

Article

# Music's Role in Facilitating the Process of Healing—A Thematic Analysis

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**Abstract:** This qualitative study aims to understand the factors motivating Korean migrants' participation in weekly Charismatic Prayer Meetings in a Catholic Church. As music plays a crucial role in these meetings, the paper explores whether active engagement with music motivated the long-term commitment of participants to the meetings. The research is based on a thematic analysis of a focus group comprising six Korean adults living in Australia. Results show that music performed in religious forms such as Praise and Worship and Speaking/Singing in Tongues prayers was found to intensify spiritual experiences of the people as a group, and over time, each participant experienced improved physical and mental wellbeing, which in turn motivated further investment in the meetings. It was evident that the passionate group music-making enabled participants to focus on conscious and subconscious body, mind, and spirit, eliciting transpersonal experiences within each person. The findings of the current study are deemed relevant to this specific cohort and to others in similar contexts, where minority groups use worship and music for socio-cultural inclusion that addresses both spiritual and mental health issues. Though a small-scale study, the current paper provides a rationale for these religious groups to be involved in music-based spiritual practice.

**Keywords:** Charismatic Prayer Meeting; Praise and Worship; Speaking/Singing in Tongues; spirituality; music; wellbeing; Korean migrants

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## 1. Introduction

The current study is written by authors with different religious and cultural backgrounds. The first author was born in South Korea and trained as a music therapist in Australia. As a Catholic Christian, she was involved in Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM) with a group of Korean adult migrants in Australia. Since attending Catholic Charismatic Renewal Seminars<sup>1</sup> in 2010 and 2011, she then attended weekly CPM gatherings and provided keyboard accompaniment for the group for five years. This involvement initially coincided with her fulltime postgraduate study and the challenges of new stressful life circumstances. Juyoung has now been living in Australia for 13 years and found spiritual peace through the CPM, believing that she had been able to experience the Holy Spirit guiding her life journey. Although the CPM is not regarded as a therapy, Juyoung experienced the structure and contents of CPM in a manner similar to group music therapy. The functional similarity between the two experiences provoked her interest in the current study.

The second author is of European origin and was raised in the Anglican tradition, attending a Church of England school. She migrated to Australia from United Kingdom 11 years ago. Since early adulthood, Jane has not followed any religious pathway and considers herself to be an atheist. As a

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<sup>1</sup> It is a seminar that introduces Catholics a new way of praising and worshiping God, music occupying a central role.

musician, she has performed extensively as solo classical singer, often appearing in many historic religious venues such as St Paul's Cathedral in London and Durham Cathedral. She has also spent the last decade developing singing groups supporting frail older people, with an intention to offer positive ageing opportunities.

As part of Australian Research Council funded Discovery Project (DP 140102679), Musical Investment, that explores the relationship between musical activities and wellbeing across lifespan, the current study aims to understand people's motivations for and experiences of long-term music-based religious practice in the CPM format. In the current project, the first author led discussions with prayer meeting members, analyzed the data with the second author who acted as a discussant, co-analyst and co-writer. The two researchers respected one another's different beliefs and used these differences as a point of dialogue to probe and understand the data and its significance to the participants. The current article begins by situating this study within a cognate historical and theoretical context of the study. Then, the results of the data are presented thematically, followed by a conclusion with insights gained from the process.

## 2. The Historical Context of Korean Immigrants in Australia

Seeking spiritual power through religion is believed to offer significant life focus for many Koreans. It has been argued that this is specifically owing to the long, traumatic history of the Korean population (Buswell Jr and Lee 2006). Due to being surrounded by strong and politically ambitious Asian countries such as China, Russia, and Japan, the peninsula of Korea has frequently been invaded, and Koreans have suffered in many ways. Colonization under the Japanese lasted for over 36 years, ending in 1945, during which times the slavery and oppression endured bore heavily on Korean identity. The Korean War (1950–1953) resulted in the forced division between north and south by the US and the USSR and led to extensive family trauma. Indeed, the pain of separation for families living between the two parts of Korea, as well as the constant threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons, are still an ongoing dilemma for many Koreans. Seeking spiritual strength and power has been imperative to several generations of Koreans, and this transgenerational yearning has been used to explain why Christianity spread rapidly in South Korea, especially in the past 20 years, and perhaps why so many Koreans are passionately conducting missionary work around the world (Seol 2001).

