (Repeat)  
*Kealeboga.* (Thank You)

Indeed, according to Participant 5AG (2021), gospel music is important because it brings her close to God as a Christian; it relaxes, heals and comforts; and brings people together as a community of believers. She was asked how it brings people together and heals. She replied: the message of gospel music encourages people to come together as family and talk about the goodness of God. She further explains that when singing together in one accord they come close to each other. She said in addition what she has alluded gospel lyrics and its harmonies

make to believe that God has healing power and God's faithfulness. She said one example of a song which carries message of hope for healing is called 'Look to Jesus and believe',<sup>10</sup>

Look to Jesus and believe

Look to Jesus and receive

Whatever you may need

you will, surely receive.

All things are mine in Christ

I believe, I receive

Nothing impossible: I believe, I receive.

On the Cross, He gave me all

Yes, I receive, all by faith

cause I ask in the name of the Lord

And I ask according to his will.

Yes, I ask in the Name of Jesus

I ask, His on Word.

### **Chorus**

You fill my cup to overflow

You gave more than we ask or think

Adonai, You open doors, You make ways

You answer prayers, in Your Name

Mountains move in Your Name

We have the victory!

On the other hand, Participant 6AG (2021) said that gospel music is important because it builds up her spiritual life; helps her to worship and pray to God; and helps her to understand the gospel message better because it reinforces and compliments the sermon.

Participant 6AG added that Christians need to sing praises to God like David in the Bible if we are to reap the benefits that come with singing and listening to gospel music as a group or

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<sup>10</sup> This song is by Gloria Muliro. It is about "looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2).

individuals. When she was asked what about the benefits that come with singing and listening to gospel, she said that they keep reviving one's spiritual being and also feed you with the Word of God the form of music.

### **5.3.2 The message of Gospel Music**

Participant 3AG (2021) said that gospel music is used to pass the good news of deliverance and salvation using lyrics compiled from the Word of God and using the composer's experience of the goodness of God. When he was asked to give an example of a composer whose song embodies the composer's experience of God's goodness, he named the composer called Ntokozo Mbatha, whose song is called 'When I Remember', whose lyrics reveal how Mabatha went through hardship in life. Its lyrics go like this,

When I remember what the Lord has done  
I will never go back anymore  
When I remember what the Lord has done  
I will never go back anymore.

Looking back over my life  
And I see how far God's brought me  
So I'll never go back anymore!  
I've been discouraged along the way  
But He's been faithful  
So I'll never go back anymore.

#### **Chorus**

Oh No,  
No no no, no no no  
I will never go back anymore  
No, no no, no no no  
I will never go back anymore. (Repeat)

Never going back (Repeat)  
I will never go back anymore  
I will never, never going back

Never going back, Reach forward

I will never go back anymore.

Hallelujah! Amen. Never going back.

Participant 3AG (2021) noted that gospel music reaches people quicker than reading a book or the Bible, because when a singer starts to sing, particularly a nice and well-arranged song, it encourages you to listen to the music and message of salvation, deliverance, and adoration of God at the same time. Indeed, according to Participant 4AG (2021), gospel music could be used as a tool to spread the gospel message of salvation. Furthermore, Participant 4AG (2021) also responded by saying that the message of gospel music mostly talks about how God is good to his people, and about deliverance and God's glory and great deeds. He also noted that gospel music can be used as tool to teach biblical scriptures. When he was asked to name few gospel songs and give any lyrics of given songs which talk about how God is good, he gave the following songs; 'Love of my soul', '*Ntata wa rona*' (Our Father), '*Dumela lona ba loratang go Tshela*' (Believe to those who want to live) and *Modimo ke Lorato* (God is Love). The lyrics of the song called 'Ntata wa rona' (Our Father) are as follows,

*Ntata rona ya mahodimong* (Our Father in heaven)

*'bitso la hao, le kgethehe.* (Hallowed be Your name) (*Repeat*)

*Ho tle, ho tle, mmuso wa hao* (Your kingdom, Your kingdom come)

*Thato ya hao, le kgethehe.* (May Your will, be done) (*Repeat*)

The researcher notes that another common song that expresses and reveals the love of God is 'Modimo ke Lorato' (God is Love). Its lyrics go like this,

*Le ge oka rapela ka maleme* (Even if you pray in tongues)

*Hao sena lerato* (if you do not have Love)

*Otla o shupa mmusho wa Modimo.* (You won't see the kingdom of God)

(*Repeat*)

*Ware Rapela, wa re rikhaboxi!* (Even if you pray in tongues)

*Ware rikhaboxi, rikhaboxi yande!!*

*O Rapela enge na osena Lerato?* (What are you praying for if you don't have love?)

(Repeat)

*A re rataneng, a re rataneng* (Let us love each other x2)

*Modimo le lerato are rataneng.* (God is Love so let's love one another)

(Repeat)

*A re haganeng, a re raganeng* (Let us hug each other x2)

*Modimo le lerato are rataneng.* (God is Love so let's love one another)

(Repeat)

*Ware Ra! ra! ra! ra!* (Even if you say ra! ra! ....)

*O Rapela enge na osena Lerato?* (What are you praying for if you don't have love?)

*Ware Ri! ri! ri! ri!* (Even if you say ri! ri! ...)

*O Rapela enge na osena Lerato?* (What are you praying for if you don't have love?)

*Ware Rondo rondo rondo* (Even if you [pray in tongues])

*O Rapela enge na osena Lerato?* (What are you praying for if you don't have love?)

*Ware rama! rama! rama! rama!* (Even if you [pray in tongues])

*O Rapela enge na osena Lerato?* (What are you praying for if you don't have love?)

The love of God towards his people was also echoed by Participant 5AG (2021) when she said that message of gospel music is all about good news from the Bible, salvation, forgiveness, peace, deliverance and God's mercy. When she was requested to give any gospel song and its lyrics which has the theme that she mentioned, she cited the song '*Tshwarelo ya Dibe tsa aka*' (Forgive me my sins), and its lyric goes like this:

*Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka* (Forgive me my sins)

*Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka* (Forgive me my sins)

*Tshwarelo ya dibe tsaka.* (Forgive me my sins)

*Morena re hauhele* (Lord have mercy on me)

*Morena re hauhele* (Lord have mercy on me)

*Morena re hauhele.* (Lord have mercy on me)

Likewise, Participant 6AG (2021) stated that gospel music is one way of preaching the Word of God, and that the music gives comfort and encouragement for those who are hurting inside, glorifies God, and teaches how people should live in peace, harmony and hope. She further gave one example of a gospel song which teaches how people should live in peace, harmony and in hope. The song she mentioned is '*Ao! Modimo, o' tletseng tshwaro* (Oh God, You are full of Grace) and its lyrics are as follows:

*Ao! Modimo, o' tletseng tshwaro* (Oh God, You are full of grace)

*Ke tsile go go rapela* (I am before You, to worship)

*Empa ke simolola ka go re* (But I start by confessing)

*Thapelo ga ke e itse.* (That I don't know how to pray)

### **Chorus**

*Ao Morena! Ao Morena!* (Oh my Lord, Oh Lord!)

*Wa me o nthute* (Please help me)

*O Morena, wa me o nthute* (Oh my Lord please teach me)

*Go go rapela, rapela ka nnete.* (To worship in truth) (Repeat)

*Go fithela letsatsi le na* (Until that day)

*Ke atisitse go beha* (That I will stop praying)

*Merapelo e' senang kutlo* (A nonsensical prayer)

*Ya molomo, le ya mokgwa.* (From my mouth)

### **Chorus**

*Moya le ka nnete* (In spirit and truth)

*Go go rapela* (To worship)

*Moya le ka nnete* (In spirit and truth)

*Rapela ka nnete.* (To pray/worship in truth) (Repeat)

### **5.3.3 Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

Participants 3AG, 5AG and 6AG (2021) said that gospel music is used to communicate gospel messages in the form of singing, chanting, reading the musical lyrics and performing the (solo or group) musical items. Participant 4AG (2021) added that composers differ, depending on their objectives because some compose for business while others for teaching and encouraging people listen to gospel message. Participant 4AG (2021) also said that the gospel message is



communicated through gospel music in many ways such as singing, recorded videos, cassettes, concerts, radio stations and many more. He further noted that gospel music is often listened to from different platforms such as musical gadgets, media platforms, televisions, radios, live performers or concerts, individuals, as well as in the church.

