

A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective on Secular Pop Music: An Exploratory Study of Engagement and Compatibility

By

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Abstract

It is a common practice for people to have pop music playing in the background while they go about daily living. Many Seventh-day Adventists seem to engage with pop music in this manner. The aim of this study was to understand the type of principles, attitudes and behaviours that were being promoted by commonly heard pop songs, and how these fare against the Seventh-day Adventist belief system. A further aim was to understand how Seventh-day Adventists listen to pop music, and why they appear to embrace songs that promote behaviours and attitudes that run contrary to their beliefs.

This is a mixed methods study. It entailed perusing the lyrics of pop songs in two ways. Firstly, 24 songs were selected that were addressed in 6 themes (4 songs per theme), the themes that have a bearing on some important aspects of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy and lifestyle (Concept of Self; Hope; the State of the Dead; Time; Substance Use; and Love, Relationships and Sexuality). Twelve Seventh-day Adventist interviewees who serve as leaders in their local congregations, and representing various groups (i.e., unmarried youth, married young people, parents, seniors, people who listen to pop music on the radio, and those who are music leaders in their churches), stated how they engaged with pop music in general, and offered their perspectives on the 24 songs. Further, 4 pastors provided comments, in their official capacity, on the compatibility of these songs with Seventh-day Adventism.

Secondly, 160 pop songs (i.e., the top 40 songs from the Billboard decade-end Hot 100 song charts, from decades 1980, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s) were reviewed to gather a general sense of the types of content, themes and extent to which messages were being promoted.

It was found that a large percentage of pop songs' messages run contrary to the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy and approach to life, and that lyrics are becoming more explicit with each succeeding decade, in terms of behaviours and practices that are rejected by the Church. It was also found that many Seventh-day Adventists may be engaging with such music because they are attracted by the music and do not pay attention to the lyrics. Furthermore, it was ascertained that music can influence a change in beliefs and behaviours and that if Seventh-day Adventists want to practice their faith seriously, they need to pay attention to the type of music they listen to, especially the lyrics.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Pop Music is widely used as an accompaniment or background to everyday activities. This seems to be regarded as a normal phenomenon as one observes its use in a variety of settings - in people's homes, in the workplace, in stores, doctors' rooms, gyms, hairdressing salons, while travelling, and so on. It appears to infuse pleasure and joy into peoples' lives as they go about daily living. Because of its prevalence, it is virtually unavoidable even to those who might not want to be exposed to it.

A preliminary informal study that I conducted in 2013 with a group of 103 Seventh-day Adventists from the Durban area, showed that a large percentage engaged with pop music as a matter of routine. Of the 93 (90%) who listened to music while busy with various activities like driving/travelling, doing household chores, and even studying, 73 (71%) said they listened to pop music and 71 (69%) listened to it mainly on the popular radio station, East Coast Radio (ECR), which identifies itself on air as "KZN's number one hit music station".

There appears to be a disparity between what Seventh-day Adventists report about how they feel about pop music, and their actual practise. Only 16 (15%) indicated that they liked pop music. The majority, 83 (80%), expressed some reservation towards it; 53 (51%) indicating that they liked *some* pop music, while 30 (29%) did not like pop music. In light of these figures, it is interesting to note that 71 (69%) regularly listened to the local pop music radio station, East Coast Radio, which often airs songs that according to my observation, promote ideas and attitudes that can be seen to be at odds with Christian principles as espoused by Seventh-day Adventism.

Pop music is not a neutral entity. Bohlman and Nettle (1995, 31) say that individuals, as composers, express "consciously or unconsciously, something about the structure of their societies and of human society in general". Thus, as a vehicle of popular culture pop music expresses, introduces and drives desires, dilemmas and lifestyle choices that are reflective of the wider society, yet in various ways seem to conflict with the Seventh-day Adventist value system.

The challenge is whether Seventh-day Adventists, as Christians who may want to strive to preserve and uphold a philosophy and lifestyle in line with the Church's perspective on biblical principles, can

engage with a class of songs that appear to undermine their belief system. How are they to relate to a medium that is so inviting, virtually unavoidable, and pervading?

Seventh-day Adventism is very much a lifestyle religion. Members are expected to be careful about what they expose themselves to in order to avoid anything that might have a negative impact on their taste for spirituality as defined by the Church (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* 2015,148). Kuusisto (2000, 111) indicates that there is a direct link between engagement with pop music and attitudes towards the principles espoused by Seventh-day Adventism: “Pop music in itself seems to be a strong indicator of a person’s attitudes toward Adventism... [People who like pop music are] more likely to express favourable attitudes towards TV, cinema, alcohol, premarital sex and so forth.¹ Whereas those individuals who do not value pop music as much enjoy religious activities like going to church and observing the Sabbath and negatively view TV, cinema and alcohol consumption”.

This thesis is an exploratory study to ascertain the position and status of the various components within this topic: Seventh-day Adventism’s lifestyle standards and stance on how members are to engage with pop music, and the wider society (Chapter 2); the topics, issues and attitudes promoted by commonly heard pop music (Chapter 3 and 4); and how Seventh-day Adventists in this local vicinity relate to commonly aired pop music that may appear to undermine those standards (Chapter 5).

Location of the Study

The sample of pop songs for this study are drawn from the American Billboard Hot 100 Charts for the period 1980-2019. The reason for choosing to work with these charts is that the songs featured here form a large percentage of the playlist of ECR. Besides its self-identification as “KZN’s Number One Hit Music Station” (played either as a jingle or announced by the presenters at regular intervals throughout the day), ECR is recognized as “the leading English commercial radio station in KwaZulu-Natal” (kzntopbusiness.co.za). As testament to its popularity at the time the fieldwork for this research was being conducted it was a regular feature in many stores and public places that I frequent in Durban – the local fruit and vegetable store, the hair salon around the corner from where I live, a Chinese store we often visit, my dentist’s rooms, a health spa nearby, even a local public library. On a more personal level, even though I do not choose to listen to the radio, it is the only radio station that I am almost exclusively exposed to when in the company of others. Further, and of significance to this study,

¹ Practices and behaviours that members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are advised to either exercise discretion when engaging with or to abstain from completely.

according to the findings of the 2013 survey, of the 84 who listened regularly to the radio, about 71 (85%) listened to East Coast Radio.

In this study I use the scenario of easy access to popular music via the radio, merely as a case study of a larger reality. The intention is to draw lessons about the music that is being disseminated, rather than take issue with the platform through which it is generated. With that in mind, popular music is becoming increasingly accessible via various platforms.

A sample of twelve Seventh-day Adventists from the local Kwa-Zulu Natal Free State Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be selected to participate in an interview, on their engagement with and comments on pop music texts. In addition, four pastors from this vicinity will be approached to provide comments on texts of the pop songs selected for further study.

Review of Literature

Background music has become a common fixture of daily life (Frith 2007, 198; Kassabian 2013, xi; Negus 1996, 28; Herbert 2011, 8). For the most part it is being passively consumed alongside peoples' engagement with other activities (Lynch 2006; Adorno 2008; Negus 1996, 28). Herbert (2011, 8) explains that "an increasing body of research indicates that the most prevalent listening situation in the West is one where attention is distributed 'across a complex situation of which music is only a part'" (Sloboda and O'Neill 2001, 418 quoted in Herbert 2011, 8). This view is supported by various researchers (Kassabian 2013, xii and 51; Bennet and Waksman 2015, 552; Negus 1996, 9-10).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church does not condemn engagement with secular music. However, it calls for discretion on the part of the listener. In terms of the Church's stance on the place of secular music in the lives of Seventh-day Adventists, I cite a few of its official documents: *A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music* (2004, 7) describes secular music as potentially speaking "to the common issues of life and basic human emotions... it could have a legitimate place in the life of a Christian". However, it states that "music is not morally and spiritually neutral" (2004, 6). *The Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* (2015, 149-150) cautions that certain types of music can have a negative impact on one's spirituality: "Debased music breaks down morality and draws us away from our relationship with God". White (2002, 291) states that "music is often perverted to serve purposes of evil, and it thus becomes one of the most alluring agencies of temptation". In addition, in the Bible, the Apostle Paul counsels that whatever followers of Christ choose to engage with should be of a faith-

affirming nature (Philippians 4:8). Thus, lyrics should “reflect moral values” and should “correspond with sound biblical theology” (*A Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy of Music* 2004, 8).

DeNora (2000, 48) supports the view that music is a powerful force - music “does things, changes things, makes things happen”. Studies show that, amongst other effects, music can influence a change in beliefs, behaviour and emotional state. Hjarvard (2008) focusses on religious transformation in modern, Western society and speaks about “how the characteristics of modern mass media relate to the processes of secularisation”. According to Howard (1992, 3) “music has the potential to contribute to the ‘conversion’ of non-members to the movement’s position” and that “popular music... [expresses] visions of a different type of society...”.

Research shows that music can influence human behaviour (Christenson et al. 2012, 127; Martino et al. 2006, 431). According to a longevity study on 1461 adolescents, degrading sexual lyrics in popular music have contributed to youths’ premature sexual activity (Martino et al. 2006, 431). There also appears to be a link between people listening to rock music and taking their own lives (Wright 2000, 366). Further, Christenson et al. (2012, 122) show that “there is strong evidence linking exposure to substance messages in music with young people’s substance related attitudes and behaviour”.

DeNora’s statement that “culture can be seen as a ‘tool kit’ for action... providing material... for action” (2003, 118-120) thus seems to be confirmed.

“Ellen White told parents that they should teach their children to reject all aspects of popular culture that might divert their attention from the heavenly world” (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 172). De Waal (1998, 47), in her thesis which reiterates the importance of Seventh-day Adventists being distinct from the ‘world’, quotes White: “Those who would not fall a prey to Satan’s devices must guard well the avenues of the soul; they must avoid reading, seeing, or hearing that which will suggest impure thoughts”. Ted Wilson (2015), President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide, in his address to the Church at the 60th General Conference Session,² also highlights this endeavour when he stated “Husbands, wives and families, don’t allow anything to creep into your homes that will distract you from God’s plans for you and your children. Eliminate any television, social media, music, books and other influences that will distract you from Jesus and His biblical truth”.

² General Conference Sessions are the highest convocation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and are held quinquennially.

I have discussed in the background above why local Seventh-day Adventists may be listening to pop music. Riesman discovered that there are two types of listeners - those that are discerning and critical of what they hear (i.e., active listeners - this group was in the minority), and the “majority group that had indiscriminating tastes in popular music” (passive listeners), (Negus 1996, 12). He observed that the majority group “were the audience for the large radio stations”. They “were not very concerned about how music was produced, and their listening habits were fairly indiscriminate” (Negus 1996,12). Perhaps this addresses the above discrepancy - that even though the majority of Seventh-day Adventists expressed reservations about pop music, a large proportion chose to consume it anyway (perhaps passively).

The pop music under consideration emanates mostly from America (Negus 1996, 170 and 172), thus disseminating largely the values of American popular culture. According to Bull and Lockhart (2007, xiii) Seventh-day Adventism poses as an alternative to this culture: “Seventh-day Adventism is one of the most subtly differentiated, systematically developed, and institutionally successful of all alternatives to the American way of life”. They observe that Adventism upholds “firm moral and religious standards” (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 2) and that the many restrictions placed on various forms of entertainment (which include music) were “not so much to reject these art forms altogether, however, but to make room for their Adventist alternatives” (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 233).

Christenson et al. (2012) have undertaken a study where they examined the lyrics of the year-end Billboard Top 100 songs in the United States from 1968, 1978, 1988, 1998 and 2008 to find to what extent substances like alcohol and drugs appear in these songs. They observe that “most of the academic work on media substance portrayals and effects has centered on television, advertising, and movies, with popular music receiving considerably less attention” and where pop music did get some attention it was focused on the images in music videos rather than on the lyrics (Christenson et al. 2012, 122). Hence the study that I am undertaking seeks to fill a gap in research, and in this particular instance, that which would be of concern to a Christian community of believers. Further, the researchers highlight the purpose of using the Billboard charts, which they have chosen to examine songs from “Billboard’s yearly Top 100 charts” because these are most likely to have been heard by the target group “over an extended period of time” and “they reflect... whatever genres are ‘hot’ during any given period” (Christenson et al. 2012, 126). This lends support to my approach which, for reasons applicable to this local vicinity, the Billboard charts also feature prominently.

Clifton Maberly (2005, 7), a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, used a conciliatory approach to his study of popular music. Instead of finding what was apparently wrong with it, he tried to find songs with spiritual leanings, in an attempt to find common spiritual ground with people who are not church goers. He believes that when attempting to analyse popular music (which he loosely referred to as 'rock' music) one should consider the story and the musicians behind the music (Maberly 2005, 10). He observes: "despite the rise in explicit content within popular music in recent years, there has also been a rise in spiritual soul-searching, with artists expressing a longing for something much deeper than the infamous sex, drugs and rock 'n roll" (Maberly 2005, 8). That being said, the exploratory nature of the study at hand is not for evangelistic purposes as Maberly's study may have been. It is rather to develop an understanding of the types of messages and attitudes promoted by a selection of commonly heard pop songs and how this relates to the principles and teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As mentioned previously, Kuusisto (2000, 111) has observed that engagement with pop music can negatively affect one's taste for the type of lifestyle, which is deeply rooted in spirituality, as promoted by Seventh-day Adventism. Dudley and Kangas conducted a survey on 1500 baptised teenage Seventh-day Adventist Church members. They found a strong correlation between the members' acceptance of the Church's lifestyle standards with their intention to remain Adventist. The lifestyle standards (prohibitions) that their survey focussed on were movie theatres, rock music, dancing, jewellery, make-up, premarital sex, 'unclean' meats, alcohol, tobacco and recreational drugs (Kuusisto 2000, 60).

Bull and Lockhart (2007, 162) observed that "becoming an Adventist entailed giving up previous indulgences", in effect, adopting a new way of life. "As members... we should emphasize again the great Bible standards and renew allegiance to these God-given principles. We should come up to the high standards of the Christian life and be separated from the world" (*Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* 2015, 142). Bull and Lockhart (2007, 162) state that the denomination seeks to guide the behaviour of its members "in three important areas of human existence: health, family life, and recreation". Thus, the various lifestyle issues being addressed fit into one or more of these areas. "The extent to which Adventists adhere to what they have been taught has varied" and, according to Dudley "it seems that the four standards - cosmetics, the cinema, dancing, and rock music will not hold in the near future of the church" (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 173-174).

The findings above show that there appears to be notable tension between pop music and Seventh-day Adventism, that Seventh-day Adventists are freely engaging with pop music and that indiscriminate

engagement with pop music can have a negative impact on members' commitment to the Church's lifestyle standards and the principles that govern them.

Theoretical Framework

Nachbar tells us that agents of popular culture “embody the zeitgeist” of the times (1992, 39). By studying such agents (in this case pop music), we can understand “the most deep-seated and enduring beliefs and values which characterize a culture over time” (Nachbar 1992, 33). Nachbar states quite categorically that the aim of popular culture is “not just to present or reflect beliefs, values and desires, but also to come chasing after us to instil [those] values and beliefs...” (Nachbar 1992 6, 41). In response, the Bible, as Seventh-day Adventism perceives, calls for Christians to exercise intentionality, discernment and selectivity as they exist within and engage with the material world (1 John 2:15-17). White (1968, 146) counsels: “As the truth is brought into practical life, the standard is to be elevated higher and higher to meet the requirements of the Bible. This will necessitate opposition to the fashions, customs, practices and maxims of the world. Worldly influences, like the waves of the sea, beat against the followers of Christ to sweep them away from the true principles of meekness and grace; but we are to stand as firm as a rock to principle”.

The hermeneutics phenomenology of research has been used in this study. According to George (2021, 1) “hermeneutics is the study of interpretation” and plays a role in disciplines “whose subject matter demands interpretative approaches... [relating to] the meaning of human intentions, beliefs, and actions, or the meaning of human experience”. Further, hermeneutics has to do with how we understand things, and understanding can be described as a ‘success’ of interpretation” (George 2021, 1). Thus, “success of understanding [interpretation]... is typically also described as edifying or educative”. (George 2021, 1). “Hans-Georg Gadamer, a philosopher most associated with hermeneutics in our times, closely connects interpretive experience with education (George 2021, 1). Thus, “we learn from our interpretive experience... about ourselves, the world and others” (George 2021, 1)

This study will consider whether popular music, as an agent of popular culture, carries and potentially encourages beliefs and values which conflict with Seventh-day Adventist principles. Further, the research paradigm best suited to this kind of study is projective hermeneutics (Patterson and Williams 2002, 12). Unlike the research tradition of hermeneutic re-enactment where one would set aside one's preconceptions and seek to empathise with the other's views, projective hermeneutics “maintains that

an ‘utterly innocent’ reading of the text is impossible and that the interpreter plays an active role in creating the interpretation” (Nicholson 1984, 29 quoted in Patterson and Williams 2002, 12). Instead, the researcher’s biases and worldview are declared upfront. Thus, as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, my worldview will play an active role in the interpretation of the song texts. Additionally, my faith tradition’s official teachings on secular music will form an additional lens through which I will assess the lyrics of pop songs. The advantage of using this paradigm is that the researcher is able to declare their religious allegiance and foreground its tenets without compromising the integrity of the academic project.

Research Problems and Objectives

Research problems

1. What is the Seventh-day Adventist position on the texts of secular music?
2. Which beliefs/behaviours espoused by the texts of selected pop songs conflict with the official Seventh-day Adventist position?
 - a. What are the existing findings about the impact of musical texts in reshaping the listener’s beliefs and/or behaviour?
3. Could there be grounds for a conflict of interest for those who accept the tenets of Seventh-day Adventism and actively listen to the texts of these pop songs, or listen passively?
 - a. What is active (cognitive) listening?
 - b. What is passive (emotional) listening?

Objectives

1. To detail the Seventh-day Adventist position on the texts of secular music.
2. To compare the beliefs/behaviours propagated in the song texts with the official teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
3. To discuss whether listening to such texts actively and passively is compatible with the teachings of Seventh-day Adventism.

Research Methods

This is a mixed methods study using both quantitative and qualitative research. My primary approach is to peruse the lyrics of commonly heard pop songs and to compare the value system they project to that promoted by Seventh-day Adventism. Further, to find out how Seventh-day Adventists in this local vicinity relate to such pop music.

I will be using a set of songs that are commonly heard on the popular radio station ECR. I have a list of about 400 songs that I have heard on ECR over a period of about a year (from November 2018- November 2019). This list is fairly representative of the type of music being broadcast on this station as it consists of songs from the various shows (i.e., taken from various times of the day), and from various days of the week and various times during the year. From this list I have been able to ascertain that most of the songs being aired are international hits, especially from the United States of America - a large percentage having featured on America's Billboard Hot 100 charts (Billboard produces amongst others, weekly, year-end and decade-end Hot 100 charts). This affirms ECR's identification as a "Hit Music" station.

My exploration in terms of the lyrics of songs will be twofold.

Firstly, I intend to understand the type of content, themes and extent to which particular messages are being portrayed in pop music. The hermeneutics approach - looking at song texts from the Seventh-day Adventist perspective, will thus come to the fore in this aspect of the study.

For this I will conduct a brief review of the top 40 songs from each of the Billboard decade-end Hot 100 song charts of the decades 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. This will amount to 160 songs. These are the most popular songs of each decade and will provide an objective platform from which to gauge the above-mentioned textual review.

I have identified at least six textual (verbal) themes in the pop music I have encountered that have a direct bearing on the Seventh-day Adventist worldview. As mentioned in the literature review above, Bull and Lockhart point out that in terms of lifestyle, the Church places emphasis on "three important areas of human existence: health, family life, and recreation" (2007, 162). The themes that this study will focus on therefore relate to these areas of human existence: 1. The Concept of Self; 2. Hope; 3. The State of the Dead; 4. Time; 5. Substance Use; 6. Love, Relationships and Sexuality. I will briefly

categorize the abovementioned 160 songs according to these six themes. A focus on these themes will help enunciate the Seventh-day Adventist perspective on lifestyle and doctrine, using the official position of the church as a guideline, thus reflecting the hermeneutic approach to this study.

Further, I have selected a small sample of songs per theme (24 songs in total) for closer textual analysis. Songs have been selected that more pointedly project the popular ideas within the abovementioned themes, in particular being ideas that pose, or appear to pose a challenge to Seventh-day Adventist principles and standards of behaviour. Some of these songs have not necessarily made it on the abovementioned decade-end Hot 100 Billboard charts but are hit songs that have made an appearance on the other Billboard charts, e.g., the Hot 100 weekly or yearly charts. In addition, I have often heard them in this local vicinity, via the aforementioned radio station and which is often heard in the various places that I frequent.

In addition, I will conduct a series of interviews amongst a sample of 12 Seventh-day Adventists from the English-speaking churches in Durban. According to Strauss and Corwin “deciding how many interviews to conduct should depend on the point at which you expect to reach theoretical saturation... i.e., when you expect a new interview to reveal no new themes... saturation is normally reached after 10-12 interviews” (Breen 2006, 466).

One criterion for selecting participants has been to choose those who occupy an active position in Church, as it is assumed that such members will be familiar with the standards and principles of the Church. However, given that the interviewees are considered to be committed members of the Church, as they are actively involved in leadership and worship, this would mean that the findings may not be general for Seventh-day Adventists overall.

The interviewees have been selected within the following groups, (comprising two individuals per group):

1. Individuals who are actively involved in music in the Church (to gain an understanding of how someone involved in church music relates to pop music).
2. Individuals who listen regularly to pop music on East Coast Radio (the understanding is that such individuals will have encountered the selected songs and may have useful comments on how they think about and relate to such songs).
3. Individuals who are parents (to hear perspectives on pop music from a parental perspective).

4. Youth (single, no children, perhaps students). To a large extent pop music speaks to issues that youth are currently dealing with. Thus, the intention to gather attitudes and involvement with pop music from a young person's perspective.
5. Young people who are married. A grouping of individuals who may offer a different perspective from perhaps young people in the same age group, yet are single, especially on themes relating to love and relationships, and aspects of a social nature.
6. Senior Adults. These may add yet another dimension due to their years of experience.

The reason for choosing individuals from these different groupings has been to gain an understanding from various perspectives of how people relate to and engage with pop music. An additional consideration is that the various race groups will be represented amongst the selected candidates.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted via video call. Participants were therefore selected who had easy access to this platform.

Further, 4 Seventh-day Adventist pastors from the local vicinity were approached to comment briefly on the lyrical content of the 24 selected songs and how they perceive these to compare with the standards and principles of the Church. My reason for selecting these ministers was to seek their reflections in their capacity as officials of the Church.

Due to time constraints and the limitations on access to individuals posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the sample size remained small (yet within accepted norms for qualitative research).

I also gathered information from a personal perspective as a conservative, practicing Seventh-day Adventist. As a participant observer I note various encounters with pop music as I go about daily living which characterizes a lifestyle that does not actively seek out pop music. The purpose of this method is in light of the idea that popular culture comes chasing after you even though you may not actively pursue it. I note the prevalence of pop music and the various spaces it is being encountered; and the type of cultural material that is being disseminated.

This study will not engage with popular music that is overtly vulgar and 'antisocial' as this would normally preclude it from the public spaces in question. Licensees such as ECR are accountable to adhere to a code of conduct as per the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (2009). This study will thus focus on the type of pop songs that are commonly aired in public by official

broadcasters, as they are held accountable to air acceptable, safe and non-offensive material to the public. Thus, the pop songs in question will be those that appear on the radio and seen as appropriate for broad public consumption.

This study will not include pop music videos. The added dimension of the visual medium can change the way the music is being engaged with which would be out of the scope of this study. Background music tends to 'unobtrusively' lend itself to a variety of settings - people can go about various activities, and in various settings, while the music is being played. Video, however, tends to tie people down to the screen, thus limiting movement and the types of activities they can engage in, and is most probably the reason why it is not popular in the settings of interest to this study. Thus, background music appears to be more conducive to normal everyday activities and has been observed to be widespread and far more prevalent than music videos. Secondly, visuals tend to depict or portray the meaning of the lyrics, whereas mere listening can allow for a greater flexibility in interpretation and the meanings derived can be far more personal. Thirdly, the act of watching is more consensual on the part of the viewer (one normally watches because one chooses to and has the option to look away if one does not want to view). Sound (music), on the other hand, is more unavoidable if present in one's space.

The verbal analysis will focus on overt messages rather than insinuations and encoded meanings. However, songs of an 'inspirational/spiritual' nature tend to allude to principles, and thus will be addressed accordingly. Lyrics will be taken from what Christenson et al (2012, 123) identify as "reliable Internet lyric sites such as www.azlyrics.com, and www.lyricsmode.com".

In summary, this study will consider the Seventh-day Adventist position on the texts of a selection of pop songs. It will compare the beliefs and behaviours promoted by these texts with the teachings of the Church. It will also consider whether actively or passively listening to these texts is compatible with the principles of Seventh-day Adventism.

The Seventh-day Adventist worldview will play a crucial role in interpreting the song texts. This is an exploratory study which will include both qualitative and quantitative research.

Chapter 2

Seventh-day Adventism as a Worldview

“God is love. This is the most essential Adventist conviction... [It] is both the foundation and the goal of Adventist theology” (McLarty 2011, 11).

Introduction

As a Christian faith, Seventh-day Adventism is a Protestant movement which expresses explicit faith in something completely outside of the self: the sovereignty of the Creator-God over their lives; and in the sole authority of a book – the Bible – that they regard as “the primary and authoritative means by which [God] reveals Himself to human beings” (General Conference Committee Annual Council 1986, 1).

Seventh-day Adventism is reputed to be the “most widespread unified³ Protestant group in the history of Christianity” (Knight. 2009, 14)⁴ and, according to Bull and Lockhart, “is now on the way to becoming a major world religion” (2007, XIII). It is an active member of the worldwide Christian Conference of Secretaries of the Christian World Communions, as such belonging to the worldwide Christian family, comprising some two billion Christians, including “Lutherans, Anglicans, Catholics, Baptists, Evangelicals, Methodists... and others” (Graz 2008, 109).

In terms of Seventh-day Adventist world statistics, as of December 2021 there were 95 297 churches, 72 975 companies (a company is normally like a church that is perhaps newly formed and thus is aiming to be formalized into an organized church) (Seventh-day Adventist Manual 2015, 37); and 21 912 161 members. As of December 2019, the Church had established work in 212 of the 235 countries recognized by the United Nations, using 535 languages in their publications and oral work. The Church operates 9419 schools and 118 tertiary institutions, 229 hospitals and sanitariums, 129 nursing homes and retirement centres, 1475 clinics and dispensaries, 15 orphanages and children’s homes and 57 publishing houses and branches (www.adventist.org).

³ Unified in doctrine, in church structure and organization, in mission, and in a distinctive lifestyle, “Seventh-day Adventists are a thoroughly organized people... speaking the same thing from ocean to ocean” (Knight 2008, 161, 167).

⁴ According to Feichtinger (2016, 382), “They are one of the fastest growing and most widespread churches worldwide”.

Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle

Seventh-day Adventists teach the concept of “‘an integrated wholeness’ – the idea that all aspects of a human being – physical, mental and spiritual – form a single unit and that one doesn’t exist without the other... Our minds and bodies are inseparable aspects of our existence” (Finley and Landless 2014, 17-18). Thus, there is a strong emphasis on a holistic approach to life and spirituality. Accordingly, each of the themes which are examined below in relation to pop music (Concept of self; Hope; The State of the Dead; Time; Substance Use; Love, Relationships and Sexuality) reflect some aspect of living and approach to life.

In the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy “health principles [are] linked to spiritual goals” (Douglass 2007, 70). All that they choose to do ultimately has some bearing on their physical, emotional, social and ultimately spiritual well-being. Therefore, health is inextricably linked with the Church’s theology (Seventh-day Adventist Manual 2015, 146). The Church seeks to guide the behaviour of its members “in three important areas of human existence: health, family life, and recreation” (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 162). The above-mentioned themes for this study fall into these three categories.

According to White “our first duty toward God and our fellow beings is that of self-development” (1976, 15). She states “that time is spent to good account which is used in the establishment and preservation of physical and mental health. We cannot afford to dwarf or cripple any function of body or mind” (1976, 15). This concept is expressed succinctly:

Since the mind and the soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigour are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. Without health no one can as distinctly understand or as completely fulfil his obligation to himself, to his fellow beings, or to his Creator. Therefore, the health should be as faithfully guarded as the character (White 1998, 195).

Through the influence of White, whom it is believed was inspired by God (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 26; Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 168), health has been a focus of the Church since its inception. It is only in recent times that many of the health principles, promoted and practiced by the Church, have become recognized by the wider society (Douglass 2007, 67; McMahon 2005, 9).

The Church’s principles on health and lifestyle “have stood the test of time and experience” (Douglass, 2007, 69 & 73). As a result, the Church attracts scientific attention and many studies have been

conducted on Seventh-day Adventists, revealing the benefits of their lifestyle choices (see Lemon, F R and J W Kuzma, <https://adventisthealthstudy.org/researchers>). I mention a few of these studies: Beuttner 2005, 22-26; Phillips et. al. 1980, 1097-1107; Mills et al. 1989, 58-590; Dudley and Kosinski 1990, 78-86; Sherma, Charlemagne-Badal and Lee 2015, 709-728; Fraser 2003; Fonnebo 1994; Banta et.al 2018. It has been shown that “Adventists who follow the lifestyle are one of the longest lived and healthiest large groups of people since the Old Testament” (McMahon 2005, 2).

Bull and Lockhart (2007, 181) state: “It might appear surprising that over a period when the benefits of the Adventist lifestyle had never been so clearly demonstrated, and scientists and journalists started to notice the generally healthy state of Adventists vis-à-vis the general population, survey data indicated that church members were growing less interested in it”.

It is also interesting, according to Dudley (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 174), that some typical features of Seventh-day Adventism may soon become a thing of the past. With reference to the issues of “cosmetics, the cinema, dancing, and rock music... it seems almost certain that these four standards will not hold in the near future of the church” (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 174). He postulated this as a result of research amongst several school-going and young-adult Seventh-day Adventists who expressed waning support for these standards (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 174). According to the Church, however, instead of the standards dropping, there will be a resurgence of interest in the standards of the Church as a great revival and reformation is anticipated before the end of earth’s history. In light of this the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide has embarked on a ‘Revival and Reformation’ programme designed to ‘awaken’ members from spiritual lethargy.

Notably the four elements that Dudley envisaged will peter out are directly related to aspects of entertainment and music. This speaks to one of the key questions of this study which is to ascertain whether there can be grounds for a conflict of interest for those who accept the tenets of Seventh-day Adventism and actively or passively listen to pop songs that appear to undermine the principles and practices promoted by the Church.

Bull and Lockhart (2007, 162) state that an important aspect of “Adventist evangelism is... to effect a change in the lifestyle of the prospective convert” and that “joining the Seventh-day Adventist Church means embarking on a well-worn road to personal well-being and, it is hoped, to eternal happiness”. Christians are called to adopt a different lifestyle from the world not just for the sake of being different,

but the principles by which they are called to live will help them reach their full potential as God's created beings (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 312).

Bull and Lockhart (2007, 249) draw in the spiritual motivation for the Adventist gravitation toward health: "Adventist perfection has never involved the mindless observation of a legal code: its orientation has always been toward purposeful self-improvement – its objective, the re-assimilation of a remnant of the human race into the divine realm". Douglass (in Bull and Lockhart 2007, 69) states that the Church's emphasis on health and lifestyle is more than just to promote well-being in this life, but to "fit a people for the coming of the Lord".

NEWSTART is an acronym that encapsulates the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle and encompasses "8 Laws of Health", for physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being. Seventh-day Adventists are encouraged to embrace and live by these elements: wholesome *Nutrition*, adequate *Exercise*, *Water*, *Sunlight*, *Temperance*, *Air*, *Rest*, and *Trust in God* (<https://ellenwhite.org/articles/101>). These principles are drawn from a quote from White's book, *The Ministry of Health and Healing*: (2004, 62) in which she explains in detail how these resources can be effectively used for optimum health. She states:

Pure air, sunlight, abstemiousness, rest, exercise, proper diet, the use of water, trust in divine power- these are the true remedies. Every person should have a knowledge of nature's remedial agencies and how to apply them.

The Second Coming of Christ is a major theme in Seventh-day Adventism, so much so that it is firmly rooted in its name: "Adventist" from the Latin word "Adventus" meaning "coming". Seventh-day Adventists have a particular understanding of the new life that Christ's Second Coming will usher in. Instead of becoming disembodied spirits, they expect to retain their physical nature, but without the sinful, mortal aspect (Finley and Landless 2014, 103). They will be restored to what God originally created Adam and Eve to be (Genesis 1; 2:15-16). The lifestyle that Seventh-day Adventists aspire to now, can be seen as a foretaste of what they expect in the life hereafter, but without having to battle against evil and sin, as those will be forever eradicated (Finley and Landless 2014 10, 103-105; Dysinger 1997 cited in Bull and Lockhart 2007 181).

Bull and Lockhart (2007, 249) describe how Seventh-day Adventists "have reappropriated and reinterpreted the central tenets" of the American Declaration of Independence in relation to their faith:

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” become, within the Adventist context, ideals of a very different character... for Adventists, the pursuit of happiness has involved, not individual self-expression within a libertarian social order, but the restraint of the emotions and the regulation of the appetites. Adventists have devoted more time to preparing for eternal bliss than to enjoying the fleeting moment. But they have not agreed to endure present hardship in return for future reward. Adventists do not expect to be made happy in heaven in compensation for being miserable now. For them, the pursuit of happiness means setting out on a clearly marked and unbroken path that leads from earth to heaven.

A key concept to embracing the Seventh-day Adventist approach to life is temperance, i.e., living a well-controlled life by abstaining from that which is harmful, and exercising moderation in that which is not (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 146; Bull and Lockhart 2007, 163). This has relevance to one of the objectives of this study which is to compare the kind of beliefs and lifestyle being promoted by the list of selected pop songs with that promoted by the Church.

However, “Doctrine and lifestyle are secondary issues” (Knight 2008, 193). A person can “believe all the right doctrines and live the right lifestyle and still be lost” (Knight 2008, 193). Knight (2008, 193) points out that the most important aspect of Christianity is salvation, and “salvation has to do with your relationship to God through Jesus Christ”. Christ is the focus around which all Seventh-day Adventist theology revolves; doctrine and lifestyle assist people to better understand God and to experience a better quality of life (Knight 2008, 193; Adult Bible Study Guide, 15 August 2021⁵).

All aspects of Seventh-day Adventist theology and lifestyle are based on Scriptures; thus, it is necessary to describe the lens through which Seventh-day Adventists interpret the biblical text, and ultimately view life and the world. Further, Ellen White has played a significant role in the direction that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has taken (Knight 1996, 7), so her role will also be briefly explained.

The Role of the Bible in Seventh-day Adventism

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes the Bible as its supreme authority (White 2002, 335). Its particular approach to the reading of the Bible produces a perspective that filters down to lifestyle practices producing a distinctive subculture.

⁵ The Adult Bible Study Guide is an official publication of the worldwide SDA church. It is published quarterly by the General Conference of SDAs. It is a daily Bible study plan that every member of the world church is invited to participate in, and each Sabbath the local church splits into classes and discussions are held on these lessons -a slot we call lesson study time.

Unlike the Postmodern perspective that “there are no moral absolutes” and that “truth is relative” (Exposing Spiritual Formation 2013, 116), Seventh-day Adventism teaches that there is a definite moral code for all humanity and that in many instances there is a clear distinction between right and wrong. Further, natural laws of health are vital for a meaningful life (see above). Thus, these have implications on lifestyle choices that can either enhance or diminish the quality of one’s life. In Seventh-day Adventism a key message of the Bible is one of restoration (Wahlen 2015, 2), where God is reaching out to humanity to lift us from a mindset and lifestyle that exacerbates the hardships and challenges that are inevitable in this life, and to empower us and eventually free us, giving us “a hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11; White 2005, 250-251).

While the Church recognises the value of community, ultimately, each individual stands alone before his or her Creator (White 1998, 188; Knight 2009, 94). The Church believes in the autonomy of each individual to engage with God and the Bible without the need to be policed by another human being; thus signalling that no human being is to be subject to another in matters of faith and conscience.

We do not need any ecclesiastical magisterium to provide the Bible’s meanings to us. Instead, its basic teachings can be understood by all believers. It assumes the priesthood of all believers rather than restricting its interpretation to a select few, such as the clerical priesthood (Adult Bible Study Guide, 27 April 2020).

The most important question in the Bible is the question of salvation and how we are saved (Adult Bible Study Guide, 7 May 2020).

Thus, it is believed that the Bible should be placed in the hands of the people to read and understand for themselves. The Bible is understood to present issues in an understandable manner, to the extent that even children can grasp many of its basic teachings (Adult Bible Study Guide, 28 April 2020). Yet at the same time it can engage the most profound minds in the ever deepening and inexhaustible truths that it contains (Adult Bible Study Guide, 28 April 2020).

The Seventh-day Adventist Church teaches that God inspired the Biblical writers (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16; Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 11, 19), and that believers should invite the Holy Spirit to help them understand its message. In fact, the sixteenth century reformers recognized the Holy Spirit as the “only reliable interpreter of the Scriptures” (Rodriguez 2006, 1). Seventh-day Adventists believe that the result of this approach will not be differing beliefs, but rather a common, shared

understanding among believers, since the Holy Spirit brings about unity of purpose and understanding (John 17:21; Ephesians 4:5).

As testament of the faith the Church places on the validity of the Bible, the first fundamental belief of the Seventh-day Adventist Church focuses on it, and puts into perspective its position and role:

The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration. The inspired authors spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. In this Word, God has committed to humanity the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are the supreme, authoritative, and the infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the test of experience, the definitive revealer of doctrines, and the trustworthy record of God's acts in history. (Ps. 119:105; Prov. 30:5, 6; Isa. 8:20; John 17:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Seventh-day Adventist Manual 2015, 162).