In terms of immigration history to Australia, Koreans were reported to be the least represented among the Asian ethnic groups in 2001 (Han and Chesters 2001b). By 2006, they became the second fastest growing ethnic group in Sydney, after Chinese—approximately 40,000 Koreans lived in Australia, and two thirds of them lived in Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). Depending on the mode of entry to Australia, Korean immigrants have been classified into “amnesty (illegal),” “skilled,” and “business” migrants. This migrant history began in the early 1970s, when approximately 500 people arrived in Australia as tourists. They came seeking a better life, escaping South Korea's poor economy, and became amnesty migrants (Han and Chesters 2001a).

From the 1980s, South Koreans were able to obtain skilled or business visas when they immigrated to Australia. Most skilled migrants expected to have more professional opportunities, and business migrants hoped for better quality of life and education opportunities for their children (Han and Chesters 2001b). However, according to an interview study conducted with 17 amnesty, 14 skilled, and nine business migrants about their immigrant life and health (Han and Chesters 2001a, b), many of them reported that their expectations were not met, and as a result, they suffered from ill health. For example, amnesty and skilled migrants experienced poor physical health and immense mental stress due to their involvement in manual work such as cleaning and factory jobs. Although business migrants report improved physical health since their arrival in Australia, they also experienced poor psychological or mental health as a result of unemployment and subsequently losing purpose or meaning from their lives. A lack of social connections with local Australians was reported as another reason impacting on their health. Migrant anxiety, low self-esteem, and resentment were the major topics that described their mental health issues. In these

studies, a Korean man reported that his commitment to a Korean church was a vital factor in coping with personal challenges, indicating the significant role of ethnic churches for some migrants.

By 2004, Korean migrants had built around 200 Korean churches (consisted of independent churches, mostly Presbyterian and Uniting churches, and a few Catholic churches) in Sydney (Han 2004). In the 2011 questionnaire study conducted by the city of Sydney that assessed the Korean community's needs (Ng, Shim, and Shinde 2011), approximately 40% of 342 respondents reported the most involved activity in their local community was attending church. The reasons for attending churches were to meet other Koreans and receive practical and psychosocial support for daily living (Seol 2001). It was reported that many new migrants would go to church first when they arrive in Australia in order to find help and support in setting up new life, such as looking for a house, work, school, and to seek mental support. Reflecting back on the previous discussion about Korean's spiritual need originating in ongoing transgenerational traumatic history, and adding to the migrants' needs for a familiar social structure, it seems that the church's role in offering psychosocial and practical support cannot be overlooked, certainly not for Koreans now living in Australia.

### 3. The Catholic Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM)

There are various opinions about the beginnings of Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM), but the Catholic Church acknowledges a beginning in 1967 at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where a small group of students prayed eagerly and claimed to receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Daniel 2010). These students reported a renewed Christian engagement with the Holy Spirit and prayed for others to receive such spiritual nourishment. Since that specific event, and through participating in Catholic Charismatic Renewal Seminars that introduce a new way of praying and worshiping God, many Catholics have experienced the transformational power of the Holy Spirit. These types of prayer meetings have spread to all over America and continue to develop worldwide (Daniel 2010).

The purpose of CPM is to encourage "the awareness and the experience of the full role of the Holy Spirit" that leads to "experiencing union with God; inner transformation; ministry empowered by charisms for evangelization and service; and building communities that witness to a renewed Catholic life" (Hogan 2016, p. 12). To facilitate the Holy Spirit to be experienced by each individual, CPM ministry uses various forms of music such as "Praise and Worship" and "Speaking in Tongues" prayers (Wu 2005, Hogan 2016). In contrast to the rigid and classical-focused music that most Catholics are familiar with in the usual church setting, the songs and music used in CPM utilize contemporary musical styles and guide individuals to participate in voluntary group singing with intermittent prayer, which is referred to as "Praise and Worship" (Tshabalala and Patel 2010). The official terminology for "Speaking in Tongues" prayers is glossolalia and it is often called "Praying in the Spirit" as well. The highlight of each CPM is when Speaking in Tongues is facilitated for each individual to produce murmuring vocal sounds and conceive thoughts and feelings about God. The participants believe that through this process, they are communicating with God, as speaking and interpreting tongues is considered one of the spiritual gifts<sup>2</sup> given by the Holy Spirit.