Participant 6AG (2021) also noted that the message is communicated through gospel music by performance of different gospel artists and bands, as well as discussion of a piece of gospel song or musical item amongst church members. She elaborated saying different bands and artists present the music in different ways, looking at artistic presentation, aesthetic appeal, timbre, melodies, harmonies, rhythmic patterns and improvisation. This would help to attract people who have different taste or feeling to listen to gospel music.

#### **5.3.4 Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

Participant 3AG (2021) said,

*Gospel music is an effective method of communicating the message because most of the time it is sung for different purposes such as church services, entertainments, funeral gatherings, concerts, and parties therefore the music reaches more people. I could say that the important part is that gospel music is not a genre which is only enjoyed within the church. It is a genre appreciated by Christians and non-Christians alike. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage because it means that gospel can be used for purely secular purposes. For example, it can be made just to make money.*

Participant 3AG (2021) also pointed that gospel music makes some people question their lives and sometimes convert to be Christians, and that the music helps some people understand the Word of God better than just the teaching of word by the preacher. Participant 3AG (2021) illustrated that music helps some people to understand the Word of God better because the message in the music keep on recurring when music play again and again this will people to understand the word as compared teaching of particular message comes one during the teaching service. In addition, Participant 4AG (2021) noted that gospel music is an effective method of communicating this message because it spreads quickly; reaches more people in and outside the church than people who only attend church services; teaches people about God at a convenient time without necessarily going to church; and people understand music better than formal teaching of the Word of God from the Bible. Indeed, according to Participant 4AG

(2021), people like listen to gospel music as compared to the teaching of the gospel directly from the Bible by the pastor.

Participant 5AG (2021) said that gospel music is an effective method because it reaches more people, spreads quickly due to musical gadgets, media platforms, promoters of the music, television, concerts, as well as tours by gospel bands and choir bands. Similar comments were also made by participant 6AG (2021) when she stated that gospel music is an effective method of communicating the message since it preaches the gospel better than when using formal preaching because it keeps repeating the same message when the music is played. It also reaches people at suitable (or convenient) times and suitable different places; spreads gospel message quickly; and accessible due to musical gadgets such as video and audio CDs, electronic media plat forms and through live gospel music tour by different artists or bands.

### **5.3.5 The Creation of Community in the Church through Gospel Music**

It is worth noting that all the research participants in this church (3AG, 4AG, 5AG, and 6AG) agreed that gospel music brings people together in their church community.

Participant 3AG (2021) said that the gospel music builds the church into a community of believers since people sing together, dance together, chant together, and therefore these activities facilitate the linking of individual church members to become a functional church community. He also gave an illustration as to how church community members link together, by stating that when musical instruments are not played due to an electrical fault, then the link between the instrumentalists and vocalists breaks and usually the playing of the gospel music would be either paused or called off – because gospel music in this context is always accompanied by musical instruments. The researcher notes that in this case, when the electrical instruments do not work, the singing is paused for the instruments to be fixed, if it is a minor problem that could be fixed on the spot. Otherwise singing would be resumed with only the available working electrical instruments. Participant 3AG (2021) further gave another illustration as to how church community members link together by using verses in the book of 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul talks about the Body of Christ – each member has a unique set of gifts which are meant for use in the community. If one part of the body is not functioning, then

the whole body suffers. As to how gospel music brings people together, Participant 3AG (2021) responded by stating that people are brought together by the singing and dancing together, practising together, such that as congregates, they tend to work together in one accord as a family. When he was asked to give an example of any song (and its lyrics) that encourages the church to work as one unity, he mentioned the song called '*Re phuthegetse Morena*' (We are gathered to the Lord):

*Re phuthegetse Morena*' (We are gathered to the Lord)

*Re phuthegetse Morena*' (We are gathered to the Lord)

*Re phuthegetse Morena*' (We are gathered to the Lord)

*Jeso Ma photha ditshaba* (Jesus who gathers the nation)

*Jeso Ma photha ditshaba.* (Jesus who gathers the nation)

### **Chorus**

A re mmakeng, a re mmakeng (Lets glorify Him)

A re mmakeng, a re mmakeng (Lets glorify Him)

A re mmakeng, a re mmakeng (Lets glorify Him)

*Jeso Ma photha ditshaba* (Jesus who gathers the nation)

*Jeso Ma photha ditshaba.* (Jesus who gathers the nation)

Participant 4AG (2021) stated that gospel music creates community in his church because church members sing, dance, chant and recite together as a collective entity or family (in one accord) in the presence of God and Holy Spirit, thus, aiming at conformity – working to sound unified congregationally. He also said the important of gospel music is that the community is constituted intentionally in the presence of God. In other words, this is not singing for entertainment, it is singing in the presence of God. He noted that it is a norm in his church that the different church structures/departments often sing when they have meeting, more especially prior to an opening prayer for a particular meeting. In addition he said that such singing together facilitates the working together as a community in that case here the gospel music foreshadows a sense of consensus. As to how gospel music brings people together, Participant 4AG (2021) responded by stating that people are brought together in his church community because it

allows all church structures such as the youth group, elders, Sunday school, women's sector, men's sector, and church band (worship and praising team) to work together in one accord in their respective groups, thus, influencing them to be a family (in their respective groups) within the church community as a whole. He said that in their respective groups they practice together and singing together, while during the church service the pastor can allow any group sing for the congregation or asked all groups sing together.

Participant 5AG (2021) responded by stating that gospel music inspires people to come together when they sing as one unit. Specifically, she said, "*Last week we had events of different groups, church worship and praising team, youth group, Sunday school and church elders showcasing what they do in their groups. This makes church [members] to be united*" (Participant AG 2021). She noted that all groups were allowed to join congregation to sing together as one accord, and that this gives the church community its unity. As to how gospel music brings people together, participant 5AG (2021) responded by stating that people are brought together in her church community since some are involved in leading worship sessions, while the rest of the church members could also be involved in chanting and reciting together for the common purpose of worshipping God. In this case it will encourage member of the church to work together as on unity. When she was asked to give any song and its lyrics which encourages unity she gave the song '*Ke Morena Jeso, yo ore dumeletseng go tsamaisa tempele*' (It is the Lord Jesus who agreed with us, to lead the temple) as an example:

*Ke Morena Jeso, (Is the Lord Jesus)*

*Yo o redumeltse, (Who agreed with ours)*

*Go tsamaisa tempele (To lead the temple)*

*Go tsamaisa tempele (To lead the temple)*

*O na ana le bomang, (He was with whom?)*

*le barutwana ba gagwe. (He was with his disciples)*

*Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah.*

*Dipelo tsa rona dithamile ka o fela (Our hearts happy indeed)*

*A go bakwe Morena. (Let's glorify our Lord)*

Participant 6AG indicated that gospel music creates community in her church in many ways such as, singing and playing music together as church community members while the music is being led by church worship and praise team. She also pointed out that the dancing and singing together of church members during church services is a message of unity. In particular, Participant 6AG (2021) said, *“Gospel music gives me and the church members acceptance to work together as one family and also I viewed gospel music as best tool to unite church community in most church activities”*.

### **5.3.6 Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

Participants 3AG and 4AG (2021) noted that there is a particular pattern to present gospel songs. For example, before the service, musical items come out spontaneously from the pew without being led by the praise and worship team leader. These are usually worshipping songs, followed by praising songs. She further stated that, according to her church’s tradition, the praise and worship team leader arranges the songs such that the pattern of presenting songs fits in the following order or pattern: worship songs, praising songs, prayer, worship song or praising song, announcements, worship song or praising song, thanks giving (offerings) and tithes, praising songs, bible message or sermons by the preacher, worship song or praising song and lastly, a closing prayer. Most of the time after the closing prayer, gospel music starts spontaneously while the congregation disperses.

