

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*The Influence of Music on the Spiritual Development of Youth
A Study of Nairobi Gospel Centre and Lifespring Chapel*

BY
ESTHER F. W. NYAGAH

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in
Christian Education*

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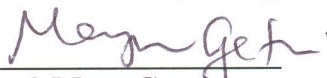
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Student's Declaration

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC TO THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH:
A STUDY OF NAIROBI GOSPEL CENTRE AND LIFESPRING CHAPEL

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)



Esther F. W. Nyagah

July, 2004

ABSTRACT

This study explored the influence of music on the spiritual development of the youth. Two churches in Nairobi, Lifespring Chapel and Nairobi Gospel Centre were selected. Data were collected through face to face semi-structured interviews with fourteen participants, and were recorded and transcribed. Observation was also done in a music concert in Lifespring chapel.

The findings revealed that the influence of music on the youth is holistic, reflecting in three major developmental domains (emotional, mental and social). The study revealed that youth can either respond to music's influence Christianly or worldly. It is the Christian response that leads to spiritual development while worldly response leads to spiritual decline.

A visual model of the interrelationships between the developmental domains was advanced and recommendations made to parents of youth, church leaders, the youth, media and music composers regarding the best ways to meet the needs of the youth through music as well as leading them to a closer relationship with God.

To

My dear husband Jeremiah

and

Our parents Mrs. Lois Muthoni and Rev. & Mrs. Moses Wambugu

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The church has a great role to play in the spiritual development of its members. Programs the church prepares for achieving this goal include preaching, teaching, worship, Bible study, retreats, and evangelism. The entire worship experience involves music, prayer, meditation and reflection. Christian music is an integral part of worship and it is a great tool in building a Christian's faith. While preaching and teaching involve only a few hours a week, Christians are exposed to music more than other church programs in a week. Music is not restricted to the worship service or organized church program. Music, especially in Kenya, is played at home from the radio, tapes, video and television and is sang as people work and in the vehicles (private and public).

Problem Statement

Any church without an established youth ministry is headed for extinction. Spiritual growth of youth is rightly a major goal of our churches today. However, ministry to the youth is unique because of who the youth are. Therefore, parents and adult leaders in our churches are looking for the best way to influence spiritual development of the youth. This is not easy, however, because there are many issues that are unique to the youth that parents and youth ministers do not understand well. One of these issues is the influence of music. It is important to discover how music influences the thinking of youth in our churches regarding the spiritual aspect of life

because they are exposed to a lot of music within and without the church. We know that whatever one exposes oneself to has influence on one. Music seems to have a strong influence on youth, but we really do not know how it relates to the day-to-day life of youth, particularly to their spiritual development. What is the influence of music to their spiritual development?

Purpose of Study

This study explored the role of music in the life of Christian youth. Hustad (1981, 74) stated, "It is hardly necessary to argue the proposition that as persons, we tend to be changed by what we idolize, what we worship. In effective Christian worship, we become like God, who is the object of our worship". The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore youth's perceptions of the influence of music on their spiritual development. Data was collected through open-ended interviews with 14 Christian youth in two churches in Nairobi. For the purposes of this study, spiritual development is defined as the elements of positive change that occur in the lives of the youth, judged on the youth's level of application of truths learned about Christian living (Mattah 2001, 4). This term is used synonymously with spiritual growth.

Significance of study

This study is important because youth value music highly. Teachers of youth, church leaders, and parents need to know the kinds of the music youth in our churches listen to and why they choose to listen to it. Since music is an educational tool, this study will help church leaders, specifically youth leaders, as they seek to minister to

and meet the needs of the youth. Youth teachers and church leaders will be helped in understanding how to best meet these needs and, thereby, provide relevant programs, e.g. concerning music. The data collected from this study have helped the researcher to develop a theory on the influence of music on the spiritual development of the youth. Having a proper understanding of what music means to the youth gives the youth teachers, parents and church leaders guidance on how to address sensitively issues dealing with music and youth in church, home and other environments. The study offers recommendations to youth workers, church leaders, Christian educators, music composers and media such as radio and television, on how to best reach the youth through music. Currently, the church in Africa is likely to be irrelevant to the youth unless it takes to consideration the current trends in music. The results of this study become a resource in directing the church in Africa towards that change which will bring relevancy to the youth.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the focus of this study.

The Central Question

What is the influence of music on the spiritual development of the youth?

Sub Questions

1. What is the youth's perception of the importance of music in their daily lives?
2. What kinds of music influence the youth?
3. How does music influence the thinking of the youth about spiritual things?
4. What do the youth feel is the role of music for the Christian community?

Delimitation and Limitations

This study was limited to the input of the youth in two churches in Nairobi: Nairobi Gospel Centre and Lifespring Chapel. Research design, time and finances limited the number of participants to 14. The target group, though not representative of all the youth in Nairobi, offers helpful insights, applicable to other Kenyan youth.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions reflect the usage of certain terms for the purposes of this study.

Youth refers to urbanized young people between the ages of 13 and 20 years who are committed to a church. **Urbanized** means that they have been influenced by city or town life even though they do not necessarily live in urban areas always.

Contemporary music refers to modern, fashionable and popular music, like rap, reggae, rock, blues, and raga.

Holistic development refers to the change in the whole person, which is manifested in the changes to the different developmental aspects such as social, emotional, moral, mental, and physical.

Church refers to the people of God; the community or body of Christ.

Christian response to music refers to the ability of the youth to take up what is morally right from music (Christian or secular) and leave what is morally wrong.

Worldly response to music refers to the youth's action of indiscriminately taking worldly values from worldly music or incorporating worldly values to Christian music.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been written on the subject of music in Christian circles. While most of the literature has been written from a non-African perspective, Western culture has infiltrated Africa, especially in Nairobi where this research was done. The Western culture is, therefore, not a very unfamiliar thing in the churches in Nairobi, though it cannot be wholly transferred as equivalent. The literature that has been referred to is in the area of music, addressing topics such as: the role of church music, debate on contemporary Christian music, youth culture and ministry, and the area of Christian spirituality.

Understanding Youth Culture

In every society, it is clearly understood that there are a lot of differences between the lifestyles of the youth and that of the older generation. The terms “generation gap,” the “now generation,” “generation X,” “Y2K generation,” “dot.com generation” and others are just a few to demonstrate the differences between the young and the old. Lawrence O. Richards commented that “the number of significant differences found between the generations has led many, like sociologist Marcel Rioux, to believe that “intergenerational conflict” is “most significant” and of “fundamental importance.” He quoted Allen Moore who suggested, “Young people tend to be precise indicators of what is going on within a culture” (Richards 1972, 13-14). Richards stressed that as we look at the values of the youth, we should also

consider the cultural forces that affect them. Harley Atkinson pointed to the following trends shaping the generation of youth and teenagers in America; mobility, knowledge and technology explosion, mass media, ethnic diversity, postmodernism, rapid social change and family breakdown (Atkinson 2001, 5-8). The above trends can also be observed in Kenya, especially in the urban centers like Nairobi, which has become the centre of postmodernism in Kenya.

In describing youth culture, Atkinson cautioned on the danger of assuming all youth to be in the same sub-culture. Youth culture can be subdivided into smaller sub-cultures, "along ethnic, geographical and class lines" (51). Atkinson pointed out some of the following common elements of youth subculture: They have "relatively unique norms and values" which are quite distinct from what exists in the adults' community. Secondly, there is the "teen lingo" which is a special language unique to the group members. The youth also have "distinct channels of communication" in which the mass media participates to a large degree. There also exist "unique fads and styles" where "a fad is a relatively new way of doing, speaking, grooming, or dressing." Youth also observe a "sense of solidarity" where, as much as possible, adults are excluded from the activities of the youth. Another element very common with the youth is "hero worship" where they imitate and show adoration for individuals they admire, especially in the entertainment world. Also addressed is "sub cultural institutionalization" where institutions like "dating, music festivals, dancing, drug abuse and music" develop to fulfill the needs of the youth that the adult or the dominant culture fail to provide.

Lawrence Richards pointed out a few styles of contemporary youth culture that are still relevant today (Richards 1972, 14-22). One is that the youth "lived a day at a time" which means that what is of importance to the youth is the "existential

now." Though the background of this comment was based on the American culture in the 70s, it has a lot of correlation to the Kenyan culture today. The other phrase Richards used to express styles of contemporary youth is "what seemed most fun." The youth are found to be more honest and open to express their desire for happiness, which Richards referred to as "pleasurable experience now!" However, he thought that this also applies to other people in a culture, but that the youth are more open and honest to express it. Richards also addressed the influence of peer groups in shaping the values of the youth by relating this influence to the phrase, "what dad would approve" representing the influence of parents. According to him, the power of approval of parents in aiding in the decision making process of the youth is of less influence today. A greater influence in the youth's decision making process is in their peer group.

