

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOSPEL MUSIC AND LEVELS OF RESILIENCY  
DURING CRISIS SITUATIONS

by

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I dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially...  
to Mom for instilling the importance of hard work and higher education;  
to my husband and children who were impacted by my study periods;  
to Vudger for being a listening ear when I needed you;  
to Jerry for his understanding and patience;  
to Aunt Wherline for her ongoing love;  
to Elder Shelton Harris who encouraged me to keep going.

To cousin Darryl Smith and friend, Vicky Bernhardt  
—may you also be motivated and encouraged to reach your dreams.

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This study focuses on the lived experiences of Hurricane Katrina survivors on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Specific research questions include (1) What role did Gospel Music play in relation to Hurricane Katrina (2) What does Gospel music mean to you. Participants include 29 males and 11 females who previously resided and returned to the Mississippi and Louisiana after Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005. The interviews occurred 7 years after the storm, thus all participants first completed the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory as a primer to reengage participants with their cognitive and emotional experiences of that time. They then completed a 12 question, open-ended interview designed to look at how they coped with their feelings using Gospel Music. The phenomenological method for this study, inspired by the work of Clark Moustakas (1994) and John Creswell (2007), was designed to uncover the essence of the lived experience from the survivor's point of view by making use of extensive narrative dialogues (Moustakas, 1994).

Participants were generous and graphic in their stories of struggle to find basic necessities, fear for their safety, concern for loss in their community, and conflict with basic faith beliefs, all during oppressive and relentless heat and dysentery. The participants experienced many similar emotions, such as initial fear, shock, anxiety, and disorientation resulting from physical losses such as homes, material objects, and familiar buildings. The themes that emerged caused the participants believe was responsible for their resilience. The emergent themes are (a) family and community, (b) God and spirituality, (c) goal-focused forward thinking, and (d) using the event to become a better person support the postulated theoretical work on positive posttraumatic growth.

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CHAPTER 1  
PROBLEM FORMULATION

**Introduction**

Major disasters, both natural and human-caused, produce widespread disruption and loss for families and communities (Erickson, 1976). Throughout recorded history, people have used the arts as a tool to help cope with life's unexpected events. "Music is a means of communication that helps express our emotions and fears. Music is a healing experience and historically, music has been used in major life event from prehistory on—that's how people cope with these life events" (BMI, 2001, p. 1).

Music is one of the modalities of Expressive Arts Therapy, (EAT). Expressive Arts Therapy uses the expressive arts—movement, art, music, writing, sound, and improvisation—in a supportive setting to facilitate growth and healing. It is a process of discovering ourselves through any art form that comes from an emotional depth (Rogers, 1993).

Music is a significant mood-changer and reliever of stress, working on many levels at once. Over 2,300 years ago, Aristotle spoke about music and its ability to communicate the emotional states of humans:

Music directly imitates the passions or states of the soul . . . when one listens to music that imitates a certain passion, he becomes imbued with the same passion; and if over a long time he habitually listens to music that rouses ignoble passions,

his whole character will be shaped to an ignoble form.(Amazing Discoveries, 2010, p. 1)

Understanding one's adjustment to crisis through an approach that includes gospel music is a beneficial starting point in the treatment and understanding of crisis survivors, such as with treating the crisis experienced by the survivors of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

### **Background of the Study**

Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast with devastating force at daybreak on August 29, 2005, pummeling a region that included the fabled city of New Orleans and heaping damage on neighboring Mississippi. In all, more than 1,800 people were killed and hundreds of thousands of others displaced. Packing 145-mile-an-hour winds as it made landfall, the category 3 storm left more than a million people in three states without power and submerged highways even hundreds of miles from its center. The hurricane's storm surge—a 29-foot wall of water pushed ashore when the hurricane struck the Gulf Coast—was the highest ever measured in the United States. Levees failed in New Orleans, resulting in political and social upheavals that continued a half decade later. This dissertation joins the discussion in its analysis of how gospel music helped individuals to find relief after Hurricane Katrina.

Hurricane Katrina was the sixth strongest hurricane ever recorded and the third strongest hurricane ever recorded to make landfall in the US. The loss of 275,000 homes made the devastation 10 times as great as any other natural disaster in US history (Brinkley, 2006). Thousands of residents from the Mississippi Gulf Coast were displaced by the storm, creating the largest population of internally displaced persons in the history of the United States (Norris & Rossen, 2009). According to the Sun Herald, (2005), \$125

billion in damage was estimated to have been caused by Hurricane Katrina (Appendix F). The Bush administration stated, (The White House: President George W. Bush, n.d.), “The flooding destroyed New Orleans, the Nation’s thirty-fifth largest city. The storm destroyed what many considered to be the heart of the Gulf Coast.” (Appendix G).

The residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast have had a long stressful history of hurricane activity. Beginning as early as 1722, a hurricane hit New Orleans carrying with it a 10-foot storm surge, flooding the area. In 1849 the city flooded once more burying over 200 city blocks. In 1893 the city experienced another similar disaster killing more than 2,000 New Orleans citizens, and in 1909 again the city was ravaged. In 1927, in an attempt to ease the flooding to the city, the levees were detonated, allowing the water to cascade in the poorer predominantly Black neighborhoods to protect the rest of the area (Brinkley, 2006). As one may imagine, the event resulted in an eroded confidence in the levee boards by the African American population in New Orleans, who felt that if the White gentry did it once, they would do it again (Brinkley, 2006). This concern has manifested itself in what Dass-Brailsford (2007) has termed transgenerational trauma, or trauma that occurs without direct exposure to the event, but is instead transmitted through parents or grandparents who have experienced the traumatic event (Davidson & Mellor, 2001). Mental health professionals often overlook transgenerational trauma, which makes assessment and assisting in recovery more complicated (Burstow, 2003).

The severe mental health consequences of Hurricane Katrina have ignited interest in the improvement of mental health care for victims of disasters (Norris & Rossen, 2009). Typically, post-disaster complications and stress symptoms may include recurrent nightmares, intrusive memories, impaired concentration, depression, hyper vigilant

arousal, and emotional detachment from others or from parts of one's life that were previously rewarding and fulfilling (Benight & Bandura, 2004). The long-term consequences, damage, and disruption caused by exposure to a hurricane of this magnitude may lead to mental health distress in unique ways (Hyre, Benight, Tynes, Rice, DeSalvo, & Munter, 2008). The psychological recovery from an event such as a severe hurricane is associated with many factors such as lost resources and sustained damage, in addition to cognitive appraisal processes and coping behaviors (Benight et al., 1997).

According to Murff (2008), effects from the storm included: roads covered in debris, houses collapsed under fallen trees, loss of electricity and water, and businesses that were shut down. Hattiesburg was the nearest inland city of a large enough size that could take people in from the areas that were hit hardest. So there was a huge population boom to the city of Hattiesburg from people coming to take refuge from the storm, and many of them stayed. There was an influx of money that people spent on retail stores and housing. Also, other businesses came to set up shop in Hattiesburg to service the hurricane zone area but wanted to be out of the hurricane zone and the city of Hattiesburg was the best place for them to work from. With the population boom there was a lot of new construction of houses, and people were enrolling their kids in school there and getting new jobs and setting up businesses in Hattiesburg. These variables, as well as the actions that were taken by the people of Hattiesburg helped the city of Hattiesburg to become the successful recovery story that it is today.

There is a need to help suffering people in crisis. There are natural disasters that occur and can leave individuals emotionally and physically exhausted. Music is a

therapeutic tool that is often used to promote mental and emotional health. Music has many benefits and profound effects on the body and psyche (Vivyan, 2010). Therefore, it is important to explore the medium of music for people in crisis. This dissertation will attempt to make a contribution to the field of therapy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The present study will explore the question if gospel music can be used to create resilience.

Ohio University (2006) found the following:

Research has shown that music works deep inside the brain to ease pain, combat stress, anxiety, depression and sleeping disorders in children and adults. When receptors receive a pleasurable musical stimulus, it is transferred to the brain and releases natural chemicals in the body that induce a decrease in pain and in requests for pain medication. (p. 1)

Hurricane Katrina is a perfect example of a crisis. Hurricane Katrina's damage was extensive. The storm destroyed so many homes, buildings, forest, and green spaces that an extraordinary amount of debris was left behind, 118 million cubic yards in total. Security organizations mobilized crisis response team to support those trapped in New Orleans and assist clients in the recovery efforts of Hurricane Katrina and later Rita (Security Management Group International, 2006).

The investigator did not find extensive enough research in this area. Therefore, more research on the use of gospel music as a resource for crisis is needed. As stated in the prior Background of the Study section, there is a need to find relief for suffering people when there is a crisis.



## **Purpose of the Study**

The questions considered in this research study include: (1) What role did gospel music play in relation to Hurricane Katrina? (2) What does gospel music mean to you? (3) Did gospel music give you strength or hope? The literature relating to resilience emphasizes how one's negative life experience has the ability to prepare one to tolerate stress and deal successfully with adverse life experiences (Bonanno, 2004).

As discussed earlier, resilience assumes the ability to move back to baseline functioning with life after trauma, whereas growth post trauma involves moving beyond pre-trauma levels of adaptation (Miller, 2006). The purpose of this study is to identify if individuals who experienced crisis became resilience as a result of listening to gospel music. This study is interested in understanding the variables that promote resiliency to crisis (dependent variable) and if gospel music (independent variable), can have a positive influence on individuals during crisis situations. The current study will examine these variables in order to contribute to this area of research. Interviews and observations were conducted using the Katrina survivors from Louisiana and Mississippi. The participants were asked to share their Katrina experience and given eleven questions to answer. The Modified Posttraumatic Growth Inventory is the instrument that will be used to analyze the data collected.

The inspiration of this research came as a result of my wanting to know if individuals can become resilient after working with people affected by the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing. I was one of 20 counselors from Lawton Public School (LPS) who traveled to Oklahoma City to render services on behalf of LPS. It truly was an eye-opening experience. I was able to witness first hand individuals hurting to such a degree

that words could not express their emotions. This experience led me to realize I needed more tools (beyond a master's degree) to assist individuals in telling their stories after a crisis. I wanted to help individuals to become resilient. This is when my journey began to search for a school that would offer me a holistic program. I wanted to learn about how to help the total person to maximize their optimal potential. This is when I enrolled into an Expressive Arts program. This is when my journey to empower individuals began.

The current research will have the following goals:

- To explore the degree of association between gospel music and crisis situations.
- To share with participants and those reading this study, the information the benefits of music.
- To gain insight into how the power of the music relate to crisis situations.

This research will explore whether there is a positive significant relationship between the use of gospel music and resilience during crisis situations. The research will explore whether music is a healthy, viable, and universal alternative for those searching for resiliency and growth.

Subjects: Twenty participants were selected for this study. All of the subjects for this study were survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

The criteria for selecting the participants for this study were based on the following:

1. They must have been living on the Gulf Coast during Hurricane Katrina.
2. They must have been affected by the hurricane.
3. They must have listened to gospel music after hurricane.

4. They must be willing to share their stories with this researcher.

### **Research Hypothesis/Questions**

The hypothesis for this study is: There is a significant positive correlation between listening to gospel music and having a high level of resilience.

The participants were questioned about their story. For the specific questions from the interviews, see Appendix H.

### **Importance of the Study**

Sneider (n.d.) found the following:

For thousands of years, music has been used for healing, both informally and in medical contexts. Mothers sing their colicky babies to sleep, we attend concerts and other musical events for pure enjoyment, and stressed people everywhere turn to their favorite songs for relaxation while driving, working, or sitting at their computers. (p. 1)

This qualitative study is necessary because the author did not find much research that explores the relationship between listening to gospel music and resilience. It seems the previous research has not explored the relationship between gospel music and resilience for individuals during times of crisis. There is very limited research available specific to gospel music in relation to resilience. Therefore, this study will explore if gospel music can be a source of strength and hope during crisis.

One can be creative while exploring one's emotions. Individuals are able to express their emotions and explore the world in which they live. This study will explore gospel music as an art form and as a cause of resilience during crisis situations. The author's assumption is that individuals who live in the Southern states who have

experienced crisis situations are likely to benefit from the results of this study. At the same time, therapists utilizing this study could also develop therapeutic strategies to assist their clients in crisis situations.