In addition, Participant 5AG (2021) said that in her church gospel songs always follow a pattern such that worship songs usually have slow tempo while praising songs have faster tempo. She explained that lyrics of worship and praising are different but there are songs which follow in both worship and praise which it depends on the type of rhythm in place. She noted that songs like *‘Lona ba ratang ho phela’* (You who desired to live) could be sung as a form of worshipping song or praising song. She also stated that in the church, songs compiled and sung using any language are allowed. Participant 6AG (2021) also noted that the worship songs are soft and slow in tempo while praising songs which are louder and faster. It is worth noting that participant 6AG further highlighted that in the church one of the distinctive patterns of presenting gospel songs is that normally a list of songs is presented by the church’s praise and worship team leader and the team is notified in advance as to who would be leading a particular

song. The researcher notes that such an arrangement is important since it guards against conflict of interest, especially in terms of who should be leading a particular song. This is in order to avoid unnecessary, unhealthy and divisive competition amongst the praise and worship team members, more so that one of the purposes of the gospel music is to unite church members as a community of believers for the sake of the spread of the gospel. Participant 6AG (2021) explained that the band master with the help of the pastor and praise and worship team selects songs, and also selects those who will lead the songs from worship and praising team.

### **5.3.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

Participants 3AG (2021) and 4AG (2021) said that the order of praise and worship songs within the pattern assists in the fill-in process whenever there is a brief pause between consecutive church activities of the day, such as preaching of the word and thanksgiving (offerings).

Participant 4AG (2021) had similar response when he stated that gospel music functions well within the pattern of worship because the band (praise and worship team) leads the congregation in the worship service effectively by following that pattern, that is, most of the time, the singing of praise and worship songs is done in between items of the church service.

Participant 5AG (2021) said that gospel music functions well within the pattern of worship because as soon as the service starts in earnest, the praise and worship band/team leads at the beginning of service with worshipping songs and praising songs. In addition, she stated that most of the time the singing of the gospel music is kept in between items of the church service still led by the band, where the list of songs to be played for any particular church service would have been prepared by the leader of praise and worship team before the service and those who are going to lead them in band/worship and praising team. She explained that the lead of church was appointed by church elders (Church board) and pastor based on the following: leadership skill, understanding of music notation, and submissiveness and trust when given church assignments (Participant 5AG 2021).

Further, participant 6AG said that the gospel music fills the gaps between church service items so as to create a smooth pattern of worship. In particular, she stated that from the start of the

church service till the end of the service, praise and worship songs are played in between the church service items to fill the gaps. Participant 6AG (2021) noted that the pattern of worship follows the order: worship song, praising song, prayer, worship song or praising song, announcements, worship song or praising song, thanksgiving and tithes, praising songs, bible message or sermons by the preacher, worship song or praising song and lastly, a closing prayer. She pointed out that most of the time the gospel music sung in the church after the closing prayer comes spontaneously while congregation disperses (Participant 6AG 2021).

## **5.4 The Perspectives of the Church Members of Apostolic Faith Mission Church**

The church members from Apostolic Faith Mission Church were coded as 3AF, 4AF, 5AF and 6AF.

### **5.4.1 The Perception on the Importance of Gospel Music in the Church**

Participant 3AF (2021) said that he perceived gospel music as important in many ways, such as healing, comforting, reviving and uplifting the spiritual being as an emotional therapy, and thereby making him involved in church activities with all the inner strength that is required. When he was asked to explain how gospel music is good for healing, comforting, reviving and uplifting the spiritual, Participant 3AF (2021) said,

*I believe that it is the lyrics because they carry messages which help one to believe and trust God for his healing power. My observation and experience is that faith and believe make one to get healed through listening to the music because of the messages from song such as 'nothing is impossible before God and God has divine power to do the miracle'. Again, my view in gospel music is the unique kind of music which can able to comfort, reviving and uplifting the spirit someone through its appealing lyrics, melodies, its appealing aesthetic, its unique timbre and rhythms. In my case when I feel down in spiritual being, when I listen to gospel music it makes my feeling to revive because lyrics encourage and lift one's spirit.*

In addition, he mentioned one song as example gospel song which carries the message of how God has divine power. The song is 'Gona le maata a pholo' (There's Power of Healing) and its lyrics are as follows:

*Gona le maata a pholo (There's power of healing)*

*Gona le maata kgololo ha a goroga (The power of deliverance has arrived)*

*A sa feleng maata go tswa malatsing a bogologolong* (The unfailing power of the Ancient of Days is here)

*Ke utlwa mo tsamao wa maata go ne fa.* (Feel the movement of Lord's power that is here)

*Gona le maata a go hodisa diphutso tsa malwetse* (There's power here to heal generational sickness)

*Maata a tetse go bofolola le go kgaola diketane* (The power has come here to loosen bonds and break chains)

*Ee, Maata agagwe a sa feleng go bula dikgoro* (Yes, His unfailing power is here to open doors)

*Maata a tsamayang, Modimo oteng.* (It's a moving power, the Lord is here)

*Gona le Maata* (There's power here)

*Modimo o fodisa malwetse othe* (God is here to heal every sickness)

*Gona le Maata* (There's power here)

*Dikeetane tsa lihihi di boholotswe* (The chains of darkness are loosened)

*Reetsa, Maata a sa palweleng a Leina la Morena mo helong le.* (Listen, the unfailing power of the name of the Lord is in this place)

Furthermore, he noted that gospel music makes people to be happy when listening to its encouraging message and more importantly, it is used to spread the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Participant 3AF 2021). In addition, Participant 4AF (2021) responded by saying that gospel music is important because it educates; makes the bible message clearer during preaching because most of the time the gospel song message links with the theme of the day's preaching, which means it reinforces the preaching. He said that the gospel music message keeps on recurring when the music is played. This makes people remember the sermons; it is enjoyable; and relaxes one's mind and therefore uplifts one's spirit because the message in those songs carrying a motivating and encouraging message to believe in God's divine power and have a faith in God's word. She also emphasised the point that gospel music is also another way of presenting gospel message instead preaching or give bible lessons. Participant 4AF (2021) said,

*In the church service the common themes are 'hope', 'healing', 'God's glory', 'restoration', 'salvation', 'forgiveness', 'faithfulness' and many more. In my*



*observation gospel songs focus a lot on those themes. In my view gospel songs act as another form of teaching the Word of God than preaching. Some examples of gospel songs that carry similar themes are 'Bonang, ho hlahile marung (Behold is our Saviour at the clouds), 'Loving and loyal', 'Blessed are they that put their trust in the Lord', 'Lona ba ratang ho phela' (You who desired to live), 'Oh Lord, You're the author of my faith', 'He's done so much for me; I cannot tell it all', to mention but a few. I will chose the lyrics of song called 'He's done so much for me; I cannot tell it all' to show how lyrics cover most of the themes which I have mentioned.*

He's done so much for me; I cannot tell it all  
Nar'ekele m'o (Accept my praise)  
If I Had ten thousand tongues  
It still won't be enough  
Nara ekele m'o (Accept my praise)  
Chukwu na gwom o ria le (God that heals my disease)  
When You hear You heal completely  
Nar'ekele mo (Accept my praise)  
Chukwu mara obim o (God who knows my heart)  
Isi ikendu le! (Living water!)  
Nar'ekele m'o. (Accept my praise)

### **Chorus**

What shall I render to Jehovah?  
For He has done so very much for me  
What shall I render to Jehovah?  
For He has done so very much for me  
Nara, nara eh, Nar'ekele (Accept my praise)  
Nar'ekele m'o! (Accept my praise)  
Nara, nara eh, Nar'ekele. (Accept my praise)

Participant 5AF (2021) said that gospel music is important because the lyrics make one to be closer to God. In addition, the participant stated that gospel music prepares one to attentively listen to the gospel message (sermon) of the day during the church service since the gospel

songs use lyrics coined from the Word of God. Thus, it is clear that the perception of participant 5AF was that gospel music set the tone and the foundation for the preaching or sermon of the day. Participant 5AF also noted that gospel music heals the broken hearted and encourages those without hope in life. When she was asked to explain how it heal the broken hearted and encourages those without hope in life, she said,