Another phrase that Richards pointed out is "what seemed right." Decisions on what seems right or wrong to youth are influenced by the values that lie underneath those decisions. Richards said, "...the only true indicator of values is behavior." He pointed out two possibilities of factors that would influence value formation among contemporary youth and the general youth culture. One is "the loss of a clear-cut cultural (adult) model" and two is "the trend away from reflective moral thinking" (Richards 1972, 20). Richards suggested that ministers to youth should stop majoring on minors like the visible symbols of youth difference such as hair styles and loud music, and start majoring on the "substance" which is made up of a set of values which are deep-rooted in the youth's decisions and choices (22).

The Youth in the Church and Youth Ministry

The youth are a very significant and influential group of people not just in the church but also in the nation as a whole. They give the church and the nation a hope for tomorrow. Ministry to the youth is a noble ministry for it builds the church's base for the future. Ian Henry George Clyne, in his work *Light on Innovative Approaches to Youth Work* quoted Ratcliff & Davies and said that a valid youth ministry is "vital to the future of the church." The church's educational ministries, therefore, should ensure that the youth in the church are nurtured spiritually and their faith in God well founded. One of the means of ministering to youth is through music. Daystar University did a research project, sponsored by Youth for Christ, in July 1979. This project analyzed the potential audience for a Christian periodical called "Step" for Africans under thirty years. The study showed that "a potential focus for the magazine was music" (Daystar Communications 1979, 14). According to the study, music "was the second major source of entertainment" after newspapers and was "the prime listening point for radio" (14). The study was done in Nairobi more than two decades ago, and it showed that music was in high demand by the youth. With the increased use of media such as television and record albums, more recent studies might give a clearer picture of the current situation. Mathias P. Emenike's study in 2000 of adolescents in Nairobi Pentecostal church revealed that adolescents between the ages of 12 and 15 years watch television and videos as the most popular form of media available to them, while music and radio were of secondary influence (Emenike 2000, 40). The two studies showed that music is popular among the youth in Nairobi. Besides their exposure to music, this current research specifically inquired about the perceptions that youth have of the importance and influence of music in their spiritual growth.

For a youth ministry in any church to be successful, the needs of the youth must be addressed. In identifying the needs of the youth, it becomes inevitable to recognize the many challenges facing our youth today, including the ever-expanding exposure to media influence among other challenges like HIV and AIDS, study, and competition in the job market. The churches need to involve the youth in the planning of their programs to ensure that what is incorporated in the program meets a real need to the specific group being addressed. When allowed to express their feelings, experiences and challenges, the youth can contribute much to the way they think their needs can be met.

As noted earlier, Hustad (1981, 74) affirmed that, as people, we tend to be changed by what we idolize; what we worship. In effective Christian worship, God is the object of our worship and, therefore, music should be used to lead people and, in this case, the youth to become like God. Speaking about youth of middle-school age, Hustad said that “this is a gang of hero worshipers, and Jesus Christ is the most logical hero-choice they could make” (74). About the high school aged youth, he said, “...they respond to beauty in great poetry and music, and also natural simple expressions of pop, folk and rock music,” and “both historic art music and contemporary expressions should be included in their repertoire” (74).

The church exists for the purpose of winning people to Christ, so “a church music program is aimed at directing people to Jesus Christ” (Terry 1974, 1). Considering music in the church, Lindsay Terry, quoting Henniger, pastor of the Canton Baptist Temple said, “you can’t build a great church on music, but you can’t build a great church without music” (2). Therefore, in the youth programs of our churches, music should play an integral part. Terry also pointed out that music should be evangelistic, “but music used with the teenage choir should differ slightly from

music used with the adult choir. It should be very solid and heartwarming (Perry 1974, 70). “The teens like to use music with life and challenge in it, songs of Christian testimony and songs that present the love of Christ” (70).

On music and culture, Hustad commented, “It is important to ask whether each music and verbal language common to each culture and sub-culture has truly been ‘transformed’ – brought to the cross - so that it makes the strongest possible contribution to the worship life of that culture” (Hustad 1981, 13). Youth in our churches have a culture unique to them. Their music, therefore, needs to comply with Hustad’s view so that it can be meaningful in their spiritual development. In defining music in church, Hustad said, “Music in church is not a free art, an end in itself. It is art brought to the cross, art which is dedicated to the service of God and the edifying of the church” (13). This needs to be true for the youth who enjoy music not just because it is an “art brought to the cross,” but because it has beats and rhythm that they can dance to and enjoy.

Music and Spirituality

Richard Foster, in *Celebration of Discipline*, explained different spiritual disciplines that facilitate spiritual growth in a Christian’s life. The inward disciplines included prayer, meditation, fasting and the study of God’s word while outward disciplines included simplicity, solitude, submission and service. Corporate disciplines included confession, worship, guidance and celebration. In many of these disciplines, music can be employed. In worship, for example, song and music is a great way to worship. Hustad said, “Music is a primary mode of expression in worship” (Hustad 1981, 295).

In meditation and reflection, music can be used. Singing a hymn that expresses the person of God like, “Oh Lord my God when I in awesome wonder...” a Christian is able to reflect on God’s creation, his love and his redemption through Jesus Christ. In prayer, music can be incorporated as well. Many Christians pray through music, and music becomes part of prayer and fasting in bringing the Christian to meet with and experience God. Music, therefore, becomes a useful tool in approaching God, in meditating about the Christian’s walk with God and in asking for forgiveness from Him (confession). Furthermore, music is employed in the discipline of celebration, which gives strength to life and is the path to joy (Foster 1978, 164-165). When a Christian is full of awe at God’s goodness, “the heart breaks forth into psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Worship, praise and adoration, dancing, laughing, flow from the inner chambers” (169).

T. W. Hunt said that music is a useful medium for transmission and teaching of theological concepts. We remember better what we sing (Hunt 1987, 17). Music is a powerful tool for Christian education (Juma 2003, 3) and can be very useful in the spiritual development of the youth. Addressing the effects of secular music on Christians, Monica a radio presenter (Family FM Radio program, June 2003) said, that music affects the way one thinks, talks, one’s outlook in life, the way one relates to other people and the way one relates to God. If music can affect the way a youth relates to God. The youth in our churches should be encouraged to channel their minds towards letting music positively affect that relationship.

The Role of Church Music

Wohlgemuth, in *Rethinking Church Music*, suggested that it is very important to evaluate the historical, psychological and biblical points of view as we think about

the role of church music (Wohlgemuth 1981, 1). This section discusses these three points of view.

Historical Point of View

Wohlgemuth described the development of the use of music from the tradition of Jewish faith in the religious services to the New Testament times where we see music used in worship and in admonition. He also addressed the development of hymn forms used in congregational singing during the reformation time (2), which were influenced by Martin Luther. Luther loved music and recommended it for teaching in schools. He believed that “through the medium of song, the word of God may remain among the people” (3). John Calvin, who also led the reformed church, recommended the incorporation of songs in the worship services but, unlike Luther, he challenged the use of hymns and said that instead, Psalms were the only text appropriate for use in congregational singing. He is quoted to have said, “Those melodies which are introduced merely to give pleasure are not agreeable to the majesty of the church and must be infinitely displeasing to God” (4).

Later in the eighteenth century hymns were written and used to revive congregational singing, especially in England. Men like Isaac Watts, writer of the hymn “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross,” and John and Charles Wesley brought “enthusiasm, joy and meaning” into the congregational worship (5). The gospel songs and the gospel chorus developed in the nineteenth century when there was a need for songs that were different from those of the Wesleys and Watts, songs that were easy to sing among the masses and among children and young people. By the 1960s, and 1970s, new types of songs and renewal songs developed and they led to the present advance in contemporary music, as well as jazz and rock styles.

Psychological Point of View

Wohlgemuth noted the different roles that music can play in a person's life by alerting the church leaders to the fact that "the power of music has more influence than is usually understood. It can abuse, control moods, arouse tears and incite action. It can debauch or delight, kill or cure, bring darkness or light" (Wohlgemuth 1981, 6). He gave an example of how Saul experienced the power of music when David played the harp. It would relax Saul and the evil Spirit would depart from him (1 Sam 16: 15-16, 23).

Wohlgemuth pointed out that the world had discovered the power of music and it was being utilized by becoming "allied to the permissive lifestyle and use of drugs by youths." Music also is used by the mass media such as television in their advertisements, programs and cartoons. It is also used for therapeutic uses, to influence painting, and it is used in worship to bring a presence and experience of the Holy Spirit in the church. Wohlgemuth cautioned, "We often err by underestimating its [music's] potential for good as well as for ill" (Wohlgemuth 1981, 8). Addressing man as a psychological being, and recognizing that "music has great potential to influence emotions and thoughts, the Christian should think critically about how he uses his music. It is an awesome responsibility to use this God-given tool with care and discretion" (8).

Nic Delamont in *The Ministry of Music in the Church* also recognized the power of music to influence people and cautioned that, "Music must not degenerate into a manipulating device, a tool to achieve other ends - by the control of people's emotions, for instance" (Delamont 1980, 15).