### **Scope of the Study**

The focus of this study is to examine (a) the narratives to understand the experience of gospel music during crisis situations and (b) the effect gospel music had in relations to resilience among Hurricane Katrina survivors. Comparisons will be made to the existing literature about Katrina survivors to the conceptual framework outlined earlier in the purposed model.

This research will address individuals from the Southern states of Louisiana and Mississippi who were affected by Hurricane Katrina. The individuals resided in Mississippi and Louisiana at the time the hurricane occurred and was over the age of 18 at that time. I conducted interviews and heard stories from Katrina survivors regarding their experience utilizing a questionnaire method.

The present research plans to contribute to the field of psychology by presenting the effects of gospel music on developing resilience during and after crisis situations. The narrative testimonies will explore if and how the participants found hope and strength after experiencing Hurricane Katrina which caused emotional, physical, mental, and psychological setbacks.

Resilient people use positive emotions to rebound from and find positive meaning in stressful events (Fredrickson, 2001). Resilience is the capacity to withstand stress and catastrophe (Kunhardt McGee Productions, 2009). Resilience also comes from supportive relationships with parents, peers, and others, as well as cultural beliefs and traditions that

help people cope with the inevitable bumps in life. Resilience is found in a variety of behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed across the life span. Resilience develops as people grow up and gain better thinking and self-management skills and more knowledge. Resilience also comes from supportive relationships with parents, peers, and others, as well as cultural beliefs and traditions that help people cope with the inevitable bumps in life. Resilience is found in a variety of behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed across the life span. Kunhardt McGee (2009) listed factors that contribute to resilience include:

- Close relationships with family and friends
- A positive view of yourself and confidence in your strengths and abilities
- The ability to manage strong feelings and impulses
- Good problem-solving and communication skills
- Feeling in control
- Seeking help and resources
- Seeing yourself as resilient (rather than as a victim)
- Coping with stress in healthy ways and avoiding harmful coping strategies, such as substance abuse
- Helping others
- Finding positive meaning in your life despite difficult or traumatic events

Further evidence states the resiliency of African Americans, in part, is rooted in spiritual philosophies and buttressed by the perception of a Higher Power as an advocate for social justice (Lawson, 2010). According to Cone (1974), African Americans' spirituality expresses struggle for the liberation of the oppressed. African American

religious beliefs, therefore, often encompass a Higher Power as a liberator. This view of God represents not only personal salvation but also social deliverance and incorporates opposition to negative cultural images (Lawson, 2010, p. 466).

### **Limitations**

A narrative phenomenological approach to this work may be perceived as a limitation of this study. I have only a small sample size of 20 participants who were interviewed. In examining the rich dialogues from the participants, it became clear that the experiences as graphically described by the participants were similar. The experiences of these survivors were not necessarily different from those who have suffered other traumas. Other survivors of trauma, as illustrated in the literature review, describe stories of the uncertainty of the future, being faced with difficult decisions, witnessing death, leaving family or sending family away during the recovery, experiencing extreme culture shock, anger, and confusion with their God, and difficulties with creating a new identity and place in their world. Each of the participant shared pain, fear, anger, grief, guilt, and anxiety as a result of their experience with Hurricane Katrina. These in-depth and unquantifiable responses offered a better understanding of what living through this experience was truly like for them.

This study is limited to individuals from the Southern states. The investigator cannot be 100% sure if the responses of the participants were honest. There could have been participants who might want to impress the investigator.

Another limitation is that some of the participants may fear that their identities will be disclosed and therefore, hesitate to be completely open. Others may have believed

the researcher have an idea of correct responses to the questions might have selected responses based on this belief.

Another limitation is the participants might try to impress the investigator with their accomplishments. Some of the participants might share highlights of their career and personal life and want the investigator to be impressed.

An additional limitation is that the questionnaires are limited. Important questions might not have been asked by the investigator.

Due to my background of being an African American from the South, my belief systems might cause me to be biased. Most of all there is an awareness that the author has regarding growing up as an African American in the South.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following are definitions of terms frequently used in the present research: gospel music (Turner, 2008). The word gospel means “good news” and gospel music is the good news of the message of Jesus of Nazareth in song.

Crisis (Cherry, n.d.): In mental health terms, the word crisis refers not necessarily to a traumatic situation or event, but to a person’s reaction to an event. One person might be deeply affected by an event, while another individual suffers little or no ill effects. A crisis presents an obstacle, trauma, or threat, but it also presents an opportunity for either growth or decline.

Resilience (American Psychological Association, n.d.b) is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

“Music Therapy uses music to effect positive changes in the psychological, physical, cognitive, or social function of individuals with health or educational problems” (American Music Therapy Association, 2004, as cited in Malchiodi, 2005, p. 2).

Compassion fatigue (Adams, Boscarino, & Figley, 2006), the formal caregiver’s reduced capacity or interest in being empathic or “bearing the suffering of clients” and is “the natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced or suffered by a person” (Adams et al., 2006, p. 1).

Trauma (American Psychological Association, n.d.c) is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer-term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives. Psychologists can help these individuals find constructive ways of managing their emotions.

Natural disasters (American Psychological Association, n.d.a) include such events as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, and tsunamis. Often these events are unexpected, sudden, and overwhelming.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Review and Evaluation of the Relevant Literature**

Resiliency is the ability to bounce back from stress and crisis. It is displayed in individuals as optimism, resourcefulness, and determination. Individuals, families, and communities demonstrate resiliency when they build caring support systems and solve problems creatively (National Network for Family Resiliency Children, Youth and Families Network, 1995).

Jordan Institute (1998) found the following:

Protective (or resiliency) traits are strengths that help a person or family cope with stress or life difficulties, increasing the likelihood of rebound from difficult situations. Resiliency traits include: a sense of humor, being first-born, having insight into situations, and independence. These traits are tools people can use in times of crisis; they give them the edge and help them make it through the situation. These traits do not prevent problems, but they do help solve them. (p. 1)

#### **Presentation of History of Literature on the Issue**

Over the past two decades, resilience has become an important construct in theory and research on psychological wellbeing (Greeff & Loubser, 2008).

The National Network for Family Resiliency Children, Youth and Families Network (1995) stated, “Families that learn how to cope with challenges and meet

individual needs are more resilient to stress and crisis. Health families solve problems with cooperation, creative brainstorming, and openness to others, according to David Reiss.”

In the case of the 2005 hurricane season, the rapid succession of a number of large and destructive hurricanes is likely to have intensified the psychological impact of the disasters, as infrastructure that survived previous storms was destroyed, rebuilding efforts were restricted, and stressors on survivors were exacerbated and drawn out over a long period (Harvey, Smith, Abraham, Hood, & Tannenbaum, 2007).

Judith Rubin (2006) investigated the literature of the arts and found the arts had been beneficial during traumatic times. She stated it is a form of secondary prevention when creative activities are made available to individuals who have experienced trauma and especially for those who are highly vulnerable for psychological problems. Rubin feels using the arts as prevention early on gives individuals an opportunity to avoid lengthy emotional damage.

Kaiser (1998) found the following:

If you have paid much attention to how you respond to a variety of music, you may have noticed that some music seems to energize you; some music can move you to tears or spark a special memory of a time, place, food, or perhaps a certain person. Some music seems to make you relax, feel less stressed, and feel happier.

Some music fills us with deep spiritual attunement (p. 1)

For the human heart and mind, music is a gift that brings hope and comfort through even the darkest times (Strickland, 2003). “In the midnight hour of the soul, when we feel most besieged by grief and alone in sorrow, music offers solace in the

recognition that, although the rhythms of our lives fluctuate between joy and despair, the song remains”(p. 1).

According to Miles (1997), “You’ll become a more proficient music user as you learn how music has helped people do everything from fight cancer pain to wait more patiently” (p. 2). Miles’ *Tune Your Brain* (1997) explained what to listen to and how in order to:

- Energize: Wake up, prepare for performance and confrontations, recharge, exercise, get cheap and legal thrills
- Relax: Manage stress and anxiety, go to sleep, gain patience and people skills, control panic attacks, meditate, eat more slowly, speak more freely
- Focus: Enhance your IQ, facilitate memory and learning, concentrate, and prolong your attention span
- Heal: Overcome pain, recover from illness or injury, stimulate your immune system, stay calm during medical procedures and surgery
- Uplift: Break bad moods, treat depression, escape from negative thought patterns, fight chronic overeating, overcome shyness
- Cleanse: Vent feelings and frustrations to manage aggression and repressed anger, face grief, and handle problem relationships
- Create: Solve problems, access right-brain imagery, adopt creative habits for more innovative work and play, enrich your sex life (p. 3)

“Music has a way of stirring our innermost feelings and all of our senses, of tapping into parts of ourselves unlike anything else. Music is a universal language that has the ability to speak to us deeply and uniquely” (Kaiser, 1998).

Scott (2007) found, Music affects the body and mind in many powerful ways such as brain waves, breathing and heart rate, state of mind, and other benefits. “Music with a strong beat can stimulate brainwaves to resonate in sync with the beat, with faster beats bringing sharper concentration and more alert thinking, and a slower tempo promoting a calm, meditative state.” Scott (2007) found the following:

With alterations in brainwaves come changes in other bodily functions. Those governed by the autonomic nervous system, such as breathing and heart rate can also be altered by the changes music can bring,” Music can also be used to bring a more positive state of mind, helping to keep depression and anxiety at bay. This can help prevent the stress response from wreaking havoc on the body, and can help keep creativity and optimism levels higher, bringing many other benefits. (p. 1)

Scott (2007) also noted:

Music has also been found to bring many other benefits, such as lowering blood pressure (which can also reduce the risk of stroke and other health problems over time), boost immunity, ease muscle tension, and more. With so many benefits and such profound physical effects, it’s no surprise that so many are seeing music as an important tool to help the body in staying (or becoming) healthy. (p. 1)

Dr. Deforia Lane shares the healing power of music (Lane, 1994).She is a resident director of music therapy at Ireland Cancer Center and Rainbow Babies and Children’s Hospital, part of the University Hospitals of Cleveland. Lane stated, “Music has the power to move a person between different realities: from a broken body into a soaring spirit; from a broken heart into a connection of shared love: from death into the

movement and memory of life” (p. 187). Lane found, music can often restore balance, reminding people of love, beauty, laughter, and touch-the correct and true movements of human relationships. Lane used musical instruments and her beautiful voice to rejuvenate the spirit of people suffering from cancer and other serious illnesses.

### **Review of Literature on Both Sides of a Controversy**

Ramsay (2011) stated, “Everyone reacts to music in different ways. One individual may love heavy metal, for example, while another is happiest listening to Mozart. Whatever your preference, a 2011 Canadian study, published in *Nature Neuroscience* has shown that plugging in to your favorite music could help melt away a bad mood” (Ramsay, 2011, p. 2).

According to Ramsay (2011), “Researchers at McGill University in Montreal showed that listening to pleasurable music of any description induced 'musical chills,' which triggered the release of the feel-good chemical dopamine. Some people listen to music for a boost on a tough day, while others might use music to keep them awake during a long car journey or to purge a negative feeling.”

Researchers have even come up with some startling findings about music. It can create changes in metabolism, circulation, blood volume, pulse, blood pressure, and our moods. In fact, nearly every organ in the body responds to music. Why? Scientists say because we are rhythmic beings. Our heartbeat, respiration, brain waves, gait, and speech all have a rhythmic pattern (Kuzman, 1998).

Music affects our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The rhythm can affect our bodies so that our pulse and respirations are in time with the music’s beat or rhythm. Music can relax or energize, and certain pieces of music can affect us in deeply personal

ways. When most of us listen to music, making music can be a very effective means of expression. It can also promote self-esteem and confidence (Vivyan, 2010). Music Therapy can help slow a rapidly beating heart through entrainment, the process of changing the phase or period of a person's involuntary responses (Ohio University, 2006). Gospel recording Artist, Yolanda Adams' song, *The Battle Is not yours*, speaks to allowing God to heal one's hurt.