*The lyrics of gospel music have messages that tells person that when you believe and have faith in that God's words has a healing power you will be healed in return the person who have faith and believe in God they get healed through the Word of God. She said some gospel song carries lyric talks about hope they will encourage a person to keep on listening to gospel music.*

It is worth noting that healing the broken hearted and encouraging those without hope in life could be achieved if the lyrics of the songs are a direct composition from the Word of God. For example songs like 'Ke laolwa ke moya' (I am led by the Holy Spirit) has the message which makes a person have faith and believe in God's miracle of healing power. She said the lyrics goes like this,

*Ke laolwa ke moya (I am led by the Holy Spirit)  
Ke tsamaiswa ke moya (I walk by the Spirit)  
Ga ke'iketse (It is not by my strength)  
Ga ke hlanye (I have not lost my mind)  
Kelaulwa ke moya. (I am led by the Spirit) (Repeat)*

*Ke Moya Nnete (He is the Spirit of Truth)  
Ke Moya Maatla (He is the Spirit of Power)  
Wa ntaela (He teaches me)  
Wa mphodisa (He heals Me)  
Ke Moya Jeso. (He is Spirit, Jesus) (Repeat)*

*Wa ntaela (He teaches me)  
Wa mphodisa (He heals me)  
Ke Moya Jeso. (He is Spirit, Jesus) (Repeat)*

Participant 6AF (2021) said that gospel music is important in her life because it soothes her heart and revives her spirit when her spirit is down or she is depressed, and therefore acts as a

therapy for the downhearted in order to bring comfort. She was asked to elaborate, she said that she believes that the lyrics in the songs play a very important role of delivering message about God's healing power and his faithfulness in the need of his people and this make her to believe in God's healing and reviving one's spiritual being through gospel songs messages. She said that, she believes that people get healed because they trust God power (Participant 6AF 2021). She also pointed out that gospel music teaches about doing good and therefore gives guidance her life, and it helps to meditate on the Word of God while listening to it in order to connect easily with God. She further explains that gospel music acts as a teaching tool for gospel because is contain the message which teaches about the gospel in the form of music. She said like '*Ke laolwa ke moya*' (I am led by the Holy Spirit) talks about how Holy Spirit leads and teaches (refer to Section 5.4.1. for the lyrics).

#### **5.4.2 The Message of Gospel Music**

Participants 3AF and 4AF (2021) said that the message of gospel music is about the life of Jesus Christ and Christians; talks about good news of salvation and deliverance from sin as stated in the bible; teaches us as to how to live with others in peace and good living relation among people; and submission to Christ.

In addition, participants 4AF and 5AF (2021) noted that gospel music encourages people to learn the scriptures in the bible because the gospel lyrics have motivating and encouraging message asking people to focus on the Word of God. It also acts as another strategy of teaching gospel in the form of music – it calls Christians to be firm in the Word of God. Participant 6AF (2021) stated that gospel music is about the good news of God, particularly news about salvation, deliverance from sin, and it glorifies God for his love and protection over us. Participant 6AF (2021) said,

*I could say most gospel songs act as reinforcing teaching tool for sermons or gospel teaching. For example most of our church sermons or teaching usual covers topics or themes such as salvation, forgiveness, repenting, submitting to God, trusting God and to live good live. In most cases gospel music covers those themes. Let me give one example song call '*Seteng sediba sa madi*' it talks about salvation and repenting.*

*Seteng sediba sa madi* (There's a well of blood)

*Aletareng ya tofelo* (Lying next to the altar)

*Diba se e leng sehlare* (It has the power of healing)

*Matl'a sona ke bophelo.* (The power that gives life)

*Baetsadibe ba batsho* (Sinners who were doomed)

*Ba se kenang ka tumelo* (Their sins have been washed away)

*Ba tloha teng ka basweu* (By the blood and they are spotless)

*Ka thabo le ka tshwarelo.* (With happiness and forgiveness)

### **Chorus**

*Bare amen Halleluyah* (They say Amen Hallelujah)

*Ho boraro bo teroneng* (The Trinity in the altar)

*Ntate le mora le moya* (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

*Ba bine ka ho sa feleng.* (They that give new life)

### **5.4.3 Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

Participants 3AF and 4AF (2021) pointed out that this message is communicated through gospel music composition in which many of the lyrics are picked up from the Word of God (the bible), followed by singing and dancing, performances, and the gospel music is communicable through different media platforms. In addition, Participant 4AF (2021) noted that the message is so rich in the gospel music to the extent that people often pray while uttering the word/lyrics of gospel music.

### **5.4.4 Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

Participant 3AF (2021) said that gospel music is an effective method of communicating the Christian message in such a manner that it reaches many audiences, spreads quickly, people understand the music easily than when listening to the teachings from pastor from the pulpit, and that gospel music also conveys the message while it playing at the same time. Participant 3AF (2021) said,

*I have been concern the way gospel music is used. In the first place it was solely to spread the gospel message outside the church (in public spaces) in order to reach*

*Christians and non-Christians alike, but now it acts like secular genre. The gospel music is no longer used for its primary purpose of spreading gospel message but it is often used as secular music which can be used for various reasons such money, business and entertainment, and some use it to generate money under the pretext of spreading the gospel message. I could say that the important part is that gospel music is not a genre which is only enjoyed within the church. It is a genre appreciated by Christians and non-Christians alike. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage because it means that gospel can be used for purely secular purposes.*

Participants 4AF and 6AF (2021) suggested that gospel music is an effective method of communicating the gospel message since they easily learn bible verses through the musical lyrics and are able to memorise the bible verses in the musical lyrics when singing along with the church praise and worship team during the church service. Participant 4AF (2021) further noted that it is easy to learn and memorise scripture since in the church gospel musical items (songs) are often repeated during the service and other services during the week.

Participant 6AF (2021) also said gospel music is an effective method of communicating the gospel message because people like to listen gospel music and the music can spread throughout a large population within a very short time, and it reinforces the preaching/teaching of the gospel since people turn to understand the lyrics of music better. When she was asked what is it about gospel music that people like so much, she said people like listen to gospel music for various reasons, such as appealing lyrics, aesthetic appeal, strong rhythm and singable melodies.

#### **5.4.5 The Creation of Community in the Church through Gospel Music**

Participant 3AF (2021) said that in the church there are different groups or departments such as youth, church elders, Sunday school, women sectors, men sectors, church band, pastors' and deacons' team, and these groups usually meet at different days and times, where the respective groups often play gospel music as a unifying item of the community of believers in that particular group. She said that some of the examples of gospel songs are 'Rea khubama' (We bow down), 'Bokang modimo wa kganya' (Glorify the God of Light), 'Ntate nthuse', (God help me) and 'Jeso ke Moloki' (Jesus is our Saviour) 'Thabang le nyakalle' (Rejoice and be glad).

Amongst the songs that she mentioned, she chose the lyrics of the song called '*Thabang le nyakalle*' (Rejoice and be glad):

*Thabang le nyakalle* (Rejoice and be glad)

*Ba lehodimo, Le thabele* (Those in the heavens)

*Le thabele baetsalibe.* (Be glad for the sinners)

*Le ba tsoang lefifi* (All those in the darkness)

*Ba tsoang timelong, Ba thabeleng* (Those that were lost)

*Ba thabeleng ba phonyohile.* (Rejoice for they have escaped)

### **Chorus**

*Bokang le rorise Modimo* (Give glory to the Lord)

*Bokang le lerato la Jeso.* (Give praise also for the love of Jesus)

*Tumisang ka pina* (With joyous songs)

*Tsa khalalelo* (Give praise and worship)

*(Ke) Mohlolo ona oa mohau.* (For the miracles that are in His mercy)

In particular, Participant 3AF (2021) indicated that gospel music brings people together in many ways such as singing and dancing together, practising and working together, live performance by different groups in the church show-casing their talents in church services, and also in separate church-sponsored events.