While it is understood by Seventh-day Adventists that there may be some passages whose meaning is not easy to understand (2 Peter 3:16), it is believed that the principles necessary for salvation are sufficiently clear (Davidson 2003, 3).

There are various Biblical hermeneutical methodologies in existence (Davidson 2003, 1). Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Bible itself displays the most reliable method of interpretation. By consulting Scripture and learning how the biblical writers used Scripture to interpret itself, it is possible to gain a reliable understanding of the various teachings in the Scriptures (Adult Bible Study Guide, 2 April 2020; Davidson 2003, 1).

Seventh-day Adventist theology is based on the historical-biblical method of interpreting the Bible (Davidson 2003, 9). This method assumes that there is much in the Bible that is to be understood literally. For example, the first eleven chapters of Genesis are taken to be literal accounts of creation, of the onset and spread of sin and of a worldwide flood. It is believed that the first week of creation, as stated in Genesis chapter one and two, took place in six literal days, with the seventh completing the week by being instituted as a day of rest. The account of a worldwide flood and the necessary preparations for it (the building of the ark), is understood to have transpired as recorded. The concept of *Sola Scriptura* is critical to Seventh-day Adventism in the following sense:

The Protestant claim of “Scripture alone” (*sola Scriptura*) elevated Scripture to the sole standard and decisive source for theology... Scripture *alone* is the final authority when matters of faith and doctrine are at issue... Over against an allegorical interpretation of Scripture, where many different meanings were read into the biblical text... (Adult Bible Study Guide, 25 April 2020).

This does not mean that other supporting material such as commentaries and lexicons are not to be consulted. However, these are not to add to or replace tenets of Scripture.

Many of the teachings in Seventh-day Adventist theology find their roots in the first chapters of Genesis and develop in accordance with this initial train of thought, as the scriptures are further expressed and referred to elsewhere.

1. The Nature of the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-2; Genesis 1:2)
2. Creation (the world, and humanity: Genesis 1:26-28)
3. The Sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3)
4. The Origin of Evil (Genesis 3)
5. The Messiah and the plan of redemption (Genesis 3:15)
6. The Covenant (Genesis 1:28; 2:2-3, 15-17; 9:9-17; 15)
7. The dispersal of language and people (Genesis 10 and 11)
8. The genealogies that provide the framework for biblical chronology from the Creation to Abraham (Genesis 5 and 11)
9. The power of God’s spoken Word (Genesis 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16; John 17:17)
10. The nature of Humanity (Genesis 1:26-28)
11. God’s character (Matthew 10:29-30)
12. Marriage between a man and woman (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18, 21-25)
13. Stewardship of the earth and its resources (Genesis 1:26; 2:15,19)
14. The promised hope of a new creation (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Revelation 21:1)
(Adult Bible Study Guide Lesson 8. 16 May 2020).

Many of the above teachings have implications for this study, for example the Seventh-day Adventist perspective on Creation, the Sabbath, the origin of evil, the plan of redemption, the nature of humanity, marriage, and the promised hope of a new creation.

The Role of Ellen White in Seventh-day Adventism

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was started by a core group of cofounders, Ellen Gould White (1827-1915) being one of them. Even though she “never” accepted formal office (Seventh-day

Adventists Believe 2005, 257; Bull and Lockhart 2007, 21; Knight 1996, 61), “her influence shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church more than any other factor except the Holy Bible” (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 257). Due to her ongoing influence through numerous literary contributions, and the references to her writings in this work, I will contextualize her role in Seventh-day Adventism, especially as it relates to the present study.

White wrote extensively on various topics such as religion, education, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, publishing, nutrition and management. Her writings consist of topical books, *Testimonies for the Church* and numerous letters and periodical articles (Knight 1996, 83).

Seventh Day Adventists believe that White was “appointed by God as a special messenger to draw the world’s attention to the Holy Scriptures and help people prepare for Christ’s second advent”.⁶ However, White and the Church hold that her writings are not to be taken as a substitute for the Scriptures, or to be placed on the same level. They are said to be the “lesser light” pointing people to the “greater light” – the Bible (Knight 2008, 130). White spoke of her work as follows:

The word of God [the Bible], is sufficient to enlighten the most beclouded mind and may be understood by those who have any desire to understand it. But notwithstanding all this, some who profess to make the word of God their study, are found living in direct opposition to its plainest teachings. Then, to leave men and women without excuse, God gives plain and pointed testimonies [White’s writings], bringing them back to the word that they have neglected to follow (Knight 2008, 130).

“White took a larger role in the area of lifestyle practices than she did in the formation of doctrine” (Knight 2008, 192). The process in the development of the doctrines entailed intensive Bible study by the early group of Seventh-day Adventists until they had reached a general consensus. White would then sometimes receive a vision that reaffirmed that consensus. “Thus, White’s role in the formation of doctrine was one of confirmation rather than initiation” (Knight 2008, 192). Bull and Lockhart (2007, 28) highlight that White’s position in the church was different in comparison with leaders of some other religious groups:

Ellen White did not proclaim and gather a following; rather, she had a particular kind of religious experience that came to be accepted as authoritative within an existing group. The prophetic

⁶ <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/about>.

ministry of Ellen White was an aspect of Adventist social experience, not just a psychological experience of a single individual.

The Church's emphasis on lifestyle and health reform was birthed quite soon after the Church was officially set up in 1863. Fifteen days after the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists was formalised, White "had one of the most influential visions of her entire ministry" (Knight 2008, 168). That vision concerned lifestyle issues and health reform.⁷ Although many of the principles of health that White promoted were not new innovations, what was significant was that she integrated the message of health reform into Seventh-day Adventist theology (Knight 2008, 166). From the time that White first began to write on the topic of health in 1863 to the present, Seventh-day Adventists have had a distinctive lifestyle (Knight 2008, 166).

"The concept of balanced education of the whole person would become a hallmark of Mrs White's writings on education over the next 40 years" (Knight 1996, 55). White stressed the importance of the intellect in one's approach to being a Christian: "The truths of the divine word can be best appreciated by an intellectual Christian. Christ can best be glorified by those who serve Him intelligently" (White quoted in Knight 1996, 56).

In her will White made provision for the continuance of her work. She gave the instructions to make her writings available for the benefit of the church and its members (Knight 1996, 82-83). Hence numerous publications attributed to White are dated many years after her death.

By way of introduction, I have presented a general perspective on Seventh-day Adventism, including the place of lifestyle, as a framework within which the concerns of this study would sit. This also necessitated an explanation of the role of the Bible and of Ellen White, as these are key figures in Seventh-day Adventism. I will now present a theological perspective that drives Seventh-day Adventism, and as it relates to the themes and questions on hand.

⁷ During her lifetime White had "approximately 2000 visions and dreams" (<http://ellenwhite.org/content/article/learn-about-ellen-g-white>).

The Great Controversy

According to Seventh-day Adventists the Bible identifies two opposing forces in this world: Satan who “deceives the whole world” (Revelation 12:9), and is identified as a liar (John 8:44), a murderer and a thief (John 10:10); and Christ, the Redeemer who ransomed humanity from Satan (Isaiah 53; John 3:16), and who offers “abundant life” to all who will accept Him into their lives (John 10:10).

The Great Controversy theme is a fundamental concept within Seventh-day Adventism that frames the concepts of good and evil within a theological perspective. It speaks of a war⁸ that broke out in heaven (Revelation 12:7-9) and is in progress between Christ and Satan. Each has a particular *modus operandi* in this battle. Christ is on the side of truth, transparency and righteousness, which require self-restraint and intentionality on the part of His followers. Satan, on the other hand, conceals his purposes under the guise of gain, self-benefit and fun, usually within the context of instant gratification. Seventh-day Adventists believe that the conflict between God and Satan is being played out on the earth through the life and choices of each individual (Finley 2010, 14). Each of these rulers has a set of principles governing their kingdoms. Human beings have the freedom to choose whose principles will govern their lives – either God the Creator, or Satan. There is no other choice.

The ideas promoted by the selected pop songs in this study have a direct bearing on the Church’s theological standing within the context of this battle as they appear to encourage ideas and behaviours that run contrary to biblical spirituality and undermine the Christian’s endeavour to live the type of self-controlled lives reflected in the Scriptures. They are set to attractive and memorable music, and many engage with these songs, perhaps unaware of what they promote.

According to Seventh-day Adventists, by default, and due to humanity’s inherent sinful nature, the natural inclination is towards ideas and practices that fall in line with the agenda of evil (Romans 8:7-9). This is further fuelled by attitudes and behaviours displayed and propagated through popular culture. To a large extent the entertainment industry (music, movies, TV shows and books) seems to drive this agenda. Both the positive and negative attributes of popular culture, in turn, can infiltrate the other systems in society, like education and policy. Music has wide appeal and its ability to “speak” to our varying moods and circumstances makes it a ready and welcome companion.

⁸ The war was won by Christ when He defeated Satan at the cross. Christ came to the earth, lived a sinless life (did not give into Satan’s temptations, thus did not come under his power). Christ then died on our behalf. Conquered death by rising again.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that it is important to distance oneself from those things that tend to strengthen the carnal nature, and to turn to God instead. White (2005, 35) explains the effect of yielding to God:

In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.

Freewill and Love

The Biblical record reveals God as a God of love (1 John 4:8; 4:19; John 3:16; 15:13). It is believed that the whole cosmos is permeated by that love. Hence, God's government, and the way He rules His creation, is based on love. God's love for His created beings is meant to be reciprocated. However, if love is to prevail and to be fostered, it needs to be freely given. Therefore, God created beings with freewill, so that when they loved Him back, it was out of choice. Love cannot be forced (Adult Bible Study Guide 26 September 2021). The aforementioned reference states:

God cannot force love: the moment He does it's no longer love. Hence, when God created intelligent and rational beings in heaven and on earth with the ability to love, the risk existed that they might not love Him back. Some didn't – and hence there exist the origins of what we know as the great controversy.

The Ten Commandments

Seventh-day Adventism proposes that if people had a proper understanding about the God of the Bible, they would be drawn to Him as One who had their best interests at heart. They would concede that His rules (the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20: 3-17), which are believed to be a transcript of His character and the constitution of His government (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 265, White 1958, 34), rather than being the unreasonable demands of a despotic ruler, are for their and others' ultimate protection and happiness, and well-being.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Ten Commandments are "God's pattern of conduct" for "all humanity" and that Christ did not abolish the Ten Commandments, but rather fulfilled them (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 264, 265; Matthew 5:17-20), demonstrating through His perfect life that it

is possible to live a life of obedience to God by total dependence on God; and through His death, which was a ransom for humanity, brought salvation as a gift to all, offering His perfect life in exchange for each individual's failure to do so. The Bible states that all have sinned (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8), and defines sin as the transgression of the law, or lawlessness (1 John 3:4). Hence all require forgiveness, which God offers freely to the repentant (1 John 1:9; Romans 6:23).

God invites humanity into a relationship of love, based on obedience to His Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:6; Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Deuteronomy 30:19-20; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3), a relationship that will lead to eternal life (Revelation 22:14).

Allegiance to God and to His governance are at the forefront of the great controversy. Satan promotes rebellion and lawlessness, and wars against God's followers, identified as those who obey God's commandments (Revelation 12:17; 14:12).

Seventh-day Adventist Mission, the Three Angels' Messages and the Ten Commandments

Seventh-day Adventists identify themselves as a movement of prophecy (Knight 2008, 91), instituted by God to take a special message to the world that no other grouping has been tasked to do. This message is found in Revelation 14:6-12 and is referred to as the "Three Angels' Messages". These messages herald the "everlasting gospel" that is to be taken to the ends of the earth; a call to everyone to come to God, to "fear God", to "give glory to Him", and to worship Him as the Creator (Revelation 14:7). "It announces the arrival of the judgement hour, proclaims salvation through Christ, and the approach of His second advent" (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 166). It warns against all forms of worship that is incongruent with what is believed to be biblical truth, and of their ultimate destruction. The existence of sin and evil are believed to be just a temporary phenomenon that arose as created beings exercised their freewill, a choice to try to live well apart from God and His divine principles and governance. Such a choice has proven to be detrimental and has demonstrated the disastrous effects of disobedience. Thus Satan, sin, and its effects will be eradicated (Ezekiel 28:18,19; Malachi 4:3; Nahum 1:9; Revelation 20:7-9, 14).

The second angel's message (Revelation 14:8) constitutes the final warning echoed in Revelation 18:1-4, to all the inhabitants of the earth to come out of Babylon,⁹ since Babylon and all that are in it will be

⁹ Babylon is believed to represent 'false' systems all worship, i.e., practices and beliefs that are out of line with biblical truth as understood by Seventh-day Adventism.

destroyed. The call to be separate, is understood to mean that one distances the self from the philosophies and way of life of this system (Knight 2008, 115), and embraces 'biblical truth' and the lifestyle that would naturally flow from adherence to biblical principles. This has direct implications for one of the aims of this thesis which is to compare the principles and behaviours promoted in the selected pop songs and how they compare with those of Seventh-day Adventism.

The 'everlasting gospel' that is to be announced to the whole world is essentially the good news that God has provided for all a way of escape from inevitable death (Romans 6:23; 5:12). God offers eternal life to all regardless of their previous behaviour. There is nothing one can do to earn salvation. One does not keep the Ten Commandments to earn salvation. Salvation is a free gift (Romans 6:23; John 3:16). The liberating principle that the early reformer Martin Luther discovered in the Bible, that "the just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38), is a key element in the everlasting gospel that is to be taken to the world.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that in the Bible the everlasting gospel ties up with the everlasting covenant (Titus 1:2; Genesis 12:1-3; 17:7). "All through the Bible, the covenant and the gospel appear together" (Adult Bible Study Guide, 10 October 2021). This is where the Ten Commandments are believed to fit in, and how the follower of Christ reciprocates God's love.

...the essence of the gospel is covenant, and the essence of the covenant is the gospel: God out of His saving grace and love offers you a salvation that you do not deserve and cannot possibly earn; and you, in response, love Him back "with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30, NKJV), a love that is made manifest by obedience to His law: "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3, NKJV) (Adult Bible Study Guide, 9 October 2021).

Even when Jeremiah talks about the new covenant, he does so in the context of the law: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33, NKJV) (Adult Bible Study Guide, 10 October 2021).

Seventh-day Adventism teaches that the type of relationship that grows from reciprocating Christ's sacrificial love by a life of obedience to God's law, is one of family. God wants to be a Father, rather than just a Lawgiver (Adult Bible Study Guide, 14 October 2021).

The Seventh-day Adventist approach to mission is to reach the whole individual - physical, mental, moral and spiritual. Hence, the church's four-pronged approach to mission, which caters for the needs of the whole person (Knight 2008, 23). Coined the "Adventist missiological quadrilateral" (Knight 2008, 23), it comprises the church's publishing ministry, the way the church is structured, its focus on education, and its emphasis on health.

According to Seventh-day Adventists, the aim of the gospel is the restoration of the image of God in humankind and that many who reject the Creator-God do so because they misunderstand what He is about. White (1990, 182) wrote:

It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men [people] are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted... The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love.

Since all human beings have sinned (Romans 3:23) and have come under Satan's power they are being held hostage by him. God's plan to rescue humanity can be summed up as follows:

1. Christ paid the ultimate price to ransom human beings (John 3:16).
2. He offers freedom from sin and guilt, through forgiveness of sins, and help to live above sin - to live the abundant life (1 John 1:9; John 10:10).
3. Thus, individuals who accept God's invitation to dwell in them through the Holy Spirit, are empowered to cooperate with God in a work of restoration - restoring the image of God in them.
4. The Three Angels' Messages – begin with an invitation to all to have a relationship with their Creator (Revelation 14: 7) who has their best interests at heart and a future that is amazing beyond imagination (1 Corinthians 2:9), for those who choose to love Him.

The Church believes that its mission is to take the Three Angels' Messages to the world would be impossible to accomplish without special power from God. Finley says: "What can be more critical for the people of God than the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal power for the finishing of God's work on earth?" (Finley 2010, 5). For this reason, the Church needs to fervently reach out to God through prayer, the study of the Scriptures, and a change in habits and behaviours that are preventing spiritual advancement.

Living on the brink of eternity, the Church is seen as "spiritually drowsy" and "asleep", oblivious to the opportunities to prepare the world for the Coming of Christ. "The secular, materialistic, godless culture

around us lulls us into spiritual stupor” (Finley 2010, 49). Some types of music can be classed as part of this secular, materialistic and godless culture. White said:

Music has occupied the hours which should have been devoted to prayer. Music is the idol which many professed Sabbath-keeping Christians worship...[Satan] works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power. When turned to good account, music is a blessing, but it is often made one of Satan’s most attractive agencies to ensnare souls (White 2002, 295).

The “Revival and Reformation” programme that the Church has embarked on aims to encourage and assist members to withdraw from worldly distractions, and to enhance spiritual development and a desire to become active in pursuing the Church’s mission. Contrary to the idea that certain standards of the Church will soon become obsolete, and even though it may seem to be heading in that direction by the choices of some of its members, deeply embedded in its theology is the belief that towards the end of time interests in the standards of the Church will be revived. Those who will be averse to those standards will choose to leave the Church, while many, from all walks of life who appreciate the validity of such principles will respond to the invitation (Three Angels Messages), will come out of ‘Babylon’ and will embrace and uphold the standards.

Themes

Many of the concepts that are being addressed here are principles that are reflective of Christianity at large. However, some have implications for distinctive pillars of the Seventh-day Adventist faith.

The six themes for this thesis will be handled under two broad platforms. Firstly, the “Concept of Self”; “Hope”, and “The State of the Dead”, have philosophical underpinnings and will be dealt with accordingly. The second set of themes, “Time”; “Substance Use”; and “Love, Relationships and Sexuality”, are directly related to the issue of lifestyle, dealing with physical health, and also have implications for emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Concept of Self

Possibly the greatest quest that humans strive for is happiness. The human tendency to achieve this is often through self-seeking and selfishness (Jennings 2012, 63). Seventh-day Adventists believe that instead of this approach being beneficial to the person it actually tends towards misery, unhealthy

dependence and self-destruction. Seventh-day Adventists believe that a human being's greatest battle is that against the self (White, 2005, 27). They believe that achieving happiness requires the help, love and sufficiency of a power outside of the self – that is, the Creator-God (Landless 2014, 91).

Seventh-day Adventists believe that, as seen in the life of Christ and in nature, God's kingdom is about giving - giving of the self to refresh others, and in this regard the individual becomes refreshed (White 1955, 81). Thus, the ideal that the Seventh-day Adventist is to strive for is to look outside of the self - firstly to love God supremely, and secondly to love others as one would love oneself (Matthew 22:40). True happiness is achieved as a by-product of being other-centred. It is based on a disposition that is fueled by love, to fulfil one's duty towards God (John 14:15) and others (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-37). Such 'reckless abandon', putting God and others first before the self, encapsulates the essence of biblical teaching (Matthew 25:31-46).

White (2005, 48) explains:

God cares for everything and sustains everything that He has created. He who upholds the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, at the same time cares for the wants of the little brown sparrow... [each person] is tenderly watched by the heavenly Father. No tears are shed that God does not notice... if we would but fully believe this, all undue anxieties would be dismissed. Our lives would not be so filled with disappointment as now, for everything, whether great or small, would be left in the hands of God, who is not perplexed by the multiplicity of cares, or overwhelmed by their weight.

Hope

Apart from Christianity, which fosters dependence on Christ, there are other attitudes and ideas that are propagated to offer a sense of hope in a restless, uncertain world. This section will address three issues that are included in the selected pop songs.

One philosophy is that with combined human effort, poverty and want will be eradicated. It is often said that there are enough resources on the earth to cater for the needs of every human being. The question is, can humanity come together to achieve such an ideal in this life? Even though the Church believes in humanitarian work and oversees a vast welfare programme, Seventh-day Adventists believe that the eradication of poverty and distress in this life is not possible. In what is believed to be their inherent sinful, selfish nature (Romans 5:12; Jennings 2012, 63), human beings are unable to achieve such

philanthropic endeavours in their own strength (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 104). It is believed that only the presence of God in people's lives can transform them to be selfless and other-centred (John 15:4,5; Ephesians 2:1,3, 8-10; Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 104-105). Dependence on God will allow them to become conduits of God's provision to others.

Frequently, evolutionists have pointed to the enormous scientific advances... as evidence that man [humanity] seems to be the arbiter of his own destiny... given enough time, he will solve all the world's problems... Humanity has utterly failed to subdue and control the sinful heart... Someone had to come from beyond human history, invade it, and bring a new reality into it (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 106).

As long as Satan exists, pain and suffering will remain. However, the promise remains that one day God will destroy sin and Satan (Revelation 20:10,14). He will create a new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1) where there will be no more deprivation and want. Crying, death, sorrow and suffering will not exist anymore (Revelation 21:4).

Secondly, there is the understanding that in order to be successful one will have to compete for that coveted prize that is reserved for the winner alone. Even though this is easily displayed in the arena of sport and entertainment, it is a principle that undergirds the popular approach to life. You have to be richer, smarter, stronger to survive - the survival of the fittest (Jennings 2012, 29). However, Seventh-day Adventism promotes the principle that every person has a place in God's plan, therefore it is not the case that one's success is dependent on another's failure. Each one can be successful in their own sphere (White 1998, 178, 226; Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary 4 1976, 636). Thus, a spirit of co-operation, rather than competition, is fostered and encouraged in Seventh-day Adventism (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 251, White 1998, 285).

Thirdly, there are various ideas about God's proximity to human beings. To what extent does the belief that God is away from humanity's reach (see Daniel 2:11), reiterated in a popular song, fare with Christianity's stance as promoted by Seventh-day Adventism? It is believed that Christ, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, lives in the believer's heart and is the Christian's constant and closest companion (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 71; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20).

To sum up the theme of Christian hope, White (2005, 40) makes a telling statement on where the hope of the Christian lies:

A life in Christ is a life of restfulness. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there should be an abiding, peaceful trust. Your hope is not in yourself; it is in Christ. Your weakness is united to His strength, your ignorance to His wisdom, your frailty to His enduring might.

The State of the Dead

A common belief is that people who have died are now residing in heaven, are conscious of their loved ones on earth, and are even able to be communicated with, and to offer guidance and companionship. Seventh-day Adventism promotes a different perspective on people's state in death and life hereafter. The fundamental belief is as follows:

The wages of sin is death. But God, who alone is immortal, will grant eternal life to His redeemed. Until that day death is an unconscious state for all people. When Christ who is our life, appears, the resurrected righteous and the living righteous will be glorified and caught up to meet their Lord. The second resurrection, the resurrection of the unrighteous, will take place a thousand years later (Job 19:25-27; Psalms 146:3-4; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10; Daniel 12:2, 13; Isaiah 25:8; John 5:28, 29; 11:11-14; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Timothy 6:15-16; Revelation 20:1-10) (Seventh-day Adventist Manual 2015, 172).

There are two types of death¹⁰ mentioned in the Bible. The first death, the type that human beings presently experience, is often referred to as sleep (John 11:11, 14; Luke 8:52; Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 15:51). It is the cessation of life, a state of lifelessness, rather than the immediate entrance into heaven, or into another existence (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 9:5-6, 10; Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 387, 389).

Thus, the Seventh-day Adventist hope of being reunited with deceased loved ones is at the Second Coming of Christ, at which point the dead in Christ, who have been sleeping "in the dust of the earth" (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29) will be raised to life (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52). The second death will mark the final obliteration of the source of evil – Satan, of death itself, and of all those who have refused God's invitation to enter into a relationship with Him and obey His commandments (John 14:15) which promote life, peace and well-being (Revelation 20:9-10, 14; Revelation 22:14, 15), but have rather chosen to be imbued with Satan's characteristics of

¹⁰ This is referring to death in the sense of being non-existent. It is not inclusive of references to death in a metaphorical sense, e.g., spiritual death, or death to self, etc.

disobedience and lawlessness that bring pain, suffering and devastation to self and others (John 10:10).

As part of the great controversy theme, the second death marks the end of the conflict between good and evil. In this life Satan would have been given the opportunity to prove his claim that created beings can live well without God's rules, and that living without rules means ultimate freedom (White 2002, 280) - a claim that Seventh-day Adventists believe has utterly failed.

Lifestyle Themes

Seventh-day Adventists believe that "our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19; Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 46), and that "mental and spiritual vigour are in great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character" (Seventh-day Adventist Manual 2015, 145). I propose that the three themes dealing with time; substance use; and love, relationships and sexuality are interrelated. They can either be managed so as to be of great benefit to the individual, or mismanaged, to a person's detriment. White (1976, 15) says: "Only one lease of life is granted us; and the inquiry with everyone should be, 'How can I invest my powers so that they may yield the greatest profit? How can I do most for the glory of God and the benefit of my fellow men [people]?" Thus, the question of how best to make use of time, the substances and resources available for my benefit, and the privilege to preserve and prepare the self to make a valuable contribution to society as an individual, and as a future spouse and parent, will be addressed in this section.

The concept of stewardship (being a good manager), of all that one has been entrusted with: "time and opportunities, abilities and possessions, and the blessings of the earth and its resources" plays an important role in the life of a Seventh-day Adventist (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 169). The Church Manual (2015, 136) states further:

Christians are God's stewards, entrusted with His goods and, as His partners, responsible to manage them in harmony with His guidelines and principles.

Element of Time

Seventh-day Adventists are encouraged to live as naturally as possible, aligning their lives with the daily, weekly cycle of rest and activity. Under normal circumstances they are to factor in adequate sleep at night, and engage in activities of work, exercise, recreation during the waking hours. At the end of each week, they enter into a complete 24-hour period of rest, resting from labour, and engaging in activities of rejuvenation: worship, family time, time out in nature. Thus, activities (work, exercise, and recreation) and repose (relaxation, sleep, and a weekly Sabbath rest), flow with ease from one to the other, congruent with the natural rhythms, the body's needs, and in regular cycles for optimal benefit.

Bull and Lockhart (2007, 230) point out how the Adventist concept of time differs from that of mainstream Christianity: "Adventist theology is primarily concerned with time - with the time of the end, the correct timing of the Sabbath... To be an Adventist is to have an acute awareness of location in time...". In mainstream Christianity weekly Sunday services are informed by an annual cycle of seasons: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost, while the Adventist year centres on the weekly Sabbath (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 230). The Seventh-day Adventist year is split into four quarters, each with thirteen Sabbaths. During each quarter a specific Bible theme or book of the Bible is studied by way of the worldwide Bible Study Guides (Sabbath School lessons) and the "themes and topics are unrelated to the seasons of the Christian year" (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 230). Even though many Adventists acknowledge some of the special days traditionally observed by mainstream Christian denominations, generally no special services are held on these days. Some of these events are commemorated through ordinances rather than observed as special days on a yearly calendar. Two such examples are the communion service which celebrates the death of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:26), and baptism, symbolizing the death and resurrection of Christ (Romans 6:1-4) (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 167).

The seventh-day Sabbath, however, is believed to be an obligatory weekly celebration, as it is situated in the moral law – the Ten Commandments and is pointed out as a commemoration of Creation (Exodus 20:8-11, Genesis 2:2-3). "It is this weekly celebration that gives Adventists their particular understanding of time, their peculiar temporal obligations... [Adventists] have been discouraged from keeping up with other forms of popular culture that might offer a rival understanding of the structure and significance of time" (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 230 and 232).

Seventh-day Adventism teaches that time belongs to God and people are accountable to God for the way they use their time. Time is not to be squandered in frivolous activities. Further, habits of indolence and carelessness are believed to have a negative impact on spiritual development and open “the door to a thousand temptations” (White 1990, 149). Instead, time is to be used to develop the character so as to prepare for the life hereafter, and to be of service to others (White 1990, 147-149).

Substance Use

Seventh-day Adventists are encouraged to embrace regular wholesome habits which can help fight against the craving or need for stimulants and narcotics (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 146). The imbibing of these substances is believed to have unnatural, even harmful, effects on the body. Many may consume harmful substances for the favourable effects they may have on their mental states, like “stimulation and release from stress and pain” (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 314). Seventh-day Adventism promotes the use of healthful food and drink for similar purposes, but expecting far greater benefits, without the ill effects, like dependence and addiction. White (1976, 375) says: “The state of the mind has largely to do with the health of the body”. Seventh-day Adventists are encouraged to consume wholesome food and drink. The Church promotes a vegetarian diet, although this is not enforced and is not to be a “test of fellowship” (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 179; White 1976, 404). However, if one chooses to eat meat, unclean meats, for example pork and shellfish (according to Leviticus 11) are forbidden (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 318-319). The Church also promotes abstinence from tobacco, liquor and drugs, including caffeine, contained in tea, coffee, and colas (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 314).

Love, Relationships, Sexuality

Seventh-day Adventists believe that physical intimacy is sacred and only meant to be engaged in within the context of marriage between a man and a woman. “Scripture regards any sexual relations before and outside of marriage as sin” (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 336). Society is much more liberal and accepting of sexual relations between consenting adults, which in the biblical context would be viewed as fornication and adultery:

An entire industry has developed to capitalize upon the perversion of the imagination. The sensual films and books [and music] it produces have no place in the Christian life. They not only encourage illicit relationships, they also reduce men and women to mere sexual objects,

thus distorting the true meaning of sexuality and obscuring the image of God. Christians are called upon to think pure thoughts and live pure lives because they are preparing to live in a pure society throughout all eternity (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 336-337).

Seventh-day Adventist Views of Music

Secular music deals with settings other than that of the worship service or devotional activity, and can have a place in the Christian's life (A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music 2004, 2):

It speaks to the common issues of life and basic human emotions. It comes out of our very being, expressing the human spirit's reaction to life, love, and the world in which the Lord has placed us... Although it does not directly praise and adore God, nevertheless it could have a legitimate place in the life of the Christian.

As seen in many biblical examples, and in the human experience in general, music forms an integral part of our very being and can speak to our experiences and allow us to express ourselves in ways that no other medium can (A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music 2004, 1). However, as sin has infiltrated all aspects of our lives, it has infected the realm of music as well. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Satan can use music to gain access to the mind (White 2008, 18), and to debase and degrade humanity, stirring up "lust, passion, despair, anger, hatred" (A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music 2004, 1). The book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (2005, 317) says that "any activity that weakens our relationship with our Lord and causes us to lose sight of eternal interests helps bind Satan's chains about our souls".

According to White (2002, 295), Satan uses diversion to gain power over people as the following quote explains:

Anything will suit [Satan's] purpose that will divert the mind from God and engage the time which should be devoted to His service. He works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power... Music is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls.

Since "music is not morally and spiritually neutral" (A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music 2004, 1), discretion and caution needs to be exercised when selecting or engaging with music. "White continually

counsels us to raise our sights in music. She tells us, ‘Music, when not abused, is a great blessing; but when it is put to a wrong use, it is a terrible curse’” (A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music 2004, 1). “Music is a gift of God to inspire pure, noble and elevated thoughts. Good music, then enhances the finest qualities of character (Seventh-day Adventists Believe 2005, 317). However, “debased music breaks down morality and draws us away from our relationship with God” (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 150).

A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music (2004, 2-3) sets out some of the principles to guide members in their choice of music.

1. All music the Christian listens to, performs or composes whether sacred or secular will glorify God: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). This is the overriding biblical principle. Anything that cannot meet this high standard will weaken our experience with the Lord.
2. All music the Christian listens to... should be the noblest and the best: “...whatever is true...pure...right...admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things” (Philippians 4:8). As followers of Jesus Christ who hope and expect to join the heavenly choirs, we view life on this earth as a preparation for, and foretaste of, the life to come.
3. [Music] is characterized by quality, balance, appropriateness, and authenticity. Music fosters our spiritual, psychological, and social sensitivity, and our intellectual growth.
4. It appeals to both the intellect and the emotions and impacts the body in a positive way. It is holistic.
5. Vocal music employs lyrics that positively stimulate intellectual abilities as well as our emotions and our will power. Good lyrics are creative, rich in content and of good composition. They focus on the positive and reflect moral values. They educate and uplift; and they correspond with sound biblical theology.
6. Musical and lyrical elements should work together harmoniously to influence thinking and behaviour in harmony with biblical values.

Seventh-day Adventists believe and preach that Christ is soon to return. As part of their mission of proclaiming the Three Angels’ Messages they challenge all people to choose what is good over the bad, to “say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...” (Titus 2:12-13):

We believe that the gospel impacts all areas of life. We therefore hold that, given the vast potential of music for good or ill, we cannot be indifferent to it (A Seventh-day Philosophy of Music 2004, 2).

Conclusion

The concept of self-development and intentional living is an important aspect of Seventh-day Adventism. The holistic approach to lifestyle and spirituality is believed to be a reflection, or a foretaste (though a faint one), of an anticipated magnificent life hereafter (1 Corinthians 2:9).

I have shown that Seventh-day Adventists believe that the unwelcome and unfortunate entrance of sin into a perfect world, has been an interruption to God's original plan for His creation – which entailed a life of unadulterated happiness. God's character of love necessitated the creation of beings who had freewill. This meant that they could choose not to love their Creator, or to trust His motives or respect His governance.

Satan, who initially used his freewill to turn against God, introduced sin and disobedience into a perfect universe. The great controversy theme highlights the conflict between good and evil and forms the bedrock upon which the biblical narrative sits (Ephesians 6:12). Thus, the concepts of right and wrong, truth and error, and of the existence of absolute truth, is foundational to the Seventh-day Adventist worldview. The Bible, to which all other voices are to be subject, when understood using the Historical-Biblical approach, is believed to support this perspective.

God instituted a rescue plan for fallen humanity. The right of free-will means that salvation is not forced upon all but offered as a free gift to any who will accept it (John 3:16; Romans 6:23). The Seventh-day Adventist Church believes it has been tasked with the mission to herald this rescue plan – the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6), and to prepare the world for the Second Coming of Christ (Adult Bible Study Guide, 21 Sept 2021), after which time there will be no further chance to repent and be saved. The Three Angels' Messages (Revelation 14:6-12) is an invitation and a warning to the world. It offers everyone a chance to enter into God's plan for reconciliation with their Creator, a process of restoration, and eternal life hereafter. It also warns of the consequences of refusing to do so – an end to the privilege to exist. Since all life is in God's hands (Job 12:10), and since evil brings pain and suffering, God will, at some point in the future, totally eradicate sin and evil, and restore peace, harmony and order in His universe.

In order to ignite the Church with the drive it needs to fulfil its mission, the Church believes that revival and reformation are necessary, as the Church is believed to be in a state of spiritual lethargy (Revelation 3). Consideration will be given as to the potential role of a sample of pop music in the battle

between good and evil, the great controversy, and perhaps whether in some way it can contribute to a state of spiritual lethargy or apathy.

Seventh-day Adventists look forward to the time when evil will come to an end, and life as God originally intended, will be restored.

White frames it as follows (2002, 383):

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.

Seventh-day Adventists believe that until that day, they should live prudently, with forethought and restraint, embracing biblical principles in all aspects of life, including the secular music they choose to engage with. It is held that such an endeavour would not be easy by their own efforts, but with strength and help from God it is possible (Philippians 4:13).

Chapter 3

Pop Music as a Vehicle of Mainstream Culture

“I listen to music when I’m walking to school, working, trying to get to sleep, in the bath... pretty much most of my day is taken up with music. I really notice when it’s not there – I hate silence” (Sophie) (Herbert 2011, 7).

Music features prominently in society and in many people’s lives. Currently, popular music, in keeping with its name, is in widespread use. Shuker (2016, 1-2) quoted many contemporary examples of the presence and “pervasiveness” of popular music at the time of completing his book. In a cultural sense popular music is important, and for many, plays an integral role in their social identities. In an economic sense it attracts huge revenue, making it “a leading cultural industry” (Shuker 2016, 2).

It is interesting to note that peoples’ impressions about music guide the way they engage with it. Middleton (2000, 1) intimates that almost everyone has opinions on pop music and its meanings and effects. This study is driven by an endeavour to develop a more informed approach and an understanding of pop music - a medium that has consistently accompanied me through the various stages of life. However, my engagement with it and attitude to it has been quite conflicted. As a youngster I was drawn to the attractive sounds of the music; later, the musicality of the artists and musicians. With the passage of time, and a growing cognizance that lyrics expressed sentiments, I wanted to know what these sentiments were. At times I had great difficulty disengaging from the beautiful sounds of the music when the lyrics seemed to clash with religious ideas I held as important. In the process, as echoed in Middleton (cited above), I developed opinions about the meanings and effects of pop music.

In this chapter I endeavour to consider a few aspects that have an important bearing on this study. To lay the groundwork I address concepts like ‘everyday listening’ and ‘ubiquitous popular music’. I attempt to understand what is meant by the term ‘popular music’ and how that relates to ‘pop music’. I touch on the role of technology which is a key driver of popular music as we experience it today. I briefly consider the influx of music from America. I then address issues pertaining to how people listen to music and reflect on the factors that influence how they derive meanings from pop songs. I consider the focus on youth, and their engagement with popular music, in research. I then briefly explore the power of music to bring about change, both on a personal level, and in society, and what the implications might be for Seventh-day Adventism as a culture.

Everyday Music-Listening

Everyday music listening is a common feature in many people's lives. Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2002, 120) say that "the everyday is a concept that is intended to draw our attention to the most grounded, concrete practices of human beings". Having music accompany such routine activities has become commonplace and widespread. In fact, for many, ubiquitous listening happens so unobtrusively that often the person is not consciously engaging with the music, even though it is present (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137-138). Indeed, often they have not even chosen the music they are exposed to (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 131). Herbert (2011, 17) states that even though such music "may be barely perceived", it does play a role in mediating, focussing, colouring and integrating elements of our experience. For example:

Music is a device or resource to which people turn in order to regulate themselves as aesthetic agents, as feeling, thinking and acting beings in their day-to-day lives (DeNora 1999, 45).