Ohio University (2006) found the following:

Research has shown that music works deep inside the brain to ease pain, combat stress, anxiety, depression and sleeping disorders in children and adults. When receptors receive a pleasurable musical stimulus, it is transferred to the brain and releases natural chemicals in the body that induce a decrease in pain and in requests for pain medication. (p. 1)

Walsh (2007) stated case studies of group recovery (Zinner & Williams, 1999) have found that the grief experience may become a developmental crisis or a growthful opportunity for a community. Catastrophic events, traumatic loss, and suffering can lead to a breakdown in community morale and Stagnate future development.

According to music therapist Patti Catalano (2007):

Music is an important part of the healing process as we cope with natural disasters, terrorism, war, assault, sexual assault, and accidents. We know that there will always be some sort of stressors in our lives and something that will be needed to help us rebuild as a community (should that stressor affect us more broadly). Through music, we can help pull together people as a community to deal

with such losses. Music, as a powerful invention, is there to help us work through the inevitable losses and to return us to a place of joy and hope. (p. 2)

The Native American culture has a rich tradition of healing with music (Miles, 1997). The Navajo nation employs music healing ceremonies that can last more than a week. Ojibwa Midewiwin healers have an entire repertoire of songs to treat the sick. If you are a member of the Winnebago nation and lucky enough to own a grizzly bear song, you can allegedly heal wounds by singing it, while the Papago of Arizona cure the songs given to them by the deer, badger, horned toad, rattlesnake and lizard. The Cherokee people have songs specifically targeted to treat ailments from snakebite to fever. Miles also stated that Chinese healing music is based on theories of balancing yin and yang, correlating the five tones of the scale with organs in the body.

Strickland (2003) found that gospel songs like *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?*, *Oh Mary Don't You Weep*, and *This May Be the Last Time* speak of overcoming adversity, of maintaining hope despite despair. "Faith in an eventual triumph over earthly pain is a hallmark of gospel music. Such songs of solace and hope sustain and encourage people through emotionally difficult times" (p. 3).

According to Krammer and Mazelis (2006), living through traumatic events changes the ways the self and the world are experienced. In the worlds of Judith Herman (1992), "The core experiences of trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others" (p. 135). Disaster, whether natural, manmade or a combination of the two, can be traumatizing to anyone and, to those many individuals who have already experienced trauma, re-traumatizing.

## **Evaluation of the Sufficiency of Studies and Other Literature**

Moreover, many studies find that the suffering and struggle to recover in the aftermath of a traumatic experience often yields remarkable transformation and positive growth. Studies of posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) have found positive individual changes in five areas: (1) emergence of new opportunities and possibilities; (2) deeper relationships and greater compassion for others; (3) feeling strengthened to meet future life challenges; (4) reordered priorities and fuller appreciation of life; and (5) deepening spirituality (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

Through the power of music, people in the United States and around the world united to support our nation and grieve our losses in New York City, at the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania (Anonymous, 2001). During the crisis, the music of many religions and one nation echoed around the globe. Countries around the world used music to express their sorrow at America's losses and their own. At times of crisis, the remarkable power of music becomes ever more evident. From the spontaneous singing of *God Bless America* by our nation's Congress to the hopeful choruses of those keeping vigil in New York City, from the anthems sung at memorial services for the victims to the classrooms where music teachers endeavor to help their students cope with this tragedy and its aftermath, music united and comforts us in a unique and potent way. It can help us make peace with the past and instill in us courage to face the future (Anonymous, 2001).

Hackbarth, Thomas, and Wetchler (2012) found, natural disasters affect many families in the United States each year. Natural disasters are defined as "some rapid, instantaneous or profound impact on the natural environment upon the socio-economic system" (Alexander, 1993, p. 4). Major disasters can lead to severe disruption, trauma,



and loss for individuals, families, and communities (Catherall, 1992; Moos 1986; Walsh, 2006) and may leave victims in a state of shock and disbelief (Hoff, 1989). Surviving a natural disaster can come at a cost when faced with multiple losses and the task of putting one's life and home back together (Hoff, 1989; Walsh, 2006).

The Harper dictionary of music defines gospel as a kind of highly emotional religious music in four part harmony that has developed mainly in African American Churches. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* says that gospel is a form of Black American music that came from worship services and from spiritual and blue singing (Blue & Naden, 2001). Although the gospel has a different meaning to the individual, there is a common meaning. Gospel, which means "good news," as mentioned before, promises a better future for the righteous and the downtrodden and the sheer joy it communicates is unsurpassed among musical types (Blue & Naden, 2001). Gospel's roots lie in the music of Africa and the sorrowful experience of black slaves. Eventually, out of the misery and escape to their daily struggle to survive would come the music that we call gospel. The words to one of the best known early gospel songs express the profound hopefulness that was so common: "Before I'd be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave And go home to my Lord and be free" (p. 13).

Pianist Wherline Shepherd, who has played for audiences including churches in the Washington DC and around the United States for over 50 years, understands the healing power of gospel music. She told the investigator that it is common for her to receive requests from individuals for certain sacred music to be used at their final services. Shepherd stated songs such as *Amazing Grace* and *Jesus Keep Me near the*

*Cross* seem to bring comfort and hope to individuals who have planned their obituary (W. Shepherd, personal communication, October 4, 2011).

The tendency to increase one's connection with spirituality in times of personal crisis is well documented. Practices such as prayer are helpful in coping with a life challenge (Bade & Cook 2008; Berg, 2004; Carver et al. 1989; Pargament, 2007) including health crisis (Baesler et al., 2003), economic challenges (Clark & Leikes, 2005), and sexual abuse (Murray-Swank & Pargament, 2005).

According to Negro Spirituals (n.d.), *There Is a Balm in Gilead* is a well-known Negro spiritual, which has an interesting meaning. The phrase "balm in Gilead" is quoted in the Old Testament, but the lyrics of this spiritual refer to the New Testament (Jesus, Holy Spirit, Peter, and Paul). This difference is interesting. In the Old Testament, the balm of Gilead cannot heal sinners. In the New Testament, Jesus heals everyone who comes to Him.

"In the New Testament, the four Gospels say that Jesus healed many people whatever their conditions: he can heal the poor. A Christian who feels the Spirit must share its faith and preach, like Peter and Paul" (Negro Spirituals, n.d., p. 3).

According to Visvis (2008), Fredrick Douglass explains in his *Narrative* that during slavery black music served to engender emotional relief through cathartic expression. Black music like the "talking cure" is a model of testimony that acts as a cathartic agency.

Black people (Lawson, 2010) often used prayer, gospel music, and church attendance to endure the stressors of life (Bennett, 1986; Grier & Cobb, 1969; Jennings, 1997). Because the church was the only institution that African Americans were

permitted to operate and organize for a number of years, it provided social and emotional support (Bennett, 1986; Cone, 1974). Religious traditions have persisted over time, geographic locations, and social classes. Currently, 82% of African Americans believe that the church assists to alleviate the conditions of Black people (Chatters, Taylor, & Lincoln, 1999).

Heerden and Bryan (2006) stated, LSU surveys had always showed that 30 percent of the residents of New Orleans will not evacuate, the majority because they are “low mobility;” in emergency preparedness jargon—that is they have no ready access to a car. According to author and pianist, Lois Tilly many individuals did not think the hurricane was coming. They had evacuated several times before and nothing happened. Individuals who left did not want to get caught in the hurricane. Others just did not want to leave. Tilly, a native of Chicago, Illinois lives in the upper 9th ward area of New Orleans shared her story with pride. She played for four churches on August 29. She went to Baton Rouge for a month and a half and evidently ended up in Detroit, Michigan (L. Tilly, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

Retired educator, Vudger Carter from Petal, Mississippi stated some of the people in Mississippi had access of places to stay so they were apt to leave their homes before the hurricane. They could go to the Salvation Army, the school, or Churches (V. Carter, personal communication, January 29, 2013).

According to Larry Smith, cab driver, “People didn’t evacuate because some of them are stubborn and didn’t think anything would happen. Some just like to live dangerous. People wanted to go but couldn’t go. Many individuals did not have any

friends or family to come and get them. Others lived in poverty didn't have any cars" (L. Smith, personal communication, April 4, 2013).

Author and pianist Lois Tilley stated that most folks in New Orleans never wanted to leave. The hurricane was a traumatic experience for New Orleanian who had to evacuate (L. Tilly, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

Some of the investigator's favorite gospel artists and songs have meaning that speaks to God's grace and mercy. They tell the story of God's redeeming mercy and everlasting blessings. Some of them include *Testify by Commission, He's Done Enough* by Beverly Crawford, and *Soul Out* by Hezekiah Walker & LFC. These songs gave the investigator peace and comfort during various crises in my life. The talented gospel artists of these songs wrote lyrics that reached into the depth of my soul. The words helped me to find comfort, relief, and joy.

Whitney Houston's Last Song Was *Yes, Jesus Loves Me* (Whitney Houston, 2012). The night before Whitney Houston suddenly died she sang the words to an old hymn titled *Yes, Jesus Loves Me* at a pre-Grammy party. This song has been sung by young children in Sunday school and prominent musical artists alike down through the years.

Gospel Recording Artist Marvin Sapp stated (Robinson, 2012) about missing his late wife, Malinda Sapp, who lost her battle with colon cancer. "There are days when I get up and I cry, thinking of her. There are days thinking of her and I smile. There are days when I'm angry. Days that I'm not we miss her." Sapp found writing songs to be therapeutic (healing) for him. Sapp, father of three, says writing a song is therapy for him. It helps him to deal with the loss of his wife. I can relate to finding comfort in songs.

Sapp's music transcends the musical genres; his music has such wide appeal because of its heart-felt lyric. His breakout hit, *Never Would Have Made It* was a song he wrote as an ode and eulogy for his father's funeral. "It was birthed out of my pain," he said (Robinson, 2012, p. 2).

Gospel Singer, Alexis Spright, Sunday Best season 5 runner up, stated, "My family gets healing from gospel music .It keeps us together and helps us to have a good time"(Dickerson, 2012).

Musician, George Duke credits his time working with Jeffrey Osborne on the former Love Togetherness Devotion frontman's latest album, *A Time for Love*, for helping him cope with the death of his wife Corine, who passed away last year from complications of cancer. "It is a special project because I was dealing with her illness all through during this record, but in many ways this album, the Jeffrey Osborne album, really kind of helped me channel all this"(Eurweb, 2013, p. 1).Music is a very interesting thing. It can console. It can antagonize. It can teach. It does all of these things. That's what's so wonderful about the creative process.

According to musician Shelia E, (Sheila, 2012) music is like a spiritual awakening. Shelia was raped at 5 years old by a babysitter. As a result, she grew up struggling with the shame of her childhood experience, but fortunately had an outlet. She grew up playing drums. Shelia was angry and held her story in due to not knowing how to tell what happened to her. In 2001, she founded the Elevate Hope Foundation, which uses music and arts to help kids in foster care to express themselves artistically when they cannot share their feelings with others (Elevate Hope Foundation, 2013). Music has always been at the heart of Shelia. "Not until I was an adult did I realize how my

exposure to music at an early age assisted in the healing process. Many abused children have expressed a heartfelt desire to involve themselves in the education of music and the arts (Sheila, 2012).

“In my endeavor, I discovered that many have expressed an urgent desire to involve themselves in the education of music as an outlet. I know, as their families, even society has discarded them, the exposure and education of music and art will be a life changing and saving experience” (Elevate Hope Foundation, 2013).

Oakland Interfaith Gospel director Terrance sees gospel music as a healing force: “Gospel often takes people from all kinds of races and to places they’ve never been. You can cry your eyes out. You can lay on the floor and cry. You can run and jump. That’s what it’s all about” (Harrington, 2010, p. 2).

Gospel recording artist and Sunday BEST Judge, CeCe Winans, knows what it is like to need healing. The gospel superstar, who has spent her singing career inspiring others, says she needed healing herself after the death of her brother, gospel singer and minister Ronald Winans. “I never lost a sibling. Oh God, the emotions that you go through” (English, 2005, p. 55). Searching for answers, Winans not only looked to God, but she listened to her song, *He’s Concerned*, on her CD *Purified*.

Recording Artist, Jonathan Butler shared on BET’s Lift Every Voice that his song, *Grace and Mercy* was easy to record because of what he was going through, depression and the recession. Butler stated the song was easy to sing because it was a part of my experiences (Reed, 2013).