As it aims to evoke emotionally charged religious experiences in a safe space, conducting the group music-making such as Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues requires particular skills of a music leader. Accordingly, the Catholic Church offers a specific set of guidelines for the music ministry (Hogan 2016), emphasizing that music leaders need to have ongoing training. The CPM group in the current study has developed a trajectory of worship over the years, which offers an example of CPM sessions:

- (1) Preparation and Beginning of the CPM:

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<sup>2</sup> The nine spiritual gifts include (1) expression of wisdom, (2) expression of knowledge, (3) faith, (4) gifts of healing, (5) mighty deeds (miracles), (6) prophecy, (7) discernment of spirits, (8) varieties of tongues, and (9) interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:7–11 New American Bible with Revised New Testament 1986/1970).

People prepare flowers, candles, a picture of Jesus Christ, and a statue of Mary on the altar in front of the group. The music minister plays keyboard, guitar, and sings several songs for people to join as they arrive and sit on chairs placed in a semi-circle in front of the altar. When the congregation is ready, the music minister starts the meeting with the beginning song called “The Sign of Cross”<sup>3</sup> (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003, p. 142), which involves hand gestures that make a cross sign as the lyrics indicate.

(2) Daily Reading and Rosary Prayers:

A Bible scripture of the day is proclaimed by the worship leader, which participants contemplate during the meeting. Then, the rosary prayers are delivered, and the calling of the Holy Spirit is undertaken by singing the song, “Come, Holy Spirits”<sup>4</sup> (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003, p. 504).

(3) Praise and Worship:

Everyone voluntarily thanks, praises, and worships God for gifts such as good weather, nature, and people etc. As each person offers their thanks, the others support them with the response lines, “Lord, receive our praise and worship”, this sequence repeating many times until the worship leader feels enough prayers have been offered. Then, the congregation is encouraged to choose several songs from a book specifically published for CPM in Korean (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003)<sup>5</sup>. Sometimes, when the song contains lyrics related to bodily actions such as raising hands and clapping, people undertake the action while singing. In the early days of this group, the participants danced around the room as well, but over time, people stopped dancing and remained seated in their chairs. At times, people discuss the meaning of words or lyrics of songs after singing.

(4) Facilitated Speaking in Tongues Prayers:

Lights in the room are turned off (candles remain lit), and a particular song that requests the Holy Spirit to be with the group is sung. Its verses can be repeated as many as needed until the music leader breaks into Singing in Tongues with loud and dynamic keyboard accompaniments. Everyone then starts their own Speaking in Tongues prayers with an intention to speak to God through the presence of the Holy Spirit. After reaching several musical climaxes, the sounds of Speaking in Tongues begin to subdue, and the music leader then gradually reduces the volume and tempo of the music. The music eventually ends with a silence.

(5) Interpretation of the Tongues:

After several minutes of silence, the worship leader asks, “Lord, we are waiting, please speak to us,” and the group explains the messages they received from the God during their Speaking in Tongues prayer.

(6) Praise and Worship:

People voluntarily pray for anything they need or want in their life and sing several songs of their choice.

(7) Ending of the CPM:

People voluntarily share their religious experiences over the week, then, gather and hold

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<sup>3</sup> Lyrics in English: In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. In the name of the father, of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. We are here to give thanks, praise, and worship to you, Lord. We are here to give thanks, praise, and worship to you, Lord.

<sup>4</sup> Lyrics in English: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

<sup>5</sup> For Korean Readers who might want to inspect the book, the name of the book in Korean is “기도 공동체 성가.”

hands and sing “The Lord’s Prayer”<sup>6</sup> (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003, p. 175) before ending the meeting.

Once a month, the group in the current study also participated in CPM mass, where a priest conducted the special mass embedded with some CPM activities. During the Speaking in Tongues Prayers, the priest laid his hands on each person’s head to increase the power of the exchanges. To encourage and facilitate this process, the music minister offered live improvised music throughout that constantly changed with varying dynamics in tempo and volume, accompanying the Singing in Tongues as they do in a typical CPM.