Respondents use music as a resource for the conduct of emotional 'work', and for heightening or changing energy levels. They also turn to music as a device for ongoing identity work and for spinning a biographical thread of self-remembrance. Music provides respondents with a scaffolding for self-constitution (DeNora 1999, Abstract).

According to Sloboda, Lamont and Greasely (quoted in Herbert 2011, 13), music seems to occupy "six 'functional niches' in contemporary Western society: travel, physical work, brain work, body work, emotional work, attendance at live events". We see this when we hear music blaring from a local taxi, people doing their chores, working out at the gym or studying while having music in the background. To borrow the sentiment from Herbert, it is as though people are choreographing their surroundings with music (2011, 89).

Sloboda, Lamont and Greasely observe that there are "four overarching functions of 'self-chosen music use': distraction, energizing, entrainment, and meaning enhancement" (quoted in Herbert 2011, 13). Herbert (2011, 12-13) offers several reasons for people listening to music: they find it enjoyable, it helps pass the time, it helps them relax, they listen out of habit, to create the right atmosphere, or to create or accentuate an emotion. To some, music keeps the mind "from spinning off in various directions" (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 137). This is said to be the role of Muzak (an initial form of background music) – to keep workers' minds from wandering, by helping them to focus, and to sop up "non-productive thoughts" (Gifford quoted in Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137).

To some, background music is an absolute necessity.

My babysitter Anett and many of my students leave the radio or MTV on in different rooms, so that they are never without music. They say it fills the house, makes the emptiness less frightening... These have always been background music's functions (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137).

Ubiquitous Popular Music

I recall an experience I had a few years ago:

It was December 2018 and coming up for special days. On my son's birthday we went out for a little treat. As we walked out of the place the enigmatic tones of Ed Sheeran's hit song, *Shape of You* caught my attention as it emanated from the popular local music radio station which was playing in the background. Interestingly enough, one evening, less than two weeks later, as we exited the airport in Rome, the catchy sounds of this song boomed across the vicinity, from some venue nearby. We were far away from home, yet not really - Sheeran reminded me that we were part of a global family, being greeted once again by a familiar hit song that was very likely circling the globe.

Robert Burnett (quoted in Hull 2004, 19) said that "popular music is certainly the most global aspect of our 'global village'". Scholars, for example Shuker (2016, 2), Kassabian (2013, xii), Clarke et al. (2010, 1) and The American Academy of Pediatrics (2009, 1488) agree that popular music is almost everywhere. Kassabian (2013, 10-11) used the term *ubiquitous* (having borrowed the term from ubiquitous computing), "to describe the omnipresence of music in contemporary everyday life". These writers state the many places where popular music can be heard - shopping malls and shops; public transport- buses, cars, trains, planes; on the streets, in parks, workplaces, homes, phones, restaurants, and clubs. Kassabian (2013, xii) adds that we encounter popular music "some through our own choices, some without our sanction or control". The American Academy of Pediatrics (2009, 1488) highlights a common fact - that pop music is often experienced as background music and that it is also "easily available through the radio, various recordings, the Internet, and new technologies".

DeNora (2014, xxii) states that theory becomes clearer when illustrated with concrete examples. With this in mind I would like to quote two of my own experiences as an example of someone who does not usually invite pop music into her daily experience yet encounters it anyway.

I recently took my car in for a service. As I waited at the service centre, the music from the popular local radio station filled the venue and seemed to keep everyone in high spirits. As I exited the building and

climbed into the courtesy vehicle, the sonic transition was seamless. The same radio station was playing in that car, and I hadn't missed a beat of the song as I stepped out of one setting into the other. A similar situation occurs whenever we visit one of our local stores. As I get out of the family vehicle which is often tuned in to the local radio station, and into the covered parking lot which leads into the store, once again - from car to parking garage and into the store, the music, uninterrupted, accompanies me from one setting to the next. Kassabian's statement is fitting as she describes this ever-present music "following us from room to room, building to building, and activity to activity" (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 138).

Kassabian explains:

We are uncomfortable being unhooked from the background sound of ubiquitous subjectivity, so we turn radios on in empty rooms and put speakers under our pillows. We hang up when the telephone connection is not kept open by sound. We prefer to be connected, need to listen to our connections, cannot breathe without them (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 140).

Defining Popular Music

Since we are dealing with the phenomenon of pop/popular music it would be fitting at this point to attempt to describe what it is that we are dealing with. Eight features help us develop a clearer perspective on popular music. Rather than these appearing to be hard and fast rules to define popular music, they are rather broad underlying characteristics that may be generally agreed upon. These are drawn from Peter Manuel (1988, 1-22).

1. Popular music is found in industrialized societies.
2. It is mainly city music, regarding origin and audiences.
3. It is reproduced through mass media - broadcasting, recording, television.
4. It is sold as a commodity in the mass market and is sold for profit.
5. The music is entertainment.
6. It is performed by professional musicians who are not very highly trained, and do not tend to think about their work in an intellectual way.
7. It involves a personality cult, i.e., a star system that is generated by the media.
8. It is associated with a focus on the latest releases (products), new products constantly being released.

Like Christenson et al. (2012), this study uses songs that have appeared on the billboard charts,¹¹ which feature the most popular songs overall. The playlist for this study can be referred to as pop music, rather than the more generic classification 'popular' music. I borrow Till's (2010, 78) view on the distinction between the two, that whereas 'popular' music extends to a much wider grouping of music like folk music, historical traditions and less commercial forms, 'pop' music relates to "mainstream chart music traditions... and commercially driven successful current music". Wall (2013, ix) offers an alternative meaning where pop is "a contraction of the term popular music". This thesis focuses on the type of widespread music that people are exposed to, even if they are not necessarily intentional about accessing it.

American Influence

When the playlist was being drawn up for this study, no consideration was given to the country from which these songs emanated – songs that were very popular, often heard on the radio, and had themes that were of interest. However, when I did check, I found that 23 of the 24 selected songs were by American artists. The main motivation for focussing on these songs is that they are prevalent in my local vicinity, or at least the type of places that I frequent. Daily pop songs primarily from the USA are being played in stores and shopping malls, heard from passing vehicles, and the popular hit music station, which is often the source of the music played in these public places.

Negus (1996, 165) states that from early in the twentieth century there was widespread concern throughout the world about the dominance of cultural products from the USA. Such concerns were also verified by "empirical statistical evidence which indicated a predominantly one-way movement of entertainment products from the USA to the rest of the world" (165). Lashua et al. (2014, 7) describe this cultural trend as an "apparently growing gravitation towards American musical styles" which Chambers (quoted in Lashua et al. (2014, 7)) refers to as "Americanicity". I can certainly vouch for the fact that such a trend exists in the vicinity where I live, as I am usually exposed to such cultural trends in various private and public spaces. The findings of Hull seem to indicate that this is not the case in all countries across the globe. He says, "the United States is not necessarily engaged in culturally dominating the world's music industry" (Hull 2004, 20). He finds that in some countries the local popular music is predominant.

¹¹ This study will make use of the Billboard charts that reflect the most popular songs in the United States (see Bradlow and Fader 2001, 2). Such trends in the United States are mirrored by the music broadcast in this local vicinity.

Role of Technology

Ubiquitous music is made possible by technology which plays a major role in the distribution of such music. Manuel (1988, 12) says that theoretically people can listen to any music they choose. However, it is quite evident that Western pop music is by far the most heard. The reason he offers for this situation is that peoples' taste is "manipulated to a large degree by music industry promotion" and "mechanisms of distribution":

While promotion and marketing techniques often fail, it is difficult to question Adorno...that the "mechanisms of distribution carry at least as much weight as that which they distribute" ...These mechanisms have been used to create homogeneous mass audiences.

The advent of new technology in the 1920s revolutionized the music industry (Brackett 2005, 1). By 1999 recorded music was found to be "the world's universal form of communication... and the United States recording industry accounts for fully one-third of that world market" (Gomery "Radio Broadcasting" quoted by Myer and Kleck 2007, 138).

Prior to recorded music, audiences had to be "in the presence of the performing musicians" in order to experience the music (Negus 1996, 7; see also Clarke et al. 2010, 65). Recording technology has made music accessible to anyone with the appropriate device, and in virtually any space one chooses. In addition, recording and playback technologies have developed incrementally over the years making recorded music increasingly and more easily accessible (Kassabian 2013, xii).

Various music streaming solutions are offering increasingly more personalized approaches for music acquisition (Anderson 2015, 814). In fact, recently (18 October 2021) Apple showcased its latest technology that ensures you have music for every occasion and mood by just saying the word – speaking to your device through "Siri".¹² There are wireless ear-pods for hassle-free continuous connectivity to your music. These are waterproof, so you can even be out in the rain with them or have a 'sweaty' workout at the gym. Digital streaming services ensure instant access to millions of songs; you are not confined to your own limited private collection anymore.

¹² Siri is an app for doing tasks hands-free. It performs tasks by using voice. "Apple Music and Siri work together... Which means you can ask Siri to find a new song you'll like. Put on a favorite album. Or even answer questions about bands you love. Siri can also suggest your favorite playlist when you arrive at the gym or start your drive home" (<https://www.apple.com/siri>).

One feature of such technologically driven music is the aspect of intimacy that it introduces to the listening experience. Schwarz (quoted in Kassabian 2013, xix, xx) describes Peter Gabriel's rendition of his song "Intruder" thus:

Peter Gabriel's voice as he sings the verse is very close to the microphone, he sings purely, quietly, as if right into the ear of the listener. For me, it sounds as if Gabriel were putting his arm around the male listener's shoulders and sharing with him the narrator's fantasy of intruding into the space of a woman... The fantasy structure, of Gabriel whispering into the listener's ear... depends on a certain set of acoustic qualities... on the listener's field of audition being filled by the sound.

The idea of the singer's ability to speak in such a personal manner to the listener is noteworthy and raises the question of agency, and to what extent the listener can be influenced to act on the suggestions he/she hears. What are the factors that make one susceptible or not to such influences? The section 'Listening' aims to shed some light on these questions.

Listening

In this section I attempt to understand how people listen to music, and to consider the potential reasons people seem either to be unaware, or unconcerned, about lyrical content. Are there possible factors that steer the listening experience away from the verbal messages?

When I initially thought of the concept of listening, my idea about passive and active listening was based on how people related to the lyrics. Thus, a passive listener was taken by the music and paid no attention to the lyrics, whereas the active listener focused on the lyrics and the message that was being conveyed. In the context of the issues being addressed in this study, is such a view tenable?

I have learned that music affords a wide listening experience as there are various elements that can come to the fore as the mind focuses on one aspect or another in the music.

So, what do people hear when they listen to music? In a survey where British people were asked what they hear when listening to music, among the many answers, some had to do with musical structure - "rhythms, melodic contours and textures" – and to a large extent focused on what these sounds meant to them "whether this was in terms of an extra-musical association, an affective quality, a physical space, or the source of the sound" (Clarke et al. 2010, 66). This suggests that people tend to listen beyond the actual sounds of the music to the meanings it has for them (Clarke et al. 2010, 66).

Whether listeners pay attention to the acoustic characteristics of the music or to its meanings depends on how they listen, and what they are listening *for* – defined not just by their preoccupations, but by cultural conventions, received knowledge about how to listen in particular circumstances, and the material characteristics of the listening situation (Clarke 2010, 76).

Clarke et al. (2010, 65) highlight two ends of the potential listening experience. It could be either “‘active’ or ‘focused’ listening”, or “‘passive’ or ‘background’ hearing”. He states that these are more a “theoretical simplification”, as the “auditory experience” does not remain fixed on one type of listening, but rather “shifts between varieties of listening” (Clarke et al. 2010, 65).

Ubiquitous Listening

Music has the ability to shift in and out of the listener’s focus or awareness, thus being background and foreground music (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 134). Kassabian suggests that due to the omnipresence of music in industrialized settings, people in such environments have developed “a mode of listening dissociated from specific generic characteristics of the music” and tend to “listen ‘alongside’ or simultaneously with other activities” (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137). She continues: “This listening is a new and noteworthy phenomenon, one that has the potential to demand a radical rethinking of our various fields” (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137). She calls it “ubiquitous listening” (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137). Sloboda and O Neill (quoted in Herbert 2011, 8) explain that research into the way listening is becoming distributed “across a complex situation of which music is only a part” is mounting.

Stockfelt (quoted in Kassabian 2013, xx-xxi), calls attention to the idea that there are different ways to listen to music.

For it to be possible to analyze this music adequately as it appears in everyday listening situations, a fragmented listening must guide us in determining both which parameters in the sounding music merit closer consideration in a more concentrated and reflexive study and how these parameters must be considered. Hence, we must develop our competence reflexively to control the use of, and the shifts between, different modes of listening to different types of sounding events... we must develop our own reflexive consciousness and competence as active “idle listeners”.

When it comes to ubiquitous listening Kassabian has questions about Stockfelt’s position as she believes it is virtually impossible to study something that one is not conscious of or is not paying attention to: “How can one understand how people engage music inattentively through scholarly

attention? And while reception can presumably be inattentive but conscious, can it be attentive but unconscious?" (2013, xxi).

As stated below, music can even be composed intentionally to create constant shifts of attention between the foreground and background.

Brian Eno, from whose mind all contemporary ambient music has sprung... tried to create music that could be actively or passively listened to. Something that could shift imperceptibly between a background texture to something triggering a sudden zoom into the music..." (Hesmondhalgh 2002, 134).

Due to how certain characteristics of music can impact the listening experience in particular ways, it is quite plausible that composers can skillfully manipulate musical sound to create a desired effect. I would like to point to the study by Juslin et al. (2015) which studied emotional reactions to music. These researchers used, and where necessary, adjusted certain pieces of music, in order to tap into and bring to the fore various anticipated responses to music, even bodily and emotional reactions that occurred outside of conscious awareness, or where selected pieces could trigger anticipated emotional responses. For example, one of the aspects they tested was brain stem reflex, which they describe as a "hard-wired attention response to simple acoustic features such as extreme or increasing loudness or speed", like "quick, automatic, unlearned" responses to sudden loud or fast sounds (Juslin et al. 2015, 8, 13). In the case of brain stem reflex the reaction to the music takes place very early in the auditory process – "before one has even recognized the object of attention" (Juslin et al. 2015,13). This study demonstrated that music has physical, emotional effects on individuals, even beyond people's understanding of what the music is doing to them. This illustrates that composers and producers can create music to influence people as they desire.

Emotional Listening

I have discovered, through writers like Kassabian and Eurich, that there are kinds of listening that have a physicality to them, and of 'listening' that is based on touch and feeling, rather than the experience being just auditory. This form of listening is a reaction to the sound of the music itself, rather than the lyrics. Kassabian (2013, xiv-xv) relates her experience at a memorial service that she attended. She says the music was not particularly loud or "especially bass-y": "It was emphatically not... a rock concert or a club night... Nonetheless, at several points the music flowed through the furniture into my thighs, back and arms".

Soon after, she heard about “a new genre called dubstep” and its characteristic “sub-bass”. This made her realize that there are many settings in which ubiquitous music is heard, like “in cars, in the homes of audiophiles... [where they] have similar body-vibrating aural experiences at will”, and that it is not just experienced through the ears... “There’s a physicality to the music, you know it’s a physical listening experience” (Kassabian 2013, xv).

Eurich refers to the type of extreme listening experience rock ‘n’ roll affords, and labels it emotional listening.

Amplifying creates a postponement of the spectrum of overtones towards odd partial tones. The reception of such frequencies directly leads into the central nervous system and creates physical reflexes. The higher the proportion of odd frequencies, the more exciting its effects. G. Harrer calls such kinds of listening emotional listening in contrast to cognitive listening, which leads the frequencies perceived to the cognitive parts of the brain, especially to the speech centre. Basically, music appeals to both functions of listening. In Rock 'n' Roll the proportion of noise and odd frequencies is so high that it works alarmingly on the central nervous system. If there is a parallel use of narcotics or alcohol this mostly means a complete switch-off of the cognitive parts of mind (Eurich 2003, 59).

I find the distinction that is drawn between emotional listening and cognitive listening to be significant. Emotional listening comes across as a more somatic response to the music, whereas cognitive listening engages the mind. Hence, emotional listening will impact emotions and feelings, and would influence the listener within that sphere, whereas cognitive listening will engage the mind and invite a more critical, perhaps evaluative stance. This is not to say that cognitive listening is completely devoid of all emotion, but rather that the individual can exercise control on how the music affects them.

When dealing with emotional listening, Juslin et al. (2015, 5) state that various studies “suggest that music evokes a wide range of emotional states, including calm, happiness, nostalgia, interest, pleasure, sadness, arousal, love and pride...” It is commonly observable that such emotions can also translate into physical reactions to the music. The aspect of the music that elicits a physical response, of moving to the music, is the rhythm. Madison (2006, 201) says that music has a particular quality that makes people want to “tap their feet, rock their head[s] and get up and dance”. In testing this hypothesis, he found that the drive to want to “move some part of the body in relation to some aspect of the sound pattern” was considerably consistent amongst the 18 listeners who were tasked to rate 64 music examples (Madison 2006, 201). It is common knowledge that the body responds to music, even in ways “outside our conscious awareness” (Juslin et al. 2015, 11).

In relation to this Kassabian suggests that “at the lower levels of attention... [pieces of music] are operating at a modality” she refers to as “affect” (2013, xiii):

Affect is the circuit of bodily responses to stimuli that take place before conscious apprehension. Once apprehended, the responses pass into thoughts and feelings, though they always leave behind a residue.

I was once at a concert with my family which I had expressed reluctance to attend. As I sat there, I suddenly caught my daughter’s eye as she gleefully smiled at me. She had caught me in the act. I was tapping my foot to a song she knew I would not have wanted to engage with. Yes, the beat had grabbed me, at a level before cognizance. It was a funny yet telling moment. In the context of Juslin et al, I would, no doubt, have been displaying an instinctive inclination towards emotional listening, rather than cognitive listening.

Are bodily responses to music, like tapping the feet or nodding the head, a key that allows the music entry into one’s system, even if not a conscious invitation? A kind of signal of acceptance that ushers in the music with all its potential effects, a go ahead for the music to enter, to come in and do its work of entrainment?¹³ On the other hand can efforts to intentionally resist and withhold bodily responses that are within our control (which would be a conscious, deliberate act) actually prevent the music from taking control of the system, even though it is in our space? Such questions have an important bearing on firstly, the widespread encounters people have with music, and the fact that some may not want to engage with such music, and secondly, the distinction between emotional (passive) listening and cognitive (active) listening. I think this is of paramount significance – the issue of control and agency. Who/what is in control when the person and music find themselves in the same space? Is it the music with all its potential effects (positive or negative) or is it the individual making a conscious decision to set the boundaries and decide whether the music is suitable to engage with or not? Indeed, as Ballantine (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 17) points out: “music is not neutral but ... Sheerly by virtue of its presence... always adds, or changes, meaning: it might relate to the lyrics through a process of selective emphasis... or point beyond - transcend the words... or insist on something else altogether, even to the point of contradicting the words”. Thus, showing that the music itself comes with its own potential to influence.

¹³ Entrainment in this case can be described as a process where the bodily rhythms become aligned to that of the music.

One of the issues that has sparked off this study is my observation of how common and widespread ubiquitous listening is, with lyrical content that often grabs my attention, yet seems to go unnoticed by others. Is this a matter of people not paying attention? Kassabian (2013, xviii) quotes Herbert Simon who says that attention is becoming an “increasingly scarce” commodity. Hayles (quoted in Kassabian (2013, xix) states: “Deep, focused, long attention traditionally associated with the humanities is being replaced with a fragmented and multiple form of attention”.

Adorno held that music should challenge the listener to think critically about the world, thus emphasizing that music should engage the mind. However, Adorno believed that the popular music that was being produced for entertainment purposes created passive listeners, it was “responsible for contributing to social passivity, as audiences regressed to a ‘child-like’ state and were easily manipulated” (Negus 1996, 10). Adorno proposed that music can actually be used to manipulate and control people. Such a suggestion speaks directly to concerns related to this study. Could Seventh-day Adventists’ acceptance of music that undermines their belief system actually contribute to watering down their drive for spirituality, a spirituality that sits on a different, even conflictual, paradigm from the potential influences generated through the lyrics in those pop songs?

Passive and Active Listeners

Riesman interviewed a number of teenagers in Chicago and described them as belonging to two groups of listeners – passive (in the majority) and active (in the minority) (Negus 1996, 12). He found that the majority were not too concerned about how the music was produced – they were the ones drawn to the large radio stations and the popular bands. “Their listening habits were fairly indiscriminate”, and their conversations about the music and musicians tended to be on a superficial level, like engaging in gossip. The minority group were more critical and questioning. They engaged in more “detailed technical discussions about the compositions and performers” (Negus 1996, 12). Riesman described these groups as “an *active*, hip and rebellious minority and a *passive*, indiscriminating and conformist majority” (Negus 1996, 12-13). Riesman thus reiterates Adorno’s view that music can be used to manipulate and control people who are not perceptive, and that such a group of undiscerning listeners is in the majority.

The emotional response to music has to do with how the music makes one feel. Plato and Aristotle understood music to be a powerful force that could cause “psychological and social unrest and... calm, soothe, divert, or give pleasure” (Clarke et al. 2010, 169). In emotional listening, it seems the music

plays a significant role in determining a listener's response. When feelings are out of control, people can act on impulse. Being controlled by impulse can lead to dangerous behaviour. Adorno and Riesman's passive listeners who are not particularly discerning, run the risk of being negatively affected by the impact of the music. In contrast, in cognitive listening, the listener exercises stronger control over the listening experience, deciding how the music is going to impact them.

Middleton (2000, 11) comments on a characteristic of music to drive listeners towards the experiential more than the cognitive mode:

If music must be granted its own irreducible (though never pure) discursive moment, the correspondences, equivalences, and parallels that its sound-patterns suggest lie often not in the sphere of language but in that of gesture, somatic process, and tactile sensation.

It seems that with emotional listening, the music's appeal to bodily responses can supersede cognitive engagement and, in some circumstances, cognition may even become dormant during that time. Yet, as stated in Juslin et al. (2015, 11) "stimuli that occur outside our conscious awareness", as in music, "can still influence our behaviour".

Meaning in Pop Songs

Martin (in Marshall and Laing 2014, 117) says that cultural objects do not inherently have meaning in themselves, instead they derive their meanings "through the dense network of social relationships" from which they are situated.

Clarke et al. (2010, 75) argue "that music does not have to have a specific meaning but has the potential for particular meanings to emerge given particular circumstances". According to Middleton (2000, 9) there is a widespread realization that one cannot detach musical meaning from the "discursive, social and institutional frameworks which surround, mediate and... produce it".

Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2002, 7) speak of the multi-textual nature of popular music. Middleton (2000, 8) poses a question that offers us further insight into what would be referred to as the text in the context of music:

What exactly is the text here? Aren't the channels of dissemination, the institutions and social settings, the collective behavioural practices of musicians and fans, the associated visual styles, the surrounding media discourses, aren't these all parts of a *multiple text*?

Added to this is the tendency to perceive the cultural object as a mere reflection of society. Negus (1996, 193) says we should be “sceptical of any attempts to interpret any meaning as a ‘reflection’ of a society or an ‘expression of an artist’”. He uses the song *Imagine* (by John Lennon) as an example of a song whose meaning should not be pinned down to the original intent of the composer and performer as it has “moved through time and space away from its moments of origins” (Negus 1996, 193). The phenomenon of songs enduring through time and space, and to being meaningful in different ways to a variety of people, is a reason they should not be seen as merely a reflection of society or the artists’ intent. Songs tend to derive and lend meaning to/in various settings. Denselow described *Imagine* as “a vision of peaceful global Communism”, while Wiener saw it as expressing “the New Left position...” (Negus 1996, 193); thus, being used to lend support to differing ideologies as it moved from one setting to another.

Popular song is not simply a ‘mirror’ of any particular time, place, space or social moment. Rather, it is itself a constitutive part of these, and it plays an active role in helping people to create, imagine or resist their world (Ballantine quoted in Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 17).

Since the original intent in the composition or performance of a song does not seem to remain fixed as it moves from one setting to another, but rather is coloured by and appears to regenerate meaning in keeping with each unique setting (Negus 1996, 193), this study will not attempt to delve into the original meanings of the songs, or the intent for their composition.

That being said, some critics state that frequently there exists a preferred reading in the text (the lyrical content), “a dominant message set within the cultural code of established conventions and practices of the producers/transmitters of the text” (Shuker 2016, 82). Shuker goes on to say that the dominant message is not necessarily perceived by all listeners. People coming from a different worldview can experience the text in a different light (Shuker 2016, 82).

Negus draws attention to the concept of mediation when explaining that songs do not necessarily carry meanings that are experienced the same way by all listeners. “Popular music cannot be known in any neutral, immediate or naively experiential way” (Negus 1996, 3). He explains:

Human experiences are grounded in cultural activities, which are understood and given meaning through particular languages and symbol systems. These are, in turn, constituted within particular social circumstances and subject to different types of political regulation... as soon as we try to communicate and share this experience we are caught up in language and

culture – the range of concepts, communicative actions and social practices that we must formulate, convey and exchange meanings with other people (Negus 1996, 3).

Music cannot be kept at arm's length. It gets into our systems and deeply melds with who we are and become, as we engage with it. Wall (2013, 185) thinks it is “artificial” to look for “messages in popular music since, when considering meaning in music culture, a whole array of factors come into play”. It has to do with “how the music makes us feel, how we categorize it, how we associate places or moments with particular songs or style, how we value it” (Wall 2013, 185). According to Middleton (2000, 166), all forms of popular culture are popular because they can be polysemic.¹⁴ Having the potential to be understood in several ways, they can appeal to a diverse range of people.

Although pop music is a “sociological artefact” (quoted in Middleton 2000, 6) where a number of factors come together to create its meaning, this study focuses primarily on what Middleton (2000, 7) would refer to as “a rather simplistic content analysis of lyrics”. Despite Middleton’s seemingly negative attitude to lyrical analysis, numerous scholars still use this as a primary tool to assess pop music. Some examples are Martino et al. (2006); Christenson et al. (2012) and Primack et al. (2012).

One question I ponder in this study is whether the messages in the lyrics of pop songs would have special significance to the Seventh-day Adventist mindset. This mindset is very much word-based, as it is concerned with the ‘correct’ interpretation of scripture, and equally that the lyrics in songs sung in worship correctly reflect the Church’s teachings. Bull and Lockhart (2007, 227) draw a parallel between ‘the art of rhetoric’ in popular music and that in Seventh-day Adventism, stating: “so much of the way Adventists relate to one another and to the outside world is through verbal communication”. Inevitably then, the “primacy of the word” is very evident in Seventh-day Adventist worship (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 222). Thus, since ‘the word’, both spoken and written, plays a major role in Seventh-day Adventism, it is understandable when Seventh-day Adventists tend to concern themselves with what verbal messages are being conveyed through the lyrics of pop songs.

Whereas this study may steer away from a range of aspects that contribute to what would be considered ‘the music itself’ – and merely focuses on the message conveyed via the lyrics, even that does not necessarily mean that the message would be straightforward and not lend itself to ambiguity. This study can be viewed as an interesting experiment, which taps into the experiences and opinions of what is expected to be a fairly homogeneous group of interviewees and officials. As leaders from a

¹⁴ Can have several possible meanings.

particular worldview (Seventh-day Adventism), which in many instances is quite different from the mainstream culture, they are called upon to explain what meanings they perceive in selected pop song lyrics, and how they would relate to such. To string together a few phrases borrowed from Middleton (2000, 236) - Can their particular worldview, their “socially constructed codes”, in a way “set the limits of meaning” and “orient its received meaning in particular ways”?

But then again, can the following statement made by Charles Keil (stated in Negus, 1996, 30) pose a challenge to the above line of reasoning? Is there enough latitude in the music itself to create differing responses, even though one is situated within a particular and different worldview from the mainstream?

Each person is unique. Like your footprints, your signature, and your voice, your choices of music and ways you relate to music are plural and interconnected in a pattern that is all yours, an “idioculture” or idiosyncratic culture in sound.

Chapter 5 deals with the responses of the individual Seventh-day Adventists.

According to Negus (1996, 35), “The contribution of active audience theory has been to challenge Adorno by showing how audiences are not easily stupefied and contribute much to producing the meanings of popular music”. This study ascertains to what extent Seventh-day Adventist respondents appear to exercise discretion and choice when listening to pop music, and especially for the older respondents whether, like mine, their listening has changed and ‘evolved’ through the years.

According to Middleton, when dealing with lyrics there are two ends to the spectrum. They can either be indicative of the “thematic content”, basically pointing to the “semantic field of the song”, or they can form a part of the song structure, “an aspect of the overall ‘musical’ process” (2000, 163). “This divergence maps out the field of possibilities for the relationship of words and music in pop - with ‘linguistic content’ at one extreme, ‘musical sound’ at the other” (Middleton 2000, 163). Thus, the listener can engage with the lyrics with the intention of understanding the message contained in the words or treat the lyrics as mere sounds contributing to the overall musical structure. According to Frith (quoted in Middleton 2000, 163) there is evidence in favour of the proposition that more listeners “pay no particular attention to words at all”.

There are some pop songs that I am aware of that I think have positive messages and can uplift, inspire and conscientize the listener. To mention a few: *If Tomorrow Never Comes* (Ronan Keating)

encourages you to express your love to loved ones before it is too late. *Don't Worry, Be Happy* (Bobby McFerrin) is a jolly, happy song that can lift you out of a despondent mood; *I got Your Back* (Ciara) is the pledge of a mother to always stand by her child no matter what life throws her child's way. There are numerous others.

In fact, some of the songs that have been chosen for this study can be experienced as inspirational and empowering, if the actual connotations of the messages were not given deeper consideration or did not mean to someone else what it means to me, considering my philosophical-theological perspective as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. At the time the song *From a Distance* (Bette Midler) was a hit, it was well received, as many minds seemed to be drawn to God when listening to this song. In an age when women are being violated despite major efforts, and systems being set in place to recognize and protect the rights of women, songs like *The Greatest Love of All* (Whitney Houston), and *Hero* (Mariah Carey) can be experienced as empowering and motivational. Songs like *We are the World* (USA for Africa) and *Stand up for Love* (Destiny's Child) encourage benevolence and reaching out to the vulnerable and less fortunate. It is interesting how the interviewees responded to the songs mentioned above that form part of the playlist for this study.

Then there are so-called 'bad' songs. What makes songs 'bad'? Washburne and Derno (quoted in Hawkins 2011, 119.), respond to the disposition to judge:

Anytime anyone makes a discursive judgement of 'good' or 'bad'... this is first and foremost a positioning gesture... we make a claim for being 'in the know' about things, we demonstrate an educated perspective and activate a wide range of underlying assumptions about what is 'good'.

At this point I will cite an example where my 'positioning gesture' sprang into action. My children were adolescents at the time. It was mid-morning, and we were on our way to the beach for a picnic. We were all excited. The local radio station was playing in the background, and everyone was busy chatting and having a good time – until Shaggy's song (discussed below) came on the air. I did not want to draw the children's attention to the song, but the message was loud and clear, and very disturbing. No one else seemed to be 'listening' but it was becoming increasingly uncomfortable for me, especially that the children were being exposed to it. He was singing about what he and the girl next door were doing when his girlfriend caught them:

we were both caught making love on the bathroom floor

... she caught me on the counter
... saw me kissing on the sofa,
... even had her in the shower
... she even caught me on camera... (Shaggy, *It Wasn't Me*, 'clean'¹⁵ lyrics).

I was horrified. I suddenly reached over and turned the music off. There was an uproar in the car. "Why is mum switching off the radio? The music was so much fun". It was obvious that no one was listening to the message of the song. Or perhaps at their age[s], they were too young to think about the lyrics. Or perhaps the lyrics, as we have discovered were 'mere sounds contributing to the overall musical structure of the song'? It is interesting to note at this point that this is a rap song with quite explicit sexual lyrics. Martino et al. state that amongst the various genres that they examined for sexual content they found that "the highest concentration of degrading sexual lyrics [was] observed among songs of rap and rap metal artists" (Martino et al. 2006, 9).

There are cases when popular songs are known to invite resistance especially when they display violence, have explicit sexual content, promote drugs and alcohol, and contain other disturbing material. Hawkins points out that there are "social conservatives" who fear that such music can "incite unruly, inappropriate, or culturally threatening behaviour" (Hawkins 2011, 122). In 1985 the "Senate Hearing on recording labelling... spearheaded by... Tipper Gore and the PMRC", is an example of parents and family organizations standing up against popular music that they believed was irresponsible as it "had the ability to incite objectionable physical behaviour" amongst an audience of young people (Hawkins 2011, 122). Gore argues that "to market explicit sex and graphic and sadistic violence to an audience of preteens and teens is a secondary form of child abuse" (Hawkins 2011, 122). According to Frith (quoted in Hawkins, 2011, 124): "aesthetic judgements are necessarily tangled up with ethical judgements" regarding music – "be it incompetence, self-indulgence, inauthenticity, bad taste, or stupidity".

At this stage I draw attention to what I consider to be a notable development in technologically driven music. I point to two streams of music in the earlier stages of technologically generated music which later 'merged' to become the dominant listening experience as we know it today.

Firstly, there was popular music, like rock 'n' roll which flaunted and showcased in its lyrics counter-cultural practices and behaviours, like casual sex, violence and juvenile delinquency (Brackett 2005,

¹⁵ Some popular songs have a 'clean' or radio version where certain vulgar or offensive lyrics in the original version are replaced so that the song can be played on the radio.

100). At the time, the music caused quite an uproar and audiences and performers of such music were depicted by mainstream newspapers and magazines in a “condescending” manner, as “trespassing societal norms” (Brackett 2005, 100).

Then, in contrast, there was Muzak, at first “vocal-free”. This was a type of unobtrusive, background music, designed especially as a “workplace tool” (Anderson 2015, 812). Starting off mainly for the workplace it served to create a pleasant ambience, while simultaneously masking the clanging and clinking produced by normal daily movements (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137). Initially heard in “offices and other workplaces”, Muzak was “intended to raise worker productivity” (Teitel 2013, 72). Gifford said “workers’ minds ‘were prone to wandering. Muzak sopped up these non-productive thoughts and kept workers focussed on the drudgery at hand’” (quoted in Hesmondalgh and Negus 2002, 137).

Fast-forward several decades later, now to Neo-Muzak:

While Muzak reigned (and operates still) as a workplace tool rather than a personal care product, neo-Muzak successors like Pandora, Spotify, and other digital streaming services have arrived to close the gap as personal care products for affect management and mood elevation. Welcome to the age of neo-Muzak. Whether at work, home, the mall, the gym, on the bus or in the car, web-connected subjects live and weave among an array of streaming platforms for algorithmic or curated musical moodscape and affective atmosphere (Anderson 2015, 811).

During the present stage of the music-technological revolution, pop songs, many with no less offensive messages than the early days of rock ‘n’ roll, in fact becoming “more explicit in their references to drugs, sex and violence over the years” (The American Academy of Pediatrics 2009, 1488), have replaced the instrumental ‘canned music’ (Muzak), and have become the dominant widespread and prevalent listening experience. Pop music, now the preferred commonly heard background music (Hesmondalgh 2002, 134), even within the local vicinity, generally accompanies various day-to-day activities (Hesmondalgh and Negus 2002 131).

Gifford, quoted in Hesmondalgh and Negus (2002, 139), says “Muzak’s real significance is that it paved the way for a new ambient culture, a culture that Sensurrounds¹⁶ us with digitalized music and pixelated images...”

¹⁶a cinema special-effects technique whereby the audience is apparently surrounded by low-frequency sound (<https://www.lexico.com/definition/sensurround>).

Anderson (2015, 134) talks about the concept of foreground and background listening and Hesmondalgh (2002, 134) states:

... since the mid to late 1980s, background music has become foreground music. In the language of the industry, background music is what we call 'elevator music', and foreground music is work by original artists. While background music has all but disappeared, you can now hear everyone from Miriam Makeba to the Moody Blues to Madonna to Moby in some public setting or other and quite possibly all of them at your local Starbucks.

Needless to say, a whole new bevy of artists would feature at the forefront of today's popular music scene.

Youth

Miranda (2013, 5) reminds us that music has potential to have many "social psychological impacts and meanings" for people at various stages of their lives. Negus (1996, 8) states that earlier in popular music studies researchers tended to focus on young people (on the teenager in the 1950s, then the problems of youth in the 1960s); later studies seemed to broaden out to include "fans and music scenes in general" (8). That being said, and even though this study is not meant to focus on any particular age group, in my review of literature I have discovered that a lot of research into popular music centres on young people - children, adolescents and youth.

I have also found that some of the effects and habits that are brought to the fore within the context of young peoples' engagement with music, though possibly more intense during that stage of life, can apply to those in other age categories as well. For example, in 1990, Von Feilitzen and Roe reported that research they had done amongst children and young people within the domestic context, revealed that "75-90 per cent of all music listening occurs in connection with some other parallel activity... [and that] the most common activities that accompanied music were waking up, eating, homework and housework" (Negus 1996, 28). According to the informal survey that I conducted some years ago amongst 104 Seventh-day Adventists of various ages spanning 10 to about 70, having something playing in the background was a common practice across the various age groups. The American Academy of Pediatrics (2009, 1489) also points out that there are several studies that show that "there is a relationship between music and emotions, regardless of age".

It is also important to note that children and young people make up a large percentage of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and thus issues pertaining to them are necessary and valuable.

Evidence shows that of the various types of entertainment media – television, movies and music – popular music plays a more important role in the lives of young people than the other forms (Christenson et al. 2012, 127). Members of this group are heavy consumers of popular music and they “devote huge amounts of time and money to music listening” (Miranda 2013, 5). An overriding concern seems to be that they are at a vulnerable stage in their development and highly susceptible to negative influences from the popular music that they are exposed to. Many decisions and choices made at this stage have an impact on their future sense of stability, happiness and well-being.