Spike Lee’s film, *When the Levees Broke* (2006) film document was in remembrance of all the Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans; and in the Gulf States

of Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida. This documentary speaks of the Phenomenon experience to the highest level. Today, the people living along the Gulf Coast continue in their daily struggle to rebuild, revive, and renew in these United States of America.

Katrina survivors were not the only ones who were misplaced. Lee Arnold, Hot 8 Band Manager, Resident of Treme and band members were displaced also. They found themselves trying to get gigs, according to *When the Levees Broke* (Lee, 2006).

For purposes of this research, Deforia Lane's theory will be used as the premise that music is medicine. Her theory is based on the work conducted in hospitals with cancer patients. Lane believes, "Music, the gift of a song, can often restore balance, reminding people of love, beauty, laughter, touch—the correct and true movements of human relationships" (Lane, 1994, p. 177).

Eugene (1995) found, contemporary African American women use the spirituals (religions songs of the slave ancestors) and gospel music (religious songs of the descendants of the slaves) to praise God, to protest in faith, and to seek civilian freedom against structural malevolence. "Through the spirituals and gospel music, womanist both express their heritage of communicable zeal and demand respect, justice, human freedom, and dignity. Spirituals and gospel music disclose the reality of and the fight against two malevolent evils that helped induce their birth: slavery and racism, and their concomitant companions, sexism and classism" (Eugene, 1995, p. 3). If social life is constructed from a collective conversion of gestures and symbols from which shared meanings are derived, creating a situational culture, then the spirituals and the gospel music represent a base for

community upon which Black folk have built a collective therapeutic perspective on their situation as oppressed people in America.

According to Foluke Awoleye, there are many other reasons why believers express thanksgiving to their God through gospel music. They can be summarized as spiritual, financial, and material blessings, success, and achievement (Adedeji & Olansisebe, 2010).

Being a member of a functional community can have broad benefits to mental health (Harvey, et al., 2007). As suggested by Norris and colleagues, it is necessary to develop ongoing assistance and interventions that provide mental health care to disaster victims in a way that is “culturally appropriate and feasible” (p. 357). Given the musical heritage of South Louisiana, a culturally appropriate community initiative in the post-hurricane period was a choir, organized by Australian choral leader Martin Meader in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The choir (called the Hurricane Choir) comprised hurricane disaster evacuees and survivors who rehearsed and performed to live audiences. The choir commenced 6 months after the hurricane disasters and had a 12-week intensive rehearsal period that culminated in three public performances in the American Spring of 2006. It should be recognized that the choir provided a strategy to assist survivors of the hurricanes who might not otherwise have been able to get direct psychological support from mental health professionals (Harvey et al., 2007, p. 360).

Similar to the dissertation work completed by Dr. Marc Guidici (2010), in *Post Traumatic Growth, Positive Assets and Strengths in Post Hurricane Katrina Survivors*, a phenomenological approach will be used. The phenomenological (heuristic study) will be



used for the reason that phenomenology is committed to descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analyses (Moustakas, 1994).

The effects of using music with persons experiencing mass trauma was studied by music therapist Baker, whose study compared the effects of live, taped, and no music on agitation and orientation levels of people experiencing post-traumatic amnesia. While the sample was small, (N=22), results indicated that music significantly reduced agitation ( $p < .0001$ ) and enhanced orientation ( $p < .001$ ). While the results indicated no significant differences between live and taped music, the trend suggested that music selections were more easily encoded in memory and then retrieved on request than picture selections. The results suggest that music therapy programs have an important role to play in the management of people with post-traumatic amnesia (Baker, 2001).

Music therapy and other experiential therapies, such as the creative arts therapies, hold an essential place in trauma work. In her book introducing the therapeutic spiral model, Hudgins (2002) quotes Bessel van der Kolk in his keynote address to the 1997 American Society of Group Psychotherapy and Psychodrama stating that “body-centered, experiential methods are the ‘treatment of choice’ for traumatized people” (p. 23). Judith Rubin also cites the effectiveness of using the arts. She states, “The arts are powerful tools in the processing, metabolizing, and assimilating of the toxic effects of trauma that linger, fester, and affect the developing brain” (Rubin, 2006; Solomon & Siegel, 2003).

Living through traumatic events changes the way the self and the world are experienced (Krammer, & Mazelis, 2006). In the words of Judith Herman, “the core experiences of trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Alternatively phrased, trauma as events or events—self-in-relation” (as cited in Miller, 2006, p. 135).

Harris and Fallot, (2001) assert that we call the *effects* of trauma we experience the *impact* of the trauma. This is because that term helps us to remember that human trauma arises mainly from traumatic events and needs helping responses, which these authors argue should be uniform in being what they call trauma-informed.

Charles Figley first published a book on compassion fatigue in 1995 and presented a model for mitigating the effects of compassion fatigue for those most susceptible. He writes, “The model is based on the assumption that empathy and emotional energy are the driving force in effective working with the suffering in general, establishing and maintaining an effectively therapeutic alliance, and delivering effective services including an empathic response” (Figley, 1995, p. 9). In particular, Compassion Fatigue appeared to be the consequence of working with traumatized individuals, if the professional was exposed to significant numbers of them and had a strong empathic orientation (Figley, 1995). Empathic engagement with traumatized clients often requires the professional to discuss details of the traumatic experience, including role playing and dramatic reenactment of the events, which are thought to be vital to the therapeutic process but can have an adverse emotional impact on the caregiver (Figley, 2002).

### **Identification of Methodological or Other Problems in the Existing Literature**

Research on adults who have lived through trauma shows that reliable social support systems and access to community-based resources are among the strongest predictors of long-term mental functioning following a traumatic event (Ozer, Best, Lipsey, & Weiss, 2003). Social support, essentially the quality and quantity of social support that is received by a family member and one’s community, appears to be particularly essential for mitigating the negative health consequences following trauma

(Uchino, Cacippo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). The use of social support as a coping strategy is associated with many positive outcomes (Swickert & Hittner, 2009).

At Kaiser Permanente in California, music is used to prep patients for surgery and chemotherapy and to help treat back pain, spinal injuries, high blood pressure, migraines, and ulcers (Miles, 1997).

An assessment of medical music research studies conducted in the 1980s showed that music had a significant impact on (in order of effectiveness) (Miles, 1997):

- Pulse rate (undue elevation of which can cause medical distress)
- Amount of pain medication required
- Perceived or observed pain
- Music relation
- Perceived or observed anxiety
- Stress hormone levels
- Blood pressure
- Mood and attitude
- Motor ability
- Length of labor in childbirth

These studies also found that music improved walking, speed, exhalation, strength, physical comfort, length of hospitalization, and satisfaction and contentment among patients undergoing medical treatment, as well as increasing movement and weight gain for newborn babies (Miles, 1997, p. 127).

Andrew Pacholyk, (2000), an acupuncturist who has been in the alternative health field for over 18 years, uses music as healing with his patients. Pacholyk stated, “Music is

a magical medium and a very powerful tool. Music can delight all the senses and inspire every fiber of our being. Music has the power to soothe and relax, bring us comfort and embracing joy! Music subtly bypasses the intellectual stimulus in the brain and moves directly to our subconscious (p. 1).

Pacholyk's desire to use music as healing with his patients came as a result of his healing experiences with music (2000). He has written many articles and given lectures around the world on alternative medicine and therapies for healing mind, body, and spirit.

Music made to take your spirit higher usually succeeds. Styles with the right mood traits include gospel, its African relative iscathamiya, and choral music. The call and response singing style of these genres creates a sense of community and togetherness and it is good to sing along with (Miles, 1997).

Anonymous (2004) stated, "The delivery of music in the palliative care setting has been found to assist with pain, anxiety, grief and unresolved issues and concerns in a way that is supportive, peaceful and non-intrusive" (p. 31).

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### **Research Approach**

“Research has been described as doing one’s damndest to find answers to perplexing questions. This is not the usual textbook definition, but it is the definition used by most of us who are intimately involved in doing research. A more sober definition is that research is a systematic approach to finding answers to questions” (Shavelson, 1988, p. 3).

Regardless of the field in which the question is posed, the purposes of behavioral research, in more specific terms are to describe, predict, and control behavior.

Many researchers agree that the goals of scientific research are: description, prediction, and explanation/understanding. Hale (2011) stated, “Some individuals add control and application to the list of goals. Arguably, the most important goal of scientific research is explanation.”

This chapter will provide a brief overview of qualitative research, and then specifically will provide a succinct description of phenomenological methods in research. Next will be a description of how the participants in this study were selected, and a brief overview of the participants in this study. Finally, this chapter will illustrate the procedures through which this study was conducted.

## Research Design

A qualitative design, rooted in narrative inquiry was used for the dissertation by Laurence Merrill Kelly, Jr. in the *Factors Contributing to Resilience in a Post Katrina* (2010). This qualitative method was intended to permit for an in-depth analysis of the narratives of the residents of New Orleans who were displaying resilience and competence. A semi-structured interview was chosen to elicit information on how people rebound from the experience and devastation of Katrina (Kelly, 2010).

A phenomenological approach was considered for this research for the reason that phenomenology research is committed to descriptions of experiences, not explanations or analyses (Moustakas, 1994).

Thomas and Polio (2002) specify the following criteria for selecting participants for a phenomenological study:

- 1) The participant must have had the experience (living through Hurricane Katrina).
- 2) The participant must be willing and able to describe the experience (living through Hurricane Katrina).
- 3) And paramount to this study, the confidentiality of the participant must be protected.

The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. In the human sphere this normally translates into gathering “deep” information and perceptions through inductive, qualitative, methods, such as interviews, discussions, and participant observation, and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s)

(Lester, 1999). While all qualitative methods are focused on people's experience and individual realities, the phenomenological research investigator typically goes beyond the actual words spoken by individuals in an attempt to describe their experiences and interpret their words to identify underlying meaning for these individuals (Fischer, 2006). For this study, phenomenological methods were chosen for the reason that the intent was to discover the experience as it was lived.

The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe a "lived experience" of a phenomenon. As this is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, methods to analyze its data must be quite different from more traditional or quantitative methods of research (Waters, 2012). Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions. Adding an interpretive dimension to phenomenological research, enabling it to be used as the basis for practical theory, allows it to inform, support or challenge policy and action (Lester, 1999).

The researcher used the interview and conversation methods for this study. A variety of methods can be used in phenomenological-based research, including interviews, conversations, participant observations, action research, focus meetings, and analysis of personal texts. If there is a general principle involved, it is that of minimum structure and maximum depth, in practice constrained by time and opportunities to strike a balance between keeping a focus on the research issues and avoiding undue influence by the researcher (Lester, 1999).

Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are the most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth (Berg, 2004).

### **Subjects**

Participants for this study all currently live in the Southeastern region of the United States, specifically on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Participants were all referred to the investigator by family and friends. The participants for this study met both inclusionary and exclusionary criteria to be included in this work. To be included in this study, participants must have been adults, at least age 18, who resided in Louisiana or Mississippi. Therefore, participants for this study must have been residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast affected by Hurricane Katrina when it made landfall on August 29, 2005.

Twenty individuals participated in this investigation. The participants were from the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Louisiana, and Mississippi. They were from different socio-economic backgrounds, religious beliefs, ethnic identifications, and political beliefs to provide a variety of accounts of the phenomenon.

#### **Participant 1**

This participant is an African American female, 62 years of age. Participant 1 is a California native, who is married with three adult children. She is a homemaker and lives in Dieder, Louisiana. Her home received rain damage but nothing extensive. Participant



1 was a neighbor of the investigator when she lived in San Diego. She was interviewed at the Holiday Inn Express hotel in San Diego, California.

### **Participant 2**

This participant is an African American male, 65 years of age. Participant 2 is a native of Dierdorf, Louisiana. He is a married bus driver and lived in California for over 35 years. He had just moved to Dierdorf shortly before Hurricane Katrina took place. Participant 2's home received rain damage but nothing extensive. Participant 2 knew the investigator from when he lived in San Diego. He was interviewed at the Holiday Inn Express in San Diego, California.