Biblical Point of View

The tradition of using music in worship has existed since the times of the Old Testament. Delamont identified the use of Levitical choirs, for instance as recorded in 1 Chronicles 15:16, and 2 Chronicles 29:25-28. The New Testament, recorded the practice of "making melody in your heart to the Lord" as found in Ephesians 5:19, Luke 1:26-38, 46-55, James 5:13 and Acts 16:26. The tradition of music in worship has existed from the times of the Old Testament and will be there until eternity as revealed of the four living creatures and the twenty four elders in Revelation 4:6-11.

The Church and Contemporary Christian Music

There has existed a debate regarding the position of contemporary Christian music in the Church ever since this music has infiltrated the Church. Some people regard it as a revival from the Holy Spirit and others see it as a compromise with the world (Miller 1993, 1). Steve Miller, in *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate*, quoted James Emery White who observed that "perhaps one of the most clearly observed marks of many fast growing churches is their shift away from traditional hymnody toward contemporary music." (2). However, there have been opposers to this kind of music, who give their proofs of how this music is detrimental and as Miller put it, they regard the music as "actually a thinly veiled device of the enemy. They maintain that the church's embrace of this tool merely demonstrates the appeal of the world to the flesh and the lack of discernment by the church at large" (3).

People have had different opinions and questions about contemporary Christian music. As Miller put it, the major question asked is, is this music "of the devil or of God, bane or blessing, worldly or godly" (4)? Miller gave a possibility for

the reason behind the continued debate about contemporary music. He suggested that it is because of "the cross-disciplinary nature of the study of music in the church" (4). Cross-disciplinary study involves a certain discipline being viewed in light of the views and principles of another discipline. Miller suggested that the cause could be that many pastors lack any "musical background [and] many musicians lack a theological background" (4).

Among the many contributors to the opposition given to contemporary music is John Diamond who did a research in behavioral kinesiology. From the study, it was concluded that a certain pattern of the beat known poetically as an *anapestic beat*, which is found in many contemporary songs, is damaging. "He claims that a person's muscle strength is reduced by approximately two thirds when music containing a certain beat is introduced" (10). Miller commented that, according to Diamond, it does not matter how godly the musicians are or how theologically accurate lyrics in a song may be. All that matters is the music itself. If the theory is true, contemporary music must be very damaging. However, Miller challenged the accuracy of this theory. Referring to other studies done, Miller specifically mentioned a 1979 study done in North Carolina studying the effect of music on the maintenance of vigilance. This study showed a contradiction to Diamond's study. According to the North Carolina study, Miller reported, "Familiar music, regardless of the style, actually heightened awareness and thus improved performance" (14). According to Miller, Diamond's research did not give psychological evidence to prove that there is a specific single style that leads to a universal response.

Miller suggested the need for sensitivity to the music preference of the people being ministered to. He noted that some age groups and some cultural groups may have different preferences of music and styles than other groups. The groups should

be ministered to differently according to their preferences so as to bring relevance and effective communication (21). Richards, in his work *Youth Ministry - Its Renewal in the Local Church*, gave the following suggestion, "It is vital in planning for ministry with youth that we understand the styles in which youth tend to think and feel and shape our ministries to what they are, not to what we might think they ought to be" (Richards 1972, 14). Therefore, doing research is very important in order to establish the perceptions of the different categories of people found in our churches so that we have our direction on how to address the issue of music in our churches today as guided by real findings. This study sought to gather stories from youth in two Nairobi churches in order to understand their perception of the influence of music over their spiritual lives. Such an understanding allows those ministering to youth to appropriately address their needs.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

Methodological Literature

The methodological literature discusses two principle approaches to social science research; the quantitative and the qualitative paradigms. This research utilizes the qualitative paradigm. Qualitative research is “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 10-11).

Assumptions in a Qualitative Study

Qualitative methods are generally inductive. Though information in a qualitative study can be collected from many sources, e.g. books, newspapers, letters, and others, many researchers use observation and open-ended or semi-structured interviews (Starcher 2003, 59).

Grounded Theory

Creswell (1998, 68) wrote on five traditions that are used in qualitative research. These are biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. Grounded theory is so called because it is grounded in data collected during research. Grounded theory, as used in this study, is defined as “theory generated from data systematically obtained and analyzed through the constant comparative method” (Creswell 1998, 98). This is a grounded theory study about the influence of music on the spiritual development of youth from two churches in

Nairobi. The data was obtained from fourteen youth of these churches through in-depth interviews. Creswell said that a grounded theory intends to “generate or discover a theory” (Creswell 1998, 56) which identifies with certain situations. A theory is “a plausible relationship among concepts and sets of concepts” (Ibid.).

Theory in Qualitative Research

The word theory is used in a grounded theory study to refer to the result of the study. The researcher in this study sought to discover a theory that is derived from the information from informants (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 12). In a qualitative study, the researcher does not start with a preconceived theory to test in the course of the research. Rather, the theory emerges during data collection and analysis. In an inductive approach, the researcher begins with collecting information from the respondents and then forms "categories or themes until a theory or pattern emerges" (Creswell 1998, 56).

Unlike in quantitative research where theories are used deductively and presented at the beginning of the study, qualitative research ends with the derivation of a theory. In quantitative research, a theory is presented through hypotheses or research questions, and then information is gathered to test this theory. In a qualitative study, researchers use an inductive model, thus, the theory is presented at the end of the study because it is developed as the research progresses.

The researcher chose to do a qualitative study in the grounded theory tradition because detailed information was needed from the respondents, the youth. The information gathered was the youths' perception of the importance of music to them, their favorite kinds of music, and whether music influenced their thinking about their spiritual lives. This is because youth need to be listened to in order for people to understand why they do what they do. The use of interviews with open-ended

questions gave the youth a chance to express themselves more clearly and even ask for clarification on the issues being discussed. It is from this information and the whole process of research that dictated the path for development of a theory that relates to the research questions.

From the information given by the participants of this study, the following theory emerged: *Music's impact upon youths' lives is holistic, reflecting its influence upon three major developmental domains (emotional, social and mental). Spiritual development results when youth respond christianly to music's influence while spiritual decline results when youth respond to music's influence in worldly ways. Their response shapes their moral development.*

Methodology

Methodology involves data collection, data analysis and verification of strategies. Method refers to a set of procedures and the techniques for gathering and analyzing data (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 11).

The Role of the Researcher

This work involved field research meant to investigate the influence of music on the spiritual development of the youth in two churches in Nairobi. This being a qualitative study, the main instrument in data collection was the researcher. Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, said the researcher “collects empirical materials bearing on the question and then analyzes and writes about them” (Starcher 2003, 57). The researcher gathered data from the participants through personally conducting in-depth interviews with each of the participants.

Participants

The participants for this study consisted of the youth of two churches in Nairobi (Nairobi Gospel Center and Lifespring Chapel) who were between 13 and 20 years of age. The researcher did “theoretical sampling” where people who fit into the category of the population and were in a position to make a contribution to the evolving theories were selected to participate (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 201). There were seven male and seven female participants in the study, two of whom were in primary school, nine in high school and three out of high school. All participants were committed Christians.

Instrument Design

Data collection for this research was done using personal interviews. The interviews were used with an intention of answering particular research questions in this study. The interviews contained open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used to collect qualitative data since they allow the respondents to express themselves freely (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 64).

Pilot Interviews

The researcher interviewed two youth from the NEGST campus who fit the description of participants for the study and regularly attended church in Nairobi. The researcher used these interviews to learn how to ask questions during the actual interviews and to learn what to expect in the field. Having been told the necessary information, the two youth pointed out the unclear items and also suggested ways of improving the interview. These suggestions were taken into consideration in conducting the actual interviews.

Data Collection

Data were collected from open-ended or semi-structured interviews, which were face to face with fourteen participants. The participating youth were selected according to their capacity to contribute from their point of view on the influence of music to their spiritual development. The interviews were done one on one, during the months of January and February, and they lasted for a period ranging from fifteen minutes to forty-five minutes each. The researcher also attended a music concert in Lifespring Chapel and made observations.

Types of Data Collection

Data were collected mainly through face to face, audio taped qualitative interviews. The researcher, however, also made observations of a Christian youth concert called the JAM session, whose aim was ministry through dancing.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis was based on the research questions and the feedback from the interviews. The study followed the procedure given by Strauss and Corbin in their book *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* as below:

- i) Open coding, which is “the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 101). This started as soon as the information was collected. Analysis was done line by line, but sentences were also coded, as well as paragraphs and the entire document (120). The researcher reduced the “large amount of data to smaller, more manageable pieces of data” by

conceptualizing where items with similar properties were grouped together and given a name that represented the commonality (121).