To understand the way this type of religious experience is constructed through the ritualized Charismatic performance, cultural anthropologist Keping Wu (2005) observed Catholic Charismatic community practices in America. After 18 months of fieldwork, Wu was able to describe in detail how CPM was directed, and the findings support the practices undertaken in the current study. According to Wu (2005), “a lot of singing, dancing, speaking in tongues, chanting, prophesying, waving, jumping, laughing and crying” is practiced (p. 6). She sums up the priest’s facilitation skills being to execute “a balance of spontaneity and control,” where individuals act independently but also interact with others and God. Wu (2005) concludes that “unity and interaction are the most important qualities of rituals that aim at transforming individual realities” (p. 8).

Theresa Smith (2015) is another music researcher who describes music’s vital role in music-based religious services. She observed how music is used in African-American Baptist church services. By describing two situations where music played a powerful role, Smith (2015) claims that music “functions as almost a timbral membrane for the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the service” (p. 6).

With regard to quantitative investigations of the phenomenon relevant to the current study, the role of Praise and Worship on Pentecostal young people’s spiritual wellbeing has been investigated in the context of youth ministry group (Tshabalala and Patel 2010). In that study, 40 young people living in South Africa completed a Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Halonen and Santrock 1999)<sup>7</sup> and a questionnaire that asked about the roles of various religious activities including Praise and Worship on participants’ spiritual wellbeing. Results revealed that experiencing music in their meetings was described as “uplifting and transforming,” and the young people felt a “sense of connection” with their peers and God. They believed that their involvement with the youth group provided them with “guidance and growth,” and Praise and Worship supported them when they needed to “cope with difficulties.”

A survey study conducted by Atkins and Schubert (2014) investigated whether the spiritual experience through music is intrinsic: whether it was evoked from music itself or extrinsically evoked by the memories or emotions associated with music. One hundred and seventeen people who attend various types of Christian churches such as Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Uniting Church members participated in the study, and the results indicated that spiritual experience, which is profound and transcendent, “comes to life” (p. 76), with musical forms. The authors also found that the music experienced in religious contexts is felt to be stronger, deeper, and more emotional than music experienced in non-religious context.

In the fields of music education and therapy, the uses of music in a group context have been well studied and documented. Benefits of group singing on healthy older people have been reported as increasing relaxation/feeling of happiness and lifting of spirits (Hillman 2002, Skingley and Vella-Burrows 2010, Lally 2009, Lehmborg and Fung 2010). Group singing was also offered to some people who experience various life challenges such as dementia (Davidson and Almeida 2014,

<sup>6</sup> Lyrics in English: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

<sup>7</sup> This is an adapted version of Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) scale, which consisted of two aspects of spiritual functioning: religious wellbeing and existential wellbeing. Ten subscales of religious wellbeing measure perceptions of one’s spiritual life, while another ten subscales of existential wellbeing measure meaning in life and the nature of one’s existence (Tshabalala and Patel 2010, p. 75).

Camic, Williams, and Meeten 2011, Davidson and Fedele 2011), homelessness (Bailey and Davidson 2002), and being socially marginalized (Bailey and Davidson 2005, 2003). In general, it was considered that group singing offers the participants with a structure and controlled/directed environment to explore and reflect on their emotions, and over time, participants were reported to experience an enhanced sense of self and regulation of mood (Lee, Davidson, and Krause 2016).

While there is no academic discussion that provides theoretical support to the music's role in CPM, some discussions in the field of music therapy are considered relevant. For example, Potvin and Argue (2014) explore music therapy as a spiritual practice by adopting a western Christian perspective. If the analogy is drawn between music as a prayer and the therapist as a minister, the relevance between CPM and group music therapy as a spiritual practice can be argued. In particular, for the current paper, the vital role of music ministry in CPM supports the idea of a professional music therapist controlling the specific uses of music to evoke and facilitate therapeutic changes in clients in various situations. Furthermore, as CPM is performed in a group environment, the notion of music as "a sociocultural phenomenon, an aesthetic expression of collectively constructed rituals and traditions that promotes individual and collective transformation" (Potvin and Argue 2014) provides a useful theoretical context for CPM.

Anne Lipe (2002) transformational model of music experience provides another important context for the role of music in CPM. After reviewing 52 published articles on the topic of music, health, and spirituality, Lipe proposes a transformation model of music experience. Incorporating various theoretical perspectives on the function of music, she claims its central function is personal transformation, with secondary functions being to: (a) evoke and support transpersonal<sup>8</sup> experiences, (b) promote individuation, and (c) invoke and transmit healing power. Making an association to Wu (2005) definition of the purpose of CPM being to transform individual realities, Lipe's transformational model of music experience provides a theoretical framework for the current study.