### **Participant 3**

This participant is an African American male, 67 years of age. Participant 3 is a native of New Orleans, Louisiana. He is a married college professor who lived in East New Orleans. Participant 3's home received flood damage and was uninhabited. Participant 3 did not return to his home until November 2005. He lost his job and had to be retrained, which forced him to take a lower paying job with a different college. He was interviewed at the African Fellowship Center in New Orleans, Louisiana.

### **Participant 4**

This participant is an African American female, 35 years of age. Participant 4 is a native of Lucedale, Mississippi. She lived with a girlfriend in an apartment in Laurel during Katrina. Their apartment did not receive any damage. Participant 4 is now married and lives with her husband. She is a physiologist in Laurel Mississippi. Participant 4 knew the investigator through her mother. She was interviewed at her home in Laurel, Mississippi.

### **Participant 5**

This participant is an African American male, 63 years of age. Participant 5 is a native of Nigeria, Africa, and his tribe is called the Ibu. He lived in the Metilia area of New Orleans with his wife when Hurricane Katrina hit. Participant 5's house was damaged and major repairs were required as a result of Katrina. He is an evangelist and an entrepreneur. He was introduced to the investigator by a fellow Toastmaster member. Participant 5 was interviewed at the African Christian Fellowship in New Orleans, Louisiana.

### **Participant 6**

This participant is an African American male, 56 years of age. Participant 6 is a native of New Orleans and is married and a father of two children. His house received extensive damage during Katrina. Participant 6 is also the pastor of a church in New Orleans which was damaged in Katrina. His family evacuated to Dallas, relocated to Baton Rouge, and finally went to Hammond, Louisiana where his family stayed until their home was renovated. Participant 6 and his family moved back into their home in 2009. He was introduced to the investigator by Helper 3. He was interviewed at First African Baptist Church in New Orleans.

### **Participant 7**

This participant is an African American male, 66 years of age. Participant 7 is married and is a native of Nigeria, Africa. His home received rain damage in the back area of the house, causing the wind to come through, which ripped the ceiling. Participant 7 is a university professor of microbiology at Southern University New Orleans. He was

introduced to the investigator by a fellow Toastmaster. He was interviewed at the African Christian Fellowship in New Orleans.

### **Participant 8**

This participant is a Caucasian female, 42 years old. Participant 8 is married and has two children. She is a native of Lumberton, Mississippi. Her home was damaged from Katrina. However, they were able to live in it while it was being repaired. She is an insurance agent and test proctor. Participant 8 was introduced to the investigator by participant 17. She was interviewed at Krystal Burgers in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

### **Participant 9**

This participant is an African American male, 72 years old. Participant 11 is a married native of New Orleans. His home was completely destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. Participant 9 had been living in his house since 1969. He has since relocated and purchased a home in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a truck driver whose headquarters is located in New Orleans. He also lives in a rental house in New Orleans, since he travels frequently for work. He is a relative of the investigator. He was interviewed at his rental home in New Orleans.

### **Participant 10**

This participant is an African American female, 73 years old. Participant 10 is a married and a native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Her home was damaged during Hurricane Katrina. At the time of this interview, she had a scheduled for her home to be renovated by FEMA. Participant 10 is a homemaker who is presently living in her home. She is a relative of the investigator. Participant 10 was interviewed at her home.

**Participant 11**

This participant is an African American male, 37 years old. Participant 11 is native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi where he has lived his entire life. He lives with his companion and child. His home was damaged, and he has since moved to another home. Participant 11 is a claims analyst in Biloxi, Mississippi. He is a relative of the investigator. He was interviewed at his mother's home in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

**Participant 12**

This participant is a Caucasian female, 38 years old. Participant 12 is a native of East New Orleans, Louisiana. Her home was completely lost during Hurricane Katrina. She is divorced and has since relocated to Jackson, Mississippi. Participant 12 is a higher education administrator who was introduced to the investigator by a friend. Participant 12 dictated her Katrina experience and sent it to the investigator.

**Participant 13**

This participant is an African American female, 75 years old. Participant 13 is a widow and a native of Houston, Texas. Her home was completely destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. Participant 13 had been living in her home since 1969. She has lived in New Orleans for 40 years. She is now renting a townhouse in the Garden District of New Orleans. Participant 13 was introduced to the investigator by Dr. Susanne Tropez-Simms. Participant 13 was interviewed at Cornerstone United Methodist Church in New Orleans.

**Participant 14**

This participant is an African American male, 71 years old. Participant 14 is native of Chicago and a father of two sons. His home was damaged, causing him to lose

everything in Hurricane Katrina. He has since moved into a new home in New Orleans.

Participant 14 is a pastor of a St. James Baptist Church in New Orleans. He was introduced to the investigator by participant 5. Participant 14 was interviewed at his home in New Orleans.

### **Participant 15**

This participant is an African American female, 91 years old. Participant 15 lives alone in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Her home received minimal damage due to hurricane Katrina. She did not have to leave her home after the storm. Participant 15 is a retired RN educator. She was interviewed over the phone. Participant 15 was introduced to the investigator by participant 10.

### **Participant 16**

This participant is an African American male, age 59 years old. Participant 16 is a native of New Orleans and married. His townhouse was damaged. Participant 16 is a car salesman and owns a cab. He met the investigator while she was conducting interviews. Participant 16 was interviewed at the Radisson Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana.

### **Participant 17**

This participant is an African American female, 48 years old. Participant 17 is native of Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where she lives with her daughter. They sought shelter with neighbors during the storm. Her home was damaged, but she has since moved back. Participant 17 is a food service worker claims analyst who has known the investigator since childhood. She was interviewed at Tower of Power Ministries in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

### **Participant 18**

This participant is an African American female, 44 years old. Participant 18 is married and from the Baltimore, Maryland and grew up on the east side of the city. She moved to Mississippi 18 years ago. Participant 18 is a pastor in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. A tree landed on the back side of her home. She is slowly getting repairs done to his home. She was introduced to the researcher by Rhonda Travis. Participant 18 was interviewed at her Tower of Power ministries Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

### **Participant 19**

This participant is an African American female, 69 years old. Participant 19 is a native of Gulfport, Mississippi. She is a widow and a retired choir director. Her home was completely damaged and had to be torn down. She stayed with her children in Columbia, Mississippi and has since returned home. She was introduced to the researcher by Sam Arnold .She was interviewed at her home.

### **Participant 20**

This participant is an African American male, 32 years old. Participant 20 is a native of Mississippi and is married with two children. His home received minimal damage during Hurricane Katrina. Participant 20 is a pastor and a musician. He was introduced to the researcher by Participant 19. He was interviewed at Progressive Missionary Baptist Church in Gulfport, Mississippi.

Each of the previous descriptions is intended to illuminate a context of the accounts provided by the participants in the ensuing chapter. Each participant lived

through and experienced firsthand the events of August 29, 2005 when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in Louisiana and Mississippi.

### **Instrumentation**

The impetus of this study was to identify the resilience of Hurricane Katrina survivors and look at how gospel music contributed to positive changes in specific areas, including perceived changes in self, sense of relationships, and philosophy of life. To facilitate this inquiry, participants in this study were first presented with the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), and then with an open-ended, 7-question assessment founded upon phenomenological principles. The data collection was compiled in June 2012, nearly 7 years after Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. With that in mind, the participants first began by completing the Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI), a reliable and valid assessment that was developed by Richard Tedeschi and Laurence Calhoun to assess the positive outcomes reported by survivors of traumatic events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). There were two reasons for beginning with the PTGI. First, the investigator presented the PTGI, which is a short assessment, to reduce the participants' anxiety. Second, the PTGI was used to prime the participants to think about their experiences living through Hurricane Katrina and prepare them for the open-ended assessment based on phenomenological principles.

#### **The Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI)**

The PTGI was developed based on a literature review of positive changes in specific areas, including perceived changes in self, sense of relationships, and philosophy of life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). The assessment originally had 34 items, all positively worded, and was administered to approximately 600 undergraduate students

from psychology classes at a large Southeastern university. After analysis, the assessment was reduced to 21 items, comprising five factors: Relating to Others, New Possibilities, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life (Cohen, Hattler, & Pane, 1998). This inventory was found to have good reliability and validity.

The PTGI is used to assess the positive outcomes that are reported by survivors of traumatic events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). It is a 21-item assessment that mines for factors of New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life. This is a self-report assessment that incorporates a 6-point Likert-type item response format ranging from:

0=I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis.

1=I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my crisis.

2=I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my crisis.

3=I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my crisis.

4=I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my crisis.

5=I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis.

Following the assessment, one is afforded the opportunity to score it, and is provided with short informational paragraphs that promote reflection on one's responses. As a final point, the PTGI also briefly explains that change and posttraumatic growth is an ongoing process and that responses may change to these questions over time.

### **Open-Ended Assessment Tool (Inventory of Strengths and Assets)**

Upon completion of the PTGI, the participants began a 10-question, open-ended assessment with the investigator. This open-ended assessment, in the tradition of phenomenology and qualitative studies in general, addressed the broad experience of the



thoughts and feelings regarding a life encounter (Mateo & Kirchhoff, 2009), and assisted the respondents in telling their stories as fully and completely as possible. This narrative method of studying an individual and how an individual ascribes meaning to an experience is often referred to as an interpreted method of research rather than a descriptive one (Van Manen, 1990). Questions for this interview have been developed based on information gained from contemporary literature on trauma, resiliency, and posttraumatic growth. This qualitative open-ended assessment consisted of 11 open-ended interview questions designed to assess strengths and assets of the survivors of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. See interview questions in Appendix G.

My assessment choice was inspired from the assessment of a similar dissertation by Dr. Marc Giudici, *Post Traumatic Growth, Positive Assets, And Strengths in Post Hurricane Katrina Survivors*. Dr. Marc's assessment was piloted with the Katrina population in 2008, yielding favorable and consistent results. The 2008 pilot results found that the participant's SPSS analyzed scores were consistent with participant's responses to the PTGI. My report yields similar results.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Institutional approval for this study was granted in 2011. A letter explaining the research project along with an email was sent to the participants requesting their voluntary participation. Before each interview, participants read a consent form and were provided with information regarding this study. The participants were informed that the investigation considers how gospel music was used to obtain resiliency in their recovery from Hurricane Katrina. The participants were told that they may withdraw from this study at any time, either during or after their participation, without negative

consequences. The participants were also told they could withdraw from the study and their data would be eliminated destroyed. The participants were informed that the information they provided would be kept strictly confidential and the informed consent forms and other identifying information would be kept separate from the data. They were informed that if they had any questions to contact Dr. Inula Martinkat, Academic Dean at the International University of Professional Studies. Further information included that this study involved completing a Posttraumatic Growth Inventory Assessment Tool and participating in an interview, to be arranged at their convenience, and would take approximately 30 minutes. Upon completion of this study, as appreciation for their time and effort in completing this research project, the investigator provided each of the participants with a gift card valued at \$10 USD from McDonalds.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### **Summary**

This chapter includes a detailed description of the participants' interview, the PGTI Inventory results, the hypothesis questions, and a summary of the participant interview results. Each hypothesis research question is addressed individually. This chapter includes feedback from the helpers who gave assistance to the Katrina survivors. The helpers also shared their views on the effects of gospel music relating to Hurricane Katrina.

The following sections contain rich descriptive narratives and descriptions. Phenomenology is committed to the thorough description of experiences, not explanations or traditional analyses. These detailed responses enable the investigator to reflect on essential themes from the narratives, and to discover the nature of the lived experience (Creswell, 2007). These detailed narratives and descriptions enable the phenomenon to stay alive, to illuminate its presence and underlying meanings from the perspective of the person who lived through the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

#### **Subjects**

##### **Participant 1**

Participant 1 lived with her husband and the grandchildren during Hurricane Katrina. Dieder is a small town located between New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Participant 1

shared her story about not having any lights or air conditioning and how her food went bad for days. She stated, “It was hard to be out of your own home.” Her family had to move into a relative’s home for 17 days. Her family had just moved to Louisiana from California when the storm hit. “We never expected to just move to a place and something like Katrina happen. Talking to others was a big help.” Participant 1 coped with her feelings by talking to friends and family when painful thoughts and feelings came up. This helped a lot. “I talked to other people who had been through similar experiences.”

