

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Honors Theses

Undergraduate Research

4-30-2020

A Phenomological Study: The Adventist Musician Experience

Tiffany Steinweg

Andrews University, steinweg@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/honors>



Part of the [Music Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Steinweg, Tiffany, "A Phenomological Study: The Adventist Musician Experience" (2020). *Honors Theses*. 236.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/honors/236>

This Honors Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Undergraduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.

J. N. Andrews Honors Program
Andrews University

HONS 497
Honors Thesis

A Phenomenological Study: The Adventist Musician Experience

Tiffany Steinweg

30 April, 2020

Advisors: Dr. Karl G. Bailey and Dr. Karin Thompson

Primary Advisor Signature: 

Department: Department of Music and School of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Abstract

What is the experience of a Seventh-day Adventist professional classical musician? Both Seventh-day Adventists and classical musicians have been the subjects of numerous studies in past decades; however, few to none of those studies have focused on individuals who identify as both. The current study seeks to better understand the experiences of Adventist musicians within their church and within the wider classical music community. Interviews were conducted with five musicians using an initial and a follow-up set of questions. Themes were identified from interview transcripts by a content analysis. Several predicted themes were confirmed such as the experience of one's career as a 'calling', as well as Adventist musicians' value of excellence and service. Contrary to expectations, Sabbath observance was not seen as a major obstacle. The discovered primary themes included a tension of values, identity realization, caution towards the broader Adventist Church, and a suppressed vision of connection and collaboration. Some limitations on the results and conclusions of this study were the small sample of subjects and the large number of different topic categories addressed. Further research is suggested to explore if the current study's findings remain consistent when more subjects' interviews are added to the data pool, and if further understanding can be gained by refining or modifying the interview questions.

A Phenomenological Study: The Adventist Musician Experience

What is the experience of a professional Seventh-day Adventist classical musician? Within that experience, how has he/she approached the issue of Sabbath observance? What are the obstacles, challenges, advantages and opportunities faced by subjects in the interactions between their religious persuasions and career choice? And what is his/her vision of the potential relationship between the Adventist Church and its professional musician members? Although classical musicians and religious faith have been studied separately from a variety of perspectives, little research has been done on the connection between the two, especially among musicians employed independently of the church institution. One previous phenomenological study looks at the experiences of Christian musician-educators (Fung, 2016), and another reveals the relationship between the religious and professional identities of Christian faculty in higher education (Craft, Foubert, & Lane, 2011), but there are no studies which specifically look at Adventist musicians and the interactions between their religious and professional lives. Thus, the current study explores Seventh-day Adventist Christians' experiences choosing or being 'called' to a musical career, their understanding and approach to keeping the Sabbath, and several other areas related to the intersection of their unique religious and professional identities.

Adventism

The Seventh-day Adventist Church formed during the Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s. Since then, Adventists have evolved into a worldwide church of over 20 million members who hold to 28 fundamental beliefs derived from the New and Old Testament Scriptures. These beliefs are expressed in doctrines of God, man, salvation, the church, Christian life and last day events; and they are viewed as truths which pervade every aspect of the human experience. This characteristic—a religion's extensive influence on the every-day life of its

members—is one reason why Laurence R. Iannaccone includes Seventh-day Adventists in his discussion of ‘strict’ religions. A ‘strict’ religion, according to Iannaccone, is more distinctive, high-cost, and demanding of strong commitment than most. Usually, these religions require adherence to certain lifestyle standards; for example, abstaining from caffeine, alcohol, and meat; shaving one’s head, wearing robes, or chanting. It follows that such religious convictions would inevitably cause some conflicts when it comes to integrating into a non-religious social or professional context. For Seventh-day Adventists, including Adventist musicians, one anticipated conflict in choosing and finding a job or career path would be their commitment to Sabbath observance. For an Adventist musician who considers working anytime between sundown Friday evening and sundown Saturday evening to be against their religious beliefs, looking for gigs or auditioning for an orchestra job proves to be more complex than for a musician who doesn’t hold this conviction. Nevertheless, countless members of the Adventist Church have felt ‘called’ to a musical career and chosen to follow that calling.