Despite the established history of CPM practice, no study to date explores the lived experiences of the Catholic Christians in CPM or the relationship between the music-based religious experiences and wellbeing benefits. In spite of the intense involvement of Korean migrants in both Catholic and Protestant churches all over the world, no study has explored the motivations of their heavy involvement in the church in relation to the possible role of music in their overall wellbeing. Therefore, the current study was guided by two research questions: (a) What is the experience of Korean migrants in CPM over an extended period of five years? (b) Has music been a motivating factor in their long-term commitment to CPM, and if so, how does music support the participants' spiritual experiences in this meeting?

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Study Design and Method of Data Collection

As the current study explored the lived experiences of participants who had engaged in religious practice over a five-year period, the nature of the data sought was private and personal, and accordingly, a qualitative study was designed to understand individual phenomenological experiences (Creswell 2013). Additionally, we wished to investigate the group's experience; therefore, instead of conducting individual face-to-face interviews, a focus group interview was selected as the most appropriate and time-efficient method to gather data (Stewart and Shamdasani 2015). This method was also enabled the researchers to identify both common and multiple perspectives relating to the shared experience of the particular group.

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<sup>8</sup> The term "transpersonal" is defined as "denoting or relating to states or areas of consciousness beyond the limits of personal identity" in the Oxford Dictionary of English.

#### 4.2. Participants

Participants of the current study were six Korean migrants who regularly attended the weekly CPM. The participants comprised two males and four females. Their ages were ranged from 33 to 62 years old, and the mean age was 50 years old. The number of years of participation varied between participants: the averaged year of participation were 3.8 years. Table 1 presents the information of the participants at the time of the data collection.

**Table 1.** Participants Information.

Name of Participant <sup>9</sup>	Age	Gender	Years of Attendance
John	59	M	5
Angela	57	F	5
Peter	46	M	5
Bernadette	33	F	5
Regina	42	F	2

Among the six participants, four participants—John, Angela, Peter, and Bernadette—have been active members who never missed a single meeting for over the five years. Peter was the worship leader of the group, and in CPM sessions, he led the prayers and offered guitar accompaniment. The first author, who has the Christian name of Bernadette, was the music leader as she is a qualified music therapist and confident music improviser. Working closely with the worship leader, Bernadette provided keyboard accompaniment and actively lead both Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues in all CPM sessions. Before participating in the focus group interview, the participants were provided with verbal and written information (plain language statements) and written consent forms. Ethics clearance for the study was given by The University of Melbourne (Ethics ID: 1442751.1).

#### 4.3. Procedure of Data Collection and Analysis

The first author facilitated a one-hour focus group discussion with the participants while they were on their religious retreat at a remote religious respite place. As she was a main member of the long-term group, while facilitating the group discussion, she was not hesitant to share her personal experiences or to add to the on-going sense of group and its closeness in the CPM. It is for this reason that she, as an insider, was selected to carry out the interview, rather than the second author, who would have perhaps found it more difficult to elicit open responses from the group, as she is neither Korean or a Catholic. Questions were asked, including,

1. What has been your experience in CPM?
2. What motivates you to continue CPM?
3. How would you describe the role of music in CPM?
4. How has this experience in CPM affected you in general? (Across your mental, physical, and social experiences?)

The interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, which was then shown to the participants to validate the text data as part of member-checking process in qualitative study (Lincoln and Guba 1985). To identify motivating factors and any benefits of using music in CPM, a thematic analysis was then conducted and shared between the two authors. Braun and Clarke's

<sup>9</sup> These are participants' Christian names, protecting their Korean names.

(2006) six phases<sup>10</sup> of conducting a thematic analysis were adapted to a simpler version of three steps in this study as follow:

- Step 1. Identifying key statements;
- Step 2. Searching for themes;
- Step 3. Reviewing themes.

Initially six candidate themes were identified in step two.

- (1) Beauty of music and singing;
- (2) Improvement of general physical and psychological wellbeing;
- (3) In-depth experience of the Holy Spirit through group singing;
- (4) Relief of psychological stress;
- (5) Great anticipation to the weekly meetings;
- (6) Strong and binding spiritual power as a group.