Participant 4AF (2021) stated that gospel music created community in the church because it uses many languages which unites people of different cultural backgrounds and behaviours such that they all function as a team. Furthermore, participant 4AF (2021) noted that gospel music brings people of different cultural backgrounds and behaviours together in the church community in different ways such singing and rehearsal together, dancing and performing together, learning and teaching other group members new songs. Participant 4AF (2021) said,

*Our church is consists of people of different ethnic groups such as Kalanga, Pedi, Shona, Tswana, Kgalaagari, Subia, Tswapong and many ethnic groups which have different cultural background and behaviours. In our church we allow to sing any song using any dialect, but the languages which unify us are Setswana and English therefore*

*any song came in the form any dialect it will be interpreted into Setswana and English to accommodate everybody. Some songs could be sung both in English and vernacular languages, and in some instances, some songs use language code switching which could be either a mixture of Setswana and English, or Xhosa/Zulu and English, for example.*

Participant 5AF and 6AF (2021) noted that gospel music creates community since new members are often motivated to remain actively involved in the church and register as full-time members because of the enjoyment of the quality of the gospel music been played in the church. She further stated music can bring people together in the church because people tend to sing and dance together, learn and read music together and interpret the musical lyrics to each other as team which constitutes church community.

#### **5.4.6 Particular Way of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

When asked as to whether the presentation of gospel songs in their church always follow a particular pattern or not, all the participants (3AF, 4AF, 5AF and 6AF) stated that there is a particular way of presenting gospel songs. In particular, they all noted that the order of arrangement of the gospel songs is always based on a song list prepared by church praise and worship team leader to be followed during the church service or activities. The leader or choir master chose the song during the week with the help of pastor and praising and worship team.

#### **5.4.7 The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship**

As to how gospel music functions within the church's pattern of worship, Participant 3AF (2021) pointed out that gospel music has a slot at the beginning of every activity within the proceedings of programme. Also, Participant 3AF (2021) alluded that music always has slot at beginning of church service and in between the consecutive items of the programme till the end of the church service. Participant 4AF (2021) said that the gospel music is led by the church band, and the choice of the praise or worship songs selected to be sung depends on the item/session at a part of the programme. In particular, 4AF (2021) highlighted that praising songs that talk about thanksgiving are sung during presentation of offerings; songs on salvation and victory, are sung when people are called to the altar for repentance; and songs of that have

messages of healing and deliverance from spiritual oppression and diseases are sung during and after the healing session. She said that ‘*Kealeboga Morena*’ (Thank you my Lord) is an example of a praising song that talks about thanksgiving, and which is sung during presentation of offerings:

*Ke a leboga Morena, Ke a leboga Morena* (Thank you my Lord, thank you, Lord my God)

*Ka tsohle o nketseditseng tsona* (For all the things you do for me)

*Ka tsohle o nketseditseng tsona.* (For all the things you do for me)

*Ntate o senkgwe sa botsholo jame* (Daddy you butter my bread)

*O sukeri mo teng,* (You sugar my tea)

*O tshogohatso mo go nna* (You bless me)

*Dilo tsothe o didirele nna* (For all the things you do for me)

*Dilo tsothe o didirele nna.* (For all the things you do for me)

She said that ‘*Re tlisha thlomphe le poko*’ (We bring honour and praise) is an example of a song which talk about salvation and victory. It is a song typically sung when people are called to the altar for repentance:

*Re tlisha thlomphe le poko* (We bring honour and praise)

*Kgalalelo le maatla* (Glory and power)

*Ke tja gago Morena* (They are Yours, oh Lord)

*O ya halalela* (You are Holy!)

*Re tlisha thlomphe le poko* (We bring honour and praise)

*Kgalalelo le maatla* (Glory and power)

*Ke tja gago Jehofa* (They are Yours, Lord)

*Re tlisha thlomphe go wena.* (We bring honour to You)

*Wena o mong arena* (You are our master) (Repeat)

*Re reta Kwana ya Modimo* (We worship the Lamb of God)

*O tletše kganya wena* (You are filled with glory)

*O kwana ya Modimo.* (You are the Lamb of God)



In addition, some songs like ‘*Tshepha Thapelo*’ (Trust a prayer) is one of the songs which includes a message of healing and deliverance from spiritual oppression and diseases. It is often sung during and after the healing prayer session.

*Hoseng ha o tsoha* (When you wake up in the morning)

*Bosiu ha o robala* (When you sleep at night)

*Tshepa Thapelo*. (Put your trust in prayer)

*Leha o le tsietsing* (Even if you’re in trouble)

*O tsamaya lefifing* (Walking in darkness)

*Tshepa thapelo*. (Put your trust in prayer)

*Leha o thabile Rapela* (Even if you are happy – pray)

*Leha o lemonateng U rapela*. (Even if you are joyful – pray)

*Oh oh oh Kae kappa kae* (Wherever you are)

*Neng kappa neng* (Whatever the time)

*Tshepa thapelo*. (Put your trust in prayer)

Participant 5AF (2021) said that the existing pattern is such that worship songs start the proceedings of the church activities, then gospel music assumes the order, gospel praising songs; prayer; praise and worship songs; announcements; praise or worship song; and the sermon of day accompanied by occasional brief gospel musical item to complement or spice up the teaching of the word. She also noted that at end church service there is prayer, and music while people disperse.

Furthermore, participant 6AF said that the gospel music is part of every activity within church service, while the church band leads praise and worship songs during the church service.

## **5.5 Conclusions**

The results of the chapter revealed that church members noted that gospel music is important in the church because it glorifies God; brings healing to the emotionally hurt or grieved people; spreads the gospel message; and makes people have hope and faith in God’s kingdom.

Therefore, gospel music plays a major role in the lives of church members, and is the integral part in praise and worship service or church service.

Church members revealed that the gospel message is communicated through gospel music played and led by praise-and-worship teams using musical instruments and vocalists while the rest of the congregation sings along, and where the lyrics are based on the Word of God. The general perception was also that gospel music is an effective method of communicating gospel messages because some people prefer listening to the music rather than listening to preachers, and the music plays a role in evangelism. In addition, the church members perceived that spreading the gospel message using gospel music is more effective because often people would stay longer during the presentation of gospel music, than during a sermon. This researcher notes that this may well be because unlike during a sermon, during a musical presentation or when the whole church sings the listeners or singers get actively involved in terms of singing, dancing while at the same time been ministered to by the lyrics, melody and the beat of the song, without being passive for hours. Conclusively, gospel music is an effective strategy to teach and spread the Word of God quickly and to a wide audience, since the entertainment value of gospel music holds the attention of many ordinary people and introduces them to Christian lyrics coined from the Word of God.

In this chapter, generally, the church members also revealed that gospel music builds a community, since the music uses the lyrics coined from the Word of God to advocate for people to respect each other, serve one another, and love one another. More so that the church members are from different places with more or less the same problems and which need God's intervention.

In general, the church members stated that songs that are normally soft and slow in tempo are worshipping songs, while the praising songs are moderate, loud and fast in tempo, where praise songs are for praising God and worship songs are for glorifying God and are meant to encourage the spiritual connection with God. In addition, the church members note that from the beginning till the end gospel music is played in between the items of the service to fill the gaps. For instance, during a sermon a preacher allows relevant gospel songs having the same

theme as the sermon to interlude so that the preached gospel message could sink in and create an atmosphere of appreciation or celebration as a reinforcement to the message of the day. Specifically, the church members acknowledged and confirmed the assertion of the pastors and the musicians that the pattern of music interludes allows the music to blend with the programme of the church service for the smooth flowing of the activities of that particular church service, by holding all the separate parts of the service together. Therefore, gospel music in the church, particularly during a church service is transitional in nature.

## CHAPTER SIX

### DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter will present an analysis of the data, such that the study objectives inform the results themes. In analysing the perception of gospel music in the church, the researcher used a model of church music devised by David Pass (1989). In particular, the researcher used the theory that church music satisfies three separate theological functions within any act of worship, namely, *kerygmatic*; *koinoniac*; and *leitourgic* (Pass, 1989:91). Besides the presentation of the demographics pertaining to research participants, the chapter comprises of two main parts. The first part (Section 6.2.2) is a discourse on the similarities and differences in perceptions of the different stakeholders (research participants), while the second part (Section 6.2.3) focuses on how the research participants perceive gospel music based on the theoretical framework, that is, based on *kerygmatic*, *koinoniac* and *leitourgic* categories.