- ii) Axial coding is part of open coding where analysis “revolves around the axis of one category at a time” (Starcher 2003, 67). In the process of axial coding, the researcher identified certain conditions that had to do with different kinds of behavior in response to different kinds of music. According to Strauss and Corbin, “conditions are sets of events or happenings that create situations, issues and problems pertaining to a phenomenon and to a certain extent, explain why and how persons or groups respond in certain ways” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 130). The following explanation is about the major conditions that emerged from this coding procedure.

Causal conditions are “sets of events or happenings that influence phenomena” (131). The major ones identified from the current study were situations in which the participants found themselves exposed to what they referred to as “bad” music; e.g., in public means of transport (*matatus*), parties, and also media such as radio and television.

Intervening conditions are “those that mitigate or otherwise alter the impact of causal conditions on phenomena” (131). For example, most youth in this study talked of a realization that the music they were listening to or playing was “bad” or “not right” whether this was expected or not expected. This happened when they were watching TV or music videos, listening to the radio, at a party, in a *matatu* or hearing music played in a nearby club.

Contextual conditions are “specific sets of conditions (patterns of conditions) that intersect dimensionally at this time and place to create the set of circumstances or problems to which persons respond through

actions/interactions” (132). Depending on the context, the different participants in this study had different ways of responding to the situation in which “bad” music was played. For example, if they detected a “bad” song playing on the radio, TV, in a *matatu*, at a party, etc, they used responses such as “switch off the radio,” “switch off my head,” “don’t listen,” “switch my mind away,” “walk out” or “decide to stay.”

In the process of axial coding, the researcher came up with a figure that related two major categories, survival mechanisms in helping the youth reject “bad” music and strategies of choosing good music (see page 42).

- iii) Selective coding is the process of “selecting the core category that emerges from the data and relating it to other categories” (Obat 2002, 9). It is where integration and refining of the theory takes place (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 143). The core category that emerged from the data was the holistic influence of music in the lives of the youth. This category was related to other major categories such as music’s influence in the emotional, mental, social and moral developmental domains.
- iv) Memo writing was used by the researcher as a “record of analysis, thoughts, interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection” (110). The researcher always kept a notebook in which insights, questions, explanations, discoveries and certain issues pertaining to the study that needed to be followed up were recorded.

The process of coding and categorizing went on until all the data had been considered and no new categories came up. Selective coding enabled the emergence of a theory, which is represented by the figure on page 26.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DATA INTERPRETATION

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of music in the spiritual development of the youth. Data were collected through interviews and observations, involving fourteen youth from two churches in Nairobi, Lifespring Chapel and Nairobi Gospel Centre. The basic research questions used to collect data are as follows:

- 1) What is youth's perception of the importance of music in their daily lives?
- 2) What kinds of music influence youth?
- 3) How does music influence the thinking of youth about spiritual things?
- 4) What do the youth feel is the role of music for the Christian community?

The data collected were analyzed using the grounded theory methods leading to the discovery of a theory.

Theory Explanation

Data analysis resulted in the following theory. **“Music's impact upon youths' lives is holistic, reflecting its influence upon three major developmental domains (emotional, social and mental). Spiritual development results when youth respond christianly to music's influence while spiritual decline results when youth respond to music's influence in worldly ways. Their response shapes their moral development.”** A response of choosing good music was having positive

influence in the youths' lives while the consequence of choosing bad music was having negative influence in their lives.

For the purposes of this study, the above mentioned domains are discussed in respect to how music influences the youth. Although they are discussed separately, they remain interrelated. Music influences these domains differently but not independently. However, spiritual development is all encompassing and governs the influence of music to the rest of the developmental domains. The moral domain involves the choices that the youth make, which either lead to spiritual growth or spiritual decline. The following figure represents this interrelationship.

Figure 4.1. Visual Model of the Interrelationships between Domains

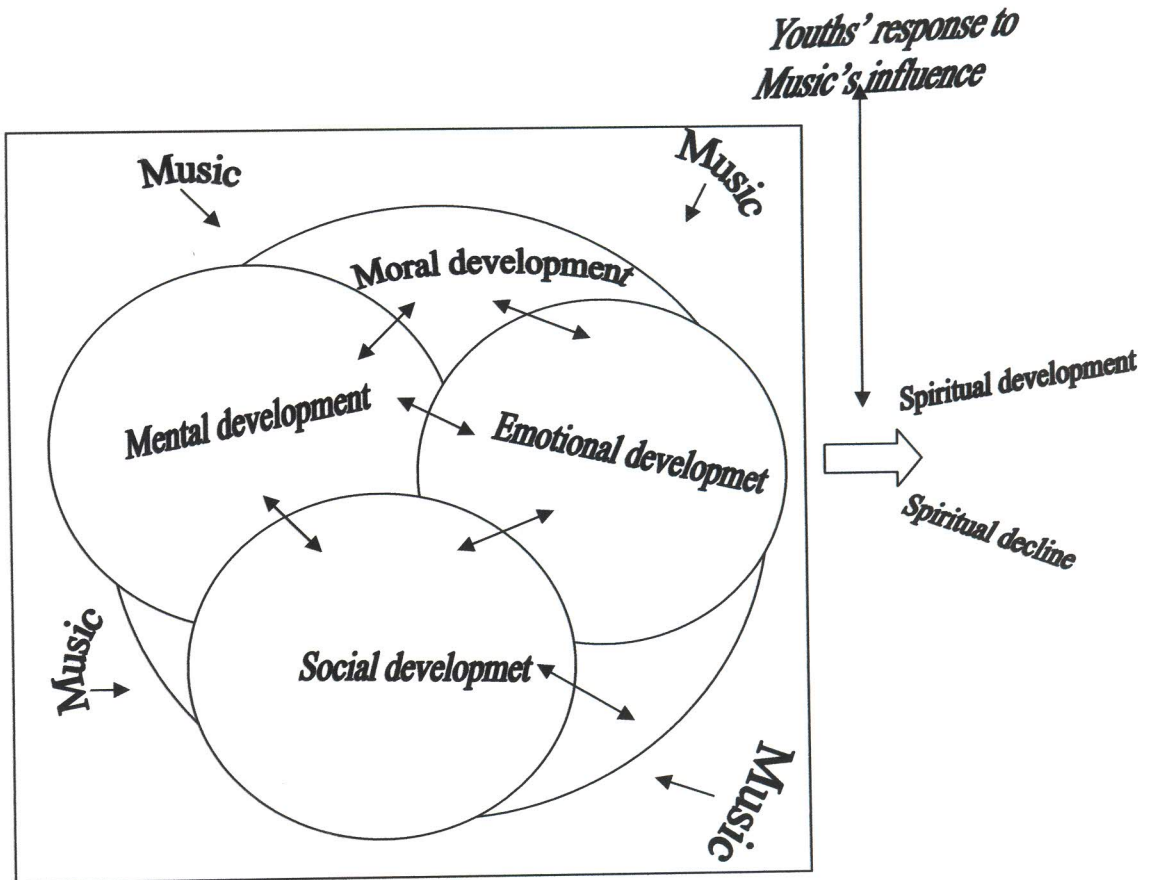


Figure 4.1 demonstrates the interrelationship between the developmental domains. Music influences the different domains, but the moral domain filters this influence such that how the youth respond to music's influence results to either spiritual development or decline.

Music and Spiritual development

Spiritual development in this study refers to the elements of positive change that occur in the lives of the youth, judged on the youth's level of application of truths learned about Christian living. From the findings of this study, spiritual development of the youth is represented by the interrelationship among the different developmental domains in their lives and it governs the influence of music to the mental, social and emotional domains through the moral choices they make. All the participants in this study were committed Christians. Below is an overview of how they understood spirituality. The names used are not the real names of the participants.

The Youth's Understanding of Spirituality

Basically, all participants related spirituality to the relationship a person had with God. However, this relationship was viewed differently by different youth, meaning that they had different indications of being "spiritual". They expressed spirituality as outward, inward or both. One participant said the following in response to the experiences in his spiritual, life, "Sometimes, I find myself doing things that don't really make me look a Christian". This expresses the outward aspect of spirituality, "looking a Christian". Another, in response to his involvement in singing 'bad' secular music said, "There is always something at the back of my mind that will

say “I am not doing the right thing”. This expresses an inward understanding of spirituality, where the mind is also involved.

The baseline of spirituality according to the youth was having a relationship with God, which meant that a Christian was expected to do what God wanted as expressed in basic biblical teachings. The following expressions were from different youth showing the place of God in their spiritual lives.

Frank: I live a life that respects God

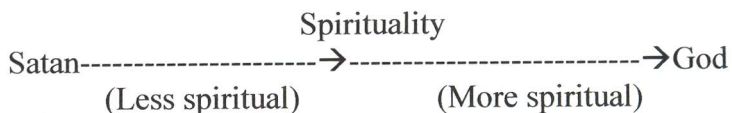
Nicholas: I think if I do good, I please God and that is what is expected of me

Joseph: I strive to live according to God’s will upon my life. I pray to Him always for guidance even when so many wrong and sinful things are happening around me.