Kassabian (2013, xii) states her observation of how heavily young people can be involved with popular music:

My daughter, who is currently twenty-two, would prefer to have music on in the background always, or at least almost always, and most of my students seem to be roughly the same... They say they're most often not paying attention to the music; they just want it as a background accompaniment to their routines and activities.

Music is a powerful force in the lives of young people and contributes to their socialization. It provides entertainment, distraction from problems, it helps them to deal with loneliness, to control their emotions or moods, and plays an important role as they build relationships (American Academy of Pediatrics 2009, 1488). According to Martino et al. (2006, 4) music plays an important role in facilitating young people's friendships and social interactions and in the development of their personal identity. They also gain information about society, about social and gender roles and how they are expected to behave, from the music that they listen to. Christenson et al. (2012, 127) state that media has an “impact on youth across a wide array of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours”.

Theoretically there is strong justification that listening to lyrics that encourage a certain behaviour can influence adolescents to engage in it. Primack et al. (2009, 521) state that their findings support and add to previous studies which suggest that “exposure to specific content in popular music may be a risk factor for adolescent risk-taking behavior”. They have found a strong association between adolescents' exposure to cannabis in popular music and adolescents' use of cannabis (Primack et al. 2009, 521). Primack et al. (2012) examined 793 popular songs and found that more often than not alcohol consumption was presented favourably and associated with wealth, sex, luxury objects, partying, other drugs, and vehicles.

If something (for example, casual sex or substance use) is portrayed in a favourable light without there appearing to be negative consequences, that behaviour will be imitated. Research¹⁷ shows that the more teens listen to songs that have sexually degrading messages, the more likely they are to become sexually active (Martino et al. 2006). Also, in studies of popular music that make reference to substance and alcohol use, Christenson et al. (2012, 127) state that they have not come across any studies that suggest that exposure to popular music can discourage young people from using drugs and alcohol. Rather, they have found that exposure to music exerts an influence on attitude and behaviour in terms of substances and that such influence is more likely to encourage such behaviour than not (Christenson et al. 2012, 127).

According to social cognitive theory people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating (Martino et al. 2006, 4). Further, there is a greater likelihood of the behaviour being copied if the models are seen to be attractive or are similar to the individual. Thus, “highly popular music artists can... serve as especially potent role models for teens” (Martino et al. 2006, 4). There is the notion that people learn ‘scripts’ from media role models. Scripts depict scenarios, patterns of behaviour within those scenarios, and likely outcomes of those behaviours (Martino et al. 2006, 5). For example, sexual scripts carry information on how and with whom to have sex, in what setting, and what the sequence of events would be. Martino et al. (2006, 5) explain it as follows:

Through its dominant themes and characterizations, music may provide young people insights into particular sexual scripts, shaping their attitudes assumptions about sexual relationships and creating a notion of what is expected and normative. These attitudes, expectations, and norms may, in turn, play a role in adolescent’s sexual decision-making and behaviour.

After conducting a study on 1461 adolescents, Martino et al. (2006, Abstract) have come to the following conclusion:

Listening to music with degrading sexual lyrics is related to advances in a range of sexual activities among adolescents... Reducing the amount of degrading sexual content in popular music or reducing young people's exposure to music with this type of content could help delay the onset of sexual behavior.

Researchers note a trend in popular music where specific genres tend to highlight and promote particular behaviours or specific substances. For example, rap and rap metal music tends to have the

¹⁷ Much of the research in this chapter examines developed countries in the west. However, there is reason to believe that a similar situation exists in certain sectors of South African society, given the similarity of parts of South African economic and material cultures with those of the west.

“highest concentration of degrading sexual lyrics” (Martino et al. 2006, 9). The American Academy of Pediatrics (2009) present statistics on the type of lyrical content of the various styles of popular songs and their impact on young listeners. They quote the National Institute on Media’s analysis of the lyrical contents of the top 10 CDs. They found that

[Forty-two] percent of the songs contained very explicit sexual content... rock, heavy metal, rap and new emerging genres... revolve around topics such as sexual promiscuity, death, homicide, suicide and substance use... [the lyrics of some rap music have] explicit sexual language... as well as messages of violence, racism, homophobia, and hatred toward women... Drug, tobacco, and alcohol use also tend to be glorified in these songs (The American Academy of Pediatrics 2009, 1489).

Champney-Smith (quoted in Christenson et al. 2012, 127) points out “the close association of certain substances with certain genres”, for example “country with alcohol, heroin with jazz, marijuana with reggae, crack cocaine and marijuana with rap”.

Some have argued against the effects of lyrics, by claiming that the lyrics do not matter as much since children and adolescents use music just for entertainment, that they do not pay much attention to the lyrics, and even if they did, they would not really understand them (The American Academy of Pediatrics 2009, 1489). However, as can be seen from the following quote, studies have proven otherwise:

Approximately 17% of male adolescents and 25% of female adolescents expressed that they liked their favorite songs specifically because the lyrics were a reflection of their feelings. Also, it has been found that the more importance adolescents give to a certain type of music, the more attention they will pay to the lyrics... Furthermore, Knobloch-Westerwick et al. have stated that although young listeners might not understand all the details in lyrics, they recognize enough to obtain a general idea of the message they bring (The American Academy of Pediatrics 2009, 1489).

Martino et al. (2006, 4) state that even though many young people may listen to music as a secondary activity, it may be difficult for them to ignore the references that are of a sexual nature in many of the popular songs in which “the language used to describe sex” is becoming “increasingly direct”. Studies have also demonstrated that engagement with certain genres of popular music influenced behaviours in specific ways (American Academy of Pediatrics 2009, 1489).

DeNora (2000, 48) suggests that music can be a powerful instrument of change: “music has transformative powers, it does things, changes things, makes things happen”. Gerbner et al. (2002) say

that messages that are received from the media can take precedence over other beliefs about the social world and can be adopted as the receiver's subjective reality. Christenson et al. (2012) agree. Hearing repeated messages creates the impression that this is normal behaviour, that everybody is doing it and that it is normal in mainstream culture (Christenson et al. 2012, 122). Further, it is common for such activities to be portrayed "as a fun, consequence-free part of youth lifestyle", rather than as behaviours to be careful of, even shunned (Christenson et al. 2012, 127). There is "increasingly strong evidence that exposure to popular music can influence young people's attitudes and behavior" (Christenson et al. 2012, 122).

Social Change

Kassabian 2013, xii-xiii) asks a pertinent question:

But what are all these ubiquitous musics doing, as we listen to them in so many different places and ways? Are they hailing us, in a process of Althusserian¹⁸ subject formation? Are they purveyors of ideologies? Do they constitute us as subjects?

Manuel (1988, 17) postulates:

The evolution of popular music... must be seen as paralleling the evolution of new societies. The course of musical evolution thus emerges as the product of the musical resources available to a society, and, equally as important, of the extra-musical conditions and attitudes that guide musicians in selecting, recombining, and creating new styles.

¹⁸ "Louis Althusser's theory of ideology ... a form of interpellation or "hailing"...[where] we are given a sense of being individual subjects by being addressed in a certain way by our culture. [Yet], society is not an organic whole but a complex network of groups, each with different interests..." A struggle thus exists against the dominant classes and their "attempt to "naturalize" the meanings that serve their interests into the "com-monsense" of society as a whole, whereas subordinate classes resist this process in various ways and to varying degrees and try to make meanings that serve their own interests."

https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/59483321/Literary_Theory_-_An_Anthology_Blackwell20190601-94544-fbkrbp-libre.pdf?1559452506=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DSECOND_EDITION.pdf&Expires=1674132494&Signature=XVTNOpzEKzYF7QdRZJWEOlwAg6l5GohQ7H49JSngXDdijyKRkzJ23E~WUx1UNHClUtrYuDIHpo68d1XFk3Ex8w3bi-RByRwP6mplqEVf3K4jG8i9a5zyjHjJ7I036BO9T2I6QZSMZEygRjrqq9ImSj908-b7HwXxoOWYGwsyFUoX-fr4kuLI~QpBNMvxcEsCzxRXtn9IVvDMclggisXdxgAl3vB7zPcgT-hZkieKzEcfzIV-v0WL~XpDhrQ3ESyru0XNIBG.JzGnA6LMjAhMOFs62XN33-KNH9NNScXN9zhiPidc-rpO-ojfpMRC7iWbUSnNijyah7R6fR6mgBFgPR~g_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA#page=1289

Adorno proposed that the publishers of commercial songs “were like the fascist propagandists” who were trying to infiltrate Europe with their message that the music was produced “purely for commercial gain and social manipulation” (Negus 1996 37, 64). Negus goes on to state that perhaps this is not always the case. He suggests that there are times when “committed artists, oppositional audiences and music industry personnel might be able to produce sounds and communicate ideas that do more than simply generate profits” (Negus 1996, 64).

Negus (1996, 40) does, however, acknowledge the immense power of popular music. When youth want to rebel, music provides a number of opportunities for both individual and group expression.

Negus (1996, 62) argues that culture should be seen not just as a product that is “created through technical processes and routine practices... [but rather as] the constitutive context within and out of which the sounds, words and images of popular music are made and given meaning”. In considering the production of popular music, Negus (1996, 62) proposes the term “culture of production”. He draws from Raymond Williams who represents culture as involving a “whole way of life” and Stuart Hall who considers culture “as the means through which people create meaningful worlds in which to live” (Negus 1996, 62).

Manuel (1988, 16) says of popular music’s deep roots and existence in the above scenario:

Urbanization and modernization effect qualitative as well as quantitative social changes... the creation of a new social identity assumes a crucial rather than incidental role in survival and adaptation to the new environment. To those immersed in the struggle, popular music may serve as a powerful and meaningful symbol of identity, functioning as an avenue of expression and mediation of conflict... Popular music... may serve as a metaphor for the creation of a distinctive world of common meanings and shared cultural ideologies on the part of the new urban classes.

Can the above idea of popular music’s role actually influence people who come from a different set of ideologies to switch to that promoted by the music? Is this line of thinking being reflected by Kuusisto (2000, 110-111) who describes the effect of popular music on Seventh-day Adventists who happily engage with it?

Pop-music in itself seems to be a strong indicator of a person’s attitudes towards Adventism... When a person likes pop-music, he or she is likely to have more positive attitudes towards TV and cinema ... alcohol ... premarital sex ... and marrying a non-Adventist. Furthermore, when the individual does not value pop-music as highly, he or she is likely to enjoy going to church

more ... consider the Sabbath ... and its observance... more important and even regard TV, cinema, and alcohol as sins.

I have covered a fair amount of ground in terms of research related to the lifestyle themes in this study. I would also like to reiterate that the lifestyle changes we are seeing in society are perhaps undergirded and driven by perspectives that are embodied in the spiritual-philosophical themes addressed in this study, namely concept of the self, hope and state of the dead.

In 2006 Partridge (quoted by Lynch 2006, 483) and his colleagues became cognizant of some fundamental trends within religion and society in Western societies. They noticed a shift from traditional, orthodox Christianity. Partridge suggests the following: “Western culture is undergoing a process of resacralization in which there is a turn from traditional, doctrinally orthodox Christianity to alternative spiritual traditions [which he refers to as ‘occulture’]” (Lynch 2006, 483). Popular music, Partridge argues, has played a central role as a technology for this occultural process of resacralization (Lynch 2006, 483). Lynch (2006, 484) states that Partridge’s argument that popular music’s role as a medium to transmit such alternative ideologies is an important one.

Christenson et al. (2012, 121) highlight a prominent characteristic of popular culture in the following statement:

It is in the very nature of popular media, music included, to select from and distort reality. Thus, popular music tends to incorporate themes related to some adolescent concerns more than others: more about sex and partying, for example, than about studying hard to get into college.

When one considers the themes and lyrics of a variety of pop songs, they could be seen as driving an agenda for social change. To some, this change appears to point in a negative direction. For Seventh-day Adventists a number of the themes of pop songs vary markedly with the teachings and theological worldview described in chapter two.

Composers express about themselves

Christenson et al. (2012, 121) state that young musicians who sing about drugs and alcohol are usually reflecting their lifestyle. One singer who is being referenced in the present study, Ed Sheeran, and his song “Shape of You” (released in 2017), could be a case in point. He sings about having some ‘shots’ at a bar with his friends, while looking for a girl to spend the night with. This song may not reflect his

lifestyle in every detail, but certainly the fact that he sings about consuming alcohol, and then relates his struggle with alcohol addiction is significant. In 2015 he gave an interview about his problem with binge drinking. He describes the situation while he was on tour in 2014:

I would stay up and drink all night and then sleep on the bus. The buses would park underneath the arenas and I'd sleep on the bus all day, then wake up and then come out, do the show, drink, get back on the bus and I didn't see sunlight for maybe four months (<https://www.standard.co.uk/evening->).

This type of experience is easily relatable to some of the lifestyle songs in this study. Christenson et al. (2012, 121-122) point out that some of the messages in songs may be larger than life because musicians do not necessarily lead average lives (“high sensation and extreme emotion”). In fact, because of their lifestyle of drug and alcohol use, many musicians have had encounters with the law; some have even lost their lives.

Till (2010, 71) adds a different dimension, stating that it is more a case of pop stars combining fact with fiction, creating a “hyperreal personality”. Thus, they create a person that is more interesting and extravagant than a real person.

They draw upon cultural myths and archetypes, upon histories of other icons, and on numerous other media sources... [Pop star's] lives are generally perceived as real, although they are usually a complex mixture of reality, construction, marketing, exaggeration, and untruth (Till 2010, 71-72).

A further consideration is that it is in the nature of popular media to distort reality, not reflecting a true picture, but rather exaggerating the “image, frequency, context, and consequences” of the teen lives (Christenson et al. 2012, 122). Christenson et al. (2012, 122) say that youth tend not to be attracted to that which reflects reality but tend to latch onto media content that is sensational, “providing fantasy, excitement, amusement and status...” Soon such elements can be seen in actual trends in youth culture. Such is possibly one driving force behind the changes being experienced in individuals, family life and society in general.

Manuel (1988, 7-8) touches on some pertinent issues in regard to popular music

The most profound and persistent theoretical question in the study of popular music... concerns the relation between popular music and the aesthetic and ideological needs and

aspirations of the individual, ethnic group, or class. Discussions have centered around the degree to which popular music can be regarded as a genuine grassroots expression that responds to and fulfils emotional needs, or, alternately, whether it should be recognized as a creation of corporate (or state) culture industries that exploit, manipulate, or even create taste rather than respond to it. Does popular music rise from the people who constitute its audience, or is it superimposed upon them from above? Does it reflect and express their attitudes, tastes, aspirations, and worldview, or does it serve to indoctrinate them, however imperceptibly? ... Can popular music challenge a social order? Do listeners exercise a genuine choice among musics, or can they only passively select preferences from the styles proffered by the media?

Christenson et al. (2012, 121) also state that some young people are interested more in partying and sex than studying and working towards long-term goals. However, they go on to qualify that this cannot claim to represent the attitude of 'all' young people, as some may not be interested in such attitudes and behaviour.

In addition to the above-mentioned notion that people listen to songs that are congruent with where they are at, a peculiar phenomenon that this thesis seeks to address is why people (in this case Seventh-day Adventists) who supposedly adhere to a different set of principles, embrace music which not only contradicts, but also undermines, what they stand for?

Conclusion

Negus (1996, 1) says that "despite the fact that we often respond to music in an immediate and spontaneous manner, there are numerous occasions when theoretical understanding informs daily experiences of and discussions about popular music". Kassabian (2013, xiii) speaks to such an issue:

My eyes used to well up with tears at a particular phone company ad on television. When I could register my thoughts and feelings - that the ad was stupid and calculating, commodifying the feelings of people with distant family and lovers just to sell phone services - I was wholly repulsed by the ad. But it worked on me before that analysis slipped into place, which was very quickly. Nonetheless, my affective response was even faster, and the tears came before the dislike of the ad.

The above experience highlights the difference between what can be seen as passive (emotional) listening and active (cognitive) listening. Kassabian initially was drawn by the music, and it worked on her emotions (emotional listening). When she stopped to think about the effect it was having on her and the broader implications of the reason for the advert (cognitive listening) she had a drastic change of

mind. Clarke et al. (2010, 76) emphasise the importance of how to listen and what people are listening for, which he says is determined by cultural conventions and “received knowledge about how to listen”.

The various aspects that have been covered above, highlight the almost unavoidable presence of popular music that is closing in on us as technology becomes increasingly personal (Anderson 2015, 814), and the power of lyrics to influence behaviour, even institute change. In light of these findings about pop music, the following chapters seek to answer the question: Are Seventh-day Adventist people who engage with music that is undermining their belief system ‘listening’ inappropriately? As the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of music acknowledges, music is fundamental to human beings, and we are naturally drawn to it. Miranda (2013, 5) describes music as “a resource of considerable intellectual, artistic, cultural, technological, and economical breadth and depth”. He states further that music can have significant effects on “some of the biological, psychological and social factors that compose human nature” (Miranda 2013, 6). However, as I have shown, for those who may understand that some music can actually serve as a tool to create undesirable, even destructive effects, proactive measures can be taken to limit or prevent the influences that this music potentially carries.

Chapter 4

Analysis of Song Texts

Introduction

The songs selected for this study, as previously stated, are ones that are popular and commonly heard from public platforms like the radio. Thus, they are considered suitable for general consumption. In this section I examine the lyrical content of such songs and attempt to understand how they compare to Christian standards and principles as promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Firstly, I consider the lyrics of the twenty-four songs selected for this purpose. Four Seventh-day Adventist pastors from this local conference have perused the lyrics and provide their evaluation as per each theme. They are referred to as Pastor 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Secondly, I conduct a brief review of 160 pop songs – the top 40 songs of the Billboard decade-end Hot 100 song charts of the decades 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. I will try to understand the types of themes, messages and behaviours that are showcased in these songs. I also attempt to understand how these fare with the principles and lifestyle standards promoted by Seventh-day Adventism. Thus, when songs are stated as being in line or out of line, this is in reference to the principles and standards espoused by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Playlist of 24 Songs (4 songs per theme)

I introduce the 24 songs, as they appear in each theme, by presenting selected portions that are of relevance to this discussion¹⁹. These mostly depict the essence of the songs as there is generally a lot of repetition. I have included the complete songs in the appendix.

Theme: Concept of Self

◆ *Greatest Love of All* (Whitney Houston)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/whitneyhouston/greatestloveofall.html>)

¹⁹ Please note that the online versions of the songs do not have punctuation.

Everybody's searching for a hero
People need someone to look up to
I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs
A lonely place to be
And so I learned to depend on me

I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's shadows
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I'll live as I believe
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity

Because the greatest love of all is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all inside of me

The greatest love of all is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
It is the greatest love of all

♦ *Hero* (Mariah Carey)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/mariahcarey/hero.html>)

There's a hero
If you look inside your heart
You don't have to be afraid
Of what you are
There's an answer
If you reach into your soul
And the sorrow that you know
Will melt away

And then a hero comes along
With the strength to carry on
And you cast your fears aside
And you know you can survive
So when you feel like hope is gone
Look inside you and be strong
And you'll finally see the truth
That a hero lies in you

It's a long road
When you face the world alone
No one reaches out a hand
For you to hold
You can find love
If you search within yourself

And the emptiness you felt
Will disappear

♦ *My All* (Mariah Carey)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/mariahcarey/myall.html>)

I am thinking of you
In my sleepless solitude tonight
If it's wrong to love you
Then my heart just won't let me be right
'Cause I've drowned in you
And I won't pull through
Without you by my side

I'd give my all to have
Just one more night with you
I'd risk my life to feel
Your body next to mine
'Cause I can't go on
Living in the memory of our song
I'd give my all for your love tonight

♦ *I Have Nothing* (Whitney Houston)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/whitneyhouston/ihavenothing.html>)

Don't make me close one more door
I don't wanna hurt anymore
Stay in my arms if you dare
Or must I imagine you there
Don't walk away from me...
I have nothing, nothing, nothing
If I don't have you, you, you, you, you

Comments on theme 'Concept of Self':

The general idea in this grouping of songs is the emphasis on a person, either the self or another individual, as the ultimate in fulfilling one's deepest needs. *The Greatest Love of All* tells us that she has searched for someone who could fulfill her deepest needs. She has realized that she is the only one she can depend on, and that to love oneself is the greatest love of all. *Hero* echoes that sentiment—that the hero is one's own person, that when you have no hope at all just look inside yourself. You will find the strength to carry on and the emptiness that is inside will disappear.

My All and *I Have Nothing* present a different scenario - yet another solution to a desperate need one feels inside. In this case the person is so dependent on her lover that she is absolutely helpless without him. She would risk her life to feel his body next to hers; she has nothing if she does not have him. It is interesting that both songs are sung by the same singers who stated that the greatest hero was within themselves and that each has found a love inside that is incomparable and is the ultimate source of strength to help navigate through life.

To me these songs touch on crucial human needs for a sense of belonging, support, and self-worth. Ideally, for the Christian all of these are met in Christ.

Pastors' comments on the above theme:

The general view of the pastors was that the focus on self, apart from God, in the above songs was not in line with the Seventh-day Adventist perspective. Pastor 4 (2021) said that "our concept of self is embodied in our understanding that we are children of the ...Almighty King".

Pastor 1 (2021) stated:

The answer is within you is a dangerous philosophy. The church teaches that the answer is outside of you. In Jesus. We have value because He created us and paid a tremendous price for our sin.

Pastor 2 (2021) commented:

Seventh day Adventists believe that we are made in the image of God. He made us...He knows everything about us. When we think no one cares about us or pays attention, the bible declares we are loved and valued by God. According to the lyrics of the song by Whitney Houston ...to love yourself is the greatest love of all. Jesus saw it a little differently when He said, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends". When Paul warned Timothy about the attitude of people in the last days, self-lovers were at the top of the list [2 Timothy 3:2].

Theme: Hope

◆ *Stand Up for Love* (Destiny's Child)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/destinyschild/standupforlove.html>)

There are times I find it hard to sleep at night
We are living through such troubled times
And every child that reaches out for someone to hold

For one moment they become my own

[Beyoncé:]

And how can I pretend that I don't know what's going on?
When every second and every minute another soul is gone

And I believe that in my life I will see
An end to hopelessness
Or giving up
Or suffering

If we all stand together this one time
Then no one will get left behind
Stand up for life...

I'm inspired and hopeful each and every day
That's how I know that things are gonna change

♦ *We Are the World* (Michael Jackson)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/michaeljackson/weretheworldusaforafrica.html>)

There comes a time when we heed a certain call
When the world must come together as one
There are people dying
And it's time to lend a hand to life
The greatest gift of all

.... There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me
... As God has shown us by turning stone to bread

... When you're down and out
There seems no hope at all
But if you just believe
There's no way we can fall
Well, well, well
Let's realize that a change can only come
When we stand together as one

♦ *One Moment in Time* (Whitney Houston)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/whitneyhouston/onemomentintime.html>)

I want one moment in time
When I'm more than I thought I could be
When all of my dreams are a heartbeat away
And the answers are all up to me
Give me one moment in time
When I'm racing with destiny

Then in that one moment of time
I will feel
I will feel eternity

I've lived to be
The very best
I want it all
No time for less
I've laid the plans
Now lay the chance
Here in my hands...

You're a winner for a lifetime
If you seize that one moment in time
Make it shine

... Then in that one moment of time...
I will be free

♦ *From A Distance* (Bette Midler)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bettemidler/fromadistance.html>)

God is watching us. God is watching us.
God is watching us from a distance.

Comments on theme 'Hope':

According to the song by Midler everything looks great on the earth from a distance. Since God is watching us from a distance (according to the song), it almost seems that to Him everything looks fine - and perhaps He does not see the hunger, war and suffering of humanity. In that light, it appears that human beings have to attempt to solve their own problems. This is the message of *Stand up for Love* and *We are the World* echoed in sentiments like if we all come together, we can put an end to hopelessness and suffering and "we're saving our own lives".

Feelings of compassion and the desire to reach out and help those in need, as expressed in *Stand up for Love* and *We are the World*, are very much in line with the Seventh-day Adventist ethos (as portrayed in Matthew 25:31-46). However, it is believed that this can best be achieved when working in partnership with God who has the capacity, insight, and foresight far beyond human ability. Thus, the belief that human beings are capable of solving the problems on earth all by themselves is contrary to what the Church promotes. It is believed that human beings are helpless without God and cannot save their own lives. The Bible, as understood by the Church, states that only once Satan and sin are removed from the scene, at the Second Coming of Christ, will suffering and hardship be eradicated (Revelation 21:4), and life restored to what was originally planned.

The song *One Moment in Time* also focusses exclusively on human effort to gaining fulfillment in life. In all of the above, as in the theme *Concept of Self*, the focus is away from God and on the self. This is different from the biblical perspective as promoted by Seventh-day Adventism, in which the Christian's life, aspirations and hope are centred on God.

Pastors' comments:

The general consensus is that hope is to be found in God. Human beings cannot solve humanity's problems as "human attempts on its own will fail" (Pastor 1 (2021)). Pastor 3 (2021) stated that the "songs imply that hope comes from people or certain things, the church and the Bible teaches us that we find hope in Jesus".

The pastors point to the Second Coming of Christ as the ultimate hope of Christians for the end of suffering.

Pastor 4 (2021) said:

Christ's Second Coming is a promise from the Bible... Christ's future return will be the climax to our story on earth. It is not the end, but the beginning of how life was meant to be all along. With Christ's coming, our existence will be perfect and complete.

Pastor 2 (2021) had the following to say:

The question that naturally arises in the world today is how can we have hope when everything looks hopeless? ...Biblical hope is not a mere desire for something good to happen. It is a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future. Christian hope is different, altogether different, from non-Christian hope. ...[quotes] Romans 8:23... Our hope is based on the promise that one day He is going to come again and give eternal life to all the faithful.

On *We Are the World* Pastor 1 (2021) asked: "When did God turn stones to bread?"

Theme: State of the Dead

♦ *One Sweet Day* (Mariah Carey)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/mariahcarey/onesweetday.html>)

Sorry I've never told you
All I wanted to say
And now it's too late to hold you
'Cause you've flown away, so far away...

And I know you're shining down on me from Heaven
Like so many friends we've lost along the way
And I know eventually we'll be together (Together)
One sweet day

◆ *Can You Hear Me?* (Missy Elliott)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/missymisdemeanorelliott/canyouhear.me.html>)

I been checkin on your moms and dad
And your brother since the day you left
Passed on and went away with God
We hope that you're proud of us...

Aaliyah I know you in a safer place
You face to face with the creator
And our maker

And if you and Left-Eye happen to chat tell her
Me and Teone we know that she much safer
If you see Biggie Smalls up in the clouds tell him
He's still the illest MC we had around
2pac there is only one
Big Pun RIP we say one...

We hope yall can change the world...

◆ *I'll Be Missing You* (Puff Daddy)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/puffdaddy/illbemissingyou.html>)

I miss you, B.I.G.
Can't wait 'til that day when I see your face again...

It's kinda hard with you not around
Know you're in heaven smiling down
Watching us while we pray for you...

In the future, can't wait to see
If you open up the gates for me

◆ *See You Again* (Wiz Khalifa)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/wizkhalifa/seeyouagain.html>)

It's been a long day without you, my friend
And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again...

Damn, who knew? ...

That I'll be standing right here talking to you
'Bout another path...

Now I see you in a better place...

So let the light guide your way, yeah
Hold every memory as you go
And every road you take, will always lead you home, home

Comments on theme 'State of the Dead':

In each of the above songs the singer is speaking to the dead person, apologising or expressing how sorely they are missed, believing that they can hear them from their new abode. They 'know' that that person is in heaven now, is communicating with God or with other people who have also died. Or, as in the case of *See You Again*, the person is living on in a better place. In some instances, they ask the dead person to convey messages to others who have died, and they expect are reunited with them. Knowing that the dead person can hear them gives them hope and comfort.

Pastors' comments:

All the pastors state that the messages in this set of songs are not in line with the biblical teaching on death as promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. They reiterate that death is a sleep until the resurrection at the end of time: "We don't go to heaven immediately when we die. We sleep till the resurrection morning. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17" (Pastor 1 (2021)).

Pastor 4 (2021) made the following comment:

The Bible is very clear on describing what takes place when you die. Because we each have the breath of life within us as gifted from God, at death this breath returns to God from whom it originated. The Bible says those who have died know nothing [Ecclesiastes 9:5]. That means we aren't aware of the passage of time after death. We aren't aware of what's happening in the world. Death is like a deep sleep. Your body and spirit rests as the breath of life—which makes body and soul one, and alive—has returned to God until the resurrection.

Lifestyle Themes

One of my aims in dealing with these songs is not to delve deeply, beyond what can be understood on the surface; not to try to figure out the meanings by attempting to interpret what terms and words, for example slang words, which are unknown to me, might mean. As a result, even though various songs

in this category contain words and terms that may be quite obvious to someone who is more informed, I may not have picked up these 'hidden' meanings, as these are not immediately known to me.

Quite a few songs in the lifestyle themes fall into this category. For example, the song 'Low' is about the nightlife, yet there is a lot happening in this song that is not easy for me to understand. Even though greater insight would provide a deeper understanding of what may now be concealed, this is not necessary for this study as there is enough in the text to gauge the setting, behaviour and attitude that is being depicted.

Theme: Time

♦ *I Gotta Feelin'* (Black eyed Peas)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/blackeyedpeas/igottafeelin.html>)

I gotta feeling that tonight's gonna be a good night...

Tonight's the night
Let's live it up
I got my money
Let's spend it up

Go out and smash it
Like oh my God
Jump off that sofa
Let's get get off

I know that we'll have a ball
If we get down
And go out
And just lose it all

I feel stressed out
I wanna let it go
Let's go way out spaced out
And losing all control

Fill up my cup
Mazel Tov
Look at her dancing
Just take it off

Let's paint the town
We'll shut it down
Let's burn the roof
And then we'll do it again...

Feel the shot
Body rock...

Around the clock (clock, clock, clock, clock)

Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, and Thursday
Friday, Saturday
Saturday to Sunday

Get get get get get with us
You know what we say
Party every day

◆ *Last Friday Night* (Katy Perry)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/katyperry/lastfridaynightgif.html>)

There's a stranger in my bed,
There's a pounding in my head
Glitter all over the room
Pink flamingos in the pool

I smell like a mini-bar
DJs passed out in the yard
Barbies on the barbecue
This a hickey or a bruise

Pictures of last night
Ended up online
I'm screwed
Oh, well
It's a blacked out blur
But I'm pretty sure it ruled
Damn

Last Friday night
Yeah, we danced on table tops
And we took too many shots
Think we kissed but I forgot

Last Friday night
Yeah, we maxed our credit cards
And got kicked out of the bar
So we hit the boulevard

Last Friday night
We went streaking in the park
Skinny dipping in the dark
Then had a ménage à trois

Last Friday night
Yeah, I think we broke the law
Always say we're gonna stop

This Friday night
Do it all again...

Trying to connect the dots
Don't know what to tell my boss
Think the city towed my car
Chandelier is on the floor

Ripped my favorite party dress
Warrants out for my arrest...

♦ *Low* (Flo Rida)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/florida/low.html>)

Shawty had them apple bottom jeans (jeans)
Boots with the fur (with the fur)
The whole club was looking at her
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low
Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reebok's with the straps (with the straps)
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack (hey)...

[Flo-Rida:]
I ain't never seen nothing that'll make me go
This crazy all night spending my dough
Had a million dollar vibe and a bottle to go
Them birthday cakes they stole the show
So sexual
She was flexible professional
Drinking X&O
Hold up, wait a minute, do I see what I think? Whoa
Did I think I see shawty get low?
Ain't the same when it's up that close
Make it rain I'm making it snow
Work the pole I got the bank roll
I'mma say that I prefer them no clothes
I'm into that I love women exposed
She threw it back at me I gave her more
Cash ain't no problem I know where it goes
She had them...

[Flo-Rida:]

Hey shawty what I gotta do to get you home
My jeans full of guap and they're ready for shones
Cadillacs Maybachs for the sexy grown
Patron on the rocks that'll make you moan
One stack (come on), two stacks (come on), three stacks (come on)
Now that's three grand
What you think I'm playing, baby girl, I'm the man
I'll bend the rubber bands
That's what I told her
Her legs on my shoulder
I knew it was over
That Henny and Cola got me like a soldier
She ready for Rover, I couldn't control her
So lucky on me I was just like a clover
Shawty was hot like a toaster
Sorry but I had to fold her
Like a pornography poster
She showed her...

[Flo-Rida:]

Whoa, shawty, yeah, she was worth the money
Little mama took my cash
And I ain't want it back
The way she bent that back
Got her them paper stacks
Tattoo above her crack
I had to handle that
I was on it, sexy woman
Let me showing and made me want it
Two in the morning I'm zoning
And them Rosé bottles foaming
She wouldn't stop
Made it drop
Shawty did that pop and lock
Had to break her off that guap
Gal was fly just like my Glock

♦ *Love In This Club* (Usher)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/usher/loveinthisclub.html>)

I gotta do it for the ladies...

You say you're searching for somebody that will take you out and do you right.
Well, come here baby and let daddy show you what it feels like.
You know all you gotta do is tell me what you're sipping on.
And I promise that I'm gonna keep it coming all night long.

Looking in your eyes,
While you're on the other side,
(And I think that shorty I gotta thing for you)

Doing it on purpose, wind it and work it.
I can tell by the way that you're looking at me, girl.

I wanna make love in this club.
In this club...

I wanna make love in this club.
In this club...

Listen, if you got some friends rolling with you then baby that's cool.
You can leave them with my homies, let them know that I got you.
If you didn't know, you're the only thing that's on my mind.
'Cause the way I'm staring at you got me wanting to give it to you all night.

Looking in your eyes,
While you're on the other side,
(I can't take it no more baby I'm coming for you)
Doing it on purpose, wind it and work it.
If we close our eyes it could just be me and you

I wanna make love in this club.
In this club...

[Young Jeezy:]
I'm what you want...

He got to trap...

I'll set you free,
Sexually, mentally, physically, emotionally,
I'll be like your medicine, you'll take every dose of me.
It's going down on isle 3, I'll bag you like some groceries.
And every time you think about it, you're gonna want some more of me.
About to hit the club make a movie yeah rated R.
Pull up like a Trap Star. That's if you had...

Have you ever made love to a thug in the club with his sights on, 87 jeans and a fresh pair of Nike's on.
On the couch, on the table, on the bar, on the floor.
You can meet me in the bathroom, you know I'm trained to go.

Might as well give me a kiss, if we keep touching like this
I know you're scared, baby, they don't know what we're doing.
Let's both get undressed right here, keep it up girl, and, I swear.
I'm gonna give it to you non-stop.
And I don't care, who's watching...

In this club, on the floor,
Baby let's make love

I wanna make love in this club.

Comments on theme “Time”:

When we consider the element of time in this batch of songs, we find that the activities usually take place at night and continue into the hours of the morning. It denotes a lifestyle of continuous partying - party all night, around the clock, every day of the week (*I Gotta a Feeling*), come next Friday night we will do it all again (*Last Friday night*), it is two in the morning, and she still does not want to stop (*Low*). So, time is being spent on partying, reckless behaviour, consuming alcohol and drugs, promiscuity and spending a lot of money, even money they do not have (“maxed our credit cards” - *Last Friday Night*).

Pastors' comments:

Pastor 1 (2021) says that “sinful pleasure seeking, illicit sex, nudity, booze, law breaking” are “against our principles of decency, and that time is “more than wasted”. He says that time should be used “productively and not wastefully”. Pastor 4 (2021) says “time is gifted to us from God, and we are stewards of all that God has bestowed upon us. Therefore, Adventists are “encouraged to not be wasteful but to use our time wisely in serving God and proclaiming the last day message, of His final judgement”.

Pastor 2 (2021) points out that according to Psalm 90:12 “our days on earth are numbered”:

This simply means that our time is limited on this earth and as such ...we need to treat it with care if we are going to make our time count. The apostle Paul speaking about the importance of time says in Ephesians 5:15-17 “Be very careful then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is”.

Theme: Substance Use

◆ *We Are Young* (Fun)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/fun/weareyoung.html>)

Give me a second I
I need to get my story straight
My friends are in the bathroom getting higher than the Empire State
My lover she's waiting for me just across the bar
My seat's been taken by some sunglasses asking 'bout a scar, and
I know I gave it to you months ago
I know you're trying to forget
But between the drinks and subtle things
The holes in my apologies, you know
I'm trying hard to take it back

So if by the time the bar closes
And you feel like falling down
I'll carry you home

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun
...But our friends are back
So let's raise a toast
'Cause I found someone to carry me home

◆ *TiK ToK* (Kesha)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/keha/tiktok.html>)

Wake up in the mornin' feelin' like P-Diddy (hey what's up girl)
Grab my glasses I'm out the door I'm gonna hit the city (let's go)
Before I leave brush my teeth with a bottle of Jack
'Cause when I leave for the night I ain't comin' back

I'm talkin' pedicure on our toes toes
Tryin' on all our clothes clothes
Boys blowin' up our phones phones

Drop top and playin' our favorite CD's
Pullin' up to the parties
Tryna get a little bit tipsy

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no
Whoa-oh oh oh...

Ain't got a care in world, but got plenty of beer
Ain't got no money in my pocket, but I'm already here
Now, the dudes are linin' up cause they hear we got swagger
But we kick em to the curb unless they look like Mick Jagger

I'm talkin' bout - everybody getting crunk, crunk
Boys tryna touch my junk, junk
Gonna smack him if he getting too drunk, drunk
Now, now - we goin' 'til they kick us out, out
Or the police shut us down...