The sample size that was targeted by the researcher was twenty-one (21) participants. The researcher notes that all the twenty-one participants took part in the interviews up to the end of the respective interview sessions, corresponding to 100% response rate.

#### 6.2 The Findings of the Study

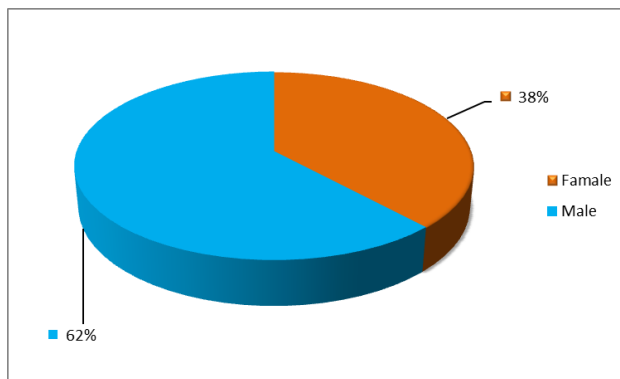
##### 6.2.1 Demographics

The demographic details of the research participants are given in this section. The demographics are in terms of gender and the participant's position or responsibilities in the church in order to have an insight as to some important background of the research participants involved in this study.

##### 6.2.1.1 Gender of the Participants

In this study, 8 out of 21 research participants (38%) were females and the rest (62%) were males. This proportional distribution of the research participants by gender is as shown in Figure 6.1 below.

**Figure 6.1:** Gender of the Participants



### 6.2.1.2 Participants' Responsibilities

The responsibilities of participants are as shown in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1:** Cross Tabulation for Participants' Responsibilities

	Pastors	Musicians	Church members	TOTAL
Gender				
Female	0	1	7	8
Male	3	5	5	13
TOTAL	3	5	12	21

### 6.2.2 Similarities and Differences in Perspectives of Different Stakeholders

In the following section, the similarities in the research participants' perceptions are discussed.

#### 6.2.2.1 Similarities in Perspectives

In particular the discussion will focus on the similarities in perspective of different stakeholders (pastors, musicians and church members) who took the part in interviews.

#### The Perception of Gospel Music in the Church

The results of the study revealed that in general, all the respondents, pastors, musicians and church members noted that gospel music is important in the church because it is used to praise/glorify and worship God. In addition, most of respondents perceived that gospel music can bring healing to the emotions of troubled and grieved people, plays an important role in

spreading the gospel message, comforting people, purifying and cleaning one's soul, lifting one's spiritual being (edification), and also inspires people to have hope and faith in God's kingdom. When the respondents were asked what part of the gospel music accomplishes these varied roles, it revealed that the respondents believe that the lyrics in particular play a very important role. For example, Pastor AF (2021):

*When someone comes to the church grieving and troubled, the gospel music brings happiness to the person and, and he or she gets healed or restored. Gospel music is the best way to praise and glorify God. When you read the book of Psalms in most cases it encourages people to praise and worship God through the music.*

Furthermore, respondents noted that some songs like 'Exaltatio', 'God is able', 'Re a bolela, radumela' (We confess, and profess), 'Moya' (Spirit), 'Bonang, go thagile marung' (Behold is our Saviour in the clouds) and to name few that carries a powerful message about how God is. The lyrics of mentioned songs are in chapter 3, 4 and 5. The researcher notes that in order for gospel music to achieve its intended purpose of spreading the gospel message, praising and worshipping God, the lyrics of each gospel song should be able to link and pass a clear and concise message to the congregation or any other listener.

### **The Message of Gospel Music**

Moving on, the results of the study revealed that in general, all the respondents, pastors, musicians and church members noted that the message of gospel music talks about the good news, God's grace, salvation, the kingdom of God, God's glory and God's good deeds and protection for people. It also encourages people to live in peace, talks about the goodness of the Lord, makes people appreciate and thank God for his mercy, and also appreciates how God delivers the people from sin. Furthermore, all general respondents perceive that gospel music is a way to cry unto God and put a petition to God. In addition for example, Musician 2AG (2021) said "*The message of gospel music is all about religion which is composed, gospel music delivers the message about the good news from the bible, encourage people to love each other, talks about God's salvation and deliverance, glorify God about his good deeds and protection to mankind [sic]*", while the Pastor 1E (2021) indicated that the message of gospel music is very clear: there is a God, a God who sees, hears, and heals. In this study the researcher noted that all respondents mentioned some gospel songs such as, 'Ke a leboga, Ke a leboga' (Thank

you, I thank You), '*Semphethe wena ya ratehang*' (Please do not pass me by), '*Ke letlotlo Sefapanong*' (The cross is my treasure), '*Lona ba ratang ho phela*' (You who desired to live) to name a few which talk about the greatness of God. The above songs and their lyrics are as presented in chapters, 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis.

### **Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

The findings of the study revealed that in general, all the respondents, pastors, musicians and church members on responding how the gospel message is communicated, the general responses were that gospel message is communicated through gospel music played and led by praise-and-worship team using musical instruments while the rest of the congregation sing along, where the lyrics are based on the Word of God (the scriptures). The general responses also revealed that gospel music is conveyed to the people through live performances, concerts, social media platforms, video and audio types, as well as radio and television stations. In addition, all respondents noted that gospel music is often listened to from musical gadgets, media platforms such as Facebook or WhatsApp, televisions, radios, live performers or concerts, individuals, as well as in the church. To cite one example from one of respondents, Pastor AF (2021) said that he intended message which is conveyed through gospel music is communicated using many platforms. For example, he noted that in his church they have a television screen that shows gospel lyrics during church service, and the band (praise-and-worship team) plays the music using musical instruments while people sing along with it by referring to the words or lyrics on the screen. He pointed out that gospel music reaches people through performances, concerts, social media platforms, video and audio types, and also radio stations, and television stations.

### **Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

As for the effectiveness of gospel music, the general perception in the study revealed that in general, all the respondents were of opinion that the presentation or use of gospel music inside and outside the church is an effective method of communicating the gospel message because in that way music reaches more people, and therefore the gospel message spreads quickly and to a larger audience.

In addition, all respondents revealed that gospel music is an effective method to communicate gospel messages because some people prefer to listen to the music rather than listen to preachers, that is, normally people are interested in music than sermons. The other most common perception of the respondents on the effectiveness of the spread of the gospel message using gospel music was that most often people would stay longer during the presentation of gospel music. However, they soon leave the gathering once the formal preaching starts. Therefore, music becomes an effective strategy to teach and spread the Word of God quickly and to a wide audience, because the entertainment value of gospel music holds the attention of many ordinary people, but also introduces them to Christian lyrics. In this sense, it seems that pastors are content to allow the entertainment value of gospel music to form a core aspect of its performance inside church. In other words, the entertaining nature of gospel music is, to a certain extent, encouraged rather than suppressed. Thus, a form of “entertainment” is harnessed for the work of the Christian gospel.

### **Gospel Music Brings People Together and Create Community in the Church**

It was also apparent that one of perceptions of the respondents pertained to the fact that gospel music builds a community, since the music uses lyrics coined from the Word of God to advocate for people to respect each other, trust each other, serve one another, and love one another.

The study revealed that church community develops and grows due to the fact that people are coming from different places with more or less the same problems and which need God’s intervention. The song called ‘*Ke ngwana wa gago*’ (I am Your Child) is one of example of songs which calls God to intervenes in one’s problem and solve it, its referred to in 4.3.4 above. In addition, generally the respondents indicated that gospel music brings people together as a community in several ways. For instance, one of the respondents (Participant 3AG 2021) pointed out that gospel music motivates the people to socialise freely when they do practice and rehearse together, sing and dance together in the church service through the help of lyrics. The results of the study also revealed that gospel music plays a role in evangelism.



Generally, the respondents were of the perception that gospel music creates a community in their churches when they socialise a lot through practising and singing together. In addition, there is interaction amongst church praise-and-worship team members, junior praise-and-worship team members, women's sector members, men's sector members, church elders, and Sunday school members.