In the third analysis step, the six themes were reviewed to investigate whether “some candidate themes were real themes (e.g., if there were enough data to support them, or the data were too diverse), while others might collapse into each other (e.g., two apparently separate themes)” (Daniel 2010). In this reviewing process, the second author actively examined the six candidate themes as an outsider observer and identified that themes 1 and 5 did not have enough data to support them. In fact, theme 1 was described by only one participant, and theme 5 was briefly described by two participants. It was also identified that theme 4 could be collapsed into theme 2, and theme 3 and 6 could be one theme, as those themes represented the same topic. Consequently, two principal themes were identified as the motivating factors of the participants in attending CPM: (a) experiencing strong spiritual power as a group and (b) improvement of physical and psychological wellbeing. The details of the results are explored in the next section.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Motivating Factor 1. Experiencing Strong Spiritual Power as a Group

Four participants described how they perceived the strong spiritual power while practicing Praise and Worship as well as Speaking in Tongues with others. Angela remarked:

*In my everyday life, I feel the presence of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which I can perhaps consider as a liquid. When I meet the Holy Spirit in CPM, it feels like drinking a rich flavored red wine as people gather and intensively sing prayers together. For it is given to me for free, I think, “Why not?” That’s the reason I come to the meetings. I cannot imagine myself not coming back.*

Angela used a metaphor of “a rich flavored red wine” to describe the intensity of her spiritual experiences of singing prayers as a group. As the most religious person in the group, she was able to meet the Holy Spirit through her daily prayers. However, she certainly felt the difference in meeting the Holy Spirit through the group music making in CPM, which was much more intense and rich. Similarly, Bernadette elaborated more on the power of the group music making:

*When we are together, when we are singing all together, and when we are performing “Speaking in Tongues,” the Holy Spirit touches each one of us and tells me to feel Him. I can meet Him only here because He said that He will come when there are more than two people. Although God hears me when I pray alone, I think it is much more powerful when many people pray all together.*  
(Bernadette)

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<sup>10</sup> (1) Familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.87).

Her belief in God's presence in a group of people follows the Bible: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). By reflecting on the sensation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, Bernadette strongly believed that she can only meet the Holy Spirit in a group setting, especially when they perform Speaking/Singing in Tongues. Once she had raised this topic, the group started to share how the group singing made them focus on the contents of the songs and thus quickly enabled them to involve themselves at a much deeper level of communion:

*When we move our bodies together and sing with all our hearts, we can totally focus. (Angela)*

*We become so immersed into the song as a group. (Peter)*

As such, all described how the music making for the group was effective for binding spiritual power of all, believing that the Holy Spirit was present in the CPM, music being an effective and sensory medium, holding the people together, to achieve the spiritual experience.

## 5.2. Motivating Factor 2. Improvement of General Physical and Psychological Wellbeing

Five out of six participants reported improved physical and psychological wellbeing after attending the CPM. The religious communion experienced was perceived to be facilitated by music and prayer. Peter explained:

*When we sing, we are de-stressed for sure. In fact, I have gained physical health, which helps me to gain spiritual health as well. The spiritual betterment leads me to come back to the meeting every week. When I come to CPM, I feel like I'm having a spiritual shower given by the Holy Spirit to clean the dust and dirt on my body. When I am spiritually awakened, I realize how much I am happy and actually I am. So, I keep thinking of that happiness, and I become positive all the time, and then everything gets better so then I keep coming back to the meetings. For me, singing is the fastest way to go up to the spiritually powerful status. My mind is positively moved and the spiritual healing fosters physical healing. (Peter)*

As the worship leader, Peter started the prayer group at its inception in 2011. At the time, as a result of harsh physical laboring work, he was not physically well. He experienced diabetes and rapid weight loss. He was also suffered from immense physical pain in his shoulder that required surgery. However, over the past five years, his physical health became more manageable, and he believed that his physical healing process was facilitated by CPM. He described this healing process as a "spiritual shower." For him, spiritual wellness helped his physical wellbeing, literally removing the "dust and dirt" from his body, which is perhaps a reference to the hard labor he was doing at the time. The role of singing in Praise and Worship was clearly perceived as an effective medium to access to a spiritual experience.