DJ, you build me up
You break me down
My heart, it pounds

Yeah, you got me
With my hands up
You got me now
You got that sound
Yeah, you got me

♦ *Buy U a Drank* (T-Pain)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/tpain/buyuadranksawtysnappin.html>)

Baby girl
What's your name?
Let me talk to you
Let me buy you a drink
I'm T-pain, you know me
Konvict music nappy boy oh wee
I know the club close at 3
What's the chance of you rolling with me?
Back to the crib
Show you how I live
Let's get drunk forget what we did

I'mma buy you a drank
Then I'mma take you home with me
I got money in the bank
Shawty what you think 'bout that?
Find me in the grey Cadillac
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh oh, ooh ooh...

Talk to me, I talk back
Let's talk money, I talk that
Crunk juice bottles
Oakly shades...

That's what I'm talking 'bout
We gonna have fun...

[*Yung Joc:*]
Won't you meet me at the bar
Respect big pimping
Tell me how you feel
Mama tell me what you sipping?
A certified dime piece
Deserve Louy 1-3
150 a shot
3 for you and 3 for me
I'm checking your body language
I love the conversation
And when you lick your lips
I get a tingling sensation

Now we're both 'bout tipsy
You say you in the mood
All I need is 'bout a hour
Better yet maybe two
Let me take you where I live
Ferrari switch gears
When I whisper in your ear
Your legs hit the chandelier
Passion fruit and sex

♦ *Party Rock Anthem* (LMFAO)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/lmfao/partyrockanthem.html>)

Party rock is in the house tonight
Everybody just have a good time
And we gon' make you lose your mind
Everybody just have a good time (clap!)

Party rock is in the house tonight
Everybody just have a good time
(I can feel it baby!)

And we gon' make you lose your mind
We just wanna see you... shake that!
In the club party rock, lookin' for your girl,
She on my jock non-stop when we're in the spot
Booty move her weight like she on the block
Where the drank? I gots to know
Tight jeans, tattoo 'cause I'm rock and roll
Half-black half-white domino
Gain the money Oprah Doe!

Yo!
I'm running through these hoes like Drano
I got that devilish flow rock and roll no halo...

And be the first girl to make me throw this cash
We get money, don't be mad,
Now stop – hating's bad

One more shot for us
(Another round)
Please fill up my cup
(Don't mess around)
We just wanna see
(You shake it now)
Now you're home with me
(You're naked now)

Comments on theme 'Substance Use':

There is plenty of alcohol, in some cases drugs, at these parties described in the songs. Alcohol and drugs seem necessary at these events to put people into a state of mind to readily do the kind of things people would not normally so easily do. Essentially, it lets their guard down so that they have little or no inhibitions. In some instances, people get so drunk that they engage in outrageous behaviours. Some are so inebriated that they need to be carried home. Some use the alcohol to deaden the senses so that they can engage in sexual activities with a stranger, someone they have just met at the bar or club. It will also help them forget what they did. Some get so unruly that they need to be kicked out of the bar or shut down by the police. In this state of inebriation, they think they will shine brighter than the sun (*We are Young*), they will have no care in the world (*TiK ToK*) and it makes them lose their minds (*Party Rock Anthem*).

Pastors' comments:

All the pastors agree that the Church prohibits the use of alcohol and drugs.

According to Pastor 1 (2021) these songs reflect “drug abuse, promotion of drugs, alcohol, lawlessness”. He says that the song *TiK ToK* “sounds like a drunken orgy” and goes on to say that these are “all against the standards of the church and totally forbidden”.

Pastor 2 (2021) states:

There is evidence that these substances not only harm people but also destroy families and hinder spiritual growth... There is a growing tendency among young people to indulge in these substances through peer pressure, the influence of friends or simply to explore something new.

Pastor 3 (2021):

We are called to be a godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with biblical principles in all aspects of personal and social life. ... Since alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and the irresponsible use of drugs and narcotics are harmful to our bodies, we are to abstain from them ... The message given by these songs indicate that partying and using drugs, alcohol etc. is normal. It seems like substance use is equated to having fun as if you can't have “fun” without it. The church's principle is clear, our bodies are the temple of God therefore we should keep it clean.

Pastor 4 (2021):

Scripture gives us guidance on not only substance abuse but also anything the body takes in, “*whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

◆ *That's What I Like* (Bruno Mars)

(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/brunomars/thatswhatilike.html>)

I got a condo in Manhattan
Baby girl, what's hatnin'?
You and your (a**) invited ...
I'll rent a beach house in Miami
Wake up with no jammies (Nope)
Lobster tail for dinner
Julio serve that scampi (Julio!)
You got it if you want it...
Take my wallet if you want it now

Jump in the Cadillac, girl, let's put some miles on it
Anything you want, just to put a smile on it
You deserve it baby, you deserve it all
And I'm gonna give it to you

Gold jewelry shining so bright
Strawberry champagne on ice
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Sex by the fire at night
Silk sheets and diamonds all white
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
... I promise that your smile ain't gon' never leave
Shopping sprees in Paris
Everything 24 karats

◆ *It Wasn't Me* (Shaggy)

(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/shaggy/itwasntme.html>)

(Open up, man) What do you want, man?
(My girl just caught me) You let her catch you?
(I don't know how I let this happen) With who?
(The girl next door, you know) Man
(I don't know what to do) Say it wasn't you
(Alright)

Honey came in and she caught me red-handed
Creeping with the girl next door

[*Album version:*] Picture this, we were both butt-naked, banging on the bathroom floor

[*Clean version:*] Picture this, we were both caught making love on the bathroom floor

How could I forget that I had
Given her an extra key

All this time she was standing there
She never took her eyes off me

How you can give your woman access to your villa?
Trespass and a-witness while you cling to your pillow
You better watch your back before she turn into a killer
Let's review the situation that you caught up in a

To be a true player you have to know how to play
If she say a night, convince her say a day
Never admit to a word when she say
And if she claim, ah, you tell her, "Baby, no way"

But she caught me on the counter (It wasn't me)
[Album version:] Saw me bangin' on the sofa (It wasn't me)
[Clean version:] Saw me kissin' on the sofa (It wasn't me)
I even had her in the shower (It wasn't me)
She even caught me on camera (It wasn't me)

She saw the marks on my shoulder (It wasn't me)
Heard the words that I told her (It wasn't me)
Heard the scream get louder (It wasn't me)
She stayed until it was over

◆ *Shape of You* (Ed Sheeran)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/edsheeran/shapeofyou.html>)

The club isn't the best place to find a lover
So the bar is where I go (mmmm)
Me and my friends at the table doing shots
Drinking fast and then we talk slow (mmmm)
And you come over and start up a conversation with just me
And trust me I'll give it a chance now (mmmm)
Take my hand, stop, put Van The Man on the jukebox
And then we start to dance
And now I'm singing like

Girl, you know I want your love
Your love was handmade for somebody like me
Come on now, follow my lead
I may be crazy, don't mind me
Say, boy, let's not talk too much
Grab on my waist and put that body on me
Come on now, follow my lead
Come, come on now, follow my lead (mmmm)

I'm in love with the shape of you
We push and pull like a magnet do
Although my heart is falling too
I'm in love with your body

Last night you were in my room
And now my bedsheets smell like you
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with your body...

One week in we let the story begin
We're going out on our first date (mmmm)
You and me are thrifty, so go all you can eat
Fill up your bag and I fill up a plate (mmmm)
We talk for hours and hours about the sweet and the sour
And how your family is doing okay (mmmm)
And leave and get in a taxi, then kiss in the backseat...

I'm in love with your body
Last night you were in my room
And now my bedsheets smell like you
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with your body

♦ *I'll Make Love to You* (Boyz II Men)
(<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/boyziimen/illmakelovetoyou.html>)

Close your eyes, make a wish
And blow out the candlelight
For tonight is just your night
We're gonna celebrate, all thru the night

[Shawn:]
Pour the wine, light the fire
Girl your wish is my command
I submit to your demands
I will do anything, girl you need only ask

[Chorus:]
I'll make love to you
Like you want me to
And I'll hold you tight
Baby all through the night
I'll make love to you
When you want me to
And I will not let go
'Till you tell me to

[Wanya:]
Girl relax, let's go slow
I ain't got nowhere to go
I'm just gonna concentrate on you
Girl are you ready, it's gonna be a long night
Throw your clothes (Throw your clothes) on the floor (on the floor)

[Shawn:]

I'm gonna take my clothes off too
I made plans to be with you...

[Wanya:]

Baby tonight is your night
And I will do you right
Just make a wish on your night
Anything that you ask
I will give you the love of your life

Comments on theme 'Love, Relationships, Sexuality':

In this segment we look at how sexual relationships are portrayed in the songs. Firstly, in the examples above, the first three do not appear within the context of marriage. This is quite clear where there is a casual approach to physical intimacy: either the male is inviting a female to join him on a holiday, during which time they will become intimate; or he has sexual relations with a neighbour and gets caught by his girlfriend; or goes to a bar to find a girl that he can take home and get into bed with. The last song (*I'll Make Love to You*) is not as clear. Statements like "tonight is your night", "I made plans to be with you", "just make a wish on your night", "I'm gonna concentrate on you tonight" create the impression that it could either be taking place within a marriage where the couple lead a busy life and set aside time to spend together, or that this is not a committed monogamous relationship, and the man could be engaging in a similar manner with other women on the other nights. Thus, in at least three of the above encounters sex is entered into outside of marriage, the only relationship which the Bible deems appropriate for sexual engagement.

Pastors' comments:

All four pastors agree that these songs promote sexual relations and a lifestyle that is contrary to the Bible and the principles of the Church.

According to Pastor 1 (2021) "all [songs in this theme] promote premarital sex. There's alcohol, dancing, expensive jewellery, deception, lust, - all against the principles of the church."

Pastor 2 (2021) says:

The Word of God has been clear from the beginning that love is the foundation of God's kingdom and everything we do, say and think must be based on this eternal virtue. Sex outside

the confines of marriage as propagated and advertised today is prohibited in the biblical context.... Sexual relations are to be enjoyed within the confines of marriage.

Pastor 3 (2021) states:

The messages from the songs under this theme portray that it's okay for unmarried people to engage in sexual activities contrary to the teaching of the church and the Bible... The message is clear, we meet, we party, we have sex ...Satan realizes the power of sex, and he has been using popular culture to lead men and women away from God and into bondage.

Pastor 4 (2021) comments:

Love, relationships and sexuality within a family setting is a holy, divinely instituted unit. The close intimate relationship of a wife (woman) and husband (man) should not be experienced by anyone outside of this monogamous relationship... In this age of continuous seeking and desire for sensual pleasure are to a large extent demoralizing many homes.

Comments on lifestyle themes:

There is a commonality in the lifestyle that is being promoted in these songs. There is continuous partying, usually at clubs/bars, at night, extending into the morning hours. There's lots of 'fun', dancing, spending lots of money, and alcohol and drugs at these parties. There is mention of unruly, extreme behaviours. Some even indulge in substances to such an extent that they pass out and need to be carried home. In quite a few songs there is reference to taking off their clothes. A normalised practice is to meet someone (usually for the first time) at the club or bar and later take them home to engage in sexual activities. Such a lifestyle is at complete odds with that promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Top 40 Billboard Hits of the 80s, 90s, 2000s and 2010s (160 Songs)²⁰

I once again point to the research paradigm, projective hermeneutics, which is being used in this study, which allows for the interpreter to play an "active role in creating the interpretation" (Nicholson 1984, 29 quoted in Patterson and Williams 2002, 12). In this regard I apply my own limited background and perspective when it comes to popular culture, and my positioning within Seventh-day Adventism, to try

²⁰ See Appendix 4 for a list of the songs.

to identify (at face value), the meanings that are most apparent in the 160 songs represented by the billboard hits of four decades, in light of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview. Therefore, as stated in chapter one, the verbal analysis will focus on overt messages rather than insinuations and encoded meanings.

There were a few challenges in dealing with the songs in this manner.

I realise that as much as I may try, my limitations may mean that some of my assumptions and evaluations may not be entirely accurate. However, I expect that although the details within some songs may not be easily perceived, it would be possible to understand the overall tone of the songs, which in this instance, is all that is needed for this study.

That being said, I have found that a fair number (28, i.e., 17,5% of the 160 songs) were quite difficult to understand. In some songs the types of phrases and words used (though generally in English) require familiarity with the youth culture at the time, the contextual dialect, or realities that exist within the popular culture (for example, references to behaviours, objects, or media personalities and so forth) that may not be easily apparent outside of that culture. It is thus tempting to delve into the background and meanings of such songs, trying to find out why were they written, what they are actually referring to, what particular terms mean and so forth. However, such a line of investigation is outside the ambit of this study which deals with how these songs would be perceived by 'ordinary' people (Seventh-day Adventists from this local vicinity) who may not be *au fait* with such cultural elements. Thus, the meanings derived may at times differ from that experienced by those who operate from within this culture. For example, songs that carry the message that a dead loved one is in heaven may be composed to bring comfort to bereaving friends and family. Such a message, however, takes on a different meaning to a Seventh-day Adventist who does not share the same belief.

A further challenge arose in trying to figure out if songs were compatible with the Seventh-day Adventist ethos. For example, is the song *Another Brick in the Wall* by Pink Floyd promoting rebellion against authority, or is it fighting for freedom of thought – the latter being important in Seventh-day Adventism? One would have to take a deeper look into the lyrics and background of this song to decide on that. Once again, such investigation is beyond the focus of this study. Thus, quite a few songs were placed in the 'not sure of meaning' category when I was sorting through.

In terms of the six themes that feature in this study, I have found that the three lifestyle themes: 'Love, Relationships and Sexuality'; 'Substance Use'; and 'Time', dominate the playlist (130 songs, i.e., 81%), with 'Time' creating the space, and 'Substance Use' at times, the atmosphere within which the theme 'Love, Relationships and Sexuality' functions.

In terms of the theme 'Love, Relationships and Sexuality' there are various shades and intensities ranging from expressions of what would be considered genuine love and devotion (typical of a marriage set-up or a relationship heading that way) (27 songs, i.e., 17%), to casual sex for self-gratification (59 songs, i.e., 37%). Often this is with someone they have just met and commonly forms part of the package of a night of partying and substance use. In between, there are committed relationships where the couples are not married yet may be engaging in physical intimacy (a situation that is considered out of line by the Church's standards), or there has been a breakup, with the accompanying pain and regret or even vengeance and bitterness. These two latter cases amount to 27 songs (17%).

About 18 songs (11%) within the lifestyle themes were difficult to place.

Of the songs that were placed under the theme 'Love, Relationships and Sexuality', 47 songs - including those expressing love, devotion and long-term commitment (27 songs), sexual engagement in a somewhat committed relationship (4 songs) or those of a sexual nature that were clearly out of line (16 songs) - did not feature the use of substances. 5 songs within this theme featured both sexual activity and substance use. Incidentally, substance use features more prominently in the songs where there is casual sexual activity.

Of the 38 'party' songs, usually taking place in clubs where there is dancing, an activity that appears in many of the songs, 26 (i.e., 68% of the 38 songs) made reference to some form of physical intimacy, 13 (34%) of which included both sexual activity and substance use. It is of interest, according to my understanding, that none of the 40 songs from the 1980s made reference to substance use. The only allusion to substance, is of the lady that worked at a "cocktail bar" (*Don't You Want Me* by The Human League).

In terms of the theme 'Time', in devoted, committed relationships expressions of wanting to spend eternity together, or of their love being endless were common sentiments, often without the mention of physical intimacy. However, those songs where sexual engagements were short term, there was an urgency, often for immediate gratification where the night of meeting is the night for sexual activity. In

such instances they party, consume alcohol and or drugs, then go to one of their homes to be alone and become intimate.

The most common form of address was 'baby' used in both committed and casual sex relationships. In the committed relationships terms of endearment like 'darling' were used. In relationships that involved sexual activity outside of a serious relationship, and in the context of having a 'good time', women were addressed in more flippant and derogatory terms, the 'milder' ones being 'whore' (*Crank that* by Soulja Boy) and 'hoes' (*In Da Club* by 50 Cent; *Sicko Mode* by Travis Scott). Also of note is the proliferation of derogatory terms used to address women over the four decades. The 40 songs in the decade 1980s do not contain any vulgar or derogatory terms, I picked up 1 in the 1990s, then there were a few in the 2000s, to a whole lot more in the 2010s. Also of note is that the lyrics have become increasing explicit and profuse with regards to sexual activity and substance use.

Another point of interest, in terms of casual sex, is the preoccupation with removing clothes. For example: "I prefer them no clothes...I like women exposed (*Low* by Flo Rida); "I won't stop 'til I get 'em in their birthday suits...it will be off with their clothes" (*Yeah* by Usher); "now you're home with me, you're naked now" (*Party Rock Anthem* by LMFAO). By the Church standards members are to dress modestly, as a safeguard to support chastity.

I have also noticed that they find it important to mention that they have lots of money. For example, "The girls see I got money...hundred dollar bills" (*This Is How We Do It* by Montell Jordan); "Green hundreds in my safe" (*Rockstar* by Post Malone); "I'm fully focussed...my money on my mind" (*In Da Club* by 50 Cent). According to the Church all one's resources are a blessing from God and should be used carefully and wisely. As mentioned in chapter two, people are actually stewards (managers) of these resources, and God is the ultimate owner. A portion belongs to God and is to be 'returned' to Him (i.e., the tithe), and the rest is to be used in a manner so as to appropriately take care of the self and others. Money is not to be used in a frivolous, self-indulgent, and wasteful manner.

It seems that one of the reasons for the mention of how much money they have is a signal that they have enough to engage in the activities of the night. Some examples: "Got money, let's spend it up" (*I Gotta Feelin'* by Black -eyed Peas); "This crazy all night spending my dough... now that's three grand, little mama took my cash,... she was worth the money" (*Low*, by Flo Rida); "Step up fast and be the first girl to make me throw this cash, we get money, don't be mad" (*Party Rock Anthem* by LMFAO). Enough money also means that they can live extravagantly and buy all the fancy things they would like. It also

gives them the advantage over others, so that they can dictate the terms (*That's What I Like*, by Bruno Mars; *Independent Woman* by Destiny's Child; *In Da Club*, 50 Cent).

Another interesting factor is that of losing one's control - losing control by imbibing substances, allowing the music to take control, losing control to another person, or one's body (bodily urges) taking control over one's better judgement. Some examples: "It's only gonna be about a matter of time before you get loose and start to lose your mind, cop you a drink", (*Family Affair* by Mary J Blige); "Got a Hennessy in my hand...Higher powers taking a hold on me (*One Dance* by Drake); "Close your eyes, Let that rhythm get into you. Don't try to fight it" (*Rock with You* by Michael Jackson); "I don't need to try to control you, look into my eyes and I'll own you.... take control own me just for the night" (*Moves Like Jagger* by Maroon 5); "You're so hypnotizing, could you be the devil?" (*E.T.* by Katy Perry); "Try to tell you no, but my body keeps telling you yes" (*One More Night* by Maroon 5)

An important principle in Seventh-day Adventism is that each person is to protect their mind and understand that they are free moral agents. As such, members are encouraged to stay away from anything (substances, music, individuals and so forth) that would reduce and undermine their God-given potential, decision making powers and dignity, to the extent that even within the individual the mind is to control the body and not the other way around. In terms of substances, they are advised to stay away from addictive, mind altering substances like alcohol and drugs, (including caffeine, which is contained in tea, coffee, cola drinks and so forth). In terms of others taking control, Seventh-day Adventists are to recognise that their ultimate dependence is on their Creator-God, a position, it is believed, that no other human being should or can occupy without dire consequences. Thus, they are even to distance themselves from practices like hypnotherapy (for whatever reason it may be suggested) as no other individual is to take control over the mind of another. White (2001, 706) says: "It is not God's design for any human being to yield his mind to another human being".

I recognized 5 songs that were tributes to people who had died. Unlike the other songs, *Candle in the Wind*, by Elton John, did not dwell on the person's (Lady Diana's) state in death. Whereas the other songs stated that the person could hear and see them, was now reconnected with those who had gone before, or was now walking a different path, this song, although addressed to the deceased person, focussed more on the life she had lived and the things she had done to brighten up the lives of others.

A small number of songs (6) were placed under the themes 'Concept of Self' and 'Hope'. In the song *All About That Bass* by Meghan Trainor (which is dealing with the concept of self), it appears that in order to feel good about the self others need to be insulted, where girls of a different size or shape are referred to as "stick figure silicone Barbie doll[s]".

Other possible themes were 'achieving of goals' (1 song), 'promoting harmony/concern for others' (8 songs), 'uprising/ revolt' (1), 'violence' (3), and 'magic/mystical' (1). Some of these appeared to be in line with Seventh-day Adventist philosophy. A few examples: *Black or White* by Michael Jackson seems to be promoting harmony between people of different backgrounds; *Say You, Say Me* by Lionel Richie, is promoting the value of supporting each other; *Eye of the Tiger* by Survivor, is about having the will to survive amidst severe challenges.

An interesting conundrum emerges though, and one that is out of the scope of this study, but important to make mention of. In Seventh-day Adventist terms, it is not just the lyrics of the song that matter, but also the genre within which it sits. Thus, even though a song like *Eye of the Tiger* (mentioned above) appears fine when read out of context of its musical setting/genre, which is rock, when heard in the appropriate tone and attitude (e.g., aggression - common in rock music), the song may project a different meaning, one that is incompatible with the type of demeanour a Seventh-day Adventist ideally would want to develop. (Ballantine (quoted in Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 17) does mention that the type of music within which lyrics are placed can influence, even create an incongruous meaning).

Overall, the messages in 33 songs (21%) appeared to be in line with the Church's principles and standards; 15 (9%) had some positive elements but were not completely in line; 66 (41%) were clearly incompatible; and 28 (18%) were difficult to understand. A further 18 songs (11%) were break-up songs. These were also not easy to categorise as being in line or not as they portray intense human emotions, often of a negative nature, which may not be ideal, but very much a natural response.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have taken an in-depth look into 24 pop songs, and then a brief overview of 160 Billboard hits.

The four pastors agreed that the 24 songs were not in line with the Seventh-day Adventist belief system. As officials who understand and promote the Seventh-day Adventist worldview, their assessments of these songs serve as a benchmark and are of value to this study.

In terms of the 160 Billboard hits, the philosophical themes 'Self Concept', 'Hope' and 'State of the Dead' were represented by only about 11 songs, as a large percentage (over 80%) of the songs had to do with lifestyle and were thus directly related to the lifestyle themes that this thesis deals with – the way people engage in relationships dealing with love and sexuality, how they spend their time, and the things they consume.

Overall, I have noticed a transition in a few aspects. Firstly, there is a steady decline in the number of 'love' songs that were considered to be in line with the Seventh-day Adventist worldview, from 12 songs in the 1980s, 8 in the 1990s, 5 in the 2000s and 2 in the 2010s. On the other hand, there has been an increase in songs that showcase promiscuity, and in songs I have labelled 'party songs' from 4 each in the 1980s and 1990s to 14 and 12 respectively for 2000s and 2010s. Thirty four of the 38 songs in this category ('party songs') were clearly incompatible, with an increase in reference to substance use, language becoming increasingly explicit and vulgar, and with reference to sexual behaviour.

These have implications for the three important areas of human existence that the Church places emphasis on: health, family life and recreation. Engaging with such songs that clearly undermine biblical principles as stipulated in Philippians 4:8, and that dishonour God (1 Corinthians 10:31) (as explained in chapter 2), is incongruent with the Church's stance, and the Christian's endeavour to embrace the type of lifestyle promoted in the Bible as understood by Seventh-day Adventism. It is important to be reminded that the Church does not reject engagement with secular music, however appropriate secular songs will not undermine biblical principles, as seen in the 24 songs which either, promote substance use, dancing, vulgarity, illicit sexual activity, materialism, or attitudes that promote self and human effort which excludes God. Since secular songs generally deal with human issues and to a large extent do not include Christian spirituality, like proclaiming Christ, they can be considered acceptable if they do not promote such practices and attitudes that contradict biblical spirituality as promoted by the Church.

In chapter one I quote Dudley (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 173-174) who mentions four standards of the Church that could become a thing of the past. Two of these which feature prominently in this study are the Church's prohibition on social dancing and engagement with rock music. I have come across many

songs in this study that showcase and invite dancing, and even though this study does not focus on music genres, many songs are in the style of rock (including hybrids of rock). Thus, it is possible that members who freely engage with these aspects (as with others that undermine their belief system) could easily find themselves in conflict with the ethos of the Church, and as Kuusisto (2000, 60) points out this can have an impact on their intention to remain Seventh-day Adventist.

A key objective of this study was to ascertain if and to what extent pop music that people in the local vicinity are generally exposed to carries and encourages beliefs and values which conflict with Seventh-day Adventist principles. It has been found that a large percentage of such songs are unsuitable for members who want to remain true to biblical principles and standards as promoted by the Church.

Chapter 5

Seventh-day Adventists' Comments and Consumption of Pop Music: Results of Interviews

This chapter explores how twelve Seventh-day Adventists in the Durban vicinity, who represent various sectors of society, relate to pop music. The data presented here forms the qualitative segment of this study.

Methods and Approach

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Kwa-Zulu Natal region comprises a number of local congregations. Due to language preference a distinction is sometimes drawn between Zulu speaking churches, and the 'minority churches' which consist of a mix of races. The minority churches consist of 44 congregations with a membership of about 2440 and use English as the medium (except for one congregation that is Afrikaans speaking). For the purposes of this study, I have chosen to draw participants from the minority churches since these have a representation from the various race groups. I also envisaged that this grouping was more likely to be exposed to the music this study examines.

In this local vicinity members across congregations tend to know each other as the church often runs combined meetings. Camp meeting²¹ is one of those and is held annually. At these camp meetings members stay at a designated venue for a few days, where they worship and socialise. Despite the close-knit nature of the local Seventh-day Adventist community, I endeavoured to engage individuals who at most knew me only peripherally or, to my knowledge, were unfamiliar with my position on the topic at hand.

The Covid pandemic presented challenges in terms of access to the Seventh-day Adventist members in this vicinity, as the country was on lockdown and movement and social interaction was restricted. Churches were closed during the time I received ethical clearance from the university, and the only way to facilitate the process and gain access to potential participants was through digital technology.

²¹ Camp meeting is held annually. Historically, it was like going camping where the meetings were held on a huge camp site where tents were set up, in which people stayed for the duration of the meetings.

Bearing in mind that a fairly small sample of twelve members would suffice for the qualitative segment of this study (see chapter one), I had to exercise some discretion in order to secure the sample of members that would be interviewed. I was also looking for some specific characteristics amongst the potential participants. Further, since the interviews were to be conducted remotely, via the online conference platform *Zoom*, candidates had to have access to this medium.

Furthermore, there were certain criteria necessary to gain the answers for this study. One was to engage participants who conscientiously embraced the Seventh-day Adventist worldview. I decided that a suitable grouping that may well meet this criterion are members who are leaders in the church. People who qualify to be leaders are normally practicing Seventh-day Adventists, are baptised, and are familiar with the standards and principles of the church. This 'committed' group of members may not fully reflect the extent of commitment of the majority of ordinary members. This would therefore limit the conclusions that can be drawn about the behaviour of members in general, in terms of their engagement and experience with pop music.

Further considerations were that various race groups, both genders, various age groups, and various congregations were to be represented in the sample.

Thus, a stratified sampling method, with a leaning towards nonprobability sampling was used (Collins 2000, 155, 158). The following sampling frame has already been mentioned in chapter one, but for convenience, I repeat it here. Two members were to comprise each group. Members were drawn from 10 congregations within the local vicinity.

4. Individuals who are actively involved in music in the church (to gain an understanding of how someone involved in church music relates to pop music).
5. Individuals who listen regularly to pop music on East Coast Radio (the understanding is that such individuals will have encountered the selected songs and may have useful comments on how they think about and relate to such songs).
6. Individuals who are parents (to hear perspectives on pop music from a parental perspective).
7. Youth - single, no children, perhaps students (to a large extent pop music speaks to youth issues, thus the intention to gather attitudes and involvement with pop music from a young person's perspective).
8. Young people who are married. A grouping of individuals who may offer a different perspective from perhaps young people in the same age group, yet are single, especially on themes relating to love and relationships, and aspects of a social nature.
9. Senior Adults. These may add yet another dimension due to their years of experience.

In order to produce results that more accurately reflect how Seventh-day Adventists in the local vicinity engage with and view pop music, I have attempted to work on a research design that would safeguard against errors like “inaccurate observation”, “overgeneralisation”, “selective observation”, “ego involvement in understanding” and “the premature closure of inquiry” (Collins 2002, 7-8).

I have attempted to be deliberate about the way I have observed the occurrence and role of pop music in everyday life. I have gathered a fair amount of data from published research, religious publications for the ordinary Seventh-day Adventist and intensive interviews so as to avoid the tendency to overgeneralise, a situation that can occur when just a few, similar features are made to represent the norm. To avoid the tendency to be selective in my observation, I have had to be cautious not to over-emphasise features that appear prominent to me while ignoring those that exist beyond my normal range of engagement, and which may not seem as apparent in my line of thinking. Even though this study highlights songs that appear to undermine the Seventh-day Adventist perspective, I also acknowledge that I cannot generalise this to all pop songs.

I have been cognisant of the fact, as Collins (2002, 8) points out, that I am personally, as well as intellectually, involved in this search for knowledge and that my understanding of events and conditions are psychologically significant to me. With this in mind, I have taken measures to steer away from the tendency for “ego involvement”, by being as rigorous and academically sceptical as possible in understanding and reporting the information I have had to deal with.

Further, I have taken measures to prevent closing the inquiry too soon, before enough data has been collected to produce a more accurate understanding of the situation. In terms of this qualitative segment of the study I have engaged twelve interviewees, a number which according to Strauss and Corwin (Breen 2006, 466) is adequate, as the researcher can expect to achieve data saturation within ten to twelve interviews.

The prepared interview schedule (included in the appendix) worked well, and I found no need to deviate from the plan, except for adding question 5.4 to the original schedule. In addition, during each interview it was, at times, necessary to interject with follow-up questions for clarity, where I needed more information, or when I wanted a particular opinion, for example on specific lyrics. This was done in a manner so as to try to solicit the respondents’ opinions without attempting to influence or steer their responses in any particular direction.

Collins (2002, 134) says that interviews should be planned and conducted such that respondents feel encouraged to speak freely. Only as the interview progressed and a sufficient level of disclosure, through exposure to the songs themselves, was achieved, was I able to be more open about the study, and towards the end of the interview make known my reasons for doing this study.

In order to set respondents' minds at ease and to create a neutral, unprejudiced footing towards pop music, one of the points I made in my introductory comments to each interviewee was that, in terms of its official position, the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not condemn engagement with secular music, as it has a place in people's lives, as it speaks to the common issues of life.

In the context of these interviews the possibility exists that respondents' answers were in some way affected by them knowing that I am a member of the Church and that I know their community.

Each respondent was expected to comment on an average of 6 songs, one from each theme. Ideally each of the 24 songs would be addressed by three interviewees. Although this was largely the case, in some instances I had to make an adjustment where for example I had to substitute an unfamiliar song with one that was more familiar to the interviewee, even though that song had already been addressed by 3 previous interviewees. That being said, not all songs were known to the interviewees who commented on them. For example, interviewee S2 did not know any of the songs presented to her. Questions three and four related specifically to the songs on the playlist and thus were repeated for each song.

Songs that Appear to Undermine Seventh-day Adventist Principles

Below is the structure of questions 3 and 4 of each interview.

A short, pre-recorded snippet of each song was played followed by the questions.

3.1 How well do you know this song?

- ◆ I know this song well, and I can sing along with it.
- ◆ I have heard this song before, but I am not too familiar with it.
- ◆ I have not heard this song before.

3.2 Is this the kind of song you would like to sing along with?

3.3. Would you be happy to share it with your friends?

3.4. Would you have it playing in the background as you go about doing some chores or while travelling etc.?

3.5. If you like this song, what do you like about it?

3.6. Is there anything you dislike about this song?

The candidate was given a few minutes to read through the lyrics, then to answer the following questions.

4.1. What message is this song promoting?

4.2. Would you say this song is in line with, or not in line with your belief system as a Seventh-day Adventist? Can you explain why?

4.3. Before you read the lyrics were you aware that this song portrayed this/these sentiment(s)?

Since I envisaged that question four was to open up a new dimension in relation to the pop songs (and thus compromise further enquiry), I found it necessary to have each respondent answer question three for all of the six selected songs before they were introduced to question four. As mentioned above, for question three they had to listen to a snippet of each song and then express how they felt about the song. Once this was done, they were then introduced to question four where they read the lyrics of these songs independently of the music. This line of questioning was to help ascertain what type of listener each respondent is and to find out what are the similarities and differences in the way this group of believers listen to or receive pop music. This process proved that being confronted by the lyrics of a song without the music was something new to almost (if not) all of the respondents, and that this process uncovered sentiments and meanings in the songs that appear to be masked when coupled with the music. I do acknowledge that I may have received different answers had my line of questioning proceeded on to question four, directly after question three, for each of the songs.

The interviews took longer than originally anticipated – an average of about an hour and forty minutes. Three of the interviews were conducted over two sessions due to time constraints. One factor that contributed to the length of the interviews was that questions three and four were repeated six times (for each of the six songs). This took a fair amount of time. Another reason was that the majority of the interviewees had stories to tell and a lot of information that they wished to share. This was due to the fact that the interview schedule comprised mainly open questions and as Collins (2002, 179) points out, open questions encourage interviewees to freely express their “attitudes, emotions, ideas, sentiments, suggestions and opinions”. I found this to be valuable and appreciated that the respondents were willing to invest their time and not rush through the interview. Many songs were tied up with memories or invited thoughts that needed to be expressed.

This study is not designed to draw conclusions about the general population of Seventh-day Adventists. The interviewees, a cohort of Seventh-day Adventists who are leaders in their churches, who may be

more 'serious' about their religion, may be taking measures in relating to the outside world that may not reflect that of the members at large. Thus, as much as valuable lessons may be drawn from these interviews, it may not be appropriate to generalise these to all Seventh-day Adventists in this vicinity. However, the value in this study is that it brings to the fore aspects of pop music and of the way people listen to music that may not be easily or readily perceived, and which is worth making people aware of so that their choices in relation to pop music are informed.

In terms of how to present the data to a large extent I will "let the stories 'speak'" as suggested by Coetzee and Woods (1995, quoted in Collins 2002, 239).

In terms of the interview schedule, the aim of question one was to derive a general sense of how each interviewee felt about and related to music, what type of music they engaged with and so forth. Question two refers specifically to pop music: where it is encountered; if it is listened to by choice; and personal feelings about pop music.

Question three was designed to help gauge what type of listener the interviewee was. The procedure was that each interviewee would listen to a snippet of each individual song and then answer question 3.1-3.6, until the batch of songs (1 from each theme) was completed.

As explained above, only after question three was completed, was the interviewee introduced to question four as it was anticipated that question four would introduce a new perspective. This question was designed to help the researcher understand if there was a difference in how people engaged with the lyrics when they were heard in the song (i.e., with the music) and when they stood alone. However, in the discussion below I present responses to question three followed by question four for each song.

Question five was designed to gather some concluding remarks:

Question 5.4 (How has this exercise impacted you? Were you previously aware of the lyrics?) was not in the original interview schedule, however after having arrived at the conclusion of the first interview, it seemed necessary to ask this question, which was subsequently added to the schedule.

One of the conditions that was decided upon in terms of the information gathered, was that interviewees would remain anonymous. The reason for this was that the stratified sampling method was

applied to draw people who would represent different categories of Seventh-day Adventist listeners, rather than represent themselves. I have thus created 'code-names' or labels to reflect the category each represents so the reader can more easily recognise the category being represented. Thus, the single youth with no children were labelled Y1 and Y2; Parents with children (who are youth) PWC1, and who are minors (PWC2); Married young adults were MYA1 and MYA2; Seniors are S1 and S2; Those actively involved in music at church are MC1 and MC2; and those who listen regularly to East Coast Radio are LR1 and LR2.

Results from the Interviews

Question One

1.1. Does music occupy an important place in your life?

Music generally plays an important role in the lives of the interviewees.

1.2. What type (genre) of music would you be referring to?

Nine of the interviewees engage primarily, (four of whom, exclusively) with gospel music. In addition to gospel music, one listens to Western classical music, while another listens to, what he refers to as Epic music, as an alternative to secular popular music. One likes to exercise to house music and one also likes R&B, traditional songs and pop. The two youth are quite involved with recorded secular music of varying styles like Afro-beats, ama-piano, hip hop, pop, jazz, and Western classical music. One interviewee likes pop music of the 70s and 80s, which was the music of his youth.

1.3. When do you engage with your preferred type of music?

They listen mainly while driving, exercising, relaxing, at home, and on Sabbaths (during which time only Christian/gospel music is engaged with).

1.4. Why do you like this type of music?

Music is selected quite intentionally for specific purposes and to create or regulate the intended mood. For example, some use the more fast-paced music when exercising or doing chores and the slower "more chilled" music when relaxing (Y2 2021). Some responses on what music does: On gospel music

- "it uplifts me" (PWC1 2021), "it strengthens my faith" (S2 2021). LR2 (2021) likes the pop music that was popular when he was younger and says, "it's like an escape into the past". MYA1 (2021) says that when her lifestyle changed, her music preferences changed.

Question Two

2.1. Have you ever heard pop music playing in the background in public places? And

2.2. If you have, where?

All say that it is common to hear pop music in public places (like at shopping malls, stores, restaurants, gyms), public transport (like taxis), the beach front, doctors' rooms, places of recreation and entertainment, other people's cars, even from taxis passing by while they are sitting in church.

2.3. Do you listen to pop music by choice?

Six participants have chosen not to listen to pop music at all, while the others do, some more-so than others. A few listen to popular music on the radio while some have playlists on their phones. It is especially interesting how important a role popular music plays in the lives of the two single youth.

2.4. Do you listen to pop music on the radio?

A few mentioned that they listened to pop music on the radio, especially while driving. Some have access to music through their phones rather than using the radio. Six of them (PWC1 2021; PWC2 2021; S1 2021; S2 2021; MC2 2021 and MYA1 2021) do not listen to pop music, therefore they do not use the radio for that purpose.