Betty: I study my Bible, praying a lot and keep company of people whose spiritual life is oriented towards yours, people who are saved.

The above statements and others that show an understanding of God's expectations of Christians like what Liz called “the stuff that God wants us to live by” all show the place of God in the spirituality of these Christian youth.

The youth confessed that they always did not do what God expected them to do. Spirituality therefore was perceived as a continuum rather than a fixed state. The extremes of this continuum were Satan and God, where spirituality increased, as one was closer to God.



The youth described their spiritual experiences as ups and downs, where sometimes they were close to God and other times they felt far from Him. Music sometimes bridged the gap. David who seemed to perceive his spirituality outwardly in his

expression, ‘look a Christian’ also had inward reflections which determined his negative perception of secular music to his life.

For me, am not a really strong Christian. As in sometimes, I find myself doing things that don’t really make me look like a Christian you know? Okay, when I listen to secular music, there are some other things that you listen to, like most of them representing death, love, sex and all that. So, it’s like its sticking to your mind, you are thinking of all those stuff.

Frank on the other hand expressed his spiritual life as follows:

I am saved, but sometimes I... like when am with my friend, I change all over a sudden. I start doing some crazy stuff, and when somebody asks me for something, I just don’t give him.

David also experienced moments of being a “real Christian” when according to him, he did things that Christians ought to do. He expressed this change as sometimes being brought by gospel music.

When you listen to music you have to think. So, when I go back to gospel music, it helps me in a way that... there is sometimes, I don’t pray. So, when I listen to gospel music, it just comes gradually, I feel like praying, I just feel like singing and all that you know? That’s when I call myself a Christian.

The above expressions showed the interrelationship of mental, moral and spiritual domains. It was part of the life of youth to go through these ups and downs in their spiritual experiences, but they had different responses based on their morality, which either brought them back on track or deteriorated their relationship with God. These are discussed more in the music and moral development section as coping mechanisms.

The things or practices that youth expressed as helpful for one’s spiritual growth were prayer, singing/praising God, worshiping God, studying the Bible, keeping good company, Christian fellowships (e.g. Christian Union at school and Sunday classes), listening to parents’ advice, always being happy, and meditating. These were examples of what Richard Foster called the inward, Outward and

Corporate spiritual disciplines as mentioned earlier in chapter II, page 11. In many of these practices, music was employed as a facilitator and thus an influence.

Music either impacted the youth's spiritual lives positively or negatively.

Positive impact led to closeness to God while the negative impact led to distancing one from God, as demonstrated in the following quotes from participants.

Lillian: "In Christian music, I look for the words that will help me in worshiping God."

Betty: "Like, *Oh Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end*, it's a commitment of my heart that I like reciting. It reminds me of what I have chosen to follow."

Joseph: "Some secular music can completely alienate you from God and almost irreversibly enslave you in sin."

Caleb: "I love music because it helps me to praise God, to worship Him and sometimes it helps me in prayer."

Frank: "When I cannot express everything in prayer, I can express it in song."

John: "Some words are so inspirational; they give me some inspiration and encouragement."

Nicholas: "Gospel music is related to the Bible, it is spiritual and the more I listen to Gospel the more I draw near to God, the more I love God."

Spiritual development, as mentioned earlier, resulted from the youths' response to the influences that music had on their social, mental and emotional domains through the moral decisions they made. This is expounded throughout this chapter as it integrates the different developmental domains in the lives of youth. Moral development, therefore, was a great factor in determining the youth's spiritual growth.

Music and Moral Development

Moral development was dominant and actually functioned as a filter of the impact that music had on the emotional, social and mental domains. Moral development was mainly expressed in the central theme of making choices. Making choices on music was mainly a moral issue and basically, music had both positive and negative influences upon the holistic development of the youth. This influence, however, was determined by whether the music was viewed as “good” or “bad” from the youth’s perspective. Bad music did not necessarily mean secular music and good music did not mean gospel music. There was both “good” and “bad” secular music, as well as good and bad gospel music. “Good” and “bad” differed according to different judgments. They mainly reflected youth’s moral convictions but also their emotional and social needs as well as their mental ability to differentiate good and bad music. It also depended on how the music met the diverse needs of youth, in the context of youth culture, e.g. entertainment, communication, ministry and education. If music was not appealing because it lacked an engaging beat, it was said to be boring and thus “bad”. Music also was classified “good” or “bad” depending on the impact it had on the whole person as indicated in figure 4.3.

Youth regarded making choices very highly as a determinant of their holistic development. They understood that making choices was their daily responsibility, yet it was a great struggle. Figure 4.2 on page 34 represents the centrality of making choices in the holistic development of youth.

Youth made choices depending on their convictions. These convictions were based on the youth’s personal principles or philosophies. These principles referred to what the youth had resolved to go by, and were determined by different factors, which included individual youth’s relationship with God, their own self understanding

(which helped them to know what was relevant or real to them), and their awareness or general knowledge and external influence (maybe from parents, teachers, peers or church members or colleagues). The youths' choices of music depended on their perception of the quality. Hence, music was either "good" or "bad," and so, they listened, sang and danced to the music or they did not. The consequence of choosing good music was having positive influence in one's life while the consequence of choosing bad music was having negative influence in their lives. This influence was holistic, meaning that it affected the diverse aspects of youth development, not necessarily all, and not necessarily the same aspects among different youth. However, spiritual development was at the center of all the Christian youth involved in this study and was a result of the choices that youth made based on their moral inclination.

The youth were highly exposed to many different kinds of music readily available to them through media like radio, television, CDs, tapes and video. The Nairobi environment also exposed them to a lot of music, especially public transport vehicles, drinking pubs and music concerts. The music that was popular to youth was different from the one liked by their parents and other adults in church and so, the youth struggled to make the right choices (i.e., choosing good music) that spoke to their emotions of excitement or depression, that entertained and made them happy, that taught them and that was in keeping with their Christian faith and parental teachings.

Some of the youth however loved the kind of music that their parents liked though they were fewer. For such youth, they were mainly motivated by the words and the meaning in the music. Betty loved hymns which she took after her mother while Liz loved old music just like her dad. Liz said "My dad has a lot of old CDs and stuff in the house and he likes to buy them coz he knows that I like them, but the

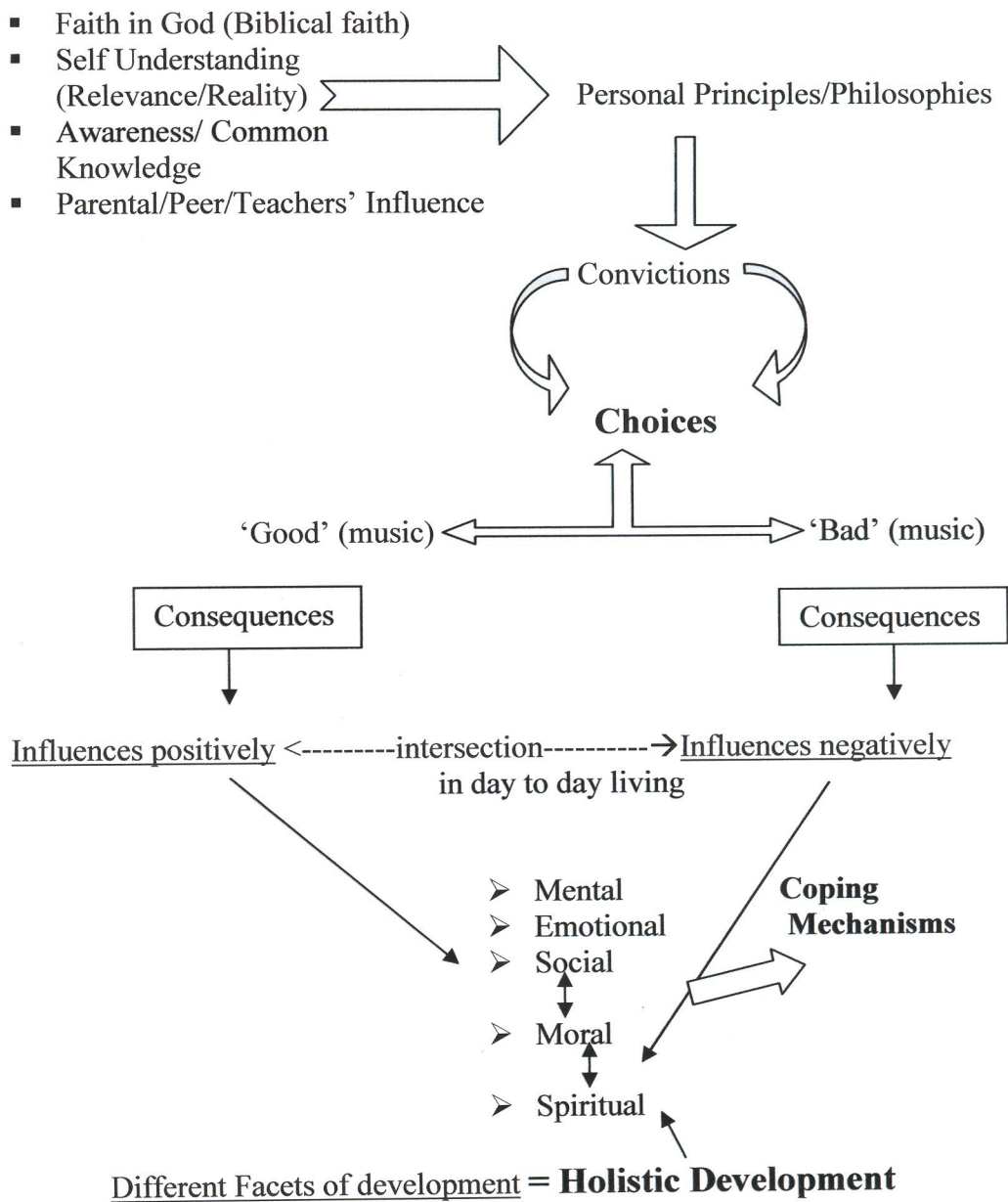
people in school mostly like reggae, which I really don't enjoy." Her reason for liking old songs was:

I like really old music, like the kind my parents used to listen to. Because it doesn't have the wrong message that, most music these days have. These days music is about sadness, sex, it's just a different kind of music, so I like the old music.

Betty on the other hand had the following to say about her like of hymns:

Partly it's individual coz like at home, not everyone likes those songs, others like my bros don't like hymns they like rock rock songs. But also it's because of my mum. My mum likes hymns, and in singing them I find the songs so nice, I just feel like learning and so I learn. They just got into my brains and I came to like them.

Figure 4.2. Youth and Choices



Coping Mechanisms and bad music

The line between “good” and “bad” music was very thin, and therefore the youth needed to be alert so as to detect whether what they were listening to was “good” or “bad” music. When youth found themselves in situations in which music switched from “good” to “bad” like in parties with friends, radio, TV, etc, they

developed their own coping mechanisms to reduce negative influence from “bad” music. Liz a high school girl who loved “old songs” and “rock” had this to say about making choices

There are some types of music for some people that really, really, really enter their mind, as in the ones that are constantly there. I think you should identify that kind of music and try to listen to it, and then make choices. If you hear a bad song ...no matter what you do, music will always enter in your head subconsciously. So, if you hear a song that is coming on and you know it's not right, switch it off or just move from there. Switch of your head or whatever, don't listen to it because it enters and it will destruct later.

Ann, who was also in high school and, a lover of blues said:

Let's say you are in a birthday party and they put that (bad) song. You can just sit there but don't even listen to the music, just switch your mind away. Yeah, but if you can't switch your mind away, okay, don't be too much influenced by the song. You can walk out or decide to stay. That's your choice.

These following response was from three high school girls, lovers of ‘pop’ and ‘blues’ who avoided listening to words of “bad” songs to reduce negative impact of the songs.

Ann: For other people like for myself, I like traveling in *matatus* that have beats, but I don't really listen to the words. Yeah, the beats, but it is not healthy.

Lillian: Okay, I ignore the words and listen to the beats. Like I move my body... that's how I try to ignore the words.

Peace: I can control myself. Is it right is it wrong? I can make that decision. And you know the wrong from the right; you can differentiate. So, it's not that influential to me. Like I said earlier, some words don't really bother me, like me, I like beats.

The above citations illustrate the coping mechanisms applied by different youth based on their convictions so as to avoid negative impact from bad songs into their lives. But it was not always easy to avoid these songs getting in their heads. Paul, a high school student gave a situation where songs could get to people even without their desire because of the environment but even then, the youth had to choose.

As we said in class today, it is the small things that matter. You listen to a song right now, its bad. May be in a *mathree* [*matatu*], you know? *Ukishuka* [when you alight in] town, you go across the street the song is playing, come back home at night may be your brother is not saved and is playing the same song. At night you try to sleep, the same song is booming in a club around you, just next to you. It has entered. The next time you hear guys talking about it, you sing along. You know, as difficult as it may seem, you have to choose.

Music and Mental, Emotional and Social Development

These three domains are discussed interchangeably in this section because of their intertwining tendencies although they could be separately identified.

Mental Influence

The mental domain involved the thought patterns of an individual. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, these developmental domains were interrelated and it was very difficult to separate them since music's influence was holistic. The youth confessed that music influenced the way they thought and applied truths learned in their lives. Despite the pressure to conform even to bad music, the youth acknowledged they had their minds with them and, therefore, had the ability to choose. Let us look at some of these responses. Betty, a high school graduate had the following to say about the involvement of the mind in decision making.

I think it corrupts the thinking of youth. Because most of them [worldly songs,] not only the words that are corrupting, the words, then when it also comes to dancing, they also don't dance so nicely. Okay, they dance in dirty styles and then those things you do there, you find yourself doing them in your house, and you know you don't just do something with your body and your mind is absent. So, it influences the way you look at things. If you are talking about having sex with people you are not even married to, at times you find yourself doubting your position and saying "by the way, what's the big deal?" and stuff like that.

Nicholas on the other hand talked of the influence of music to his attitude, referring to the help he got from one song "*Thank you*" by *Mary Mary*.

I used to ignore things completely. Like I didn't use to appreciate my parents like they were bothering me, they were denying me some things which made no sense and so, when you listen to music, God tells us to be thankful with whatever we have because without my parents, life would be worse and I think when they tell me something, they tell me of things they have experienced, they know the consequences and they know what is good for me and so, when I listen to music, I appreciate things the way they are. Maybe sometimes you are not in a good school, you don't have money, just feel encouraged be thankful to what you have.

Nicholas took the message from music to be from God, and his facial expression also showed the intertwining of mental and emotional domains. Joseph, a lover of "R & B" (Rhythm and Blues) and "gospel," expressed the influence of music to the mind this way:

Music affects the way I view different life situations. It changes one's understanding of the various life components like love, family life, patriotism and, most importantly God.

Paul, a lover of reggae music used another term to refer to music's influence, "visual," which was more of the mental influence. Here again the moral aspect was affected by what the mind processed and the social aspect of the youth also had a role to play in music's influence though the individual's choices prevailed. Paul said:

Everything goes with choices. Speaking of peer pressure in music, like in school, my friends basically... just proclaiming that you are saved is something like am saying I murdered someone yesterday. You know, it's such difficult. All the guys around me go to clubs wherever, you know they do stuff, they smoke, chew *mira*, you know? Choice comes in here, because I don't do that stuff because I know at the end of it all, it's not going to benefit me you see. As a matter of fact, it will harm me more. Guys are talking of how they went to a club, and it was booming music, it was so fun. You know music leads to other stuff, what you see on TV, the Western culture is what they do. You are not learning at all, infant, you are destroying your moral. You see the dirty songs on TV, you go to a club, and do the same stuff. You see too much stuff. So, choice comes in there. Music has become visual; it's not a matter of listening anymore. I will sit down and say I want to listen to this kind of music on TV, believe me, I won't be listening to them, I will be watching what is on the video. You know, destroying my morals.

Emotional Influence

Music's influence on the emotional domain in youth was very central. Before music could impact any other domain, it had to first appeal to the youth's emotions. Most of the reasons given by the youth for their favorite kinds of music were emotional. The kinds of music chosen by the participants of this study as their favorites were mostly contemporary. When asked why they liked the kinds of music they mentioned, different youth responded as follows.

Nicholas: In situations whereby I am bored, angry, and may be sick, it helps me to relax. For example when am angry with someone, I can take Kirk Franklin's CD, I listen to it and forget about everything and get relaxed and I feel calm. When I dance to a song like "*thank you*" sung by *Mary Mary*, and also "*In the morning*", I feel excited.

John: I listen to country gospel. I think it consoles me when am down

Liz: I like 'rock' coz its real music. I just love rock.

Peace: I like 'R&B' and 'pop.' What I look for in music are mainly the beats. Yeah, the beats are nice and your body can move with it. I love that.

Joseph: I like Gospel and R&B. Any type of gospel music especially if it's not boring. The *Rufftone* and *Kirk Franklin* variety if you know what I am talking about.

David: I love Christian music dealing with 'rap,' like *Kirk Franklin* music, *Rufftone* and *Henri Mutuku*. Yeah, those are enjoyable Christian songs. Rap music is simpler to understand, and in our age, we love music that will make us shake our bodies, more than the old would enjoy.

Betty: When bored, it keeps me occupied, I don't think a lot, when angry, I release my pressure

Frank: It makes me warm up and when angry, I cool down

Paul: I enjoy reggae when am doing something or when am busy or am on my high side, am on....., you know? And blues when am reflecting, that's basically in the evenings.

Music and the emotional aspect in the youth could not be separated. The music had to first be pleasant and appealing, and then it attracted them to its message and

meaning which they often reflected on, and were influenced mentally, socially, morally and spiritually.