Similar to Peter's experience, John, in his 60s, also highlighted the wellbeing benefits he received from CPM:

*There is a saying that singing the prayers is three times more powerful than just praying.<sup>11</sup> When I sing, I can feel that power. As an immigrant, I feel stressed by the foreign language and busy routines at work. But when I come here and sing with keyboard and guitar accompaniments, I feel relieved from the stress. Although I know that praising God is the priority in this meeting, I really like that we can have a relief from our stresses and start another week fresh again. (John)*

John immigrated to Australia in his late 50s, so learning a new language and culture was stressful and challenging for him. He was working in a large restaurant as a kitchen hand, and the working environment seemed intense and chaotic to him. As people use the Korean language in the meeting, speaking and singing in his mother tongue seemed to provide him a relaxing time. Because of this benefit, he has always hoped for other Korean immigrants to join in CPM.

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<sup>11</sup> It is generally believed that St. Augustine of Hippo said, "He who sings, prays twice."

Regina, who had attended the meeting for approximately two years at the time of data collection, also explained that she spends her time in CPM as a reflection on her busy week, connecting with God:

*In CPM, I reflect on my week. It is a good time to catch up with prayers, looking at my inner thoughts and feelings by contemplating on the lyrics of the songs, and speaking with God. (Regina)*

Regina, who was born with a physical disability in her leg, was a single mother of a teenage girl and ran a beauty business. As she was usually a quiet and passive member of the group, the worship and music leaders often encouraged her to choose songs, and Regina carefully selected songs that contained meaningful lyrics to her, which often lead to further discussion with others. Although Regina was not musically active or a passionate member, she certainly benefited from the Praise and Worship activity.

Summarizing these data, two main motivating factors were identified by the six Korean migrants to continue attending the music-based religious meetings. The first factor, experiencing strong spiritual power while making music as a group, seemed to reflect their experiences of moments in the CPM, whereas the second factor, experiencing physical and psychological wellbeing, seemed to indicate benefits of the spiritually powerful moments accumulated over several years. They seemed to be motivated by feeling and expressing the intense religious and powerful emotions during CPM, but also experiencing the positive power of the spiritual experiences on their body, mind, and soul, further motivated them to commit long-term participation to the group.

## 6. Discussion

The findings taken collectively suggest that the motivating factors for attending a music-based religious practice such as CPM are not simply religious, spiritual, musical, or social, but a combination of all of these elements that generates a type of communion. From the religious perspective, it was evident that the participants often made a reference to scriptures from the Bible when explaining their experiences in CPM, which seems to indicate that their religious belief and context was crucial in understanding their spiritual experiences in CPM. The role of initial Catholic Charismatic Renewal Seminars cannot be overlooked in this phenomenon, where the participants gained strong religious belief and understanding of the CPM theories and practices. When it came to their musical experiences, participants highlighted the intense power of the group music, supporting the previous findings of Atkins and Schubert's study (2014) that music experienced in religious contexts is perceived to be more emotional and spiritual. Music and sounds produced by the group during Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues seemed to offer a safe but flexible medium for the participants to feel, express, and reflect on their own emotions as they related to spirituality, loneliness, homesickness, personal challenges, joy, etc. But music and sounds also became a 'timbral membrane' through which to experience the Holy Spirit itself (see Smith 2015). Thus, the findings of the current study indicate that the CPM can augment religious and other personal experience through the music-based practice, and so support its members' wellbeing.

The findings of the current study further provide evidence of how profound religious experience can be achieved using both music and prayer. The participants felt the power to be transformed and guided through personal problems and difficulties by enabling them to express their emotions through music and prayer. Based on the participants' statement and reflecting on the first author's own experience, the two types of music experienced in CPM, Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues seem to require intense focus and attention to conscious and subconscious mind, body, and spirit. When singing songs and lyrics, thoughts and feelings on conscious levels are often evoked. When performing Speaking in Tongues, with a focus on the Holy Spirit, individuals seem to go deep into a subconscious level and find and speak to their inner God/voice. As the worship leader pointed out, the Praise and Worship seems like the fastest way to reach a spiritually powerful status where Speaking in Tongues prayers can be performed. The impact of these experiences on participants was referred to as a cleansing and refreshment (a "spiritual shower") by

the worship leader in this study. By focusing on body, mind, and spirit using group music making, each individual seemed to experience transpersonal experience, which is one of the role of music in Lipe's (2002) transformational model.