### **Particular Way of Presenting Gospel Songs in the Church**

All the respondents noted that there is a particular pattern of presenting gospel music in the church. In particular, there are praising songs that lead to the worshipping songs, and these types of gospel songs have specific purpose within the church. It was also revealed that the praise-and worship team usually makes a list of songs to be sung at a particular church service, under the guidance of the praise-and worship team leader and pastor. Furthermore, the choice of gospel songs depends on the particular session. For instance, when themes such as deliverance or message of salvation, healing, or worship, the congregation is led into singing songs like, '*Oh the blood of Jesus... It washes whiter than snow*' (deliverance) and '*Worthy is the lamb that was slain*' (worship), respectively. The researcher notes that in special services, like partaking of the Holy Communion, worshipping songs are normally sung to make the congregation think introspectively about the death of Jesus Christ.

### **The Function of Gospel Music within the Pattern of Worship and the Bringing Structure in Worship through Gospel Music**

In addition, the results of the study revealed the gospel music within the respective churches during a normal church service is such that from the beginning till the end gospel praise-and-worship songs are played in between the items of the service to fill the gaps. In particular, at the beginning of the service, the praise-and-worship team lead the church by singing and playing praise songs, worship songs, followed by prayer, worship songs or praising songs, announcements, worship songs or praising song, thanksgiving and tithes, worshipping songs, bible message or sermons by the preacher, and while he/she is preaching he/she allows the presentation of the gospel messages to be coupled with relevant gospel songs so that the preached gospel message could sink and create an atmosphere of celebration. This is followed by the benediction or closing prayer. With regard to the question of how gospel music functions within the pattern of worship, it was generally revealed that the pattern allows the music to

blend with the programme of the church service for the smooth flowing of the activities of that particular church service. In addition, for instance one typical response was that of Musician 2AG (2021) viewed that *“It seems from my perspective gospel music works as a kind of glue, holding all the separate parts of the service together. In this sense, it is transitionary in nature, i.e. it transitions one section to the next so that the change does not seem too sudden or abrupt”*.

In conclusion, the study revealed that most of the respondents from the three churches have much similarity of perceptions concerning gospel music than the differences. In the following section, the differences in the research participants’ perceptions are discussed.

#### **6.2.2.2 Differences in Perspectives**

##### **The Perception of Gospel Music in the Church**

In the study it is noted that some of the respondents’ view gospel music as a form of talking to the God or hearing from God. One unique answer about Gospel music was from Respondent 3E (2021) said that gospel music prepares him or lays the foundation to be able to receive the word of bible preaching because the messages from songs links with the sermons of the teachings of the day. Thus, in his experience gospel music is important in the church because it acts as a tool of preparation to hear the Gospel (or the Word of God).

One of the respondents differed from other respondents when he said that gospel music is the best tool to welcome the people who join the church, through good encouraging lyrics, aesthetic appeal, gospel music is easy to sing, also when the people are allowed to dance together as a family, while majority of the respondents noted that gospel music is the way of teaching gospel in the form of music.

##### **The Message of Gospel Music**

The study revealed that some respondents perceive that gospel music as a genre of Christian music was composed and performed for many purposes ranging from entertainment, aesthetic and ceremonial purposes but with Christian texts. They further noted in their understanding some of the composers are not Christian but they compose gospel music to meet their needs. However, it varies according to culture and social context, while others perceive as it only

composed to talk about gospel. While other respondents viewed that gospel music solely for teaching gospel in the form of music but people through their thoughts they diverted gospel music for other purpose.

### **Communication of Message through Gospel Music**

One of the respondent has different perception, in particular Participant 4AG (2021) said that composers differ, depending on their objectives, because some compose for business while others for teaching and encouraging people listen to gospel message.

### **Effective Communication through Gospel Music**

The study revealed that some respondents noted that even though at the beginning gospel music is view as effective way of spreading the gospel in the church and public spaces, in some spaces it has shifted from effective way of spreading the gospel to other broader social contexts (secular entertainment, funeral gatherings, concerts, business purposes, parties, and also to addressing local social challenges). For instance, one of respondents in particular, Participant 3AF (2021) said,

*I have concerned the way gospel music is used, in the first place it was solely to spread the gospel message out side church (in public spaces) to reach Christians and non-Christians alike, but now it acts like secular genre. The gospel music it's no longer use to its primary purpose of spreading gospel message but it uses as secular music which can be used for various reasons such money, business and entertainment. I could say that the, important part is that gospel music is not a genre which is only enjoyed within the church. It is a genre appreciated by Christians and non-Christians alike. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage because it means that gospel can be used for purely secular purposes.*

### **6.2.3 Engagement of Theoretical Framework in the Study**

In this study the theoretical framework mentions analysing the perception of gospel music through a model of church music devised by David Pass (1989). In particular, the researcher used the theory that church music satisfies three separate theological functions within any act of worship, namely, *kerygmatic*; *koinoniac*; and *leitourgic* (Pass, 1989:91). The benefit of this

model is that it takes into account both the music and the content of the text as it conveys theological message.

#### **6.2.3.1 How Gospel Music Works as Kerygma**

In the first place one should understand that *Kerygma* is a Greek word or theological word for imparting the gospel. *Kerygmatic* music corresponds with the church's mission to declare and teach its message. It is mono-directional and conveys a message of declaration or teaching (in other words, the "word" is declared) (Pass 1989:94-112). The results of the study revealed that in general, the perceptions of all the research respondents (pastors, church musicians within the praise-and-worship teams, and the church members) was that gospel music is important in the church because it is used to teach gospel, teaches and guide how people should live in peaceful way, praise/glorify and worship God. Specifically, there were similar responses with regard to the perception on the role played by gospel music. For instance, the participants indicated that gospel music mends the hearts of the broken hearted, brings words of hope for those without hope, comforts the broken hearted, and is an alternative way of evangelising or spreading the gospel of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ through its lyrics and melodies. Indeed, according to the researcher's experience, the lyrics of the gospel songs are mostly words from the bible about salvation, deliverance, as well as praise and worship, where the praise and worship songs mostly rely of the book of Psalms and other biblical books. Indeed, one of the pastors, Pastor AF (2021), stated that in most cases, the book of Psalms, "*Encourages people to praise and worship God through the music*". Further, another pastor, Pastor E (2021) remarked that during bereavement, "*We sing or play gospel music to get comforted and comfort the bereaved or distraught*".

It is clear from the results of this study that gospel music is generally perceived as another way of teaching gospel in the form of music rather than teaching gospel with solely with preaching or sermons. Gospel music can work as *kerygma* in the churches service the message from gospel music declared people should be faithful to things of God, trust God, believe that God has authority in their live how, and also teaches how God's love towards people in terms of deliverance from sin reconciliation to God, more especially if the lyrics of the songs talk about deliverance from sin and salvation are derived from the Word of God.

It is clear from the aforesaid analysis on how gospel music can act as *kerygma* in the three churches the results of the current study revealed that the message spread by gospel music is the message of hope, love of God towards people, deliverance and reconciliation to God, as well as praising and worshipping God. For this message through the gospel music to achieve its intended purpose or role, the gospel music itself should be seen/deemed to be effective on the ground. Participants indicated that the presentation and the use of gospel music is, and has proved to be an effective way of communicating the gospel message since the music reaches wide population with diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as different local languages and foreign languages.

The general response was that the gospel message is communicated through gospel music such that the congregation can sing along with the praise-and-worship team. This is another way of teaching the gospel. The study also noted that there is an opportunity for *kerygma* through performances, concerts, social media platforms (video and audio types), as well as radio and television stations.

The other most common perception of the participant on the effectiveness of the spread of the gospel message using gospel music was that most often people stay longer listening to gospel music than learning to a sermon since using gospel music to spread the Word of God (the gospel message) has an element of entertainment while been ministered to at the same time.

It also is worth noting that evangelism is often carried out using gospel music, such that some people are attracted to the church by the joy and “motivation” they get from gospel music, and that is how they eventually end up becoming permanent members of the church community, after appreciating the need to repent and receive the salvation from God.