Career as a Calling

As Douglas T. Hall points out, this phenomenon of a career as a ‘calling’ is not limited to religious people. A calling can simply be defined as internal motivation to pursue a particular career based on some sort of psychological engagement with the meaning of one’s work (Hall & Chandler, 2005). Whether the reason for the motivation has to do with one’s religion or not, following a career calling is related to a stronger sense of identity and adaptability which ultimately leads to greater objective and subjective success. I predicted that this view of career as a calling would be especially important to Adventist Christians for the very reasons described above. Because ‘strict’ religions require more distinctive and high-cost lifestyle practices, their members tend to be more definitive and committed to their identity. Since Adventists are likely

to face more conflict when pursuing a career such as music, I hypothesized that their sense of identity and internal motivation towards that career—their ‘calling’—would have to be greater if they were going to be successful.

Predicted Themes

A phenomenological study of two Christian musician-educators supported this prediction and suggested several others. Annabella Fung relies heavily on the framework of identity formation and faith application. She looks at the interactions between music, religion, cultural heritage, and stewardship; several common themes emerge from her interviews: the interwoven nature of faith and musical life, an initial ‘calling’ to music as a ministry, personal musical excellence as service to God, the importance of service to one’s community, and a sense of mission—the search to influence others for God (Fung, 2016).

The findings of a phenomenological study on several Christian faculty members at public institutions of higher education also showed the ‘career as a calling’ theme in addition to the subjects’ desire to covertly or overtly communicate a Christian worldview in their workplace (Craft, Foubert, & Lane, 2011). Some, if not all of these same themes were expected to surface when interviewing Adventist musicians, since Adventists do hold a Christian worldview.

Present Study

As Fung points out, more research is needed to expand our understanding of these relationships between faith, musical careers, and identity formation. The present study seeks to further explore the interaction between music and religion, especially the experience of musicians identifying with the ‘strict’ religion of Seventh-day Adventists.

Methodology

Subjects and Recruiting

The subjects who volunteered to participate in this study were all professional classically-trained musicians—those who have studied music at a college level and are either currently active or have previously been active in a musical career. They all identified as Seventh-day Adventist Christians and had previously considered the interactions and conflicts between maintaining their faith and navigating their career. Five subjects were recruited from the researcher's personal contacts and by recommendation of those personal contacts. An initial recruitment email was sent out with an explanation of the study and a list of interview questions for subjects to be thinking about ahead of time. Subjects were not compensated for their participation.

As part of the interview, some biographical information was collected about each musician. This information was used to write short personal descriptions (see below) that describe the individual's level of expertise and current job context without specifically identifying them. All names, locations, and other identifying information have been converted to code (e.g. fake initials).

The three individuals whose transcripts were analyzed in this study included a professional orchestral musician who has worked for 30 years in professional orchestra (VJ), a young pianist and orchestral conductor who has worked for about 10 years inside and outside of the church (PF), and a violinist, chamber musician, and teacher who has been working in a small, liberal arts environment for 20-25 years (AV).

Procedure and Data Handling

Following consent and scheduling, a phone interview was conducted with each person using an initial set of questions. The interview calls were audio-recorded with participants' permission in order to ensure accuracy of transcripts. After completing the initial interview questions, participants were given the option to answer some follow-up questions or schedule a follow-up interview. All except one (who was not included in the analysis of this study) chose to answer the follow-up questions as part of the initial interview. All subjects were assigned a set of fake initials, and their interview recordings and transcripts were only associated with those initials. Data was stored on a password-protected computer, and any identifying information has been converted to code in order to ensure confidentiality.

Materials

An initial and follow-up set of interview questions were designed based on the primary research question 'What is the experience of a Seventh-day Adventist professional classical musician?'

The initial interview questions proceed as follows:

Where are you from? What is/are your current job title(s)?

How did music become a part of your life?

How did you decide to pursue music as a career?

Were you raised in the Adventist Church? How would you describe your relationship to the Adventist Church now? Has your relationship with the Church changed at all over the years?

What has been your experience as a professional classical musician in the community of the Adventist Church? What have been the obstacles and challenges? What have been the advantages and opportunities?

What has been your experience as an Adventist in the wider (classical) music community? What have been the obstacles and challenges? What have been the advantages and opportunities?