Social Influence

The influence of music to the social domain in youth was basically understood from the relationships that the youth were involved in. At their stage of development, the youth tended to have an inclination to their peers and distanced themselves from the parental influence, seeking for independence. The difference between the parents and the youth was more pronounced and youth felt that they were misunderstood for their social behavior. The youth also lived in a very secular society which impacted their social and moral domains greatly.

Music was a great influence to youth through their peers, and they spoke of the need for proper choice of friends, friends who would help them build their morals and grow spiritually. At the same time, youth perceived a big difference between the way their parents thought of music and the way the youth thought of it. The following expressions brought out that struggle and the role of music to their social lives. See also, Paul's quotation (page 37).

Joseph: People who are close to me and care are always there to keep me in check incase I get swept over by the many types of bad music that lie in my way. One must choose friends wisely, or else he or she goes overboard unknowingly since friends are sometimes closer than family and may negatively influence you.

Betty: I have managed to keep off bad company, keep off people who talk vulgar language, yeah, and keep off dirty stuff. Because it becomes less sensitive like if you are used to vulgar language, it comes to a point of no big deal, and you will go saying it everywhere and sometimes even do it.

Peace: You know our parents, they used to live during those times. But I don't think some of them understand that things have changed things in their generation and our generation. Yeah.

Ann: Like lets say, like this one of Maria "*I will be there*" like lets say you have a best friend, and when you are in trouble, he or she is not there. So, as the song talks about, "*where there is love, I will be there for you, where there is sorrow, I will be there for you.*" It really helps you to get good friends who will be there for you.

As stated by the youth, music that was popular with them was most of the time different from that of their parents and it met certain social needs that it could not meet among the adults. Influence from peers was mentioned as an issue, and it often turned out as antagonism, when a youth could not sing the friends' favorites. The friends would often wonder what was "wrong" with their colleague, since it was expected that music would fit the particular social group.

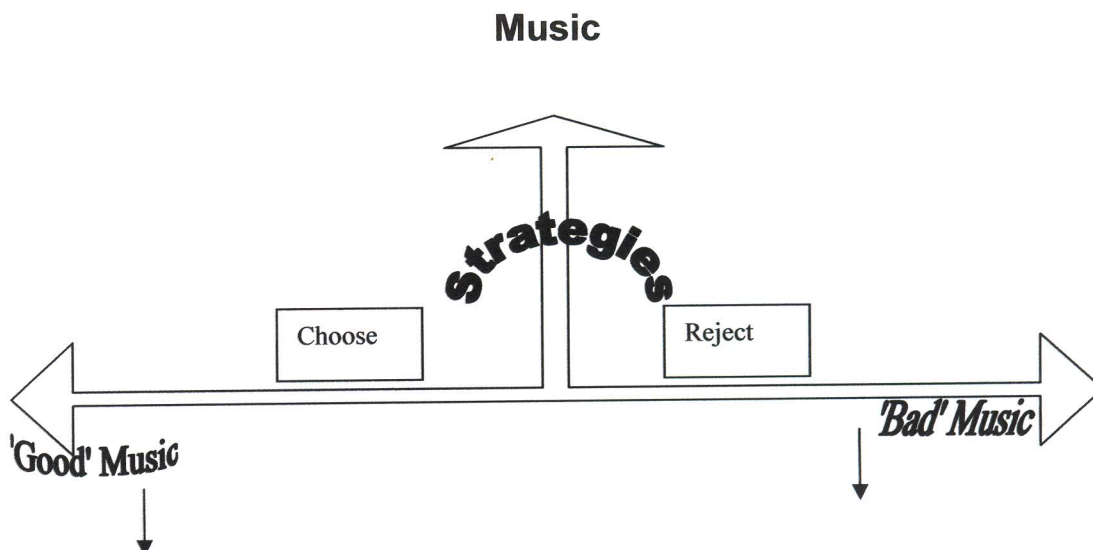
Summary

Music had a holistic influence on the lives of youth. This study sought to find out the influence of music on the spiritual development of youth. However, it was difficult to separate it from the other aspects of human development. Interrelationships among developmental domains were numerous though influences to specific domains could be discerned. Youth daily were confronted with choices regarding music. The moral domain, which regulated the influence that music had on the mental, social and emotional domains, mainly determined the choices made. Morality of Christian youth was based on their Christian faith, and other factors in keeping with it. The choices or the responses of youth to the impact of music led to spiritual development or decline. A Christian response to the impact of music resulted in spiritual development where a youth's way of life exhibited more positive elements based on the knowledge of Christian faith. For example, a choice to switch off the radio or TV playing a "bad" song which would destroy one's morals was a Christian response whose result was stable Christian living and not involvement in what the

song said. A decision not to accompany friends to a nightclub because the youth knew that “music leads to other stuff” they did not want to be involved in, was a Christian response with positive influence. These were what the researcher called coping mechanisms.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the different influences music had on the specific developmental domains, though this influence was not independent of what was happening in the other domains. The youth also had their unique basis for what was “good” and what was “bad” music and they called for Christians to be open to the “good” that secular music could offer.

Figure 4.3. Music's influence on the different domains



Positive Holistic Influence

- i. Spiritual (blesses, encourages, inspires, strengthens, builds)
- ii. Mental (For meditating, reflecting, thinking back, understanding, asking questions)
- iii. Emotional (Consoles, touches, speaks, relaxes, gives peace)

Negative Holistic Influence

- Spoils
- Rots your mind
- Destroys morals
- Harms
- Dirty words/ dancing
- Corrupts the mind
- Makes no sense
- Encourages immorality

Survival Mechanisms from bad music

- Switch off radio/TV
- Move from there/
Walk out
- Switch off your head/mind
- Don't listen to words
- Move body & ignore words
- Make quick judgment
- Listen to Christian stations

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the researcher, a theory was arrived at and recommendations were given on the implications drawn from those findings to the youth ministers, parents, music composers, media (radio and television) and the youth themselves concerning the influence of music on the spiritual development of youth. The researcher used four basic research questions to collect data.

- 5) What is youth's perception of the importance of music in their daily lives?
- 6) What kinds of music influence youth?
- 7) How does music influence the thinking of youth about spiritual things?
- 8) What do the youth feel is the role of music for the Christian community?

Summary of the Findings

The analysis of collected data reflected the findings from the study. It was observed that music was highly regarded among the youth. It was a big part of their lives. Music served many purposes e.g. entertainment, teaching, and helping them through life situations. Music influenced youths' relationships with their parents and other adults as well as with peers. They listened to music when in a sad or bored state and became happy. They relaxed with music after a busy day. They were consoled, helped to reflect, were encouraged, inspired, and strengthened. Paul, a youth, confirmed this as he said, "Basically, this is one of the things I go by. I usually say, if you really want to speak to me, as in, and get the meaning you desired for me, speak to me in song."

Some of the music that was popular to youth was often different from that which was liked by their parents and other adults in church. The youth were exposed to many kinds of music because they lived in a very secular society and were left with the big responsibility of making decisions about which music to listen to or get involved in, and which not to. The most popular music with youth was contemporary music often referred to as “pop,” which had specific sub-groups that different youth preferred depending on their tastes, e.g., reggae, rap, blues, ragga, rock, etc. The common attraction with the types of music youth liked was that it was appealing to them, especially emotionally. Emotional appeal was commonly related to nice beats, the occasion (e.g. parties, concerts,) and the artist.

However, individual youth were not restricted to love of only one kind of music, because different kinds of music were enjoyed for particular different reasons. For instance, Liz, who loved “rock” music also loved “old songs” but for a different reason. She said:

I also like really old music, like the kind my parents used to listen to, because it does not have the wrong message that most music these days have. These days it's about sadness, sex, it's just different kind of music, so I like the old music.

This study sought to discover the influence of music on the spiritual development of youth. It revealed that music had a holistic influence on youth and its influence to spiritual development was a result of their response to the impact of music in the other developmental domains (emotional, social, mental) as motivated by the youth's morality. For instance, if some music appealed to the youths' emotional domain by having nice beats, but it invoked dirty dancing styles that were not in line with Christian youth behavior, rejecting that kind of music was a Christian response that resulted in spiritual development. On the other hand, the youth gave examples of their Christian friends who were wooed into “bad” music and they slowly deviated

from their commitments and confessions as Christians to become immoral youth.

Such a response led to spiritual decline of the individual. For example, one participant recommended,

Betty: I think people, I think youth specifically should be more careful in the music they choose to sing or get involved in, you know you just choose. Because, getting involved in songs that corrupt the mind, you will just get corrupted. You start reciting those things that the artists are reciting and maybe start to sing even worse things. So, I think they should look for upright messages in songs. Yeah, words that will build their moral standing.

Interviewer: Is that recommendation out of experience of some youths you know who have been corrupted or just your thought?