### **6.2.3.2 How Gospel Music works as Koinonia**

*Koinonia* is a Greek theological term meaning the “community” or “community of the faithful”. *Koinoniac* music is intended to elevate the church community. It is omni-directional (everybody participates, everybody listens) and it conveys a message of communal unity and brotherhood and sisterhood (Pass 1989:112-119).

In general, that gospel music in the church is presented in different languages is a sign that it is inclusive and therefore has great potential to unite the church community, consequently cascading into the public space of local community since the church should be the light and salt of the earth, and should live by example.

Furthermore, on how gospel music works as *koinonia*, the results of the study revealed that the general perception of the research participants was that gospel music builds a community since the musical lyrics advocate for people to respect, love, and trust each other, more especially supporting each other since people from different socio-economic backgrounds tend to have more or less the same problems that they can share and that need God’s intervention.

In addition, in the study the generally the participants indicated that gospel music creates a community of believers in many ways. For instance, one of the participants, Pastor E (2021), noted that people in the church socialise freely if tend to “*Practice and rehearse [gospel songs] together, sing [songs] and dance together*”.

### **6.2.3.3 How Gospel Music Work as Leitourgia**

*Leitourgia* is a Greek theological word which refers to how church services work and how ordinary people actively participate in them. In this study the researcher analysed how gospel music work as *leitourgia* to reflects the community’s structure and function of gospel music in worship. The results of the current study revealed that there is a particular pattern of presenting gospel music which is similar across in all churches under consideration. The response of the participants indicated that within the respective churches, from the beginning of the service till the end of the service gospel praise-and-worship songs are played in between the items of the

service to fill-in the “gap”. In addition, the music plays a transitional role liturgically, while creating thematic unity with the sermon of the day. For instance, the texts of the songs can also highlight particular liturgical functions, such as offering, thanksgiving, petition/intercession and repentance.

From the foregone discussions of the study of the importance of gospel music and how gospel music as *leitourgia* as one of church music devises which fits into the structure of church worship service in the part of community of believers, it is clear that the church should have a well-rounded programme of praise-and worship to meet all the demands of a typical Pentecostal church service.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In this study the researcher concluded that in theoretical framework analysing the perception of gospel music in the three churches, the researcher used a model of church music devised by David Pass (1989) which helped to discern how the stakeholders (Pastors, Musicians and Church members) perspective gospel music. In particular, the researcher used the theories that church music satisfies three separate theological functions within any act of worship, namely, *kerygmatic*; *koinoniac*; and *leitourgic* (Pass, 1989:91). This model helped take into account both the music and the content of the text as it conveys theological message looking on how the general participants perceive gospel music. The general overview of the participants is that gospel music in worshipping space played a pivotal role by facilitating three theological functions, teaching and declaring of gospel (*kerygma*), uniting and building church community (*koinonia*), and allows to reflects the community’s structure and function (*leitourgia*).

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, discussions of the research findings of this study, as well as findings from the reviewed literature that agree with the findings in the current study are highlighted. In addition, this chapter presents a brief discussion on the intervention strategies that could be used to sustain the role that is played by gospel music within the church and the civic society of Botswana. A summary of the research findings and conclusions are also given.

#### 7.2 Discussion of Results

In this review, it has been noticed that generally in the perception of the interviewees gospel music plays a more *kerygmatic* role than *koinoniac* or *leitourgic*. Thus, it can be argued that gospel music plays a strongly *kerygmatic* role in the Botswana Pentecostal context. In addition, in this study it has been observed that the perception of the participants is that *kerygma* is one of the most important tasks of the Pentecostal churches. The researcher noticed that for the Pentecostal churches in Botswana to accomplish their mission of preaching or proclaiming (*kerygma*), gospel music can be very effective.

However, both *koinonia* and *leiturgia* are still important. In this study what the researcher learned is that performing gospel music is an act of *koinonia*. Nevertheless, the Botswana Pentecostal churches appear to view gospel music more as an act of preaching the gospel, than as a primary means of fellowship (communion) by intimate participation. The perceptions of the stakeholders in this study are that gospel music certainly acts as *koinonia* by encouraging unity. As a result, gospel music is used within the Christian Church for participation. Yet, importantly, the fellowship is part of the evangelization of the gospel which helps the church to grow. It is understood in the responses that the spiritual communion and participative sharing in a common religious commitment and spiritual community by the followers of Christianity with each other and with their Lord are seen through gospel music lyrics and activities. Therefore, *koinonia* expresses the church's unity in the body of Christ as different individuals,



having voices coupled with the use of different instruments, blend into a single unified work of beauty. The participant's perception was that gospel music can be a model of *koinonia*. For example, gospel music bring individuals assemble: for bible review, corporate prayer time, dinners, and administration. In this way individuals can empower and uphold one another. The participant perceived that by doing these things, they bring God and others into full solidarity with themselves.

In this study, it is clear that *leitourgia* also plays a role. Gospel music has a definite purpose in worship, and is much more than filling the gaps or drawing people closer or creating the right atmosphere for the preaching as is often done. Within the worship service, gospel music could thus fulfil *kerygmatic*, *koinoniac* and *leitourgiac* roles simultaneously. In addition, Caliz (2017) stated that “*music could be used in the background in preparing the atmosphere of or for the worship service. On the other hand, especially where people partake in the music through playing instruments or singing actively with other members to the music, they become actively involved in the activity of music-making*”. Then, as part of the sermon, gospel music can impart the word directly.

### **7.3 Recommendations for the Enhancement of the Role of Gospel Music**

The researcher notes that interventions are needed to address any challenges faced by gospel music such that the envisaged purpose or role of gospel music could be attained and sustained within the Botswana context. Based on the findings of the study, as well as on the reviewed literature, the researcher suggests the following as interventions for successful gospel music ministry in the church;

- Churches should nurture and mentor praise-and-worship teams and their leaders through music seminars and conferences, where praise-and-worship leaders, instrumentalists, and vocalists could be trained and motivated by purposively selected speakers. Additionally, one feature of such seminars and conferences could be for musicians from different denominations around the country to converge and exchange ideas about what works in their churches.
- All churches should incorporate various styles, ethnicities and cultures into their music programmes, while at the same time encouraging musicians to be spiritual in all

aspects of gospel music ministry life and to model the much needed Christian behaviour through mentoring and nurturing fellow gospel musicians.

- The establishment of dedicated individual church's gospel music ministry whose core values would be to: promote worship through music; accept and provide gospel music of various styles, ethnicity and cultures; minister to the entire congregation by gospel music; to be spiritual in all activities of gospel music ministry; and to encourage high ethical standards and moral among musicians within the praise-and worship team.

#### **7.4 Recommendations for Future Research**

The motivation for recommendations on future research stemmed from the fact there had been limitations pertaining to time constraints and more importantly, the scope of the current study, due to having to adhere to Covid-19 health protocols and envisaged uncertainties of Covid-19 lock-downs and movement restrictions. Although this thesis revealed several contributions to the literature concerning the role and importance gospel music as well as how gospel music fits into the church's service structure, the researcher notes that there are still questions that require further research that were beyond the scope of this thesis.

On this note, the researcher makes the following proposals for future research work;

- The influence of gospel music in the worship service amongst different ethnic groups. This will go a long way in seeking for ways for denominations to be culturally inclusive.
- The fact that all the pastors that participated in this thesis were males, makes it a motivation for a future research on an investigation of women who had significantly contributed to the development of Pentecostal churches in Botswana through the influence of gospel music.

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## **INTERVIEWS**

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Participant 6E (2021). Interview with the author. Mochudi.

## **APPENDIX**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Questions:**

1. Why is gospel music important to you?
2. What is the message of gospel music?
3. How does this message communicated through gospel music?
4. Is gospel music an effective method of communicating this message?
5. Does gospel music bring people together in your church community?
6. If you answered yes to no. 5 above, how does gospel music create community in your church?
7. If you answered yes to no. 5 above, why does gospel music bring people together in your church community?
8. Is there a particular way of presenting gospel songs in your church? Do the songs always follow a particular pattern?
9. If there is a pattern, how does gospel music function within the pattern of worship?
10. If there is a pattern, why is gospel music helpful in bringing structure in worship?