Have you encountered any conflicts in the area of Sabbath observance? How have you approached these conflicts?

What does it mean to you practically to ‘keep the Sabbath holy’ as a professional musician?

What piece of advice would you give to a pre-professional Adventist musician who wants to make their career in music?

Follow-up interview questions:

Is there any music you are not willing to play because of your Adventist Christian values? What kind and why?

Are you aware of any networks or associations of Adventist musicians in existence?

What do you think the Adventist Church can do to better serve its professional musician members?

What do you think musicians can do to better serve God, their church, and/or their local communities?

What can they do to better serve each other as Adventist musicians?

If there was an organization which brought Adventist professional musicians together for the purpose of furthering the mission of their church, would you be interested in being a part? What would you envision it looking like?

Reliability/Validity

The initial questions for this interview were similar in scope to the questions and themes in other qualitative studies of musicians (Fung, 2016). The nature of the primary research question called for implementation of the phenomenological method which asks, “What is the experience of _____?” or “What is it like to experience _____?”. This method does look for common themes; however, it does not discount individual differences or assume that the entire population under investigation can be generalized. It relies on the principle that the specific can illuminate—but not necessarily define—the general (Fung, 2016).

Analysis

Upon interview completion, the recordings were transcribed and imported into NVivo, a qualitative research analysis software. Themes were identified by coding each transcript and organizing the data by category into ‘nodes’ or folders. Minor themes were grouped into major themes. For example, the minor themes ‘relationship with broader church’ and ‘challenges in church’ were combined into the major theme ‘caution towards the church’. Due to time limitations, only three of the five subjects’ interviews were utilized in the analysis process.

Results

In answer to the primary research question and from the analysis of the data, I identified several major themes. These included a tension of values, identity realization, a general caution towards the Adventist Church at large, Sabbath as a positive opportunity rather than a major obstacle, and a suppressed vision of connection and collaboration among Adventist musicians.

Tension of Values

Throughout the interview and analysis process, service, excellence, relationships, church community, education, and time emerged as top values for subjects. Service, especially in the form of sharing music, seemed to be one of the most predominant. Even so, it became clear that these values, while all extremely important, do not easily co-exist in the musicians’ experiences.

An example of the tension between values can be found in the discussion of Sabbath conflicts. While the overall attitude toward Sabbath-keeping was very positive from all three musicians, they did share some stories and examples of times when they faced a conflict between keeping the Sabbath and excelling in their musical career. Musician PF said,

There's nothing wrong with looking to improve. In fact, I think that's very honorable. It's encouraged; but there are six days for that, and on the Sabbath, I look more to have a

moment to reflect on God's blessings, when I can play in church, when I can be a blessing to others.

It is evident that he values pursuing excellence in his craft, but also the time set apart on Sabbath for connecting with God, his church community, and serving others. Consequently, there will always be that tension for him between those two values; and, as he explained, prioritizing one over the other can mean either turning down some great opportunities, or compromising his convictions. Musician VJ had a slightly different perspective. In answer to the question ‘What advice would you give to a pre-professional Adventist musician who wants to make a career in music?’, he counseled, “I would advise...to be flexible—to take the advantages and the opportunities that God gives, and to not feel guilty about breaking Sabbath, as long as it is for God's glory—for the benefit of others.” It is not clear exactly what advantages and opportunities he is referring to, but here we see that for VJ, ‘God’s glory’ and the value of service to others should take precedence over a strict observance of Sabbath hours.

Similarly, the challenges that these Adventist musicians have faced while being involved with church music also stem from a tension between values—on one side the values of excellence and education, and on the other—relationships, community, and service. Musician AV explained,

I certainly feel as a professional that if I get up to play at all, I better have prepared myself well; and sometimes when you need to do something last minute for church, that gets in the way. So I think [there’s] the challenge of making sure it's always about service, rather than getting sucked into the other part of my world which is, ‘How is my reputation?’ It's all a ‘me, me, me’ kind of thing, which is sometimes an obstacle, I think, to keeping the true value of what music is to me.