Participant 1 stated, I learned to get gas and lights if another storm should come again. She stated, “Everybody was helping each other and felt that people were helpful.” Participant 1 was grateful for all of the support her family received during this unexpected crisis. “Katrina was something that you never wanna go through again. It was an unbelievable experience. People who never talked before were talking to each other.” Participant 1 stated she became better after Katrina.

When asked about gospel music she stated, gospel music means spirit. It gives a sign of relief when you hear it. Knowing it’s going to be alright in the end. I just listened to gospel songs that made me feel good.” Participant 1 was grateful to God. She stated feeling good about herself now that the storm is over.

Listening to gospel music was helpful. It took some of my sorrow away. *Jesus on the Main Line* was one of the songs that gave her relief. Now that the storm is over, a favorite song for participant 1 is *This Little Light of Mine*.

### **Textural description (What happened)**

I know what to do now.

I had never experienced anything worse than Katrina.

Moving from California when Katrina happened put sorrow in me.

I know how to deal with people now who have been in this kind of situation.

I know to talk and relate to people.

I know how to go through a crisis not having any lights.

I found relief in listening to gospel music.

It helped me to pull through emotionally.

I will know how to deal with this if it ever happens again.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

“I am grateful to God that we got through it. We just take day by day. Thank God that we are back on the track. Hopefully we won’t have another Katrina ever again.”

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

The winds were blowing hard.

Trees were everywhere.

We didn’t know what to do.

### **Participant 2**

Participant 2 shared his story about not having any lights for days. “Things were unstable for about two weeks after Katrina ended.” “We stayed right at the house during Katrina My family did not go anywhere. I have learned a lot. I know how to survive. Going without electricity and the things we take granted. I have been able to put most of Katrina behind me.”

When asked about gospel music he stated, “I always did like gospel music; it helped me to stay in touch with God. *Take my Hand God, Mighty Clouds of Joy* was one of the songs that helped me to cope with Katrina.” This song gave him peace. “I learned

not to take life for granted. I was in the Vietnam War and almost saw death. Counseling helped me to deal with life after the war. People calling to check on us made me feel supportive after Hurricane Katrina”.

### **Textural description (What happened)**

We did not have lights and air conditioned for days.

However, it did not fall on our house.

We did not leave the house.

I learned a lot on how to survive.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Don't really think about Katrina much now days.

I learned to put things in God's hands.

### **Structural Description (How it happened)**

A tree fell in our yard.

It was not a pretty scene.

### **Participant 3**

Participant 3 stated, “We could hear Katrina touch land because things being thrown into the buildings as a result of the high winds. The following day when we looked outside, we saw the area around the hospital was flooded. It was difficult to move around due to the level of the waters which measured up to the bumpers or tops of the tires of cars and some cars were submerged.” Participant 3 stated that they were not aware of the levee breaking until 3 days later when they were getting ready to return home. When they were able to visit their home, there was no external damage except for the water level. “We couldn't return home until November due to the majority of the

flood waters had not all receded. Since the water had sat so long, it encouraged mold growth. It was everywhere and we had to gut the house and rebuild and because of this. We stayed at the hospital for another 5 weeks and then were moved into a trailer home that was provided by the hospital.”

Participant 3 lived in East New Orleans with his family. As a result of Hurricane Katrina, his family moved into the East Jefferson Hospital because his wife, a medical technologist, worked at the hospital. The hospital administration made provisions for their staff and family. Therefore, participant 3 and his family stayed at the hospital with two of their sons. During their stay when a room was needed the hospital staff would move them into another room. “We were only allowed to bring one relative with us.”

Participant 3 stated gospel music means, “The medium by which we praise the Lord. We worship the Lord who inhabits the praise of his children. This means that we are experiencing the praise of the Lord by singing.” Participant 3 stated while staying at the hospital the believers who were there encouraged each other in the Lord. They would encourage each other by singing as much praise to the Lord as possible and by singing numerous choruses. “We used handbooks from native Yoruba, Nigeria African homeland.”

Participant 3 reported losing his teaching job after Katrina. “I was a college professor of pharmacy. The college was damaged by Katrina and had to declare a financial loss. Certain people were called back to work, but I wasn’t called back. I had to get another job at Southern University at New Orleans as a biology professor. It was a lower paying job. I had to be training in another field.”

Participant 3 stated having a period of endless growth leading up to Katrina (physically, spiritually, and financially). “My life was full of progression prior to Katrina. Participant 3 stated, I can relate to individuals who go through storms. I was depressed but my faith in God kept me up. I reflected on how the Lord allowed Katrina to happen. I am holding on to the hope that the Lord will restore what was taken away. I am better since the storm”.

Participant 3 stated, “I lost money to crooked contractors who did not finish the job. This was a result of trying to renovate my home. I listened to gospel music and matured in the Lord. Once you commit problems to the Lord, the problems began to fade. You can’t glorify his name and dwell on the past.”

“I listened to gospel music and matured in the Lord. I can’t pinpoint certain gospel songs that I like more now. As long as the songs lift up the Name of Jesus, they are good.”

### **Textural description (What happened)**

Hurricane Katrina was a life-changing event for me and my family.

The hospital administration cared about its staff and their families.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Through prayer and song it started the healing process of us rebuilding our faith and future.

Gospel music gave me strength and hope.

I did not have a favorite gospel song. I like all of the songs.

Katrina brought me closer to the Lord.

We had properties and a career.



It was a time that brought me closer to the Lord.

**Structural description (How it happened)**

Mold was all over the floor up to the ceiling.

We lost stuff on the ground floor.

It took a long time to drain the water.

We removed sheet rock from on the wall.

We had to gut the house.

We tried to rebuild the churches.

I attend at the African Family Center and Suburban Baptist Church in New Orleans.

**Participant 4**

“We keep hearing about the storm was coming. I knew a storm was coming. We made sure we had food, water, candles, and gas in the car. It was chaos. Preparing for the storm wasn’t so bad. After the storm was over, we saw that it was really bad. Individual’s houses were destroyed. The outcome of Katrina was sad. Hearing about the people in New Orleans was bad.

“I was staying with a girl during Katrina in some apartments. I was also back and forth to my husband’s aunt’s house. There was no damage to their apartment. We just didn’t have no electricity, no water. It was sad.”

When asked what gospel music means, participant 4 stated, “Gospel music is just quotes from the *Bible*. I read gospel music for spiritual moments. I read gospel music for spiritual nourishment. It plays a major role in my life. I read gospel music for knowledge and understanding of the word. Gospel music gives me the answers that I need to deal

with life. There were certain songs that I listened to, such as *Safe in His Arms*, *God Has Smiled on Me*. My favorite one was *Praise Is What I Do*, by Shenkinah Glory. ‘Praise is what I do when I wanna be close to you’ talks about praising God. All songs had a meaning. Gospel music gave me strength to deal with the heart aches and pain. It gave me hope to know that we would get through this ordeal.”

Participant 4 stated, “I was happy for Katrina to be over. I coped with the aftermath of Katrina by taking one day at a time. I tried to let my emotions be filled with joy. I learned not to focus on the negative emotions. I am thinking about the future of what God has for me.”

Participant 4 stated, “Katrina was the toughest times that I have ever gone through. My family had lost family members, but nothing was tougher than going through Katrina.

I learned not to take things for granted. I learned that I was able to deal with the outcome. Connections with people help me to deal with Katrina. My Lord and savior, pastor, church, family helped me to get through Katrina. The gospel music that the choir sang helped to get through Katrina. My pastor, who is a humble man, gave his congregation encouraging words through his sermons help to ease the pain. Being together with the family was helpful in dealing with Katrina. A family that prays together stays together.”

“I was surprised that I was able to deal with Katrina. I usually have anxiety. Prayer helped me get through Katrina.”

When asked about gospel music participant 4 stated, “I workout to gospel music. There are so many positive aspects to gospel music; it helps me to get through my day

and things that I go through. Gospel music gives me a lift. I will always listen to gospel music. I became interested in gospel because when I grew up we had to go to church. I became interested in gospel music because I grew up going to church and heard gospel songs .Some of my favorite artists are Donnie McClurkin, Fred Hammond, Hezekiah Walker, and Yolanda Adams. I listen to Panomdora Gospel. It gives me a variety of gospel music to listen to. I am able to listen to gospel music and get what I need. I get what I need when I listen to gospel music. It helps me to get through my day. I listen to the same songs now that I did after Katrina.”

### **Textural (What happened)**

We keep hearing the storm was coming.

We didn't take it serious.

When the storm came it was hard rain and a hard storm.

Trailers were gone.

It was bad.

The outcome of it was sad.

### **Meaning/themes units**

Listening to gospel music helped a lot; it helped me to feel better.

I am very elated that the storm is over.

With the power of prayer, I asked God to help me. God helped.

Katrina taught me that we are going to go through trials and tribulations. We are

going to go through different problems. We just have to stay prayed up.

“I was surprised that I was able to deal with Katrina. I usually have anxiety.

Prayer helped me get through Katrina.”

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

Houses were destroyed.

A hard rain came through Mississippi.

It was bad.

The outcome of it was sad.

### **Participant 5**

Participant 5 was president of the African Christian Fellowship (ACF) at the time Hurricane Katrina hit landfall. His home was severely damaged from the wind of Hurricane Katrina. Major repairs had to be done to his home. Participant 5 stated, "Some of the people were not prepared for the storm. My wife and I tried our best to encourage members of the ACF to leave before the storm hit. We thought the storm would come and go quickly, but found that it was far worse than we had anticipated. About two-thirds of the city of Baton Rouge had lost power and water." Participant 5's family had to be split, his wife was with half of their family in Houston, and he went with the remaining to Baton Rouge. participant 5 stated. "A lot of the water which sat in Jefferson Parish ruined a number of homes, especially in my city of Metairie. This area received a lot of assistance from many Christian organizations that had come to the city to assist in the cleanup and reconstruction after Hurricane Katrina." Participant 5 was an assistant professor of biology at Dillard University, but at that time had decided to go into the ministry. He stated, "A lot of people did not have flood insurance because the area never flooded in the past. Since many of the faculty did not return to the area, only 10% from the fellowship returned. I was invited to return and teach at Dillard."

When asked what gospel music means to him, participant 5 stated, “Gospel music means a lot to me. Music is ministry to the soul and it might turn a person onto the Lord. It is true Christian music has a therapeutic effect. It helped my family members also. When I was in Nigeria to us it was more like contemporary music.” Participant 5 stated that gospel music was very influential and has saved the families that had returned and that it had given him strength and hope to continue to survive. “I really like traditional hymns and any type of Christian music. I don’t necessarily know the artist.”

Participant 5 state, “The African Christian Fellowship Chapter had made a CD before Hurricane Katrina which were songs of praise. Thirty years ago they were actually called ‘The African Students Christian Fellowship’ but they had changed the name and dropped the ‘Student’ from its title. The group was founded in the state of Oklahoma. The CD has been translated into different languages in Africa and Nigeria.”

Participant 5 stated things are better now that the storm is over. “I was empowered by the grace of God and am naturally optimistic. I like to take risks but understand that this was not just about me, but God guiding me to help others. I was upset to hear that there were actually members of the ACF that wanted to relocate. The city has lots of rich culture. Where would they move it to?” Participant 5 stated, “With the Lord’s guidance I have been appointed as a representative to the National Rapid Response Team chapter for the African Christian Fellowship. The ACF has made donations to Haiti and has future plans to branch off and form other response teams like themselves in Nigeria.”

Participant 5 stated he coped with emotional things that come up for him very well. “One pain is more than another. My first trust is in God seeing what all he has done. There was never a meltdown for me after the storm.”

**Textural description (What happened)**

We were not prepared.

We didn't listen to the warnings.

Many emotional things happened.

People lost their homes.

It was very depressing.

**Meaning units/significant themes**

I feel that with gospel music, it gave me the strength and guidance to endure and to help others both here and abroad.

I realized that through the grace of God that there were many who helped us to rebuild.

With all praises to God, it was an empowering experience.

God did it; he brought me through.

I feel good about myself, now that the storm is over.

I didn't know I could do as much.

**Structural description (How it happened)**

I have become better since the storm.