2.5. Do you like pop music? (Explain why or why not)

Those who like pop music, like it for the way it makes them feel. LR2 (2021) likes pop music because it puts him in a good mood and is "more of an emotional stabilizer" (LR2 2021). MYA2 (2021) finds some pop music motivational, yet not a message he completely agrees with, so he treats it like fish where he would "eat the meat and leave the bones". Quite a few who enjoy pop music like it because it has a nice beat.

Amongst the reasons that some dislike pop music is that it is often "loud, frivolous and suggestive" (PWC1 2021); it sometimes says "very un-Christian things" (S2 2021); it's like "sorcery"- medicating the mind and designed to deceive people (PWC2 2021). MYA1 (2021) says that pop music was everything

to her when she was younger. Even though she was Seventh-day Adventist, she was “not dedicated” and “played it everywhere”. When she watched some DVDs on the power music has to influence people, and the negative impact music, like certain types of secular music, can have on the mind, she decided to stop listening to pop music, and endeavoured to engage only with gospel music.

MC2 (2021) explains that when he was younger, he liked pop music, then felt the need to make some changes. He states:

I used to write music in line with pop songs. But then I started to dig deeper in terms of my relationship with God and the Bible. I made many changes. One of those was music. I honestly felt the [secular pop] music I was engaging with affected my beliefs.

2.6. Are you selective about what pop songs you are exposed to? (If yes, and if you listen to it on the radio, how do you exercise selectivity?)

Those who listen to popular music, say they are selective about what they choose. At this point, being selective for one of the interviewees, is a matter of avoiding “some rowdy songs... with vulgarity” (LR2 2021) He prefers the “much cooler” music (LR2 2021).

Those who listen to the radio switch it off or change the station if they don't like the song. MYA2 (2021) is keen to protect his children and would change the channel - “I don't want my children to hear that”. MC1 (2021) finds it funny that her children sometimes want to switch on the radio when they are in the car: “[Laughs] My kids especially love doing this. If we're at the garage and they maybe hear something there [ECR playing in the forecourt], then they'll switch on the radio [ECR] in the car”. MC2 (2021), who does not want to listen to pop music has a problem as “ECR is 'blazing' at work”. He gets them to turn down the volume and thinks of it as “background noise... at times it's like it's not even there”.

2.7. Do you like having pop music playing in the background while you are busy doing other things, like chores around the house, or studying or office work?

2.8. Why or why not?

A few like pop music playing in the background while they are doing chores or are at gym. Some of the reasons people like background music: One said that when he is alone and puts on music (usually gospel), then he does not feel alone. Another uses it to keep him from feeling sleepy when driving at night.

Some liked to have pop music playing in the background when they were younger, but not anymore.

Eight interviewees do not like pop in the background. Some reasons were: "The devil can gain easy access to the mind through pop" (PWC1 2021). MYA2 (2021) cannot have it playing when doing office work because it would distract him as he likes to engage with the lyrics. LR2 (2021) also finds that it would be a disturbance if he is "doing something constructive".

MYA1 (2021) says:

I like total quietness when I work. Sometimes they put on ECR at work. I cannot concentrate on my work... so I ask them to please put it soft, or I close my office door. It's a distraction. I don't know how they work with music on.

MYA1 (2021) is also conflicted about listening to pop music:

I really feel like the Holy Spirit is speaking to me - this is not edifying Christ, why are you listening to it? I would feel bad within myself.

2.9. What benefits do you experience from having pop music playing in your hearing?

Some of the benefits of having pop music playing in the background: "It makes work less painful and more bearable" (Y2 2021), "makes whatever you're doing more enjoyable" (Y1 2021), it can be a "mood lifter" (MC1 2021), "can give you a boost" (LR2 2021).

LR2 (2021) says:

sometimes you're feeling down when you get up in the morning for work. You get into the car and listen to something that's a bit cheerful and fast to help you perk up a bit.

General Findings per Theme

Questions three and four focused on the themes which form a core component of this study (see chapters one, two, three and four). Each theme is discussed separately below.

Theme: Concept of Self

The songs for this segment of the study are *The Greatest Love of All* (Whitney Houston), *Hero* (Mariah Carey), *My All* (Mariah Carey) and *I Have Nothing* (Whitney Houston).

These songs were familiar to most participants. A few liked the song they listened to as it was nostalgic (Y1 2021), they liked the voice and style of the music (S1 2021) and found the music soothing and relaxing (MYA1 2021). Some readily embraced some of the songs as they liked that they encouraged a positive image of the self - i.e. *The Greatest Love of All* and *Hero* (MYA2 2021), or that the expression of devotion was heartfelt and sincere (LR2 2021) (*My All* and *I Have Nothing*).

The general consensus, after having read the lyrics was that such songs contained truth mixed with error in terms of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview. For the songs that look at the self as the ultimate hero, MYA2 (2021) and S1 (2021) felt that it is good to have a positive view of the self, but it is problematic when the self is made to take the place of God in one's life. They felt that God is the ultimate on whom people should depend since self is limited. The songs about attachment to another individual portrays such dependence on the other person, where the person's sense of worth is reduced to nothing (MC2 2021). LR1 (2021) says that in this life "you will have people you depend on, but it doesn't end with them. Y2 (2021) states that the whole being should belong to no one else but God.

MYA2 (2021) was previously so impressed by the song *Greatest Love of All* that he had recently shared the song with his child to encourage her to be her own person and "never to walk in anyone's shadow".

However, when he read the lyrics at the interview he said:

I had not looked at it in this microscopic way before ['microscopic'- i.e., reading the lyrics apart from the music]. There are some lines where the person insinuates that you have to depend on yourself which is just becoming a slight problem... where was she looking if she couldn't find anyone to fulfil her needs? Christ will supply all your needs... "A lonely place to be...so I depended on myself" - that for me is heretic - I wouldn't want my kids to do that.

He goes on to say that it is a "subtle and deadly message".

LR2 (2021) felt that the song *I Have Nothing* portrayed a “good message”:

In today's relationships you don't find that real love that she's expressing here. She's trying to say life is meaningless if she can't have him... She's expressing the depth of her love.

After reading the lyrics he was asked if it was in line with his belief system:

Now that's a bit of a tough question...her love is deep; she's probably being obsessive. I guess she's just declaring her love.

PWC2's (2021) comment in this category sums up the Christian approach to attaining what the above singers hope to find in either themselves or in another human being:

The life of a Christian is a life that is surrendered to the will of God, depending totally upon God for everything, and only in that do we find true happiness, love, strength, joy, everything she's trying to mention in the song... I cannot find it within, I need to look outside of myself to find it.

Theme: Hope

The songs *Stand Up for Love* (Destiny's Child); *We are the World* (Michael Jackson/ USA for Africa); *One Moment in Time* (Whitney Houston) and *From a Distance* (Bette Midler) were used to explore this theme.

Each of these songs was generally well known to the participants who listened to them. The first and last were a little less familiar.

After listening to a part of a song and before reading the lyrics, some of the reasons people liked a song were “it's a cool song” (Y1 2021); “it sounds decent and safe, you feel protected by God” (LR1 2021); “reaching out to people is a good message” (S1 2021); or they liked the feel of the song - that “it was not rowdy” (PWC1 2021); and that it “sounds acceptable- the melody, harmony and rhythm sound fine” (PWC2 2021). However, after reading the lyrics many changed their minds with responses like “this song can be a subtle deception” (PWC2 2021); “on the surface it looks ok, but it is completely out of line...” (S1 2021); “at first I thought it was a good song... now I don't agree” (LR1 2021).

An example of such a change of mind is the response of MYA2 (2021) after he heard a few phrases of *We are the World* and later his reaction when he got to read the lyrics.

After listening a little to the song:

It gives you goosebumps because they talk about unity and how we have a choice to make this world a better place. Later they sing about dear God, we are the children... I like this type of song. They speak to the heart, the core fibre of who human beings should be...you have to be a narcissist to hate such songs. There's nothing I dislike about the song.

He has a rethink after reading the lyrics. When asked if the song was in line with what he believed he responds:

No, no, no, not until I read now... But it was just an excitement of seeing the collaboration of artists but not paying attention to detail. So, I think reading the lyrics helps... sometimes if you just do something on the fifth gear, you'll end up agreeing with things that you shouldn't be agreeing with. So, you need to go back down to gear one and pay attention to detail.

Some reasons offered for disliking a song were the emphasis on human effort, such that God was being left out of the picture in an endeavour to solve the problems in this world (MC1 2021); PWC2 (2021); Y1 (2021), or that the idea that God was at a distance portrayed a "twisted" message about God (MC2 2021), or that a song was all about the self, eclipsing the important role God plays in defining people's worth (Y1 (2021); S1 (2021); MYA1 2021).

Of the twelve respondents that listened to the songs in this theme, three people thought that the song they heard had a good message and maintained this position after they had read the lyrics. I found that they tried to reinterpret into their worldview what others had seen as incongruent. I quote the following response to the song *From a Distance* as an example.

LR2 (2021)

[It is in line] because it's in tune with what we can look forward to when Jesus comes again. These are some of the things that will be there- peace, harmony, no more hunger. When they say God is watching from a distance - He is someone that's close, through His Holy Spirit, but I guess the person who composed the song had a feeling that God is watching from a distance.

Theme: State of the Dead

The songs *One Sweet Day* (Mariah Carey and Boys II Men), *Can You Hear Me* (Missy Elliot), *I'll Be Missing You* (Puff Daddy) and *See You Again* (Wiz Khalifa) were selected for this category.

These songs were generally known to the respondents, although a few were unfamiliar with the song they listened to.

Most respondents did not like the songs in this category as they understood that the general idea being promoted was that the dead were living on somewhere, mostly that they were in heaven, were conscious and could watch over them and hear them. All held that such a message was out of line with the Bible teaching on death as held by Seventh-day Adventism (see chapter two).

PWC1 (2021) explains:

We believe that when you die, you're asleep until Jesus comes to wake you up and then only you get together with Him.

S1 (2021) states:

It says the person is face to face with the Creator... But the Bible says when you die you return to dust... and the breath of God, that is the life-giving power that God places in us, goes back to God.

After listening to the song in this category, a few said they liked the song they listened to even though some of them were aware that it conveyed a message they did not agree with. Some reasons were that they thought "it was not harmful" (LR1 2021), they "liked the voice" (MC1 2021 and Y1 2021) "the hook was catchy" (Y1 2021), or it had a "nice message of missing a dead loved one" (Y2 2021). However, these interviewees did not realise the extent to which the 'incorrect' message was being promoted, and only picked this up after reading the lyrics. Some comments they made after reading the lyrics: "This one, no matter how sentimental, it's just incorrect" (MYA2 2021), "the Bible says the dead know nothing, this song is depicting something contrary" (LR2 2021), "I wasn't aware of all the lyrics" (Y1 2021).

PWC2 (2021) listened to a part of the song and said, “the words sound ok”. His response changed after he read the lyrics:

The deception in this song is hectic. If you don't know the words, it's crazy. You hear the word heaven- you think it's probably gospel. It's promoting when you die you go to heaven. And when you look down from heaven you hear the person.

When asked if he was aware of the message before he read the lyrics:

No, not at all. You think it's a gospel song – “heaven”, “prayer”, “Lord” is mentioned. But the deception in it is that when you die you go to heaven.

LR1 (2021) heard the song *See You Again* at a funeral, and thought it was very appropriate as it brought the assurance of seeing the loved one again. However, when he got to read the lyrics, he responded:

I didn't agree with some of the lyrics, but I still liked the song. But now I know the content...I'm thankful I got to read [the lyrics] so I get a better understanding.

LR2 (2021) felt that a mature person could listen to such a song and overlook the incongruent messages but felt that those who are younger or who are grieving and vulnerable, and who do not know about the state of the dead, could be ‘wrongly’ influenced.

Lifestyle Themes

A lot of the 12 songs in the following three themes have a common thread running through them in the sense that the element of time, substance use, and sexual activity are all present simultaneously. Thus, when interviewees read the lyrics in each category, they did not box their comments within the theme of that section, but freely commented on whichever aspect struck them. However, when addressing each of the following themes, I have selected comments that pertain to those themes.

Theme: Time

The songs *I Gotta Feeling* (Black Eyed Peas), *Last Friday Night* (Katy Perry), *Low* (Flo Rida), and *Love in the Club* (Usher) were used for this theme.

Of the twelve interviewees who listened to a song in this category eight knew the song (some very well), while five did not. Most did not like the song they listened to. Of the two that liked the song, Y1 (2021) liked it enough to want to sing along with it. He liked the memories it evoked, taking him back to when he was much younger, and that it was “catchy”.

Y2 (2021), who commented on the same song (Low), also expressed a liking for it:

It's fast paced. It's a fun song, nostalgic. I definitely still will listen to it...it's easy to sing along with.

Y2 (2021) later reads the lyrics and [exclaims]:

Oh, this is terrible. The terrible thing is as I'm reading it, I'm singing along.

By the time the interviewees had read the lyrics of the songs in this section, they were all in agreement that these songs are not in line with the Church's principles. Some of the comments on the aspect of time: “We promote the health message- staying up all night is not healthy. It's not good for your mind or body” (Y1 2021); “It goes against our health principles to have a lifestyle where your sleep does not matter” (PWC2 2021); “They party everyday... there's no Sabbath... Drinking, dancing, nightlife, partying around the clock. Where's the time for you to worship? This is not a song to listen to” (MYA1 2021); “She's talking of partying through the whole night...we don't party, not in this type of fashion. We have good, clean fun” (LR2 2021).

On the song *Last Friday Night* which has specific implications for Sabbath, which starts at sunset on a Friday evening, PWC1's comment (2021) is succinct:

With us Friday night is holy time - our Sabbath begins. They're making it a frivolous time... In this fast-paced life, that Friday night-Saturday, is important. We need time with God, family time is important.

MC1 (2021) finds it interesting that Saturday, (the Sabbath) is stated twice when they mention partying every day of the week, in the song *I Gotta Feeling*. Perhaps this stands out for her because in the Seventh-day Adventist mind the Sabbath is unique compared to all the other days of the week as it is

believed to be sacred time. Thus, placing emphasis on it as the song does, is like singling it out to especially 'transgress' it, and as PWC1 (2021) points out "they're making it a frivolous time".

MC1 (2021) also brings to the fore the issue of temperance and alludes to the '8 Laws of Health' (NEWSTART), as explained in Chapter 2:

As Adventists we promote being temperate in all things- like getting enough sleep, looking after our bodies which is the temple of the Lord, so not using drugs, going to bed early, exercising, putting in healthy food. Not being promiscuous... and stewardship as well- what we do with what we have been blessed with, both monetary and our bodies.

Theme: Substance

Songs in this category were *We are Young* (Fun), *Tik Tok* (Kesha), *Buy U a Drank* (T-Pain) and *Party Rock Anthem* (LMFAO).

Twelve people listened to songs in this category, of whom eight had previously heard the song they listened to. Two of the individuals who knew the song liked it - Y1 (2021) being happy to sing along with the song, and LR2 (2021) having heard it many times before was happy to engage with it. He said that he had heard the song many times and that it had "latched onto" him. He says:

I like the tune. The lyrics are good. It makes sense...the sort of lyrics you can listen to and sing along with.

However, after having read the lyrics, both Y1 (2021) and LR2 (2021) had a change of mind. Y1 (2021) says he was not aware of the message as he "didn't pay attention to the lyrics". LR2's response (2021) was:

Now when you look at the lyrics properly... it depicts a worldly lifestyle... all the indulgences...

Both further expounded on why they did not agree with the lyrics.

LR2 (2021):

The lifestyle depicted is contrary to our belief system. When you take substances it ...dulls the mind and the senses...you start doing things you wouldn't do in your normal state. When you're

high on drugs or are drunk...you make decisions that you wouldn't normally make when sober. It affects your thinking, choices, decisions.

Y1 (2021):

There's alcohol, probably drugs. Just the idea of losing your mind is something we don't promote. We're very straightforward about God in your mind. We don't pull any punches there. You must have control over your mind because that's where Satan attacks, and when you do these things like drink alcohol, take drugs, and you lose control of your mind that's where it's easy for temptation to slip in... So, this whole atmosphere that is being described, in a club or house party- not what Adventists should be doing.

All agree that the songs in this category depict a lifestyle of alcohol and drug use which is believed to be destructive and contrary to the standards of the Church.

Theme: Love, Relationships, Sexuality

The songs in this segment were *That's What I Like* (Bruno Mars), *It Wasn't Me* (Shaggy), *Shape of You* (Sheeran), and *I'll Make Love to You* (Boyz II Men)

Of the twelve people who listened to a song in this category, eight had heard the song before (some of whom knew it very well). Four did not know the song. A few liked the song with reasons like- "It has a catchy tune" (MC1 2021), "it perks you up" (LR2 2021), "the talent is amazing" (MYA2 2021), "he has a very smooth voice" (LR1 2021).

Y1 (2021) said of *That's What I Like*:

It's got a good beat. It follows a good rhythm that's easy to follow with these driving patterns. The lyrics are quite easy. It's just a nice easy-going song.

His impression changed when he read the lyrics:

It's very materialistic... very much based on what he can give materially. Trying to get her to like him for what he has rather than who he is. It doesn't seem as if there's any substance in this relationship. Besides travelling, buying... nothing about feeling. It's purely sexual and money.

MYA2 (2021) was initially very much in favour of *I'll Make Love to You*. He thought it would be a good song for married couples to use to spice up their marriages, but it was inappropriate to be in the public arena:

So, this song is in the public, everyone is listening to it. It's very dangerous because there are people who don't have the morals some of us do ... If you're a young man or young girl, you find yourself doing things that you don't have business in doing....and what thoughts is it bringing to the young child's mind?

There were quite a few negative reactions where interviewees felt a song was all about "pleasing the flesh" (Y2 2021), that "life is about who can I sleep with?" (PWC2 2021), and that often alcohol played a role in getting them into a state of mind to be promiscuous and do things they would not do when sober. As MC1 (2021) stated: "their senses are numbed, and their reasoning is out the door".

PWC1 (2021) was taken aback when he heard *It Wasn't Me*. (His response reminded me of my reaction to the song as I explained in chapter three):

Yo! Listen to the words. It's shocking! ... Ooh, the words are so vulgar and obscene. It's like an X-rated song. It's terrible even for me to hear it as an adult, imagine more for a child...That's a song that should be banned.

After reading the lyrics of *That's what I Like* PWC2 (2021) points out things that are promoted that do not fit into the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle:

It's promoting a life of pleasure... sex before marriage, unclean foods, jewellery. It's a sensual life. Life is about who can I sleep with? Where can I stay? Instead of God. A life of indulgence.

Question Five: Concluding Remarks from Interviewees

Whereas question three brought in a variety of responses, showing that interviewees were in some ways in different spaces when it came to how they related to the pop songs, question four seemed to have them all in agreement that the messages in the pop songs were different from the worldview they embraced.

There were various reasons for how people felt about pop music. Some liked how it made them feel, quite a few saying that they liked the beat. There were some who disliked it, especially for what the beat did to them - as it invited a physical reaction - "it moves the flesh" (PWC1 2021), which they resisted. For some, certain words or phrases stood out in a song. The positive meaning they thought these words and phrases conveyed turned out to be quite different when they were read in context. Some had already distanced themselves from secular music, and at least one of them did so, for fear that it might contain 'hidden' messages. Before interviewees read the lyrics of the songs (and after having listened to snippets of them) their positions on the pop songs were to an extent diverse, some expressing a liking for the songs they heard, admiration for the talented voices and the technical skill reflected in the production. Others expressed a general dislike for the songs, resisting that they elicited a physical response, or were wary or aware that the messages may not be in line with their belief system. However, after reading the lyrics (on average 6 songs by each interviewee, which means that each of the 24 songs was read on average 3 times), there was a more congruent attitude toward the playlist as almost all had come onto the same side for almost all the songs, believing that the messages in the songs were not in line with the Seventh-day Adventist belief system. Except for 2 favourable responses (LR2 (2021) on *I have Nothing* and S2 on *One Moment in Time*) the general consensus i.e., 72 of the 74 responses to the 24 songs (97%) were that the songs were out of line with the Seventh-day Adventist belief system. Incidentally, according to the 4 pastors (comments in chapter 4), all 24 songs were considered out of line.

Question: 5.1.

Would you say it is necessary to be selective about the music one listens to, if so, why?

There was a unanimous yes. Some reasons offered were concerns that one can be led astray by the 'wrong messages' if one is not knowledgeable. Since music feeds the mind and contributes to the way you think, it should be in line with your core beliefs. Music can so engage the listener that their guard can be let down and the wrong message can get into their subconscious without them realizing it.

MC2 (2021) says:

Music bypasses a lot of conscious thinking and if we don't consciously choose what we listen to a lot of barriers psychologically get hammered and broken down in terms of what you believe, how you do things and how thoughts are shaped. It's a battle for the mind, the choice you make for God or not... So, choose music that is wholesome, good, pure, true, holy.

LR2 (2021), who was quite familiar with the pop songs, and initially easily embraced them stated:

It's very important. It can impact your lifestyle if one is weak. Depending on the emotional state of the person... it can be like a life-changer for them. It can have a lasting effect on our minds... You have to be selective, especially the young people of today and the music that they are bombarded with.

Question: 5.2.

Do you think it is okay for Seventh-day Adventists to listen to songs that they know undermine their belief system, with the intention of enjoying the music, and ignoring the message?

Some felt that it is not possible to fully ignore the message, as S2 (2021) says "as you listen to the music, you hear the words anyway", and MYA1 (2021) says that you cannot take one without the other- "It is all captured in the brain".

PWC1 (2021) questions the purpose of listening to something that undermines one's beliefs, saying "If it's going against my beliefs, it will draw me away from God". LR1 (2021), MC2 (2021), PWC1 (2021), PWC2 (2021), S1 (2021), S2 (2021), MYA1 (2021), and MYA2 (2021) felt that if you spend enough time with something, you can end up believing it, as constantly hearing the same message can have an impact on your mind. S1 (2021) quotes the Bible text 1 Corinthians 15:33 which says that people should not be deceived as evil communication corrupts good manners.

MC2 (2021) uses an analogy to describe the idea:

I look at it as a door- your belief system is there and there's a door that locks all of these things in and the more you listen to things that are not part of your beliefs they hammer this door down... these things start to get in... then you start making changes to your life because your belief system is starting to change.

LR1 (2021) used to listen to songs that had lyrics he did not agree with:

Personally, I thought it was ok until now. I've kind of gotten educated about it. I'm just thinking at some point if you're gonna continue listening to it it's gonna trigger. So, no I don't think it's good... I think it would be unsafe.

LR2 (2021) is a little conflicted on this matter:

I can't go and contradict myself now... I, being mature enough, if the song were in the background while I'm busy working (and I'm paying attention to the beat, not much to the lyrics) were to listen to a song, I'd probably go with it. But when you're much younger the lyrics catch you faster... When I was growing up, I basically knew all the lyrics of the songs...but as you grow older you don't seem to [learn] the lyrics... I don't know why, maybe it's old age, so you don't really try to hear the words in the song. You just go with the beat... [it] perks you up... I would say do not listen to a song if not in line with our belief system.

Question: 5.3.

In your opinion how should Seventh-day Adventists relate to songs that appear to encourage behaviours and beliefs that run contrary to what the church stands for?

The general view is that they should not be listening to such music.

MYA1 (2021) says:

We shouldn't be listening to it or playing it... we might fall into darkness. Guard yourself- the things that come out of your mouth you're professing. I can't believe I sang that Shaggy song.

PWC2 (2021) says:

We should treat it the same way we treat alcohol or anything else we disagree with. Let's not compromise. Let's not tread on forbidden ground. Let's not expose ourselves to it. Obviously, you cannot stay away from malls if you need to buy something...but avoid places where these things are playing like clubs and bars... avoid it like the plague.

Y2 (2021) agrees that such music should not be listened to yet envisages it would be a struggle as she likes "a good song, especially the beat".

LR2 (2021) explains the challenge especially for young people:

That's a bit difficult. People will go ahead and listen to what they want to. It all depends on the individual... like the younger generation is bombarded with this type of music. Wherever they are- with their friends, in the car, or with their phones they have music playing. Lots of young

people with earphones... it's a different ballgame today. They will listen to whatever they want. Unless the child is really disciplined and who is really God-fearing... but today it's very difficult being young. But I guess as you grow older you get wiser... you listen to much quieter music.

Question: 5.4.

How has this exercise impacted you? Were you previously aware of the lyrics?

All agreed that they need to pay attention to the lyrics of songs.

Some responses were:

"It was an eye-opener, I definitely learned something" (MC1 2021); "It made me realise that I should listen more to the words to see if it's in line..." (Y2 2021); "I've never seen it from that perspective because I never tend to listen to the lyrics in the past, but now, the music that I do listen to, I listen to the lyrics and it does have an impact" (PWC1 2021); "We listen, we get excited but we're actually getting a message that we don't know we're getting... So I'm glad that I was educated especially by reading each song and seeing what the artist is really saying" (LR1 2021); "I've never examined them in detail as we've been doing. Now, with the lyrics... I've seen more than that which meets the eye" (S1 2021); "It taught me a lesson that I need to pay more attention to the lyrics... Even though I like the tune and the beat... but it's also the lyrics" (LR2 2021); "By you showing me the lyrics without the song, sjoel! I mean the message that comes out of these things... I feel kind of stupid now... looking at myself, I'm like hey, I actually listened to those things" (MC2 2021).

MYA2 (2021) comments:

As a father it encouraged me to say I should not only set rules on what we should listen to but I may also need to investigate further on what may be exciting when it comes to music... I need to spend time reading the lyrics, and also like you have done- microscopic scrutiny, pick up the errors and show them the truth as from the 0.5% of poison that kills the rat, when the rest is food. So, it's just to pay more attention to that before you engage with anything.

Participants' Comments as Relates to their Category

For this segment I point out a few thoughts that come to the fore in relation to the particular categories interviewees represented.

Individuals who are actively involved in music in the church.

MC2 (2021) has stopped listening to pop music completely. As a youngster he was very involved with pop music, however when he decided to get serious about his relationship with God, he found that the secular music he used to engage with no longer fit into his life. He thus decided to abstain from it completely.

Pop music also played a prominent role in the life of interviewee MC1 (2021) growing up. Her childhood home often had the radio on as chores were being done and it was a habit to have it playing in the background. She did not continue with this practice once she had established her own home and has also distanced herself from pop music. She relates the type of battle she had when she listened a lot to pop music. She remembers the one time, a pop song that she was listening to during the week, kept coming into her mind during Sabbath, and she battled to fight it off even as she sat in church listening to the sermon. She draws a comparison between the way she relates to Christian music and to pop- "so there's a big contrast with the Christian/gospel- the words attract me... whereas with pop it's more the beat or it's got a catchy jingle".

Individuals who listen to ECR- these were generally very familiar with the songs.

LR1 (2021) said that if he listens to the words he sometimes "gets put off the song because the lyrics are not good", so at times he ignores the words, so he can "just enjoy the beat". LR2 (2021) knew and liked most of the songs he listened to. When he read the lyrics, he found that quite a few of the songs that he thought were acceptable actually went against what he believed. He stated what he had learned from the interview: "It taught me a lesson that I need to pay more attention to the lyrics...Even though I like the tune and the beat... but it's also the lyrics.

Parents

Besides the two interviewees in this category, a few of the other categories comprised parents who also shared views from a parental perspective. I have included some of their comments in this section.

PWC1 (2021) said that he would not want his children to listen to the type of music he heard at the interview: "It would cloud their minds and undo much of the work that we as a family and as parents have done to grow them up in the right way". He also noticed the effect pop music has on children at school: "Before the song comes on, they'll be sitting, talking, but you just put the song on, their whole

demeanor changes...so music can really change you and put you in another state, it can make you very pliable in a certain sense”.

MYA1 (2021) was concerned that her children were exposed to pop music when away from home as they do not play such music in the home or car: “My kids are singing these songs. We don’t play it at home. They pick it up from their peers, from school”. When asked how she deals with this she says she would find the song, listen to it with him and “dissect” it for him. “He’s just a kid. My duty as a parent is to explain the meaning to the best of my ability ... I can’t force religion on them... I need to be a role model to them”.

MC1 (2021) expressed concern for young people when she read the lyrics of *Buy You a Drank*: “Sjoe! I can’t believe that this is what the kids are listening to. Wow! Sho!”

One parent comes across as not wanting to be too rigid about secular music, so he engages with ‘selected’ pop songs. One such song was the *Greatest Love of All* which impressed him, and he encouraged his child to emulate the type of person that was being sung about. Once he read the lyrics of the song at the interview, he felt that it promoted dependence on self apart from God, a message he strongly disagreed with, and would not want his child to learn.

LR2 (2021) got ‘latched’ onto a song that his daughter played a lot at home. He thought it was a ‘good’ song and made some positive comments about it: “the lyrics are good. It makes sense... the sort of lyrics you can listen to and sing along with” However once he read the lyrics, he had a change of mind: “now when you look at the lyrics properly... it depicts a worldly lifestyle... all the indulgences”.

Youth

I found that the two youths are very involved with popular music, and that most of the adults were the same when they were young. The two youths choose music to suit the activity they are engaging in at the time - “chilled music” for relaxing, the more upbeat music when engaging in physical work and exercise, etc. They use music especially for how it makes them feel and the mood it creates.

When asked how they choose what music to listen to:

Y1 (2021): “For me it’s a lot of different types depending on my mood, how I’m feeling... Maybe when I’m going to exercise, to run, to gym then I would play a bit more upbeat music... something that will

make me feel like getting pumped, you know... whereas in the morning, something a bit more mellow, more chilled out, some jazz, some R&B... on a Sunday morning, some 80s, 90s, that kind of thing... when driving I just put something on shuffle - it plays songs randomly”.

Y2 (2021): “So if it’s a song that has a certain vibe that I’m into, then I will listen to that song... it also changes depending on the day...when I’m having a bad day it just picks me up, it gives me a boost of energy ... Pop is more relaxed, more chilled, those artists that I listen to”.

When Y1 (2021) was quite young the song *Low* was popular. He is reminded of his thoughts at the time he used to hear the song:

It came out when I was quite young. It sets a precedent for what happens when you're older. You're still little. You playing with your friends outside. You hear the song. You think that's what I go do when I'm older.

Some talk about their state of mind as youth:

PWC1 (2021) says that as a youth he listened to music for the sensual pleasure- “the melody was beautiful, the voice was nice, so you tend not to focus on the words. You might know the words off by heart...but you’re not really thinking about what you’re singing”.

LR2 (2021) says that as a young person he was strongly influenced by the pop singers and the things they sang about:

Music has a very high impact in the lives of people. Music plays a very important role in molding and shaping the minds of people. Like when we were young, we used to listen to groups like Bad Company and Credence and... as young men growing up, in the teenage years, you wanted to have that lifestyle you know? You depict those singers; you want to live that life... like the lyrics of Bad Company you want to be bad. So, music does impact your life when you're growing up. Sometimes it stays with you. You pick up a lifestyle of drinking, of drugs... it encourages you to go wayward.

Married Young People

MYA1 and her spouse have done some research into secular music. They have found that it can hinder them spiritually and have thus decided not to engage with it. They only listen to gospel music. MYA1 says that sometimes when she is travelling, she switches on the radio to listen to the traffic report or news, and then when a song comes on, she feels guilty to listen and puts the radio off.

MYA2 likes listening to romantic pop songs with his wife. Such songs can help spice up people's marriages. If they are travelling long distances, they would play these songs when their children are asleep. He has reservations about a song like *I'll Make Love to You* being in the public arena though:

The problem is that it's too general. It's in the public. They should have like an age restriction, no under 18... but still... over 18 and not married... still don't qualify... I don't think songs that are very explicit about sex should be publicised (MYA2 2021).

Seniors

Like others, S1 (2021) found the lyrics of some of the songs disturbing. At one point, while reading the lyrics of *Party Rock Anthem*, he became quite uncomfortable, saying:

I'm thinking of what David said, "I will set no wicked thing before my eyes" so I got to read this here and think about all that it's saying. It's not something any Christian should behold.

I apologised and asked if he would like to refrain from dealing with this song. He however felt that it was important for the study and decided to continue.

I would like to draw a comparison between how S2 and MC2 reacted to the song *My All*. Although MC2 (2021) did not like this song he found that it sounded "somewhat soothing". However, it was certainly not soothing to S2, the senior who was a youth perhaps forty years prior to when MC2 was in his youth. S2's reaction (2022) as she listened to the song:

I'm sitting on edge... as the music's playing my nerves are reacting and I almost start to feel panicky.

There are two possible factors I would like to point out for the difference in reactions. Firstly, the age gap between the two – about 35-40 years; and the different music each was exposed to from their youth.

As a youngster in the early 2000s, MC2 enjoyed and danced to music that was being played in the clubs (which was characteristically loud and rhythmic). Thus, he had developed a tolerance for such sounds. S2, on the other hand, a young person in the 1950s and 60s, was sheltered and even forbidden by her parents to listen to the popular music of the day. She mentions artists like Elvis

Presley, Pat Boone and Tommy Steele, who were considered riotous at the time. Being an “obedient” person, secular music has hardly played a role in her life growing up and certainly not as an adult.

S2 (2021) recalls the popular music of her youth, and compares it to later music:

Our parents were horrified. Now if you listen to them, it’s so calm... Then you hear this- what has happened to music? It’s not easy on the emotions, then you’re going to do things that are irresponsible... Our parents were trying to protect us from lifestyles that would lead to damnation.

Conclusion

When I put together the playlist for this study, I had particular thoughts about the songs and wondered how other Seventh-day Adventists, who come from the same worldview, would react to these songs. What I have found was that people’s initial reactions to the songs (when they were played to them), evoked varied responses, (from those who supported the songs to those who did not). By the time they had read the lyrics, there was an almost unanimous consensus that the songs did not align with the Seventh-day Adventist worldview. Many experienced a paradigm shift when they were introduced to the lyrics of the songs.

Music plays an important role in the lives of the interviewees, and they engage with music in a variety of ways. They also experience pop music almost everywhere they go; some readily embrace it while others do not.

When it comes to pop music it is clear that almost all did not know the extent of the messages in the songs until they read the lyrics. For those who do engage with such songs, Frith’s statement (mentioned in chapter 3) that there is evidence that more listeners “pay no particular attention to the words at all” rings true (Middleton 2000, 163).

As I conclude this chapter, I would like to highlight a few points that are of interest.

Change of Lifestyle, Change of Music

Firstly, quite a few interviewees mentioned that when their lifestyle changed, their music preferences also changed. It is interesting to note that it was secular popular music (usually pop), that they previously engaged with, and later distanced themselves from when they became serious about their spirituality. One interviewee destroyed all his secular (pop) CDs when he made the change many years ago and since then has replaced pop music with gospel and instrumental Western classical music. Another said that when she was younger pop music was her “everything” as she “was not dedicated”. Now she does not listen to pop music. Another refers to life prior to becoming a Seventh-day Adventist Christian as his “old life”: “I’m talking about my old life now- I guess it was more for a sensual pleasure...the melody..., the voice... it was not about the words” (PWC1 2021). He finds such music frivolous, often suggestive, and does not listen to it anymore.

MC2 (2021) says:

When I decided to dig deeper in terms of my relationship with God and the Bible, I made many changes. One of those was music. I honestly felt the [secular] music I was engaging with affected my beliefs.

Many of the interviewees who had stopped listening to pop music felt pleased and justified about their stance as their encounter with the songs in the interview corroborated their position. Most of them now listen only to gospel music and have disengaged from all secular music.

An important point to remember is that the Church does not prohibit engagement with secular music but offers guidelines on how to choose such music, that it should be in line with sound biblical principles and in an acceptable style. Understanding that appropriate secular music is acceptable for a Christian to listen to can alleviate unwarranted feelings of guilt. It can also help broaden people’s repertoire, and I suppose challenge people to think ‘out of the box’ as it were, to look for and explore other musics that are not as readily accessible as pop music is.

As this research has found, a number of pop songs that are encountered and freely engaged with carry inappropriate messages. Given the arduous task of checking each pop song to see if it is acceptable, many may decide to refrain from general engagement, like daily switching on the radio station that plays such songs. Some may decide to peruse and create a suitable playlist. This may help, for example, if one has members of the family who may not be in a state of mind to completely cut off all secular music, for example youngsters.

The Value of Education

What stands out for me is the effects of being informed. Time and again it surfaces that those who have made changes to their choice of music, by being particular about what secular music they choose or avoiding popular/pop music altogether, have done so as a result of having been informed of the inappropriateness of such music. They have attended seminars or watched presentations about the potential effects of music and that it can be unsafe to engage with music that was incongruent with their faith. As a result, they have become more deliberate about their music choices.

LR1 (2021) states his experience:

After we did a study at church about 10 years ago my whole concept on music changed. There were certain artists I thought were cool, but if you really listen to what they're speaking about...

This research has revealed the effectiveness of a simple and practical approach - that of reading the lyrics. All listeners confirmed that you can pick up much more by reading the lyrics than by trying to figure out the meaning of the words just by listening to the song. Sometimes, certain words or phrases tend to stand out and an impression is created of the meaning, that is not necessarily the case when read in context. There are many instances where interviewees found that the message was not what they thought it was. I quote one example. MC1 (2021) thought that the song *Shape of You* carried a positive message, thinking that Sheeran was complementing the woman's shape. Reading the lyrics uncovered a completely different message to her.

When asked if she was aware of the message:

No. I think from those few lyrics I just gathered that he likes the shape of the woman that he saw but s'joe! It's deeper than that. I know that people think he is complementing the woman's shape, but no, not at all. He's just objectifying her... there's nothing meaningful. It's just for now, what pleases him now.