Again, the value of excellence comes into play. Because of her education and status as a professional, AV feels the need to be prepared and play well. At the same time, she realizes that playing for church, and even what she does for a living, is not all about her reputation and trying to make a name for herself. It's about service; and in some situations (like playing something last minute for church), a choice must be made to let go of a certain level of excellence in order to preserve the value of service, even if it is imperfect.

Musician PF shared,

My experience has been that while people value what I do as a musician—whenever I play for church...present a concert, or when I play special music—they always say, “Oh, we're so blessed with what you're doing” and so on; but more than that...in general...I don't feel like people really trust or value all the training that I [have received] over the years.

Along with excellence and service, PF expressed the value of his education and training, and how it hasn't always been acknowledged or trusted within the relationships and community of the church setting (another value he consistently mentions). He talked about how this has created some internal and external conflict for him, as he has sought to communicate the importance of musical excellence and education to church leaders who don't understand his point of view. As a result, he has tended to avoid speaking up about this issue in recent years. In order to prioritize peace in relationships and his ability to continue sharing music in church, he has chosen to set aside his initial motivation to offer his level of musical expertise and serve in a leadership role.

Within the tension of values theme, a pattern was found of boundary setting. While it may look very different from person to person, Adventist musicians appear to set individual boundaries in order to prioritize and balance all their top values. Musician AV explains how:

If a person is doing [music], you just have to be ready to give and give and give and give; there is no boundary automatically placed there, so you have to kind of pre-think out where you're going to set yours, and then think when you're going to flex them a little bit. I can't get my grading done and prepare my classes and practice 6 hours a day and still have time to see my family. So some of the choices I've made along the way go 'back and forth' in terms of time spent. I'm not doing any recording right now. I do probably one recital a year, but not much of any regional touring right now, because that would take time away from my kids. And I think everybody has different viewpoints on that, and different decisions they can make.

Whether it be drawing a 'Sabbath line' to say what one is or isn't willing to do on Sabbath, or putting limits on how much time one is willing to spend practicing versus spending time with family, it is important for Adventist musicians to clarify those boundaries for themselves.

Identity Realization and Roles

One of the most common and predicted themes of this study was that Adventist musicians would have a strong sense of calling to their career. I found this to be true, although none of the three musicians described it in those words. PF, after telling about how he chose music as a career, emphasized, "It is my passion...I love music so much, it *had* to be my full-time job. Somehow, I *had* to be around and involved in music professionally for the rest of my life" (*emphasis supplied*). Regarding a musical career, AV advised,

Don't even do it unless you can't help it...I mean, I love it and I can't imagine doing anything else; but I could never 'persuade' people into it. It feels like you have to be pulled in because you just can't imagine some other life, and you can't imagine not getting to do it.

VJ stated his ‘calling’ in even more personalized terms: “I realized that, at the core of me, I was a musician... [and] I couldn’t be the best musician that I could be unless I did it full-time.” Each person in their own way revealed how at some point in their life, whether early on, or even later after completing their undergraduate degree, they came to the realization that music was so much part of who they were, that they couldn’t imagine *not* pursuing it as a full-time career.

I found that another aspect of Adventist musicians’ identities has to do with their relationship with their church—whether they see themselves as simply another lay member or as a music minister. By their choice of words, two out of the three interviewees disclosed that they saw their ‘Adventist’ and ‘musician’ identities as more separate. For example, VJ said,

I feel very well-served as a musician because I'm a parishioner, and it doesn't have to do with me being a musician. Obviously, I have plenty of opportunities to perform. People enjoy my music and I don't feel like I'm trying to make a living in the church. If that was important to me, maybe I would feel like I'm not given enough attention; but no, I'm fine...I think [I can serve] just by supporting my church as a regular member, financially, by attending, by welcoming, holding church offices. Those are all things that I do for the church, but that's not necessarily because I'm a musician; it's just because I am a church member.

And AV clarified,

What I value about participating in the church community is related to the sharing of sacred music, but it's not necessarily related to being a professional or classical musician. So it's interesting to see which people are comfortable with that transition and others which really seem to feel the need to box me in and think ‘Oh, we have a professional

playing for church today!’ because I really prefer just to be bringing what I have to give to the church community like anybody else does.