I have had challenges in life coming from Nigeria.

Trying to fit in and learn the French culture.

Perhaps the loss of family members from back home was a tough time that I experienced before the hurricane that helped me to get through Katrina. Having come from through Katrina I learned nothing is too hard for God. It was like the scriptures coming to life. Building new relationships with people helped. Maintaining relationships with people who suffered losses helped.

### **Participant 6**

Participant 6, a pastor in New Orleans, talked passionately about his Katrina experience. “My story is multifaceted. My family and I left New Orleans on Sunday morning, August 29 and ended up in Dallas, Texas for 2 ½ weeks, and then the family split up and went into different directions (Hammond, Louisiana, Atlanta, Baton Rouge) and eventually we ended up in New Orleans.”

“We came back to the churches and couldn’t believe the damages of how severe they were. My church was wiped out. In the meantime, we end up holding church services in Baton Rouge while we trying to put things back together again. Members were spread all over the country. Some of the members passed away. However, we had to try and pick up the pieces and try to put the church and the family life back together. From a musical perspective, it was several years before we could put a choir back together. My daughter got with some choir members and they put a praise team together. We didn’t get a choir back until 2008 or 2009. Even until now, we still don’t have the choir that we had before Katrina. Nobody in New Orleans had what they had before Katrina. There were challenges on the emotional, financially, physically, psychologically; there were challenges all the way around. The thieves stove.”

“There was a lot of fighting with the insurance companies. They were fighting with FEMA and the Rhode Home program. With all of that going on, people had to deal with people stealing the material.”

Participant 6 stated, gospel music means the good news of Jesus Christ to him. “Gospel songs that I learned in church came to my mind. I received all of my structure regarding gospel music from my father who was a pastor and my mother, a gospel singer. My mother had a gospel group in New Orleans. She sang on TV in the 1960s. She directed church choirs; her group was called the Gospel Ivory Tones. After Katrina, wherever we went and found a church, this is when we heard gospel songs. No particular songs, but just songs that I heard growing up gave me hope and strength.”

Participant 6 talked about how his foundation with gospel music carried him during Katrina. “I was in a teen group formed in New Orleans. It was the second group to sing in the Gospel Music Group of America. We sang in the UNAC with the Church of God in Christ with Mattie Moss Clark. I also got to sing back up with gospel singer, Mahlia Jackson.”

Participant 6 stated, “It has been a long journey. It had been depressing. My wife noticed a change in me. She was trying to push me back to normal. I feel pretty good now.” He stated. “The way I cope with painful thoughts and emotions that come up is to just keep fighting. There were deaths people could get over. Connections with people helped me to deal with some of the sadness and memories that I experienced after the storm. Messages from people kept me encouraged.”



Participant 6 stated listening to the same gospels music that gave him comfort and relief after the storm. “There are Radio Stations in New Orleans, I appreciate their music.” He stated the interview was interesting and brought back a lot of memories.

**Textural description (What happened)**

There was 9 feet of water in the house.

The church was wiped out.

There were other things I had been through in the past.

**Meaning units/significant themes**

We refused to give up.

We made it.

We have lots of leftover scars.

Gospel songs I heard gave me strength and hope.

**Structural description (How it happened)**

There was 9 feet of water in my house.

Katrina has been the most challenging experience I’ve ever had.

I was surprised at how long it took me to snap out of it.

I had been walking and functioning in a daze.

**Participant 7**

Participant 7 stated, “As soon as we heard the warnings from the mayor of the city, my son and his family, escaped to Shreveport, Louisiana 24 hours before Katrina hit land on August 29, 2005. My son’s home was located on the West Bank of New Orleans received rain damage causing the roof to need replacing.” He started hearing from God

regarding the hurricane. Participant 7's wife worked at a retirement home (to the north) and was not able to evacuate with him due to her job.

Participant 7 stated he was very religious and had some personal experiences with the Lord. He wrote an 83-page book about his experiences called *Talk to whom Else but God*. He describes being awoken the morning of the storm and remembered a Bible passage from Psalms 46. This scripture was translated to him as the Lord was in the city and diverted the storm. He stated things are not as bad as they seem; the worst has not happened because it was diverted elsewhere. Participant 7 felt in his spirit the Lord would protect the city. "The Lord diverted the eye of the storm; it went between Slidell."

Participant 7 stated after Katrina, his workplace campus at Southern University in New Orleans received about 9 feet of water. "The classes had to be moved over to the sister campus of Baton Rouge. Other professors had to be moved to other campuses. FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers built a trailer campus for us, located on a piece of land that the University owned, and that was around March 2006."

Participant 7 stated he was the African Fellowship Christian's President from 2000 until 2004 when the property was acquired. "The membership fell from 30 to 5 after Katrina. Many of the members relocated to Atlanta and Memphis. We had to schedule phone calls with members. We would sing and encourage ourselves. I had a vision that God would send new members to the Fellowship."

When asked about gospel music participant 7 stated, "Gospel music means a lot to me. Sometimes when you pray to the Lord, you can't break through. The way you break through is through songs. I played the songs for relief and to stay sane." Participant 7

stated that he had a lot of CDs after Katrina. “There were too many songs to name like Bishop Carnie’s *Power and Glory*. Gospel music gave me strength and hope.”

Participant 7 stated he knew everything would be OK because God gave him a vision. “Yes there have been battles since the storm.” He described the tough times that he experienced prior to Katrina in his book titled, *Who Else but God, Extraordinary Spiritual Experiences of a Scientist Relevant to What God Did*.

What Participant 7 learned after surviving Katrina is there are so many distractions. “People are grateful. I learned to be grateful. There is no one else like God. Yes people in Shreveport and Baton Rouge were supportive. They fed us and paid our rent for one semester.”

Participant 7 stated, “Praise and worship means a lot to me. It’s like taking back from the enemy territory [Katrina]. The Lord brings songs during worship. I don’t look for certain songs. The Holy Spirit gave songs of worship from season to season. I don’t have to read notes; my experience was real.”

### **Textural description (What happened)**

The mayor warned us about Katrina.

Rain came in through the back window.

It ripped the ceiling off of my house.

Katrina caught me unaware. There are no surprises for God.

With the help of FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers and others, we were able to rebuild.

We tried to bring in African Nations to the fellowship before Katrina; after Katrina God brought them.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

My personal experiences with the Lord helped me to realize that we can rebuild after all of this devastating destruction.

The Lord explained to me that everything was fine.

The Lord diverted the eye of the storm that it had gone a different route.

I got this revelation in my sleep January 2006 a lot of the students followed the teachers.

My faith is stronger.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

We woke up at 5:00 a.m. when Katrina hit.

We were alarmed when the mayor alerted us that Katrina would be a good one.

We escaped to Shreveport.

We had to leave wife behind because she works with patients and could not leave them.

My work place Southern University was flooded on the second floor of the building.

We were transferred to Southern Baton Rouge campus in the fall of 2006.

The campus is in Smyner.

FEMA built a trailer for the College in March 2006.

### **Participant 8**

Participant 8 was a test proctor and also worked for an insurance broker that insured houses covering over 15 states. "My family, husband and two sons, were going to leave, but we were not able to get very far due to Hurricane Katrina. We returned and

decided to stay with my parents. There were many trees that were down in the area and including our property and my parent's property. Many of the trees had been there for many years as well as being planted by several generations of relatives. I suffered a lot both personally and as well as professionally.”

Participant 8 stated her family did not have electricity for 29 days. “We had to bathe for some time in the creek behind our house in our water well. Where my parents lived, they had their electricity turned on sooner. Sometimes we would go to their house and take care of their personal needs.”

Participant 8's spouse was the pastor of a church.” It sustained a lot of roof and ceiling damage. Water was in the church. The installation was scattered from the wind.” She helped to organize the restoration of it.

Participant 8 stated that gospel music really played a vital role to her and her family as a means of releasing stress after their church was damaged. She felt that gospel music was an outlet to come into praise and to help with hope. “Gospel music lets you know God is there. The words touch you and have meaning. Some words bring you peace.” Participant 8 described enjoying Southern gospel music and reported songs such as *Precious Lord* and *Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey* are some of her favorites.

Participant 8 stated, “Katrina was an economic loss for the people. It was hard for the insurance adjusters to get in touch with the people. Many individuals who did not have insurance realized they needed to have insurance. It was chaotic working in the insurance industry before the storm. I was an insurance agent and wrote insurance policies. I did all of the duties including approving the loans. Insurance companies had sent out other contractors that were not properly screened.”

Participant 8 stated, “I had to go out to write a policy and ended up being assaulted (raped) by an employee. The person who raped me was on probation for crystal meth. The person that had assaulted me had committed murder because he came up with a plan to burn his house and to get the insurance money. Others helped him and he murdered those people to cover his own crime. I went and got medical attention. I had to deal with this because I was threatened by my employer. He stated that if I reported the assault, I could lose my job. My boss threatened that if I went to the police he would fire me. I needed my home and so I did not go to the police. My husband went into a dark depression after I was raped. He had a difficult time with hearing that his wife had been assaulted. With our strong belief in the Lord, we were able to overcome, survive and continue to put the pieces of our lives back together. We also help others in the community.”

Participant 8 stated there had been tough times she experienced prior to the storm. “I was sexually abused as a child from age 11 years. I didn’t deal with it until I found the Lord. I found forgiveness.”

Participant 8 found, “Now that Katrina is over, I am a survivor. I am more than a conqueror. God let us experience things to help other people. I’ve learned to meditate. Gospel music sets the atmosphere to be able to meditate. I have become wiser since the storm. Katrina prepared me for what’s ahead.”

Participants 8 stated connections with people like Apostle Moore in Atlanta, Georgia encouraged her. “He sent me money and his prayers. Local churches gave support to the community. They gave ice and food. The military dropped off food for the people.”

Participant 8 stated that she hoped to be able to help someone to overcome by sharing her story. “I just want to encourage anybody on their daily walk with God. I want to help others to be prepared through the word of God with prayer, fasting, and gospel music. I still listen to some of the same gospel music as before such as *City of God* and [*Highway Home*]. I use my *Bible* for my road map.”

**Textural description (What happened)**

I had to endure a lot of devastation, both on a professional as well as personal level.

I was working in crisis mode.

**Meaning units/significant themes**

I was able to make it through with the strength of the Lord, my church, and especially the love of my family.

I wouldn't take anything for my journey.

**Structural description (How it happened)**

We had three trees fall on our house.

We had holes in the roof.

We lived in the Gumpound community.

Trees had to be removed from my house.

My husband was shocked at the devastation of Katrina.

**Participant 9**

Participant 9 was making his truck driving deliveries in Washington, DC and other neighboring states when Katrina happened. When he did get back to his house, which was in Gentilia, Louisiana, it did not have that much damage. “My wife was very

upset at the damages that she saw in our house. We were able to save our jewelry because we kept it under the mattress. This was all we saved. My car was at work and my wife's car was at the Harrah's Casino because she had free parking (at the time of Katrina).” Participant 9 felt that it was better that they were not harmed physically and all of the material possessions were of no consequence.

Participant 9 felt that gospel music was in his life as a child. “It is a form of inspiration, but I don't listen to it a lot. It did not really play a major part after the hurricane because I had not listened to it in a long time. I had a strong affiliation with religious growing up but tapered off as I became an adult. My mom and dad were sanctified.”

Participant 9 stated, “I didn't suffer as much as others had suffered. I was on the road most of the hurricane. I was more financially stable than most of the victims of Katrina. I am [not] sure if I have become better. I don't stay awake at night thinking about what I lost.”

Participant 9 stated there were difficult times that he went through prior to Hurricane Katrina. “I came up real hard in 1939. I had to pick cotton. I came here to New Orleans when I was 9 years old. This gave me a base for seeing hard times. Seeing hard times was typical for me.”

Participant 9 stated association with people who helped during hurricane Katrina inspired him. He stated it was a good experience to talk about hurricane Katrina. “The Small Business Association loaned us money to buy a house. The insurance company paid us for the loss of our house. I did not have it bad. We didn't have to go to the



Superdome and wade in the waters. My financial situation is good. We had enough to suffice. We didn't have to go into the system.”

**Textural description (What happened)**

We lost our complete home.

We had been living in that house since 1969.