Some who listen to popular music, said that they are selective about what they choose. Being selective, for one of the interviewees, is a matter of avoiding "some rowdy songs... with vulgarity" as he prefers the "much cooler music" (LR2 2021). In this study we found that 'cool music' can also carry 'misleading' messages. Yet another point that can help people choose music that is in line with what they believe, is

to be aware that the style of the music itself (in this case, something that sounds soothing and pleasing to the ear), is not necessarily an indicator that the lyrics project a 'safe' message. Once again, checking out the lyrics of such songs would be a useful exercise.

Taken by the Beat

An important factor that has come to the fore in this study is the difference between those who are accepting of the music and those who are not.

Those who were easily accepting of the songs were usually the ones who were taken by the music itself. This is evident in the response of Y2 (2021) when the song *Low*, by Flo Rida was played to her: "It's fast paced. It's a fun song, nostalgic. I definitely still will listen to it". She later had a change of mind when she read the lyrics.

The music effects an instantaneous, almost reflex, physical/somatic response. At the same time the cognitive, discerning aspect of the mind seems disengaged, as Middleton puts it "switch off your mind and boogie" (2000, 1). Y2 (2021) envisaged that she was going to have a challenge going forward because as she says, "I enjoy a good song... the beat... I really do enjoy that". This is a major factor that prevented people from thinking about the lyrics. Quite a few of this type of listener were quite taken aback when they read the lyrics of the songs they so readily embraced.

On the other hand, quite a few of those who did not like the songs were usually 'alerted' by the driving rhythm, 'the beat', and would automatically resist the song. They disliked its impact on them physically. In their words: "it gives you that motion" (PWC1 2021), "the rhythm moves the flesh" (PWC2 2021), and "the beat sort of grabs you... you don't even know the words to it but you're dancing to it" (MC2 2021). To place this concept in context of Seventh-day Adventism, the church discourages dancing (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 149).

Thus, some lessons drawn from this chapter are that Seventh-day Adventists need to be aware that secular music can carry messages that undermine their belief system and that they need to be vigilant, bearing in mind that the music itself can be attractive (be it 'catchy' or 'soothing') and yet can contain messages that they do not agree with. It is therefore important to pay attention to the lyrics, and to be pro-active in their secular music choices.

Conclusion

In this study I have considered two worldviews - that of Seventh-day Adventism, and that of the mainstream culture as reflected in a set of pop songs, understood as products that reflect the popular view.

In order to address the topic of this thesis: *A Seventh-day Adventist Perspective on Secular Pop Music: An Exploratory Study of Engagement and Compatibility*, the study was addressed in five stages. In Chapter 1 I laid out the motivation, intentions, processes and parameters of this study. Chapter 2 provided an explanation of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview, while Chapter 3 dealt with the phenomenon of Pop Music. In chapter 4 I introduced a selection of texts broadly reflecting the mainstream culture - the lyrics of 24 hit pop songs (divided into six themes), and an overview of 160 Billboard Hot 100 songs of the decade, for decades 1980s-2010s. Four Seventh-day Adventist pastors conducted an assessment on the compatibility of the 24 songs with the Church's official position. Chapter 5 examined the interaction of Seventh-day Adventism and the mainstream culture, as 12 Seventh-day Adventist interviewees, who serve as leaders in their congregations, reflected on how they engaged with pop music and provided their opinions on the lyrics of the 24 songs.

To conclude I revisit some salient points that have come to the fore in this thesis.

Popular music occupies a significant role in the lives of many people including Seventh-day Adventists. At this point it is necessary to reiterate that the findings gathered from the interviewees, who are leaders in the Church, cannot be considered representative of the general membership whose level of commitment to the principles and standards of the Church may differ.

The Church recognizes the role secular music can play in believers' lives and offers guidelines on how to choose appropriate music such that ordinary living will align with and support their spiritual endeavours (see chapter 2). For the Seventh-day Adventist Christian, recognising that it is possible to embrace music that does not explicitly embody the gospel without compromising one's faith, can broaden their repertoire, adding interest and enrichment to their life experiences, and alleviating unnecessary feelings of guilt (as some could feel guilty if the music was not gospel-oriented. This calls for careful consideration and intentionality in music choices.

I have noted that pop music is not neutral (chapter 3). This study has found that whereas some pop songs are congruent with the Seventh-day Adventist ethos and therefore can be engaged with, there is a large percentage that appear to convey messages that run contrary to the Church's standards and beliefs. It has also been found that song lyrics are becoming more explicit in themes relating to practices that are discouraged by the Seventh-day Adventist Church like casual sex, drug and alcohol use, and a hedonistic lifestyle.

Further, I have shown that music twined with lyrics has potential to influence, even change people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (chapter 3). Thus, it seems that if people want to adhere to and grow in their faith as Seventh-day Adventists, they should probably distance themselves from songs that undermine that belief system. In my discussion of the results of interviews in chapter 5, quite a few of the interviewees found this to be true in their own experience, i.e., they felt it necessary to stop listening to pop music when they wanted to more sincerely practice their faith. In fact, as Kuusisto and Dudley point out (Kuusisto 2000, 60, 111), people who engage with secular music without discretion can soon find themselves at variance with what the Church stands for, and this can affect their decision to remain Seventh-day Adventist. This study has not been able to ascertain whether or to what extent passive listening (i.e., not paying attention to the lyrics) can influence behaviour or negatively impact listeners' beliefs. However, the question of whether these can have an impact on a subconscious level remains to be answered.

As I have shown, leaders like the Church's General Conference President, Ted Wilson, White, and even organisations and individuals in the secular arena, like the American Association of Pediatrics, caution people against music that promotes inadvisable attitudes and behaviour (chapters 2 and 3). Parents are advised to guard their children against such music.

In chapter 5 I showed how people are engaging with songs that run contrary to their beliefs because they are actually unaware of the messages being promoted. Such people can be considered 'passive' listeners. As noted, the grouping of interviewees comprised members who are understood to be committed to their faith. The fact that some freely engage with pop music, and that quite a few of them were unaware and taken aback by the messages in these songs, may mean that ordinary members could be inadvertently engaging equally, or perhaps even more-so, with such music. This may be supported by the findings in the preliminary informal study (mentioned in Chapter 1) that was conducted amongst 103 Seventh-day Adventists. It comprised a mixed grouping of leaders and ordinary members and it was found that 71% listened regularly to pop music while engaging in various daily activities.

The lyrics in such songs are often masked because the music is either vibrant or appealing, and these listeners are instantaneously attracted by the rhythm (or 'the beat' as many called it), or by the soothing ambience it creates, unaware that the lyrical content undermines or is questionable in terms of their belief system. At times, a certain word or phrase may be in the fore and appears acceptable, but when read in context, is found to be transmitting a different and disagreeable message from what was perceived. A further consideration, but one that is out of the scope of this study, is the genre of the music, as Seventh-day Adventists are cautioned to avoid "jazz, rock or related hybrid forms" (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 150). As Ballantine points out, the genre of the music can influence, and even change the message of a song (Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 17).

Kassabian suggests that since music is so 'omnipresent' it has affected the way people listen (quoted in Hesmondhalgh and Negus 2002, 137). With distracted listening being so prevalent, it seems that people do not want to pay attention to the music. They are happy to have it playing along as they go about daily living, perhaps they want to switch off from thinking and just be soothed or alternatively energised by the music. Although under these circumstances such a passive listener may not readily perceive inappropriate messages, and since the lyrics being part of the music may be absorbed anyway, as some interviewees have indicated, an important question arises- would it be of value or necessary to make Seventh-day Adventist listeners, who may be unaware, aware of inappropriate messages? Does such music remain 'safe' to the listener as long as he or she does not perceive the meanings? Besides such music not being 'safe' for those who may buy into the messages that are incongruent with their belief system, is it possible that many who are engaging obliviously would appreciate being made aware that they are entertaining something that actually undermines their belief system? And would not such an endeavour assist believers in the biblical injunction to be alert (1 Peter 5:8)?

In this study I find that once people are conversant with the full meaning of the songs' texts, they may be more likely to dissociate from listening to that particular genre or song. That accords to what the teachings of the Church are as stipulated in its various official documents – the need to be discerning about what you listen to. When people were confronted with the words alone, they made a change in their understanding of what the song means. They became aware that the lyrics are not just sounds but actually have a meaning and it is one that they did not agree with. Therefore, there is a correlation between the teachings of the Church about being mindful about what you hear and empirical evidence that when people are made aware they make a change. I have found that quite a few of the

interviewees were already active listeners who, when they discovered that certain songs promoted messages they did not agree with, had made a conscious decision not to include them in their listening spectrum. Such a decision brought them in line with the tenets of the Church. When those who would be considered 'passive' listeners were made aware, they also expressed a desire to dissociate from such songs. This shows that when people are discerning, they make a change and that accords with what the Church is teaching. The evidence which I provide for passive listening making a change in someone is in a particular context, in particular groups of people and it may possibly be the same in other religious groupings.

As I draw to the conclusion, it is important to reflect on the research paradigm that undergirds this study. As stated in chapter one, hermeneutics has to do with "how we understand things", and understanding is described as "success of interpretation" (George 2021, 1); the benefit of this approach being its edifying and educative value. Further, as quoted in chapter 3, Martin (in Marshall and Laing 2014, 117) says that cultural objects do not inherently have meaning in themselves, instead they derive their meanings "through the dense network of social relationships" from which they are situated"- the setting in this case within which meanings are derived being Seventh-day Adventism.

In terms of the concept of polysemy, where various meanings can be derived from the same text depending on the perspective from which it is approached, this study has demonstrated that the shared worldview of Seventh-day Adventism to a large extent resulted in a common perspective in terms of the meanings that were perceived in the texts.

As such, this study has revealed that some Seventh-day Adventists unknowingly engage with pop songs that undermine their belief system. When this was brought to their attention, a level of understanding ensued, and some acknowledged that they were unaware that this was the case (highlighting the educative value of this paradigm). In some cases, they stated that the attractive music served as a decoy. This resonates with the sentiment expressed in chapter three (58) that "emotional listening, the music's appeal to bodily responses" somehow supersedes "cognitive engagement".

According to the official Seventh-day Adventist understanding, the Bible cautions Christians to be alert and wary as they navigate their way through life (1 Peter 5:8-9, and Ephesians 6:11). To the committed Seventh-day Adventist mind the issues that have been discussed around pop music that pose a challenge to their faith would extend beyond normal day to day experience and choices, into the spiritual, supernatural realm, bringing in the aspect of a war (the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan) being played out in and through the lives and choices of human beings. Accordingly, and as

pointed out in chapter two, “the word” and the accuracy or “truth” of it, either spoken or written, plays a significant role in Seventh-day Adventism. This preoccupation with “truth” and right doing means that if something competes with it, *that* something needs to be brought to the fore. As stated in chapter one, one of the considerations of this study was to find out whether a sample of pop songs carry and potentially encourage beliefs and values which conflict with Seventh-day Adventist principles. It has been ascertained that this is the case. As indicated by some of the interviewees, even though they did not pay attention to the lyrics when listening to the music, it was found that the lyrics had been imprinted on their minds anyway. However, in some cases an awareness that these lyrics actually meant something or that they meant something different on closer inspection only seemed to materialise when this was brought to their attention. Such reacted as if they had been somehow ‘tricked’ into engaging with such music and appreciated that this was brought to their attention.

The Church believes that as humanity nears the end of earth’s history, the condition of lukewarmness and spiritual apathy of the Laodicean church (Revelation 3:16), is actually applicable to the last day church which will be lulled into a state of spiritual drowsiness (see my discussion in chapter 2). In the words of White (2008, 18): “Music is often made one of Satan’s most attractive agencies to ensnare souls”.

Some years ago, noting the urgency of the times, the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide embarked on a “Revival and Reformation” programme which is ongoing. It is meant to infiltrate all aspects of the Church, filtering down to every single member. The terms ‘revival’ and ‘reformation’ have a specific application in this context: revival signifying “a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death” and reformation signifying “a reorganization, a change of ideas and theories, habits and practices (White quoted in Chaij 1966, 27).

In synthesizing the above concepts of revival and reformation (presented in chapter 2 in light of the Seventh-day Adventist worldview), and what I have discovered in chapters 3 and 4 (on pop music), and chapter 5 (Seventh-day Adventists’ opinions and engagement with pop music) the following can be deduced:

1. Revival - A Spiritual Awakening.

Uncritical engagement with some forms of entertainment (in this case pop music), can impede spiritual awakening and rejuvenation, and deaden the mind for spiritual exercise (Bull and

Lockhart 2007, 233). Since, according to Middleton (2000, 1) people's impressions about music guide the way they engage with it, and since a large percentage of people have been found to be passive listeners and do not pay attention to the messages in songs, they are unaware of its potential negative effects on their spirituality and thus freely engage with it. Thus, serious Seventh-day Adventists should consider their music listening habits critically. Training and education will assist in this regard.

2. Reformation - a Re-organizing of the Self:

A 'resurrection from spiritual death' (i.e., revival) will result in a desire for reformation which would entail considering one's ideas, theories, habits and behaviour and effecting the necessary changes. Seventh-day Adventists need to be aware that music that is incongruent with their belief system can have a negative impact on the way they think about and live their lives.

Perhaps the greatest quest of humanity is happiness. The two worldviews addressed in this study spell out approaches to life to achieve freedom and hence happiness. The secular view, as reflected in the songs, tend towards self and instant gratification. I refer to the song *Love in this Club* where Usher says, "I'll set you free, sexually, mentally, physically, emotionally" (<https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/usher/loveinthisclub.html>). His lyrics suggest that a night of partying, substance abuse and casual sexual activity is the key to ultimate freedom and well-being. The biblical view, as promoted by Seventh-day Adventism, focuses rather on God as the only one who can offer freedom and happiness, and this can be achieved in co-operation with the principles and standards He has set in place for that purpose.

I have sought to show that the two approaches are incongruent and incompatible with each other, perhaps even mutually exclusive (see chapter 1 on Kuusisto 2000, 111). Thus, for effective reformation – to change one's ideas and theories, and ways - one would need to be aware that the world promotes a different trajectory to humanity's quest for happiness and solution to problems, and that to be in line with biblical teaching as promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, one would have to abandon the secular mindset for that proposed in the Bible. This with an appreciation that these are not mere arbitrary rules, "but reminders of [God's] loving care" (Dysinger 1997, 12).

According to the Seventh-day Adventist reading of the Bible as articulated in chapter 2, God made human beings in His image (Genesis 1:27). "Sin had marred" that image (Dysinger (1997, 13). God set in place a plan of salvation "to restore that image" (Dysinger 1997, 13). Thus, within the context of the Bible, the 'negative' attitudes and behaviours that are promoted in the songs would actually be termed

'temptations' - choices that it is believed would undermine and "obliterate the image of God in humans" (Dysinger 1997, 13).

Framing the temptations that Christ overcame in the wilderness (Matthew 4: 3-10), with the human condition Dysinger (1997,13) comments:

Significantly, the temptations were in the areas of appetite and human desire... These remain our most common areas of sin, and the three angels give their messages to help us overcome these temptations.

Thus, the themes addressed in this study encapsulate secular attitudes and behaviours that can be interpreted as temptations, appealing to what is believed to be unsanctified appetite and human desire, and seen as deviations from the biblical pattern for the Christian as understood by Seventh-day Adventism.

Implications for reformation (i.e., instituting changes in the life), in light of the themes in this study:

- 2.1.1. Theme: Concept of Self: to exchange the secular view about self and self-worth, and quest for self-preservation (which is quantified by one's own, fluid and fluctuating feelings, and even on others' equally changeable views) with one that portrays one as infinitely valuable to the Creator-God whose love is stronger than death (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- 2.1.2. Theme: Hope: to take the focus off human effort alone, to solve humanity's problems, and to turn to God who has everyone's well-being at heart and who has the know-how and will use willing human beings in the endeavour to address humanity's problems and can do so far more effectively than they can without His help.
- 2.1.3. Theme: The State of the Dead: by looking to the deceased for guidance, companionship and help (considering Eccl 9:5), God is being displaced from His position as the only One (Our "Designer, Creator, Lover, Redeemer" (Dysinger 1997, 24)) who loves us supremely and can meet our deepest needs. Placing one's focus on God to meet one's deepest needs is believed to be the ultimate in liberation, empowerment and a sense of well-being.
- 2.1.4. Lifestyle Themes: Time; Substance Use; Love, Relationships and Sexuality: Seventh-day Adventism as mentioned (see chapter 2) is very much a lifestyle religion. Thus, a practicing Seventh-day Adventist will endeavour to live a life that is quite different from that promoted by the popular trends. Prohibitions will not be experienced as arbitrary enforcements but of value to "make room for Adventist alternatives" (Bull and Lockhart 2007, 233). In terms of 'Adventist alternatives' - members are encouraged to follow a daily programme of private time in prayer and Bible study, family worship, physical habits which include wholesome nutrition, adequate exercise, water, sunlight, fresh air,

and rest (including a 24-hour period of rest from work from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, weekly) (see my discussion on NEWSTART in chapter 2). Such a lifestyle includes hobbies and recreation, family time, time for which, in the worldly sense, is substituted and consumed by entertainment. As is evident, the lifestyle promoted in many of the songs we have looked at are completely out of line with that promoted by the Church.

I would like to highlight the foundation on which Seventh-day Adventism rests: that God is a God of love, and His stipulations and guidance are meant for humanity's protection, well-being and freedom.

As White says:

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience... God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does He has the well-being of His children in view... The divine requirements call upon us to shun those indulgences that would bring suffering and disappointment, that would close to us the door of happiness and heaven (White 2005, 27-28).

Recommendations for further Study

In light of this study, I have noticed several gaps in the literature which could be addressed through further research:

1. Can lyrics that are passively received (i.e., the listener is not consciously aware of at the time), be subconsciously processed and exert an influence on the listener?
2. Can members who are positively disposed towards music that undermines their belief system, still engage with such music and remain strongly committed to the Church?
3. The Seventh-day Adventist Church discourages members from engaging with rock, jazz and related hybrid forms (Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual 2015, 150). Research can be conducted on what it is about such music that makes it inappropriate for Seventh-day Adventists.
4. Further scientific investigation could be conducted on how and why the style or genre within which lyrics are placed has an effect on the subsequent verbal meaning that is produced.
5. A formal study on the various types of secular music that would be appropriate for Seventh-day Adventists.

Recommendations for the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Since lessons on appropriate lifestyle choices (for example abstinence from alcohol and drugs, chastity before marriage) may be overshadowed by the messages that people are exposed to through song lyrics, measures should be taken for leaders to acquaint themselves with such messages so as to produce effective measures for intervention. Such interventions are recommended to encourage serious Seventh-day Adventists to become critical listeners, and to effect the necessary changes.

In light of the findings above:

1. Programmes which build critical listening skills are recommended, especially in terms of choosing songs with the appropriate content and in styles/genres acceptable to Seventh-day Adventism.
2. Creative and innovative programmes which make church leaders, teachers, parents and young people aware of the content of pop music and how this fares with the Seventh-day Adventist belief system are recommended. This is necessary as people (especially young people who regularly engage with inappropriate pop music) can be learning a different way of life as that promoted by the Church, gaining 'inappropriate' information "about society, social and gender roles, expected behaviour" even creating a "personal identity" (Martino et al 2007, 431). This would alleviate personal internal tension which compromises faith and practice.
3. Inappropriate lessons from pop music can dwarf those promoted by the Church. For example, Primack et al (2009, 522) say that "health lessons [on cannabis] ... are likely to be dwarfed in young people's minds by the 'lessons' they learn through music lyrics". Thus, more ardent efforts by the Church to promote established programmes designed to assist members on how to embrace the Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle are recommended.
4. Further efforts need to be made by the Church to promote established programmes that cater for the different age groups, starting from as young as 4 (the Adventurer club) through to the Master Guide" programmes (which extend into adulthood). These cater for the holistic development (physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual) of every age group with an approach to develop a balanced life. The local churches need to tap into this very important resource, (which is a part of the programming of the Church worldwide), using it as a safeguard and bulwark against potential 'hazardous worldly' ideas, practices and behaviours, through pop music.
5. Such endeavours can encourage members away from the widespread and increasingly growing habit to 'sit back' and be entertained, which is believed to be detrimental to holistic well-being. Many songs encountered in this study promote a lifestyle of indolence, of constant partying and a reckless attitude toward sexual purity, which compromises future security in terms of career and family life. Therefore, behaviours and practices are to be encouraged, which are meant to guard the young, and stimulate development as promoted by the Seventh-day Adventist Church, inclusive of refreshing activities of pleasure for example – sport and hobbies, and 'active' rest, like time out in nature.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Bull and Lockhart (2007, 162) state that the Church seeks to guide the behaviour of its members “in three important areas of human existence: health, family life, and recreation”, and as has been displayed in this study- these three areas of life can be seriously compromised if one embraces inappropriate pop music or enhanced if follows the guidelines set out by the Church.

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Appendix 1

Interview Schedule

1. Role of Music in Candidate's Life.

- 1.1. Does music occupy an important place in your life?
- 1.2. What type (genre) of music would you be referring to?
- 1.3. When do you engage with your preferred type of music?
- 1.4. Why do you like this type of music?

2. The Role of Pop Music in the Candidate's Life

- 2.1. Have you ever heard pop music playing in the background in public places?
- 2.2. If you have, where?
- 2.3. Do you listen to pop music by choice?
- 2.4. Do you listen to pop music on the radio?
- 2.5. Do you like pop music? (Explain why, or why not)
- 2.6. Are you selective about what pop songs you are exposed to? (If yes, and if you listen to it on the radio, how do you exercise selectivity?)
- 2.7. Do you like having pop music playing in the background while you are busy doing other things, like chores around the house, or studying or office work?
- 2.8. Why or why not?
- 2.9. What benefits do you experience from having pop music playing in your hearing?

3. Songs that Appear to undermine Seventh-day Adventist Principles

(The researcher played a short, pre-recorded snippet of each song [one song from each theme] followed by the following questions).

- 3.1. How well do you know this song?

I know this song well, and I can sing along with it _____
I have heard this song before, but I am not too familiar with it _____
I have not heard this song before _____

- 3.2. Is this the kind of song you would like to sing along with?
- 3.3. Would you be happy to share it with your friends?
- 3.4. Would you have it playing in the background as you go about doing some chores or while travelling etc.?
- 3.5. If you like this song, what do you like about it?
- 3.6. Is there anything you dislike about this song?

4. The candidate is then given a few minutes to read through the lyrics

- 4.1. What message is this song promoting?
- 4.2. Would you say this song is in line with, or not in line with your belief system as a Seventh-day Adventist? Can you explain why?
- 4.3. Before you read the lyrics were you aware that this song portrayed this/these sentiment(s)?

5. Concluding Questions

- 5.1. Would you say it is necessary to be selective about the music one listens to, if so, why?
- 5.2. Do you think it is okay for Seventh-day Adventists to listen to songs that they know undermines their belief system, with the intention of enjoying the music, and ignoring the message?
- 5.3. In your opinion how should Seventh-day Adventists relate to songs that appear to encourage behaviours and beliefs that run contrary to what the church stands for?
- 5.4. How has this exercise impacted you? Were you previously aware of the lyrics?

Note to interviewees from the researcher:

This research project, conceived by Michelle Cecil, seeks to explore the extent to which popular culture is being promoted through pop music and how this relates to the principles and lifestyle standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It also seeks to consider the role of pop music in the daily lives of Seventh-day Adventists. Because the arts are so closely bound to culture, they do not always offer completely neutral avenues of engagement. This research project seeks to explore the extent to which popular culture is being promoted through pop music and how this relates to the principles and lifestyle standards of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If you decide to participate in this study, you will be contributing valuable insights to a developing field of academic enquiry which aims to assess the impact of popular culture on people of different faiths. HOWEVER, there is no pressure on you whatsoever to answer any or all of the questions above. Your insights and answers will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

*All answers that you provide will be stored in the UKZN Discipline of Music's strong room for a period of five years, where after it will be shredded. Your name **will not** be included on this sheet, thus any information you provide will remain strictly confidential.*

Appendix 2

Questions for Pastors

1. Love, Relationships, Sexuality
 2. Substance Use
 3. The Element of Time
 4. Concept of Self
 5. Non-Christian Hope
 6. State of the Dead
-
1. What is the church's stance on each of the themes above? (You may mention relevant literature e.g., Biblical verses and other official documents of the SDA Church.
 2. How do the messages in each of these groups of songs compare to the church's principles and standards of behaviour?
 3. Any further comments you may like to provide.

Appendix 3

Song Lyrics

Theme 1: Concept of Self

Theme 1, Song 1.

Whitney Houston – “Greatest Love of All”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbp6W4N1N9s>

I believe the children are our future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride
To make it easier
Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be

Everybody's searching for a hero
People need someone to look up to
I never found anyone who fulfilled my needs
A lonely place to be
And so I learned to depend on me

I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's shadows
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I'll live as I believe
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity

Because the greatest love of all is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all inside of me

The greatest love of all is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
It is the greatest love of all

I believe the children are our future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride
To make it easier
Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be

I decided long ago never to walk in anyone's shadows
If I fail, if I succeed

At least I'll live as I believe
No matter what they take from me
They can't take away my dignity

Because the greatest love of all is happening to me
I found the greatest love of all inside of me

The greatest love of all is easy to achieve
Learning to love yourself
It is the greatest love of all

And if, by chance, that special place
That you've been dreaming of
Leads you to a lonely place
Find your strength in love

Theme 1, Song 2.

Mariah Carey – “Hero”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCiRrsmY_Po

There's a hero
If you look inside your heart
You don't have to be afraid
Of what you are
There's an answer
If you reach into your soul
And the sorrow that you know
Will melt away

And then a hero comes along
With the strength to carry on
And you cast your fears aside
And you know you can survive
So when you feel like hope is gone
Look inside you and be strong
And you'll finally see the truth
That a hero lies in you

It's a long road
When you face the world alone
No one reaches out a hand
For you to hold
You can find love
If you search within yourself
And the emptiness you felt
Will disappear

And then a hero comes along
With the strength to carry on
And you cast your fears aside
And you know you can survive
So when you feel like hope is gone
Look inside you and be strong
And you'll finally see the truth
That a hero lies in you

Lord knows
Dreams are hard to follow
But don't let anyone
Tear them away
Hold on
There will be tomorrow

In time
You'll find the way

And then a hero comes along
With the strength to carry on
And you cast your fears aside
And you know you can survive
So when you feel like hope is gone
Look inside you and be strong
And you'll finally see the truth
That a hero lies in you
That a hero lies in you
That a hero lies in you

Theme 1, Song 3.

Mariah Carey - "My All"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSkk9isqBVO>

I am thinking of you
In my sleepless solitude tonight
If it's wrong to love you
Then my heart just won't let me be right
'Cause I've drowned in you
And I won't pull through
Without you by my side

I'd give my all to have
Just one more night with you
I'd risk my life to feel
Your body next to mine
'Cause I can't go on
Living in the memory of our song
I'd give my all for your love tonight

Baby, can you feel me?
Imagining I'm looking in your eyes
I can see you clearly
Vividly emblazoned in my mind
And yet you're so far, like a distant star
I'm wishing on tonight

I'd give my all to have
Just one more night with you
I'd risk my life to feel
Your body next to mine
'Cause I can't go on
Living in the memory of our song
I'd give my all for your love tonight

I'd give my all to have
Just one more night with you
I'd risk my life to feel
Your body next to mine
'Cause I can't go on
Living in the memory of our song
I'd give my all for your love tonight

Give my all for your love
Tonight _

Theme 1, Song 4.

Whitney Houston – “I Have Nothing”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19LPgLKrgLE>

(from "The Bodyguard" soundtrack)

Share my life, take me for what I am
'Cause I'll never change all my colours for you
Take my love, I'll never ask for too much
Just all that you are and everything that you do

I don't really need to look very much further
I don't wanna have to go where you don't follow
I won't hold it back again, this passion inside
Can't run from myself
There's nowhere to hide

Don't make me close one more door
I don't wanna hurt anymore
Stay in my arms if you dare
Or must I imagine you there
Don't walk away from me...
I have nothing, nothing, nothing
If I don't have you, you, you, you, you

You see through right to the heart of me
You break down my walls with the strength of your love
I never knew love like I've known it with you
Will a memory survive, one I can hold on to

I don't really need to look very much further
I don't wanna have to go where you don't follow
I won't hold it back again, this passion inside
I can't run from myself
There's nowhere to hide
Your love I'll remember forever

Don't make me close one more door
I don't wanna hurt anymore
Stay in my arms if you dare
Or must I imagine you there
Don't walk away from me...
I have nothing, nothing, nothing...

Don't make me close one more door
I don't wanna hurt anymore
Stay in my arms if you dare

Or must I imagine you there
Don't walk away from me, no
Don't walk away from me
Don't you dare walk away from me
I have nothing, nothing, nothing
If I don't have you, you
If I don't have you, oh, ooh, ooh

Theme 2, Song 1.

Destiny's Child – “Stand Up for Love”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eg7sCGetwNw>

[Beyoncé:]

There are times I find it hard to sleep at night
We are living through such troubled times
And every child that reaches out for someone to hold
For one moment they become my own

[Beyoncé:]

And how can I pretend that I don't know what's going on?
When every second and every minute another soul is gone

[Beyoncé:]

And I believe that in my life I will see
An end to hopelessness
Or giving up
Or suffering

If we all stand together this one time
Then no one will get left behind
Stand up for life
Stand up and hear me sing
Stand up for love

[Kelly:]

I'm inspired and hopeful each and every day
That's how I know that things are gonna change

[Michelle:]

So how can I pretend that I don't know what's going on?
When every second with every minute
Another soul is gone

[Kelly:]

And I believe that in my life I will see
An end to hopelessness
Or giving up
Or suffering

[Kelly:]

If we all stand together this one time

Then no one will get left behind
Stand up for life
Stand up for love

[Michelle:]

And it all starts right here
And it starts right now
One person stand up man
And the rest will follow
For all the forgotten
For all the unloved
I'm gonna sing this song

And I believe that in my life I will see
An end to hopelessness
Or giving up
Or suffering

[Michelle, Beyoncé and Kelly:]

If we all stand together this one time
Then no one will get left behind
Stand up for life
Stand up and sing
Stand up for love
For love
For love

Theme 2, Song 2.

Michael Jackson – “We Are the World”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYJKBnGZnMA>

(performed by USA For Africa)

There comes a time when we heed a certain call
When the world must come together as one
There are people dying
And it's time to lend a hand to life
The greatest gift of all

We can't go on pretending day by day
That someone somewhere will soon make a change
We're all a part of God's great big family
And the truth, you know
Love is all we need

We are the world
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So, let's start giving
There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me

Send them your heart so they'll know that someone cares
And their lives will be stronger and free
As God has shown us by turning stone to bread
And so we all must lend a helping hand

We are the world
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So, let's start giving
There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me

When you're down and out
There seems no hope at all
But if you just believe
There's no way we can fall
Well, well, well
Let's realize that a change can only come

When we stand together as one

We are the world
We are the children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So, let's start giving
There's a choice we're making
We're saving our own lives
It's true we'll make a better day
Just you and me
[Repeat with ad-libs until the end]

Theme 2, Song 3.

Whitney Houston – “One Moment in Time”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx4v6cO1GMk>

Each day I live
I want to be
A day to give
The best of me
I'm only one
But not alone
My finest day
Is yet unknown

I broke my heart
Fought every gain
To taste the sweet
I face the pain
I rise and fall
Yet through it all
This much remains

I want one moment in time
When I'm more than I thought I could be
When all of my dreams are a heartbeat away
And the answers are all up to me
Give me one moment in time
When I'm racing with destiny
Then in that one moment of time
I will feel
I will feel eternity

I've lived to be
The very best
I want it all
No time for less
I've laid the plans
Now lay the chance
Here in my hands

Give me one moment in time
When I'm more than I thought I could be
When all of my dreams are a heartbeat away
And the answers are all up to me
Give me one moment in time
When I'm racing with destiny
Then in that one moment of time

I will feel
I will feel eternity

You're a winner for a lifetime
If you seize that one moment in time
Make it shine

Give me one moment in time
When I'm more than I thought I could be
When all of my dreams are a heartbeat away
And the answers are all up to me
Give me one moment in time
When I'm racing with destiny
Then in that one moment of time

I will be
I will be
I will be free
I will be
I will be free

Theme 2, Song 4.

Bette Midler – “From a Distance”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLHE9jrb_N4

From a distance the world looks blue and green,
and the snow-capped mountains white.
From a distance the ocean meets the stream,
and the eagle takes to flight.

From a distance, there is harmony,
and it echoes through the land.
It's the voice of hope, it's the voice of peace,
it's the voice of every man.

From a distance we all have enough,
and no one is in need.
And there are no guns, no bombs, and no disease,
no hungry mouths to feed.

From a distance we are instruments
marching in a common band.
Playing songs of hope, playing songs of peace.
They're the songs of every man.
God is watching us. God is watching us.
God is watching us from a distance.

From a distance you look like my friend,
even though we are at war.
From a distance I just cannot comprehend
what all this fighting is for.

From a distance there is harmony,
and it echoes through the land.
And it's the hope of hopes, it's the love of loves,
it's the heart of every man.

It's the hope of hopes, it's the love of loves.
This is the song of every man.
And God is watching us, God is watching us,
God is watching us from a distance.
Oh, God is watching us, God is watching.
God is watching us from a distance.

Theme 3, Song 1.

Mariah Carey - "One Sweet Day"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AKdw8xYyoQY>

Sorry I've never told you
All I wanted to say
And now it's too late to hold you
'Cause you've flown away, so far away

Never had I imagined
Living without your smile
Feeling and knowing you hear me
It keeps me alive, alive

And I know you're shining down on me from Heaven
Like so many friends we've lost along the way
And I know eventually we'll be together (Together)
One sweet day
(And I'll wait patiently to see you in heaven)

Darling, I never showed you (No, no, no, no)
Assumed you'd always be there (Always there)
I thought you'd always be there
I, I took your presence for granted
But I always cared (But I always cared)
And I miss the love we shared (Yeah, and I know)

And I know you're shining down on me from Heaven
Like so many friends we've lost along the way (Lost along the way)
And I know eventually we'll be together (Oh, no, I know)
One sweet day
(And I'll wait patiently to see you in heaven)

(Although the sun will never shine the same again)
(I'll always look to a brighter day) Yeah, yeah
Lord, I know when I lay me down to sleep
You will always listen as I pray

And I know you're shining down on me from Heaven
Like so many friends we've lost along the way
And I know eventually we'll be together
One sweet day (One sweet day)
And I know you're shining down on me from Heaven

Like so many friends we've lost along the way
And I know eventually we'll be together (Yes, we will)
(One sweet day) One sweet day

Sorry, I never told you
All I wanted to say

Theme 3, Song 2.

Missy 'Misdemeanor' Elliot – “Can You Hear Me”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBtheehSxU>

(feat. TLC)

[Aaliyahs mother]

This is the information for
For where you can send the flowers
Its for Aaliyah
Ill give you the phone number in case you need it
Ok we'll see you
Take care of yourself
I love you
Bye bye

[Missy]

I been checkin on your moms and dad
And your brother since the day you left
Passed on and went away with God
But for your mom its been
So damn hard
I hate to even hear her cry
Aaliyah she asked me why
Would a baby girl go this way
Can you give me better words to say

One day she'll see you again
With the same old beautiful smile
Long hair and the voice of a hummingbird
You'll be singing them same old songs
Aalyiah can you hear me
I hope that you're proud of me
Me and Tim we been doing our thing
But Its never been the same
Since you had to go
I aint never met a friend
More incredible

[TLC]

I know you in real good hands
With God but damn I miss you
Aayliah if you see Left Eye will you tell her
That me and Boz miss her too
Cuz no ones gunna fill her space
TC L not replace
Yall the reasons we learned to love

Fly high with your 22 doves

One day we'll see her again
With the same old beautiful smile
Crazy but sexy cool
She'll be rapping them same old songs
Lisa can you hear me
We hope that you're proud of us
TLC has come along way
But its never been the same
Since you had to go
Cuz the healing process will be long and slow

Aaliyah I know you in a safer place
You face to face with the creator
And our maker
And if you and Left-Eye happen to chat tell her
Me and Teone we know that she much safer
If you see Biggie Smalls up in the clouds tell him
Hes still the illest MC we had around
2pac there is only one
Big Pun RIP we say one

One day we'll see yall again
With the same old beautiful smiles
All styles so many styles
And yall be doing the same old things
The last time we seen ya
We hope yall can change the world
Let them see how short life be
It would never be the same since you had to go
To the music world yall are incredible

Theme 3, Song 3.

Puff Daddy – “I’ll Be Missing You”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSdcIFkPQFU>

(feat. 112, Faith Evans)

[Puff Daddy:]

Every day I wake up, I hope I'm dreamin'
I can't believe this shit
Can't believe you ain't here
Sometimes it's just hard for a nigga to wake up
It's hard to just keep goin'
It's like I feel empty inside without you bein' here
I would do anything, man, to bring you back
I'd give all this shit, shit the whole lot
I saw your son today, he look just like you
You was the greatest, you'll always be the greatest
I miss you, B.I.G.
Can't wait 'til that day when I see your face again
I can't wait 'til that day when I see your face again

This right here tell me why
Goes out to every one that has lost someone that they truly loved
Come on, check it out

Seems like yesterday we used to rock the show
I laced the track, you locked the flow
So far from hanging on the block for dough
Notorious, they got to know
That life ain't always what it seem to be
Words can't express what you mean to me
Even though you're gone, we still a team
Through your family, I'll fulfill your dream
(that's right)

In the future, can't wait to see
If you open up the gates for me
Reminisce some time, the night they took my friend
Try to black it out, but it plays again
When it's real, feeling's hard to conceal
Can't imagine all the pain I feel
Give anything to hear half your breath (half your breath)
I know you still living your life after death

[Faith Evans:]

Every step I take,

Every move I make
Every single day,
Every time I pray
I'll be missing you
Thinking of the day,
When you went away
What a life to take,
What a bond to break
I'll be missing you

[Puff:]

I miss you B.I.G.