Both VJ and AV focused on their identity and role as a lay member separate from their career as musician. Both came across as relatively content in their relationship with their local church.

On the other hand, one interviewee seemed to see his ‘Adventist’ and ‘musician’ identities as very connected and overlapping. PF described his experience:

For the past five or six years, my main source of income has been being a music director at a non-Adventist church. I've been able to conduct big concerts there with orchestra, with choirs, classical pieces, to do great things with the music program in those churches; but I have never been the music director of an Adventist Church. It has always been someone else. It's not that I want to be the main person there. If there was someone who was better qualified than me, I would be happy to have that person be the leader or director. I've always collaborated and played with the choirs, always played the piano and the organ when there's one at the church. I am involved with the program [at the Adventist churches], but it's always someone else who has little or no [musical] training making the decisions and guidelines. So I think that as a church, both locally and at large, valuing music more and the input of people who have spent their lives getting trained as classical musicians would be something very helpful.

Clearly, PF sees himself not only as a lay member, but as a minister of music who has something to give in terms of leadership. He comes across as less content than AV and VJ, but more visionary, because it seems he wants to integrate his ‘musician’ identity into his ‘Adventist’ identity.

Thus, I found that a musician's experience as a professional within the church community has a lot to do with whether the individual views his/her 'Adventist' and 'musician' identities as mostly separate or largely connected. When they are separate, the musician tends to be more content in his/her roles; and when they are more connected, he/she tends to be less content but more visionary about musicians' relationship with the Church.

Feelings of Caution

A third theme that has come up repeatedly is a feeling of caution towards the Adventist Church as a whole. AV suggested that one reason for her own caution may be the gender inequivalencies in our denomination. She shared,

I have two daughters, as it happens, so I'm more and more aware of the gender inequivalencies in our denomination, in our faith. So those issues matter to me. It was really challenging to go through the Sabbath School series about how all the boy children were so important with no context of historical traditions or things of the times, just kind of blindly telling that kind of thing. So I would say, yeah, cautious is a good word for it, just in the larger sense.

VJ struggles to trust a denomination who, in his experience, has not welcomed questioning or discussion of different viewpoints. In one statement, he implied that the 'typical Adventist' is one who doesn't question or have his/her own ideas: "I am extremely grateful for the Seventh-day Adventist Church; I attend every week, I pay my tithe, and I'm happily a member...I'm just not your typical Adventist that doesn't question. I have my own ideas as well."

PF comes from yet a different standpoint. As mentioned before, he is wary of the Church's ignorance of highly-trained musicians. He laments, "The ones who make the decisions are people who have less knowledge, less training, less idea of what music is really all about."

In each of these examples, something related to the value of education or critical thinking is brought up as in conflict with the local church or the church at large. As discussed earlier, there is an ongoing tension of values for Adventist musicians; but this time it's not a tension *within* the musician. It's a tension between the musician's values and the values—whether perceived or actual—of the Adventist Church. Consequently, an attitude of caution exists, though the specific reasons for it may vary from person to person.

Sabbath—Not a Major Obstacle

Contrary to expectations, I did not find Sabbath observance to be a major obstacle for Adventist musicians. Instead, all three subjects expressed that it was a 'blessing' or a positive opportunity. In answer to the question 'What does it mean to you practically to keep the Sabbath holy as a professional musician?', VJ exclaimed,

Oh, awesome! That's a wonderful question! I keep the Sabbath holy by doing everything that I do to the glory of God. Of course, that is 24/7; but on Sabbath it's a special time when I avoid anything that is not necessary for my career. And the rest of the time is really for worshiping God and developing relationships—friendships with others, with church, with family. It's a day, a 24-hour period, sundown to sundown, where God becomes first in my life and I ignore my career and myself, only doing for others, not for myself.

Some did point out instances where they had to 'give up' or sacrifice a great opportunity in order to keep the Sabbath according to their convictions, but all had found ways to understand or work around it that suited both their career needs and religious beliefs. They valued the set-apart time and had found non-Adventist colleagues to be respectful of whatever 'Sabbath line' they chose to draw.