Betty: It is an experience of some youth who have been corrupted by such songs. Like someone who was saved started drifting just by maybe dancing to some song lets say in class when someone starts a tune, and then someone else who is saved starts dancing and its like “ah! *si* am just saying what...” The next thing you know, they are the ones who are dancing there in front those vulgar steps, and the next thing... they are not saved.

From the youth’s point of view, music was part of the lives of Christians, not just the youth. However, youth had a specific responsibility to choose what music to listen to and what not to, depending on their judgments of what was “good” or “bad” to them. The youth agreed that any music that could lead a Christian away from the faith needed to be rejected. They invited the adults to teach the youth on what was expected of them, but at the same time do it in a sensitive manner.

Recommendations

1. Need for Good Moral Foundation

The youth who rejected “bad” kinds of music as above mentioned were mostly motivated by their moral background. Morality of youth became very fundamental in helping them to make the right decisions. Therefore, it is of great importance to invest in proper moral foundation of youth through all avenues available. The church needs to be involved in teaching Christian doctrines, encouraging the youth to discover these truths for themselves from the Bible and to apply the principles thereof in their daily lives. The youth also thought the same, just that they asked for sensitivity from the adults (teachers, parents and other Christians), in the process of educating them.

Nicholas: The youth should be really fully advised on the kinds of music they listen to. They should listen to the words and see how the music influences them and I think the church should encourage this by talking to the youth, playing them the [right] music, teaching them and I also think preaching them the music and if possible encourage them to sing and play the instruments and make them like the music.

Christian parents and teachers need to be encouraged that though the youth may seem to rebel from their parents’ dictation on what to do and what not to do, the morals that have been taught to them since they were born are with them. Youth valued what had been impacted in their lives since they were small and they used those foundations to make decisions. What they did not like was supervision. They felt able to make decisions on their own and understood that they were accountable for their choices. The youths’ moral foundations since childhood influenced their decision-making at youth age and these choices affected their spirituality positively or negatively. Ann was a high school girl who was struggling with life’s major decisions, like how to relate when in love and other choices such as which music to

listen to. This was what she expressed as the influence from her mother in making those decisions:

Ann: Like my mum, for example, she doesn't like us watching secular music. She really gets annoyed. Like for me, there are some songs that I choose actually, because me now, my mum, I think she has already taught me enough to understand. If I want to spoil myself, it is my decision. If I want to follow her ways, it's my decision. Yeah, but you see for my small sisters they have to be controlled.

[She sings] "*When there is love, I'll be there...*" You see, I used to... I like someone, but I am waiting till I reach eighteen, *coz* those are the principles of my mother. So, that song when I heard it, I really cried. I really, really cried! [we laughed] I was in school, and I really cried that day.

2. Youth need space to be who they are

One cry from the youth that came out from this study was their desire to be understood within their context. They were part of the Christian community and they loved God, but at the same time they live in quite a different context from some of the members of that community, especially the older people (parents and adults in church). The older generation needs to be sensitive to youth and this means that they need to understand them first, what they do and why they do it before they impose judgments on them. This was reflected in their quest to the adult Christians.

Joseph: The church should not restrict the youth's choice of music just for the sake of trying to appear in control without first listening to the content. They should, however, advise them on the music that they think is good and not to tire to pray for them. The church should also appreciate the youth's choice of music since times are changing and what was appealing to especially the older generation does not have to necessarily appeal to today's youth.

Peace: We have local artists, '*akina*' [the likes of] *Ruffione*, and all that stuff and they have reached many youths through that. Yeah, so, it's good that the church also organizes, they don't only think of themselves and they say, 'yeah, during our days, this and this and this and that.' I think they should also think of youth that need to be reached on, and the changes that have taken place because it won't be fair if you just do

things according to your ways. You know our parents, they used to live during those times... but I don't think some of them understand that things have changed; things in their generation and in our generation.

Understanding that youth regard secular music differently from many adults may help adults and church leaders to understand the youth and see them from their (youths') own eyes. This was what one of them recommended regarding the attitude towards secular music.

Liz: I think they (Christians) shouldn't restrict themselves to one type... to listening to gospel music only, because there can be good from other types of music. The person may not be an acknowledged Christian or whatever, but, like it says in the Bible, the word of God is written in our hearts so, he will be singing something that God has put there, the message is there. It's just... even if the person does drugs or whatever, that message, it could be something from God, and God is telling you something. Just be open to it.

3. Youth need to be responsible in their decisions

This recommendation was from the youth to their fellow youth. Though all the youth seemed to be struggling with making the right choices at this critical time in their lives, some youth needed help more than others. The participants appealed to all the youth to be very careful on the choices they made and in this regard, choices to do with music. Youth need to own up that they are to make decisions for themselves and, therefore, they need to be very careful. This is how some of them expressed this request.

Nicholas: I would advise them to see how music influences them, how it helps them, what is the content of the music? What does it encourage? What does it say? How is the artist involved in music, what does the artist do? And I think if it is mostly negative things and ones which encourage immoral behaviors, I think I would advise them to think on the kind of music they listen. Try to listen to Spiritual music and see how it can help them in their lives.

Paul: If you listen to reggae, you know it has that influence in itself. Definitely, you have the ability to choose. No one can choose for you. So, I would urge people to be more cautious about what they listen.

David: To my fellow Christians, I would really really encourage them to be listening to Christian music, coz Christian music mostly talks about how Christians live, how Christians go about their lives and their businesses. And I would say that they should really strive or work hard to get Christian tapes or such stuff and listen to Christian music. And to my... the unborn again, I would say they should ...okay, if they are listening to secular music, they should listen to it in a much positive way. Yeah.

4. Radio and TV stations should inculcate the habit of reflection on the meaning in music. In this way, they will encourage the youth to reflect on all sorts of music and the music's influence in their lives. This responsibility especially lies with Christian radio and TV stations.
5. Music composers should strive for musical as well as lyrical appeal. The youth choose music because of the appeal it gives them, both musically (e.g. nice beats) and because of the lyrics. Christian music composers especially should strive to make their music appeal in the musical arrangement in addition to the positive value-laden lyrics. Such music would be powerful to transform lives of youth.

If these recommendations are taken into consideration by the different parties involved, there would be drastic change in our families, church and the society at large. The Christian youth also would have a lot of fun in their lives and at the same time have great personal relationships with God.

Recommendation for Further Study

The findings from the study revealed that spiritual development was as a result of youth's Christian response to music's influence, while a worldly response to music's influence resulted in spiritual decline. Youth perceived music as either "bad" or "good" depending on their personal judgments, irrespective of whether the music was Christian or secular. In light of these findings, the following are suggestions for further research.

1. An investigation could be done to discover how youth respond to diverse Christian or gospel music. This is based on the fact that the participants of this study indicated that there is "bad" gospel music.
2. An exploration into the parents' or church leaders' perception on the influence of music to the spiritual development of the youth.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

DVCAA's Letter



NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

P.O. Box 24686, NAIROBI, KENYA
A Project of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA)

TEL : 254-2-882104/5, 882038
FAX : 254-2-882906
E-Mail : NEGST@maf.org

January 30, 2004

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH WORK

The bearer of this letter, Mrs. Esther F. W. Nyagah is a student at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) and is doing research towards the completion of Master of Arts in (Christian Education). The research is on “ **The influence of Music to the Spiritual Development of Youth – A study of Nairobi Gospel Center and Lifespring Chapel**”

Any assistance that you can give to Mrs. Nyagah will be much appreciated.

Sincerely,

George L. G. Huttar, Ph. D.
Ag. DVCAA

Appendix 2

Interview Questions and Guidelines

1. What kinds of music do you like? What do you like about... (what you like?)
2. Do you own any music cassettes, CDs or videos?
3. When do you enjoy music most?
4. How would you describe your spiritual life?
5. Does music influence your life or the way you think? How?
6. Do you think the church, your family or friends have any influence on the music you choose to listen to?
7. What recommendations would you want to give to the church regarding youth and music?

VITA

Personal Data

Name: Esther F. Wambura Nyagah
Postal Address: P.O. Box 57086, Nairobi, 00200.
Date of Birth: 30th March 1977
Gender: Female
Marital Status: Married
Nationality: Kenyan

Educational Background

NEGST	Master of Arts (C. E.) Candidate	2003 – 2005 (Candidate)
Egerton University	Bachelor of Education (Arts)	1996 - 2000
Kenya Polytechnic	Kenya Accounting Technicians Certificate	1995-1996
Njumbi High School	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education	1991-1994
Gachiriro Primary	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education	1983-1990

Professional Experience

Teacher	Teens Class (Nairobi Gospel Centre)	2003-To date
Short-term Missionary	Anglican Church of Tanzania	2001-2002
Campus Staff	Fellowship of Christian Unions	2000-2001
Teacher	Ihiga Secondary School	2000
National Students Secretary	Fellowship of Christian Unions, Kenya	1999 - 2000
Teacher	Kesses Secondary School	1999
Christian Union Secretary	Egerton University, Laikipia Campus	1998 - 1999