It's kinda hard with you not around
Know you're in heaven smiling down
Watching us while we pray for you
Every day we pray for you
'Til the day we meet again
In my heart is where I'll keep you, friend
Memories give me the strength I need to proceed
Strength I need to believe

My thoughts, B.I.G., I just can't define (can't define)
Wish I could turn back the hands of time
Us in the 6,
Shop for new clothes and kicks
You and me taking flicks
Making hits, stages they receive you on
I still can't believe you're gone (can't believe you're gone)
Give anything to hear half your breath (half your breath)
I know you still living your life after death

[Faith Evans:]

Every step I take,
Every move I make
I miss you
Every single day,
Every time I pray
I'll be missing you
Thinking of the day,
When you went away
What a life to take,
What a bond to break
I'll be missing you

Somebody tell me why

One black morning when this life is over I know I'll see your face

[112 (Puff):]

Every night I pray,
Every step I take
Every move I make,
Every single day

Every night I pray,
Every step I take
(Every day that passes)
Every move I make,
Every single day
(Is a day that I get closer to seeing you again)

Every night I pray,
Every step I take
(We miss you, B.I.G., and we won't stop)
Every move I make,
Every single day
(Cause we can't stop, that's right)

Every night I pray,
Every step I take
Every move I make,
Every single day
(We miss you, B.I.G.)

[Faith Evans:]

Every step I take

Theme 3, Song 4.

Wiz Khalifa – “See You Again”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBuADd2Dx2Q>

(feat. Charlie Puth)

(from "Furious 7" soundtrack)

[Charlie Puth:]

It's been a long day without you, my friend
And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again
We've come a long way from where we began
Oh, I'll tell you all about it when I see you again
When I see you again
(Hey)

[Wiz Khalifa:]

Damn, who knew?
All the planes we flew
Good things we've been through
That I'll be standing right here talking to you
'Bout another path
I know we loved to hit the road and laugh
But something told me that it wouldn't last
Had to switch up
Look at things different, see the bigger picture
Those were the days
Hard work forever pays
Now I see you in a better place (see you in a better place)

Uh

How can we not talk about family when family's all that we got?
Everything I went through you were standing there by my side
And now you gon' be with me for the last ride

[Charlie Puth:]

It's been a long day without you, my friend
And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again (I see you again)
We've come a long way (yeah, we came a long way) from where we
began (you know we started)
Oh, I'll tell you all about it when I see you again (let me tell you)
When I see you again

(Aah oh, aah oh
Wooooh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh)
Yeah

[Wiz Khalifa:]

First you both go out your way
And the vibe is feeling strong
And what's small turn to a friendship
A friendship turn to a bond
And that bond will never be broken
The love will never get lost (and the love will never get lost)
And when brotherhood come first
Then the line will never be crossed
Established it on our own
When that line had to be drawn
And that line is what we reach
So remember me when I'm gone (remember me when I'm gone)

How can we not talk about family when family's all that we got?
Everything I went through you were standing there by my side
And now you gon' be with me for the last ride

[Charlie Puth:]

So let the light guide your way, yeah
Hold every memory as you go
And every road you take, will always lead you home, home

It's been a long day without you, my friend
And I'll tell you all about it when I see you again
We've come a long way from where we began
Oh, I'll tell you all about it when I see you again
When I see you again

(Aah oh)

(Uh)

(Aah oh)

(Yeah)

(Wooooh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh)

(Ya, ya)

When I see you again

(Uh)

See you again

(Wooooh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh)

(Yeah, yeah, uh-huh)

When I see you again

Theme 4, Song 1.

Black Eyed Peas – “I Gotta Feelin’”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMUr-teWAwg>

[4x]

I gotta feeling that tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good, good night

Tonight's the night
Let's live it up
I got my money
Let's spend it up

Go out and smash it
Like oh my God
Jump off that sofa
Let's get get off

I know that we'll have a ball
If we get down
And go out
And just lose it all

I feel stressed out
I wanna let it go
Let's go way out spaced out
And losing all control

Fill up my cup
Mazel Tov
Look at her dancing
Just take it off

Let's paint the town
We'll shut it down
Let's burn the roof
And then we'll do it again

Let's do it, let's do it,
Let's do it,
Let's do it, and do it, and do it,
Let's live it up
And do it, and do it, and do it, do it, do it,
Let's do it,
Let's do it,

Let's do it

'Cause...

[2x]

I gotta feeling (ooooo hoooo) that tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good, good night

Tonight's the night (hey!)
Let's live it up (let's live it up)
I got my money (I'm paid)
Let's spend it up (let's spend it up)

Go out and smash it (smash it)
Like oh my God (like oh my God)
Jump off that sofa (c'mon)
Let's get get off

Fill up my cup (drink)
Mazel Tov (l'chaim)
Look at her dancing (move it, move it)
Just take it off

Let's paint the town (paint the town)
We'll shut it down (shut it down)
Let's burn the roof
And then we'll do it again

Let's do it, let's do it,
Let's do it,
Let's do it, and do it, and do it,
Let's live it up
And do it, and do it, and do it, do it, do it,
Let's do it,
Let's do it,
Let's do it, do it, do it, do it

Here we come
Here we go
We gotta rock (rock, rock, rock, rock)

Easy come
Easy go
Now we on top (top, top, top, top)

Feel the shot
Body rock
Rock it don't stop (stop, stop, stop, stop)

Round and round
Up and down

Around the clock (clock, clock, clock, clock)

Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, and Thursday
Friday, Saturday
Saturday to Sunday

Get get get get get with us
You know what we say
Party every day
Pa pa pa party every day

And I'm feeling (ooooo hoooo)
That tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good good night

I gotta feeling (oooooo hoooo) that tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good night
That tonight's gonna be a good good night

Oooooooo hooooo

Theme 4, Song 2.

Katy Perry "Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F)"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrCQa_gkQUl

There's a stranger in my bed,
There's a pounding in my head
Glitter all over the room
Pink flamingos in the pool

I smell like a mini-bar
DJs passed out in the yard
Barbies on the barbecue
This a hickey or a bruise

Pictures of last night
Ended up online
I'm screwed
Oh, well
It's a blacked out blur
But I'm pretty sure it ruled
Damn

Last Friday night
Yeah, we danced on table tops
And we took too many shots
Think we kissed but I forgot

Last Friday night
Yeah, we maxed our credit cards
And got kicked out of the bar
So we hit the boulevard

Last Friday night
We went streaking in the park
Skinny dipping in the dark
Then had a ménage à trois

Last Friday night
Yeah, I think we broke the law
Always say we're gonna stop

This Friday night
Do it all again
This Friday night
Do it all again

Trying to connect the dots
Don't know what to tell my boss
Think the city towed my car
Chandelier is on the floor

Ripped my favorite party dress
Warrants out for my arrest
Think I need a ginger ale
That was such an epic fail

Pictures of last night
Ended up online
I'm screwed
Oh, well
It's a blacked out blur
But I'm pretty sure it ruled
Damn

Last Friday night
Yeah, we danced on table tops
And we took too many shots
Think we kissed but I forgot

Last Friday night
Yeah, we maxed our credit cards
And got kicked out of the bar
So we hit the boulevard

Last Friday night
We went streaking in the park
Skinny dipping in the dark
Then had a ménage à trois

Last Friday night
Yeah, I think we broke the law
Always say we're gonna stop

This Friday night
Do it all again
(Do it all again)
This Friday night
Do it all again
(Do it all again)
This Friday night

T.G.I.F.
T.G.I.F.
T.G.I.F.

T.G.I.F.
T.G.I.F.
T.G.I.F.

Last Friday night
Yeah, we danced on table tops
And we took too many shots
Think we kissed but I forgot

Last Friday night
Yeah, we maxed our credit cards
And got kicked out of the bar
So we hit the boulevard

Last Friday night
We went streaking in the park
Skinny dipping in the dark
Then had a ménage à trois

Last Friday night
Yeah, I think we broke the law
Always say we're gonna stop

This Friday night
Do it all again

Theme 4, Song 3.

Flo Rida – “Low”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZMY2SEfPuvU>

(feat. T-Pain)

[T-Pain:]

Mmmmmmm
Let me talk to 'em
Let me talk to 'em
Let it rain
Mmmmmmm
Let me talk to 'em
C'mon!

[T-Pain:]

Shawty had them apple bottom jeans (jeans)
Boots with the fur (with the fur)
The whole club was looking at her
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low
Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reebok's with the straps (with the straps)
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack (hey)
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low

[Flo-Rida:]

I ain't never seen nothing that'll make me go
This crazy all night spending my dough
Had a million dollar vibe and a bottle to go
Them birthday cakes they stole the show
So sexual
She was flexible professional
Drinking X&O
Hold up, wait a minute, do I see what I think? Whoa
Did I think I see shawty get low?
Ain't the same when it's up that close
Make it rain I'm making it snow
Work the pole I got the bank roll
I'mma say that I prefer them no clothes
I'm into that I love women exposed
She threw it back at me I gave her more
Cash ain't no problem I know where it goes
She had them

[T-Pain:]

Apple bottom jeans (jeans)
Boots with the fur (with the fur)
The whole club was looking at her
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low
Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reebok's with the straps (with the straps)
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack (hey)
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low

[Flo-Rida:]

Hey shawty what I gotta do to get you home
My jeans full of guap and they're ready for shones
Cadillacs Maybachs for the sexy grown
Patron on the rocks that'll make you moan
One stack (come on), two stacks (come on), three stacks (come on)
Now that's three grand
What you think I'm playing, baby girl, I'm the man
I'll bend the rubber bands
That's what I told her
Her legs on my shoulder
I knew it was over
That Henny and Cola got me like a soldier
She ready for Rover, I couldn't control her
So lucky on me I was just like a clover
Shawty was hot like a toaster
Sorry but I had to fold her
Like a pornography poster
She showed her

[T-Pain:]

Apple bottom jeans (jeans)
Boots with the fur (with the fur)
The whole club was looking at her
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low
Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reebok's with the straps (with the straps)
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack (hey)
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low

[Flo-Rida:]

Whoa, shawty, yeah, she was worth the money
Little mama took my cash
And I ain't want it back
The way she bent that back

Got her them paper stacks
Tattoo above her crack
I had to handle that
I was on it, sexy woman
Let me showing and made me want it
Two in the morning I'm zoning
And them Rosé bottles foaming
She wouldn't stop
Made it drop
Shawty did that pop and lock
Had to break her off that guap
Gal was fly just like my Glock

[T-Pain:]

Apple bottom jeans (jeans)
Boots with the fur (with the fur)
The whole club was looking at her
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low
Them baggy sweat pants
And the Reebok's with the straps (with the straps)
She turned around and gave that big booty a smack (hey)
She hit the floor (she hit the floor)
Next thing you know
Shawty got low, low, low, low, low, low, low, low

C'mon

Theme 4, Song 4.

Usher - "Love In This Club"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdATGDEjAzs>

(feat. Young Jeezy)

I gotta do it for the ladies.
And I gotta keep it hood.
Where we at Polo
I see you Ryan
You Keith you was right
We just getting it started.
Yeah man.

You say you're searching for somebody that will take you out and do you right.
Well, come here baby and let daddy show you what it feels like.
You know all you gotta do is tell me what you're sipping on.
And I promise that I'm gonna keep it coming all night long.

Looking in your eyes,
While you're on the other side,
(And I think that shorty I gotta thing for you)
Doing it on purpose, wind it and work it.
I can tell by the way that you're looking at me, girl.

I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club
In this club
I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club
In this club

Listen, if you got some friends rolling with you then baby that's cool.
You can leave them with my homies, let them know that I got you.
If you didn't know, you're the only thing that's on my mind.
'Cause the way I'm staring at you got me wanting to give it to you all night.

Looking in your eyes,
While you're on the other side,
(I can't take it no more baby I'm coming for you)
Doing it on purpose, wind it and work it.
If we close our eyes it could just be me and you

I wanna make love in this club.

In this club
In this club
In this club
I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club
In this club

I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club
In this club
I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club
In this club

[Young Jeezy:]

I'm what you want,
I'm what you want,
I'm what you need.
I'm what you need.
He got to trap,
He got to trap,
I'll set you free,
Sexually, mentally, physically, emotionally,
I'll be like your medicine, you'll take every dose of me.
It's going down on isle 3, I'll bag you like some groceries.
And every time you think about it, you're gonna want some more of me.
About to hit the club make a movie yeah rated R.
Pull up like a Trap Star. That's if you had...
Have you ever made love to a thug in the club with his sights on, 87 jeans and a
fresh pair of Nike's on.
On the couch, on the table, on the bar, on the floor.
You can meet me in the bathroom, you know I'm trained to go.
Might as well give me a kiss, if we keep touching like this
I know you're scared, baby, they don't know what we're doing.
Let's both get undressed right here, keep it up girl, and, I swear.
I'm gonna give it to you non-stop.
And I don't care, who's watching, watching, watching, watching.
In this club, on the floor,
Baby let's make love
I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club

In this club
I wanna make love in this club.
In this club
In this club
In this club

I wanna make love in this club.

Theme 5, Song 1.

Fun – “We Are Young”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9g5m3z24jJM>

(feat. Janelle Monáe)

Give me a second I
I need to get my story straight
My friends are in the bathroom getting higher than the Empire State
My lover she's waiting for me just across the bar
My seat's been taken by some sunglasses asking 'bout a scar, and
I know I gave it to you months ago
I know you're trying to forget
But between the drinks and subtle things
The holes in my apologies, you know
I'm trying hard to take it back
So if by the time the bar closes
And you feel like falling down
I'll carry you home

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun

Now I know that I'm not
All that you got
I guess that I, I just thought
Maybe we could find new ways to fall apart
But our friends are back
So let's raise a toast
'Cause I found someone to carry me home

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun

Carry me home tonight (Nananananana)
Just carry me home tonight (Nananananana)
Carry me home tonight (Nananananana)
Just carry me home tonight (Nananananana)

The moon is on my side (Nananananana)
I have no reason to run (Nananananana)
So will someone come and carry me home tonight (Nananananana)
The angels never arrived (Nananananana)
But I can hear the choir (Nananananana)
So will someone come and carry me home (Nananananana)

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun

Tonight
We are young
So let's set the world on fire
We can burn brighter than the sun

So if by the time the bar closes
And you feel like falling down
I'll carry you home tonight

Theme 5, Song 2.

Kesha - "Tik Tok"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3YrXqit-SWE>

Wake up in the mornin' feelin' like P-Diddy (hey what's up girl)
Grab my glasses I'm out the door I'm gonna hit the city (let's go)
Before I leave brush my teeth with a bottle of Jack
'Cause when I leave for the night I ain't comin' back

I'm talkin' pedicure on our toes toes
Tryin' on all our clothes clothes
Boys blowin' up our phones phones

Drop top and playin' our favorite CD's
Pullin' up to the parties
Tryna get a little bit tipsy

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no
Whoa-oh oh oh
Whoa-oh oh oh

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no
Whoa-oh oh oh
Whoa-oh oh oh

Ain't got a care in world, but got plenty of beer
Ain't got no money in my pocket, but I'm already here
Now, the dudes are linin' up cause they hear we got swagger
But we kick em to the curb unless they look like Mick Jagger

I'm talkin' bout - everybody getting crunk, crunk
Boys tryna touch my junk, junk
Gonna smack him if he getting too drunk, drunk
Now, now - we goin' 'til they kick us out, out
Or the police shut us down, down

Police shut us down, down
Po-po shut us - (down)-man

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no
Whoa-oh oh oh
Whoa-oh oh oh

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no
Whoa-oh oh oh
Whoa-oh oh oh

DJ, you build me up
You break me down
My heart, it pounds
Yeah, you got me
With my hands up
You got me now
You got that sound
Yeah, you got me

You build me up
You break me down
My heart, it pounds
Yeah, you got me
With my hands up
Put your hands up
Put your hands up

Now
The party don't start 'til I walk in

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no

Whoa-oh oh oh
Whoa-oh oh oh

Don't stop, make it pop
DJ, blow my speakers up
Tonight, Imma fight
'Til we see the sunlight
TiK ToK, on the clock
But the party don't stop no
Whoa-oh oh oh
Whoa-oh oh oh

Theme 5, Song 3.

T-Pain – “Buy U A Drank (Shawty Snappin’)”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sqe33usA3KE>

Shawty snap (yeah)
T-pain
Damn
Shawty Snap
Yung Joc (shawty)

[Yung joc:]
Ay ay
She snapping
Ah she snapping
Shawty snapping

[T-pain:]
Snap your fingers do the step you can do it all by yourself

Baby girl
What's your name?
Let me talk to you
Let me buy you a drink
I'm T-pain, you know me
Konvict music nappy boy oh wee
I know the club close at 3
What's the chance of you rolling with me?
Back to the crib
Show you how I live
Let's get drunk forget what we did

I'mma buy you a drank
Then I'mma take you home with me
I got money in the bank
Shawty what you think 'bout that?
Find me in the grey Cadillac
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh oh, ooh ooh
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh ooh, ooh ooh

Talk to me, I talk back
Let's talk money, I talk that
Crunk juice bottles
Oakly shades
Shawty got class

Oh behave
Let's get gone
Walk it out (now walk it out)
Just like that
That's what I'm talking 'bout
We gonna have fun
You gonna see
On that patron
You should get like me

I'mma buy you a drank
Then I'mma take you home with me
I got money in the bank
Shawty what you think 'bout that?
Find me in the grey Cadillac
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh oh, ooh ooh
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh ooh, ooh ooh

[Yung Joc:]

Won't you meet me at the bar
Respect big pimping
Tell me how you feel
Mama tell me what you sipping?
A certified dime piece
Deserve Louy 1-3
150 a shot
3 for you and 3 for me
I'm checking your body language
I love the conversation
And when you lick your lips
I get a tingling sensation
Now we're both 'bout tipsy
You say you in the mood
All I need is 'bout a hour
Better yet maybe two
Let me take you where I live
Ferrari switch gears
When I whisper in your ear
Your legs hit the chandelier
Passion fruit and sex
All in the atmosphere
I'mma let t-pain sing it
So he can make it clear

I'mma buy you a drank
Then I'mma take you home with me

I got money in the bank
Shawty what you think 'bout that?
Find me in the grey Cadillac
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh oh, ooh ooh
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh ooh, ooh ooh

Let's get gone
Walk it out
(Now walk it out, think about it, ah snap)
Now rock rock rock rock
You can do it all by yourself
Let's get gone
Walk it out
(Now walk it out, think about it, ah snap)
Now rock rock rock rock
You can do it all by yourself

I'mma buy you a drank
Then I'mma take you home with me
I got money in the bank
Shawty what you think 'bout that?
Find me in the grey Cadillac
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh oh, ooh ooh
We in the bed like
Ooh ooh ooh, ooh ooh

Theme 5, Song 4.

LMFAO – “Party Rock Anthem”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eMnB5f7Rgiw>

(feat. Lauren Bennett and GoonRock)

Party rock
Let's go!

Party rock is in the house tonight
Everybody just have a good time
And we gon' make you lose your mind
Everybody just have a good time (clap!)

Party rock is in the house tonight
Everybody just have a good time
(I can feel it baby!)

And we gon' make you lose your mind
We just wanna see you... shake that!

In the club party rock, lookin' for your girl,
She on my jock non-stop when we're in the spot
Booty move her weight like she on the block
Where the drank? I gots to know
Tight jeans, tattoo 'cause I'm rock and roll
Half-black half-white domino
Gain the money Oprah Doe!

Yo!
I'm running through these hoes like Drano
I got that devilish flow rock and roll no halo
We party rock! Yeah, that's the crew that I'm repping
On a rise to the top no lead/Led in our Zeppelin
Hey!

Party rock is in the house tonight
Everybody just have a good time
And we gon' make you lose your mind
Everybody just have a good time

Let's go

Party rock is in the house tonight
Everybody just have a good time
(I can feel it baby!)

And we gon' make you lose your mind
We just wanna see you... shake that!

Every day I'm shuffling
Shuffling shuffling

Step up fast
And be the first girl to make me throw this cash
We get money, don't be mad,
Now stop – hating's bad

One more shot for us
(Another round)
Please fill up my cup
(Don't mess around)
We just wanna see
(You shake it now)
Now you're home with me
(You're naked now)

[Lauren Bennett:]

Get up get down put your hands up to the sound [3x]
Put your hands up to the sound [2x]
Get up [9x]
Put your hands up to the sound, to the sound
Put your hands up! [4x]

Party rock is in the house tonight (put your hands up!)
Everybody just have a good time (put your hands up!)
And we gon' make you lose your mind (put your hands up!)
Everybody just have a good good good time

Put your hands up
I can feel it, baby!
Put your hands up
Put your hands up

Shake that!
Every day I'm shuffling

Put your put your
Put your put your
Put your put your
Put your put your
Put your hands up
Your hands up
Put your hands up_

Theme 6, Song 1.

Bruno Mars - "That's What I Like"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeTV9ad1sP0>

1. Hey, hey, hey
I got a condo in Manhattan
Baby girl, what's hatnin'?
You and your (a**!) invited
So gon' and get to clappin'
Go pop it for a player
Pop, pop it for me
Turn around and drop it for a player
Drop, drop it for me
I'll rent a beach house in Miami
Wake up with no jammies (Nope)
Lobster tail for dinner
Julio serve that scampi (Julio!)
You got it if you want it
Got, got it if you want it
Said you got it if you want it
Take my wallet if you want it now

Jump in the Cadillac, girl, let's put some miles on it
Anything you want, just to put a smile on it
You deserve it baby, you deserve it all
And I'm gonna give it to you

Gold jewelry shining so bright
Strawberry champagne on ice
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Sex by the fire at night
Silk sheets and diamonds all white
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like

I'm talkin' trips to Puerto Rico
Say the word and we go
You can be my freaka
Girl, I'll be a fleeko, mamacita
I will never make a promise that I can't keep
I promise that your smile ain't gon' never leave

Shopping sprees in Paris
Everything 24 karats
Take a look in that mirror
Now tell me who's the fairest
Is it you? (is it you?) Is it me? (is it me?)
Say it's us (say it's us) and I'll agree, baby

Jump in the Cadillac, girl, let's put some miles on it
Anything you want, just to put a smile on it
You deserve it baby, you deserve it all
And I'm gonna give it to you

Gold jewelry shining so bright
Strawberry champagne on ice
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Sex by the fire at night
Silk sheets and diamonds all white
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like

[Bridge]

If you say you want a good time
Well here I am baby, here I am baby
Talk to me, talk to me, talk to me
Tell me what's on your mind (what's on your mind)
If you want it, girl come and get it
All this is here for you
Tell me, baby, tell me, tell me, baby
What you tryna do

Gold jewelry shining so bright
Strawberry champagne on ice
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Sex by the fire at night (Sex by the fire at night)
Silk sheets and diamonds all white
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like
Lucky for you, that's what I like, that's what I like

Theme 6, Song 2.

Shaggy - "It Wasn't Me"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pslgz9o8meM>

(feat. Ricardo Ducent)

(Yo', man) Yo'

(Open up, man) What do you want, man?
(My girl just caught me) You let her catch you?
(I don't know how I let this happen) With who?
(The girl next door, you know) Man
(I don't know what to do) Say it wasn't you
(Alright)

Honey came in and she caught me red-handed
Creeping with the girl next door

[Album version:] Picture this, we were both butt-naked, banging on the
bathroom floor

[Clean version:] Picture this, we were both caught making love on the bathroom
floor

How could I forget that I had
Given her an extra key
All this time she was standing there
She never took her eyes off me

How you can give your woman access to your villa?
Trespass and a-witness while you cling to your pillow
You better watch your back before she turn into a killer
Let's review the situation that you caught up in a

To be a true player you have to know how to play
If she say a night, convince her say a day
Never admit to a word when she say
And if she claim, ah, you tell her, "Baby, no way"

But she caught me on the counter (It wasn't me)
[Album version:] Saw me bangin' on the sofa (It wasn't me)
[Clean version:] Saw me kissin' on the sofa (It wasn't me)
I even had her in the shower (It wasn't me)
She even caught me on camera (It wasn't me)

She saw the marks on my shoulder (It wasn't me)
Heard the words that I told her (It wasn't me)
Heard the scream get louder (It wasn't me)
She stayed until it was over

Honey came in and she caught me red-handed
Creeping with the girl next door
[Album version:] Picture this, we were both butt-naked, banging on the
bathroom floor
[Clean version:] Picture this, we were both caught making love on the bathroom
floor

I had tried to keep her
From what she was about to see
Why should she believe me
When I told her it wasn't me

Make sure she knows it's not you and lead her on no right to vex
Whenever you should see her make the gigolo flex
Somebody else as it be by you, it not that complex
Seeing is believing so you better change your specs
You know she are gon' bring 'bout things up from the past
All the little evidence you better know to mask

Quick upon your answer: go over there
But if she pack a gun you know you better run fast

But she caught me on the counter (It wasn't me)
[Album version:] Saw me bangin' on the sofa (It wasn't me)
[Clean version:] Saw me kissin' on the sofa (It wasn't me)
I even had her in the shower (It wasn't me)
She even caught me on camera (It wasn't me)

She saw the marks on my shoulder (It wasn't me)
Heard the words that I told her (It wasn't me)
Heard the scream get louder (It wasn't me)
She stayed until it was over

Honey came in and she caught me red-handed
Creeping with the girl next door
[Album version:] Picture this, we were both butt-naked, banging on the
bathroom floor
[Clean version:] Picture this, we were both caught making love on the bathroom
floor

How could I forget that I had
Given her an extra key
All this time she was standing there
She never took her eyes off me

Gonna tell her that I'm sorry
For the pain that I've caused
I've been listening to your reason

It makes no sense at all
We should tell her that I'm sorry
For the pain that I've caused
You may think that you're a player
But you're completely lost
That's why I sing

Honey came in and she caught me red-handed
Creeping with the girl next door

[Album version:] Picture this, we were both butt-naked, banging on the
bathroom floor

[Clean version:] Picture this, we were both caught making love on the bathroom
floor

How could I forget that I had
Given her an extra key
All this time she was standing there
She never took her eyes off me

Theme 6, Song 3.

Ed Sheeran – “Shape of You”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJ2rlci9PE0>

The club isn't the best place to find a lover
So the bar is where I go (mmmm)
Me and my friends at the table doing shots
Drinking fast and then we talk slow (mmmm)
And you come over and start up a conversation with just me
And trust me I'll give it a chance now (mmmm)
Take my hand, stop, put Van The Man on the jukebox
And then we start to dance
And now I'm singing like

Girl, you know I want your love
Your love was handmade for somebody like me
Come on now, follow my lead
I may be crazy, don't mind me
Say, boy, let's not talk too much
Grab on my waist and put that body on me
Come on now, follow my lead
Come, come on now, follow my lead (mmmm)

I'm in love with the shape of you
We push and pull like a magnet do
Although my heart is falling too
I'm in love with your body
Last night you were in my room
And now my bedsheets smell like you
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with your body

Oh I oh I oh I oh I
I'm in love with your body
Oh I oh I oh I oh I
I'm in love with your body
Oh I oh I oh I oh I
I'm in love with your body
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with the shape of you

One week in we let the story begin
We're going out on our first date (mmmm)
You and me are thrifty, so go all you can eat
Fill up your bag and I fill up a plate (mmmm)

We talk for hours and hours about the sweet and the sour
And how your family is doing okay (mmmm)
And leave and get in a taxi, then kiss in the backseat
Tell the driver make the radio play
And I'm singing like

Girl, you know I want your love
Your love was handmade for somebody like me
Come on now, follow my lead
I may be crazy, don't mind me
Say, boy, let's not talk too much
Grab on my waist and put that body on me
Come on now, follow my lead
Come, come on now, follow my lead (mmmm)

I'm in love with the shape of you
We push and pull like a magnet do
Although my heart is falling too
I'm in love with your body
Last night you were in my room
And now my bedsheets smell like you
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with your body

Oh I oh I oh I oh I
I'm in love with your body
Oh I oh I oh I oh I
I'm in love with your body
Oh I oh I oh I oh I
I'm in love with your body
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with the shape of you

Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on

I'm in love with the shape of you
We push and pull like a magnet do
Although my heart is falling too
I'm in love with your body
Last night you were in my room

And now my bedsheets smell like you
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with your body

Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
I'm in love with your body
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
I'm in love with your body
Come on, be my baby, come on
Come on, be my baby, come on
I'm in love with your body
Every day discovering something brand new
I'm in love with the shape of you

Theme 6, Song 4

Boyz II Men – “I’ll Make Love To You”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62eW7EbP1Qc>

[Nathan:]

Close your eyes, make a wish
And blow out the candlelight
For tonight is just your night
We're gonna celebrate, all thru the night

[Shawn:]

Pour the wine, light the fire
Girl your wish is my command
I submit to your demands
I will do anything, girl you need only ask

[Chorus:]

I'll make love to you
Like you want me to
And I'll hold you tight
Baby all through the night
I'll make love to you
When you want me to
And I will not let go
'Till you tell me to

[Wanya:]

Girl relax, let's go slow
I ain't got nowhere to go
I'm just gonna concentrate on you
Girl are you ready, it's gonna be a long night
Throw your clothes (Throw your clothes) on the floor (on the floor)

[Shawn:]

I'm gonna take my clothes off too
I made plans to be with you

[Wanya:]

Girl whatever you ask me, you know, I could do

[Chorus:]

I'll make love to you
Like you want me to
And I'll hold you tight
Baby all through the night

I'll make love to you
When you want me to
And I will not let go
'Till you tell me to

[Wanya:]

Baby tonight is your night
And I will do you right
Just make a wish on your night
Anything that you ask
I will give you the love of your life, your life, your life

[Chorus:]

I'll make love to you
Like you want me to
And I'll hold you tight
Baby all through the night
I'll make love to you
When you want me to
And I will not let go
'Till you tell me to

[Chorus:]

I'll make love to you
Like you want me to
And I'll hold you tight
Baby all through the night
I'll make love to you
When you want me to
And I will not let go
'Till you tell me to

Appendix 4

Billboard Top 40s per Decade

1980s

<https://www.listchallenges.com/the-top-100-songs-of-the-80s>

1	Physical	Olivia Newton John
2	Endless Love	Diana Ross/Lionel Richie
3	Bette Davis Eyes	Kim Carnes
4	Every Breath You Take	The Police
5	Say, Say, Say	Paul McCartney & Michael Jackson

6	Eye of the Tiger	Survivor
7	Flashdance- What a Feeling	Irene Cara
8	Ebony and Ivory	Paul McCartney & Stevie Wonder
9	Waiting for a Girl Like You	Foreigner
10	I Love Rock 'n Roll	Joan Jett and the Blackhearts
11	Call Me	Blondie
12	Another One Bites the Dust	Queen
13	Centrefold	J. Geils Band
14	Lady	Kenny Rogers
15	Billy Jean	Michael Jackson
16	Abracadabra	Stevie Miller Band
17	Woman in Love	Barbra Streisand
18	All Night Long	Lionel Richie
19	Upside Down	Diana Ross
20	(Just Like) Starting Over	John Lennon
21	When Doves Cry	Prince
22	Total Eclipse of the Heart	Bonnie Tyler
23	Do That to Me One More Time	Captain & Tenielle
24	Coming Up (Live at Glasgow)	Paul McCartney
25	Like a Virgin	Madonna
26	Crazy Little Thing Called Love	Queen
27	Jack and Diane	John Mellencamp
28	Another Brick in the Wall Part 2	Pink Floyd
29	Jump	Van Halen
30	Down Under	Men at Work
31	Funky Town	Lipps Inc
32	Hurts so Good	John Mellencamp
33	Rock With You	Michael Jackson
34	Say You, Say Me	Lionel Richie
35	Don't You Want Me	Human League
36	Against All Odds (Take a Look at Me Now)	Phil Collins
37	Another Day in Paradise	Phil Collins
38	Beat It	Michael Jackson
39	Hello	Lionel Richie
40	Magic	Olivia Newton John

1990s

<https://pulsemusic.proboards.com/thread/96294/billboard-top-100-songs-90s>

1	One Sweet Day	Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men
2	Macarena	Los Del Rio
3	I'll Make Love to You	Boyz II Men
4	Un-break my Heart	Toni Braxton
5	Candle in the Wind/Something About the Way You Look Tonight	Elton John
6	End of the Road	Boyz II Men

7	I Will Always Love You	Whitney Houston
8	The Boy is Mine	Brandy & Monica
9	I Swear	All 4 One
10	I'll Be Missing You	Puff Daddy, Faith Evans & 112
11	The Sign	Ace of Base
12	How Do I Live	LeAnn Rimes
13	Gangsta's Paradise	Coolio featuring L.V.
14	On Bended Knee	Boyz II Men
15	Fantasy	Mariah Carey
16	Too Close	Next
17	That's the Way Love Goes	Janet Jackson
18	Because You Loved Me	Celine Dion
19	Waterfalls	TLC
20	Dreamlover	Mariah Carey
21	Creep	TLC
22	Can't help Falling in Love	UB40
23	Jump	Kris Kross
24	Take a Bow	Madonna
25	Tha Crossroads	Bone Thugs-N-Harmony
26	The First Night	Monica
27	Can't Nobody Hold Me Down	Puff Daddy & Mase
28	Informer	Snow
29	This is how We Do It	Montell Jordan
30	Baby Got Back	Sir Mix-A-Lot
31	Believe	Cher
32	Freak Me	Silk
33	No Scrubs	TLC
34	You're Still The One	Shania Twain
35	Wannabe	Spice Girls
36	No Diggity	Blackstreet & Dr. Dre
37	Everything I Do I Do It For You	Bryan Adams
38	Livin' La Vida Loca	Ricky Martin
39	Black or White	Michael Jackson
40	I'd Do Anything for Love but I Won't Do That	Meat Loaf

2000s

<https://www.cs.ubc.ca/~davet/music/list/Chart25.html>

1	We Belong Together	Mariah Carey
2	Yeah [Radio Edit]	Usher Featuring Lil' Jon & Ludacris
3	Low	Flo Rida
4	How You Remind Me	Nickelback
5	I Gotta feeling	Black Eyed Peas
6	No One	Alicia Keys

7	Boom Boom Pow	Black Eyed Peas
8	Let Me Love you [Album Version]	Mario
9	Gold Digger	Kanye West Featuring Jamie Foxx
10	Apologize	Timbaland Featuring One Republic
11	Dilemma	Nelly Featuring Kelly Rowland
12	Family Affair	Mary J. Blige
13	Big Girls Don't Cry	Fergie
14	Maria Maria	Santana Featuring The Product G&B
15	U Got it Bad	Usher
16	Whatever You Like	T.I.
17	Bleeding Love	Leona Lewis
18	Independent Women	Destiny's Child
19	Foolish	Ashanti
20	Hey Ya! [Radio Mix]	OutKast
21	Burn [Single Version]	Usher
22	The Way you Move [Radio Edit-Clean Version]	OutKast Featuring Sleepy Brown
23	Crank That (Soulja Boy)	Soulja Boy
24	In Da Club [Clean]	50 Cent
25	Irreplaceable	Beyonce
26	Hanging by a Moment	Lifeshouse
27	Breathe	Faith Hill
28	Lose Yourself	Eminem
29	Fallin'	Alicia Keys
30	I'm Real	Jennifer Lopez
31	Goodies	Ciara Featuring Petey Pablo
32	Hot in Herre	Nelly
33	Smooth	Santana with Rob Thomas
34	Run It	Chris Brown
35	Just Dance	Lady Gaga featuring Colby O'Donis
36	My Boo	Usher Featuring Alicia Keys
37	Live Your Life	T.I. Featuring Rihanna
38	Baby Boy	Beyonce Featuring Sean Paul
39	Lollipop	Lil Wayne Featuring Static Major
40	Crazy in Love	Beyonce Featuring Jay-Z

2010s

<https://www.billboard.com/charts/decade-end/hot-100/>

1	Uptown Funk!	Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars
2	Party Rock Anthem	LMFAO Featuring Lauren Bennett & GoonRock
3	Shape of you	Ed Sheeran

4	Closer	The Chainsmokers Featuring Halsey
5	Girls Like you	Maroon 5 Featuring Cardi B
6	We Found Love	Rihanna Featuring Calvin Harris
7	Old Town Road	Lil Nas X Featuring Billy Ray Cyrus
8	Somebody That I Used To Know	Gotye Featuring Kimbra
9	Despacito	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee Featuring Justin Bieber
10	Rolling in the Deep	Adele
11	Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse)	Post Malone and Swae Lee
12	Without Me	Halsey
13	Call Me Maybe	Carly Rae Jepsen
14	Blurred Lines	Robin Thicke Featuring T.I. + Pharrell
15	Perfect	Ed Sheeran
16	Sicko Mode	Travis Scott
17	All About That Bass	Meghan Trainor
18	Royals	Lorde
19	God's Plan	Drake
20	Moves Like Jagger	Maroon 5 Featuring Christina Aguilera
21	Happy	Pharrell Williams
22	Just The Way You Are	Bruno Mars
23	Rockstar	Post Malone Featuring 21 Savage
24	TiK ToK	Ke\$ha
25	See You Again	Wiz Khalifa Featuring Charlie Puth
26	Dark Horse	Katy Perry Featuring Juicy J
27	Thrift Shop	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis Featuring Wanz
28	One More Night	Maroon 5
29	We Are Young	Fun. Featuring Janelle Monae
30	That's What I Like	Bruno Mars
31	The Hills	The Weeknd
32	All of Me	John Legend
33	Happier	Marshmello & Bastille
34	Shake it Off	Taylor Swift
35	One Dance	Drake Featuring WizKid and Kyla
36	Radioactive	Imagine Dragons
37	Sexy and I know It	LMFAO
38	Someone Like You	Adele
39	Counting Stars	One Republic
40	E.T.	Katy Perry Featuring Kanye West