

*Embodied Spirituality: The Role of the Body in Moravian Congregational Music*

The Moravian Church is one of the oldest Protestant churches in the world. Music remains an important part of their worship. The renewed Moravian Church sent many missionaries across the world to spread the gospel. The first mission station in South Africa and the first Moravian Mission Station was established at Genadendal in 1738 by Georg Schmidt for the indigenous (San) people. President Nelson Mandela renamed the official presidential residence in Cape Town after the small town, Genadendal. In this paper, the author focuses on the role of the Body in the Moravian Congregational Music in South Africa. Reed Knouse (2008: 196) affirms that the musical activities in the Moravian settlements in South Africa is still unknown.

This paper explores the embodied dimensions of congregational singing within the South African Moravian Church. By focusing on the Moravian Church Choir Union of South Africa (MOCUSA) and the Moravian Brass Band Union of South Africa (BBSA), this study investigates how the physical and emotional experiences of worship shape and are shaped by the corporeal engagement with the sacred. Through ethnographic research and analysis of Moravian music festivals, this paper examines the role of the body in producing and experiencing sacred music, considering factors such as embodied gestures, vocal techniques, and the spatial arrangements of worship spaces. By understanding the embodied dimensions of congregational music, this research aims to illuminate how the Moravian Church has preserved its musical heritage and fostered a sense of community through shared musical practices.