Suppressed Vision

Lastly, it became evident that all three interviewees had some kind of vision of how Adventist musicians could serve and connect better among themselves and with the Church. It may be as simple as staying in touch with colleagues across the country and encouraging each other, as all three musicians suggested. Or, it may be as complex as creating a church-wide census of high-level professional Adventist musicians in order to better organize themselves for service. PF proposed,

To serve each other we could collaborate more. But I think that sometimes to be able to collaborate more, we need to know that we exist; because there might be good musicians around the corner and we don't even know about them. But I think the church could probably do a better job as an organization than an individual trying to create a database or a census of where the good musicians are, who they are, or what they're doing. I think we could have a resource where we can connect with each other—access to those connections.

AV even brought up the idea of starting a music therapy program in one or more of the Church's institutions of higher education:

Given the Adventist health message and its presence in higher education in therapeutic and medical fields, I would really love to see one of our colleges develop a music therapy program...as the research continues about the impact of music listening or music making in various medical scenarios, I think we would do well to be thinking about how we can serve in that area.

Apparently, there are many thoughts and ideas out there about what *could* be. Yet in conversation with each musician, reasons came up for why many of the ideas haven't worked or

probably wouldn't work. One talked again about a clash with the values of the church institution. In answer to the question about a potential collaborative organization for Adventist musicians, VJ interjected,

Well, you see, I think I might feel differently about the mission of our church than the typical Adventist because the typical Adventist is interested in institution building—that is, baptizing more people, bringing in more tithe and that kind of thing. And I feel the mission of the Adventist church is to bring God's kingdom to earth; so that means that wherever we are—salt of the earth—that is the mission of the church. So in some ways you think, 'Okay, well let's get a big, huge organization of Adventist musicians and perform at some prestigious venue and do an altar call at the end or something—try to make the Adventist Church look good.' And to me, that isn't the mission of the Adventist Church—to look good in front of the world. I think it's to lift Christ. So I wouldn't be in favor of that. I think I would just be in favor of [musicians] encouraging each other in their spiritual life, and to continue to serve God where they are, where God puts them.

Another subject expressed that he was just tired of church politics. After describing his attempts and perceived failure at speaking up for musical excellence in the Church, PF expounded,

I think most Adventist musicians that I've met, we have the desire to see music be good at our churches. We have the desire to serve and to collaborate; but sometimes we get tired and think, "You know what, let them do it their way and I won't get involved." Maybe we need less of that [kind of thinking]. I know it's hard, especially when you've been doing it for so many years and you see no change.

On a different note, AV expresses her genuine interest in more collaboration and organization; but for her, the challenge is time and energy limits.

The thing is, nobody has time. I don't know if I would have time to do this even if we set it up! I mean, when CK comes to town, we try to play, but I can't imagine anyone having time if we were to put something together on purpose and have like a 5-day event.

Nobody my age would have time to come and they probably couldn't afford it. But those things would be fun, kind of like having the band clinic or the orchestra clinic at the University.

In summary, all three interviewees in casting their own or considering someone else's vision, pointed out obstacles which have suppressed or quelled hope of those dreams being realized. At the same time, they were all very interested in the study and eager to answer the questions. By the end of the interview, just from being prompted to think and talk about these topics, two of the subjects seemed more excited and visionary about the existing possibilities for better collaborative service to God, the Church, local communities, and each other.

Discussion

Christian musicians as well as university faculty experience their careers in a unique way due to their religious persuasions. According to two previous phenomenological studies, they consistently report a sense of 'calling' to their area of expertise, a high value of service and mission, and an interwoven nature of their religious and professional identities (Craft, Foubert, and Lane, 2011; Fung, 2016). Additionally, Christian musician-educators were found to value personal musical excellence as service to God (Fung, 2016). I expected Adventist musicians to fit these categories too, since they hold a worldview similar to many Christians. The theme of 'career as a calling'—conveyed by Douglas T. Hall—was predicted to be especially strong among Adventist musicians because of the anticipated conflict of Sabbath observance and other implications of belonging to a 'strict' religion (Hall & Chandler, 2005; Iannaccone, 1994).