The personal experiences of some participants as migrants were similar to those in previous studies of Korean migrants' health and wellbeing (Han and Chesters 2001a, b, Han 2004). The results also resonate with the experiences reported by Tshabalala and Patel (2010) and Smith (2015) who all describe a similar phenomenon in which an effective religious practice guided and supported ethnic minority groups to work through their personal issues such as new perspectives on socio-political situations. Such findings could have resonances for other people who are experiencing similar cultural or ethnicity issues such as asylum seekers.

Daniel (2010), who examined CPM from a sociological context, highlights "the importance of social stressors such as marginality, isolation, and relative deprivation in driving people to join the Charismatic movement which seems to provide a renewed sense of identity, meaning and power in religious affairs" (p. 174). The de-stressing nature of music is encapsulated in the theory of the transformational power of music (Lipe 2002, Potvin and Argue 2014). One of the primary and secondary functions of music in Lipe's transformational model of music is to invoke and transmit healing power. When it works, music serves as "a container for moving through trauma towards healing" (Lipe 2002, p. 231). This theoretical notion was manifested in the CPM group whose members experienced a spiritual transformation through their healing process which relied heavily on music making.

The power of singing in a group, seen as a way to gain physical and psychosocial benefits, replicates evidence from previous studies with healthy seniors to develop a healthy ageing process (Hillman 2002, Skingley and Vella-Burrows 2010, Lally 2009, Lehmborg and Fung 2010), seniors with dementia to cope with deteriorating health and relationship with their careers (Davidson and Almeida 2014, Camic, Williams, and Meeten 2011, Davidson and Fedele 2011), and even homelessness men to regained resilience and strength to cope with their difficulties (Bailey and Davidson 2005, 2002, 2003). Thus, the function of group singing in a community context positively aligns with the findings of the current study. In short, participants can work on their emotions through music, and experiencing group membership has a source of healing power.

While some may regard the first author's role as interviewer a biasing influence on the data produced by the participants, we believe that the topic of the discussion was so personal, sensitive, and dependent on religious empathy that participants felt very comfortable with the first author and they would not have discussed their religious experiences with an unfamiliar person. Because the first author experienced similar phenomena, the in-depth conversation was facilitated by her closeness to others in the group.

Since few academic studies have been conducted in this area, this article offers some insights into a new area of study. Clearly, more qualitative studies exploring the unique experience of each individual in the CPM would provide a richer understanding of the CPM for those regularly practicing it or who do not have positive responses to this form of Catholic meeting. Quantitative studies that utilize surveys or questionnaires (e.g., the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Halonon and Santrock 1999) with large numbers of participants would also be useful in confirming or validating the findings of qualitative studies. The Catholic Church offers a firm guideline on the facilitation methods in CPM (Hogan 2016), thus, investigating the specific facilitation skills of effective music ministry or musical leader in CPM community might also be helpful in future work, specifically for training new musicians.

Certain factors need consideration for future studies. The role of the church for Koreans has been discussed in both spiritual and practical levels in previous studies. One negative aspect to have emerged in those studies has been that the Koreans meet within their own ethnic community through such churches, rather than socializing with local Australians (Han 2004, Seol 2001, Ng, Shim, and Shinde 2011). The Korean migrants in the current study, however, spoke of the comfort they felt speaking and singing in their mother tongue in the meetings. Consequently, studying the

benefits of speaking and singing in mother tongues on migrants in regular social contexts and using musical context for them to integrate with local people would be a useful area of future study.

## 7. Final Reflection

The first author, Juyoung, who is both the music participant and researcher in the current study, found that exploring the motivations of the six Korean participants in the CPM and researching their relationship to music offered an opportunity to contemplate the needs of the group as migrants. For the first time, she saw the group from the perspective of migrants living in a foreign country. Noticing the needs of fellow migrants and the role of group music making in a religious context offers her a fresh insight into her spiritual wellbeing as well as her music therapy practice.

The second author, Jane, is also a migrant, but one who has not developed a religious belief and has never experienced CPM, speaking in tongues, or any of the practices the participants undertook in their meetings. She is a singer and has group singing leadership experience, and after interacting with the data from the current paper and assessing it alongside other literature as well as her own experiences, Jane believes the current data add new data to the building pool of evidence that singing can bring group cohesion, a sense of being part of something larger than the self, and offers physical health and wellbeing benefits.

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