My hypothesis that Adventist musicians would experience their career as a calling was confirmed, although not as a result of difficulties with Sabbath observance. Iannaccone may have grouped Seventh-day Adventists into his discussion of ‘strict’ religions, but not one of the three musicians included in this study saw the Sabbath as a restriction or as an obstacle to their career. The biggest challenges subjects reported were more related to setting boundaries to prioritize their top values, managing time, and understanding their identities and roles as professionals within the Church. These challenges may have contributed more than anything else to the stronger sense of adaptability and commitment that comes along with a ‘career calling’.

An interesting discovery which was unique to this study of Adventist classical musicians is the difference between musicians who view their ‘Adventist’ and ‘musician’ identities as separate versus those who see them as connected. Although the musicians (2 out of the 3) who seemed to have more ‘separated’ identities also came across as more content, and the one whose identities appeared to be more ‘connected’ expressed less contentment, this does not necessarily mean that the same pattern can be found among all, or even many, Adventist musicians. It also doesn’t mean that either situation is more healthy or favorable than the other. It does, however, call for additional investigation.

More subjects should be interviewed to see if the same patterns and themes continue to occur. Specific questions such as ‘What other differences come up in the experiences of separate versus connected-identity Adventist musicians?’ or ‘How have Adventist musicians approached the tension between their values of service and excellence within the Church?’ could be addressed. Any of the major themes from the current study could be looked at more in-depth. Also, similar qualitative research could be done on Adventist musicians of other genres or

Adventist professionals in other fields. All of these suggestions could contribute towards the remaining gap in the literature on music and religion or religious and career identity.

Limitations

Several limitations played a role in this study, and should be noted as possible hindrances to its validity and reliability. First, the small sample size makes it difficult to trust any themes as truly insightful about the Adventist musician population outside of this study. Time limits restricted a more comprehensive and diverse subject pool. Second, the researcher of this study is a pre-professional Adventist classical musician herself, and therefore came to the present topic of investigation with many past experiences and pre-conceived notions—whether conscious or unconscious—that may have influenced the results. She did, however, make an effort to always look at statements in context and take the bigger picture into consideration when analyzing the interview transcripts for themes.

Due to the nature of the phenomenological method, the primary research question was very open-ended and broad; so even though a number of interview questions were designed to help focus the study, the data and results retained a very multifaceted quality. This may have also contributed to a more subjective analysis by the researcher.

Conclusions & Implications

Despite limitations, the current study at least provides useful insight into the experiences of a few Adventist classical musicians. From the analysis of three subjects' interviews, the 'Adventist Musician Experience' can be described as a tension of conflicting values, identity realization, and an often-suppressed vision of excellent collaborative service. While each individual was shown to have a different experience based on their different careers and life stages, the themes I found do further our understanding of music and religion, 'career as a

calling', and faith application in identity formation. The discoveries shared here should also be advantageous for the population of pre-professional classical musicians within the Adventist Church who want to learn about the experiences of others who have 'gone before them'.

Confirmation of my hypothesis, that Adventist musicians would report a strong sense of calling to their career, implies a great potential for their influence and support of the Adventist Church and its mission. Additionally, this investigation has shed light on the existing relationship between the Adventist Church and some of their professional musician members, and suggests a need for further enquiry into ways this connection can be improved and encouraged to thrive.

References

adventist.org. (2019). Retrieved from General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists website:

<https://www.adventist.org/en/>.

Craft, C. M., Foubert, J. D. and Lane, J. J. (2011) Integrating Religious and Professional Identities: Christian Faculty at Public Institutions of Higher Education. *Religion & Education*, 38(2), 92-110. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15507394.2011.579547>.

Fung, A. (2016). Reserach Gate full text of Article : Music in Religion. *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, 6(3), 77–92. Retrieved from <https://religioninsociety.com/journal>.

Hall, D. T., & Chandler, D. E. (2005). Psychological success: When the career is a calling. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 155–176. <https://doi.org/10.1002/job.301>.

Iannaccone, L. R. (1994). Why Strict Churches Are Strong. *American Journal of Sociology*, 99(5), 1180–1211. <https://doi.org/10.1086/230409>.

Jonathan Butler. (1986). From Millerism to Seventh-Day Adventism: “Boundlessness to Consolidation.” *Church History*, 55(1), 50–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3165422>.