We lived in the Gentilly area in New Orleans.

We went through and saved what we could.

A church group went through and gutted the house for us.

We were blessed to not have been in the area when Hurricane Katrina touched down.

I took off from work (North American) after Katrina.

We stayed in a hotel where there were lots of Mexicans and people on drugs.

My sister-in-law coordinated housing for people.

She booked reservations in apartments for people.

Siemens mattress gave us 180 mattresses because people would live in the apartments.

**Meaning units/significant themes**

I didn't suffer as others had during this horrific storm.

I did not learn anything new.

There were no surprises.

My outlook is different from the average person.

I didn't have a specific person I talked to after the hurricane.

I did not feel devastated.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

I feel fortunate because I had somewhere to go.

I stayed with my baby daughter, Aisha.

I realize you will have good and bad times.

Stuff will be here and it will be gone.

There was nothing new learned.

### **Participant 10**

Participant 10 was an African-American female, 73 years old, who lived in Hattiesburg, Mississippi with her 91-year-old husband during Katrina. She stated that a tree fell on her house and the house started leaking. “This was nothing compared to how God kept us safe. I prayed and asked God not to let the storm hit. We didn’t have lights or gas, but we had our lives.”

During the time of this interview (June 25, 2012) participant 10 was in the process of getting her home repaired by FEMA through contractors in Hattiesburg. She expected to be moving into temporary shelter while her home got repaired.

She described coping with painful thoughts and emotions that come up through rebuking the devil and calling on the blood of Jesus.

When asked about gospel music, she stated, “Gospel music means a lot to me. It means everything to me. When you don’t see your way, you can call on Jesus.” She described after Katrina listening to the song *Jesus Never Fail* regardless of the storm. “It’s a deliverance song. Gospel music gave me strength and hope. I feel like I need to stay with God and keep praying.” One of the things Participant 10 stated learning about

her was having a mind to look up more. “I am closer to God now. We need to keep our prayers sent up to God.”

Participant 10 stated that relationships with people helped in making it through after Hurricane Katrina. “Knowing people helped a lot. Strangers helped; a white man walked up to me and handed me \$200. I thank God for being so good to me. He gave me a mind to follow him. Participant 10 stated it had been a blessing to talk about her Katrina experience with me.

#### **Textural description (What happened)**

We did not have any radios but had songs in our hearts after Katrina.

I use the word of God as a weapon.

I love to wake up at night and think about Jesus.

#### **Meaning units/significant themes**

I believe God will do what he said in his word.

I thank the Lord for sparing our life.

There is Power in calling on the name of Jesus.

#### **Structural description (How it happened)**

Trees were falling down all around us.

The storm hit around us, but we had our lives.

#### **Participant 11**

Participant 11 is a 37-year-old resident of Hattiesburg, Mississippi who lived near William Carey College. He was living with his girlfriend when the storm hit. He described watching the news the night before Katrina. “Power lines were down. I

recorded about 10 minutes of the hurricane.” Participant 11 stated he had never been in a hurricane before.

When asked about Gospel music, participant 11 said, “Gospel music is my main form of music in which I listen. Gospel music touches the soul. It makes me remember from where I came. The hurricane happened during my divorce. Gospel music was a big help during this time.” Participant 11 described listening to songs by recording artists, Donnie McClurkin, Marvin Sapp, and Bishop Paul Morton. “*Open the Flood Gates of Heaven* was one of the songs that I listened to after Katrina.” Participant 11 stated that gospel music gave him strength and hope. “It reminds me of how I was raised.”

Participant 11 reported feeling that he can go through all obstacles after Katrina. He stated feeling stronger since Katrina. “I can’t let thoughts determine my future. You have to understand where the pain comes from and find a way to deal with it. I learned that I can endure anything after Katrina. It reinforced my strength.”

Participant 11 stated he listens to the same artists now that he did after the storm. “Katrina brought the community together. You did not have to come through it alone. Money did not mean anything. The NBA players helped out; they brought clothing, cleaning supplies, and perishable goods to the community.”

Participant 11 stated that the interview brought back a lot of memories for him. Katrina happened during my divorce. It helped me to make it.

### **Textural description (What happened)**

The tree came through the front of the house.

It did not come through the house.

The winds were high.

Power lines were down.

No one was injured.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Gospel music helped me to make it through my divorce.

Things were never as tough before Hurricane Katrina.

I have found a way to cope with things by focusing on happier times.

Katrina reinforced the strength that I have.

Gospel music helped me to make it through the storm.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

Money didn't mean anything.

Katrina brought the community together.

Nothing that I had experienced was tougher than Hurricane Katrina.

Katrina taught me that I can endure anything.

### **Participant 12**

Participant 12 is a 38-year-old Caucasian female who lived in New Orleans with her husband. She shared her story with the investigator. "August 28<sup>th</sup> 2005, we drove off the seminary campus in New Orleans East at 5 in the morning. It was still dark as we sipped our coffee and sat in traffic . . . it was literally crawling by inches. Earlier that morning I packed enough clothes and reading materials for 3 or 4 days. Most evacuations lasted about that long and resulted in little storm damage usually or turned altogether. We were headed to my husband's family farm in Opelousas, Louisiana... but it took 3 hours to even get out of the city and still we were crawling . . . the inbound lanes of the interstate were redirected as outgoing lanes, but even with 6 and sometimes eight lanes,

traffic moved painfully slowly with so many people leaving town at the same time. It was half a day later before we made it to airline highway to head towards Baton Rouge. . . it was about that time we began to regret the coffee. The port a potty at a construction site was like an oasis in the desert in a time of great need nothing was open. Evacuation was mandatory for everyone so you could only get gas with a credit card at the pump so the doors were locked allowing no access for restrooms or water. It was more than 12 hours to make the usual 2 ½ drive. We settled into the guest house thinking it would be more like a mini vacation.”

Participant 12 stated, “The next morning we watched on satellite TV and were relieved to learn the storm for the most part went around the city with little damage . . . I believe it was the next morning that we learned about the levees being compromised, we sat mesmerized watching as water poured in over the place we called home, not knowing what to expect or where to turn. . . . all we could do was wait. Then we watched as people were being rescued off rooftops and those lining overpasses waiting to be rescued, desperate for water . . . so many emotions, so surreal. The Friday of that first week, we realized we would not be returning to the city any time soon and would need additional clothes. We also were uncertain about our finances. We did not know if we would have jobs or when we could return to work. As I purchased clothes for us to wear to church on Sunday, I started thinking I better apply for a job. I could waitress if necessary or work in a shop. Then I started to worry; those concerns would persist until 2010 ...and from that day we were playing catch up financially. For the first 3 days, there was no phone service, the system was overloaded with people trying to check on family members . . . the only way to contact people was through the Internet or texting (which was fairly

new).It took several days to connect with everyone as the storm left neighboring states without electricity I was called in to our main campus in Hattiesburg to discuss the future of our New Orleans campus and to learn the fate of my job, which was our family's primary income. My husband was employed as a pastor part-time, but everyone in our little church had evacuated as well.

“The president of the university asked if I was willing to go back and re-open the campus. He said if I was not willing, they would not pursue it. I agreed to go back and to work from the Hattiesburg campus until we could get back to New Orleans. I stayed with friends in Hattiesburg while my husband stayed in Opelousas until we were able to close on our house. (We had a contract before the storm. The house was in good shape but no one would write insurance necessary for closing.)We were not allowed into the city and onto the campus until October 8. I went for work to check our building and get what I needed to work from Hattiesburg. The police had taken over the building as a headquarters. I went to my apartment on campus...furniture was turned over; black mold was growing on the walls and the ceiling. It smelled terrible there were several inches of muck on the floor. I had to stand on the couch and gingerly crawl over the overturned entertainment center to reach the bathroom in search of some of my jewelry; couldn't find the kitchen table . . . again surreal. I took one pair of earrings, two soup bowls, and a broken crystal bowl from the wreckage . . . it was all that could be salvaged. We drove out of the city past all the destruction . . . life was surreal. On top of the destruction, many changes occurred including living separately from my newlywed husband. My parent's also lost their home of 40 years and my aunt across the street did too. The entire

community I knew was gone . . . the elementary school, my high school, the church I grew up in.”

“In terms of work, I was trying to find our students who had scattered across the United States with offers of free tuition and help. Although people had cell phones we did not have those numbers in any kind of database. We did not require students to have a school email address so there was no means to contact students except hit and miss. Most students found us. When we reopened the campus in February we had 100 students (one quarter our normal enrollment), which was miraculous considering there were not homes for them to live in, schools for their kids to attend, few operational stores, gas stations etc. When we first opened the only food in the area was with the Red Cross, more than 6 months after the storm.”

“I say all this to explain why recovery has taken so long and still continues . . . those of us who returned to the city or neighboring communities also affected lived amidst the devastation, saw it daily. The lack of resources at stores and limited restaurants reminded us daily that life wasn’t normal and wouldn’t be for a long time. When restaurants did open we overate! I remember our excitement when a chicken place opened close to campus! I still have anxiety in Wal-Mart and avoid it at any cost. For months after the storm, we stood in lines for hours . . . products and choices were limited. Everyone needed things from the stores simply couldn’t keep anything in stock.”

Participant 12 stated, “People were kind. There was resurgence in faith. It was a shared grief and pain throughout the community . . . we all had loss, and somehow that seemed to unite us.”



“As I said our finances were unstable; we also then were saddled with a mortgage with one less job than we had when we entered the contract. We also had no furniture and no clothes and had lost the one car we left behind. It was like emptying the ocean with a teaspoon.”

“While I was living and working in Hattiesburg my husband relapsed into an addiction he had prior to our marriage. The time was filled with multiple stressors. Faith was one of the few constants and music grounded us in lots of ways . . . I listened and tried to praise as I drove past the destruction each morning and evening. The lyrics of hymns we held dear played internally as amazing grace was really all we had to carry us from one day to the next.”

“Now it is 7 years later . . . we still mark time by a storm. In the years that passed, my marriage ended, my father died, the campus was restored to its former glory and I felt the need to move on and took another job in a neighboring state. My heart though is still in New Orleans. I am amazed by my resilience, but always felt it was due to God’s grace and provision.”

Participant 12 was asked about what role gospel music played during Hurricane Katrina and what gospel music means to her. She stated, I guess it depends on how you define gospel music. We listened to a lot of praise music (my husband was a pastor and seminary student). I think the role it played for me during Katrina and in the months that followed, wasn’t necessarily the sound of the music, but the words of old faithful hymns that resonated (internally) and acted as a balm. Songs like *Amazing Grace*, *Oh for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*, *Joyful, Joyful*, the words were ingrained from years of repetition . . . they had become a part of me, an internal resource

that shaped the way I looked at the situation. All of those songs are reminders of what is eternal they are reminders that God is in charge when everything seems out of control, that he is the giver of all things and that he will provide for every need and restore that which is taken from us. That he is provider, comforter, counselor, and friend. That he will provide for all our needs according to his riches . . . exceedingly and abundantly above all we could ask or need. The words of those hymns were like a warm blanket on a cold night. My training was in sociology . . . I was very aware of responses of the larger community just like they say there are no atheists in foxholes; in reference to the war; likewise the role of faith was magnified in the lives of the community following the storm. I don't know if it's the need to believe there is purpose in the suffering, or just a need to believe someone greater than ourselves has the situation under control."

The investigator wanted to know did Participant 12 listen to certain songs. "Other than some of the hymns stated above, I don't really remember . . . I do remember listening to *Mercy Me* a lot, songs like *I Can Only Imagine*, and the *WOW* praise CD (probably 2004)."

### **Textural description (What happened)**

Evacuation was mandatory for everyone.

You could only get gas with a credit card at the pump.

The doors were locked allowing no access for restrooms or water.

We drove out of the city past all the destruction

Life was surreal.

On top of the destruction, there were changes.

I had to live separately from my newlywed husband.

My parent's also lost their home of 40 years, and my aunt across the street did too.

The entire community I knew was gone.

The elementary school, my high school, the church I grew up in was all gone.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Faith played a big role in our lives.

The gospel songs reminded me of what is eternal.

The songs also reminded me that God has everything under control when it seems like things are out of control.

God was good to us.

### **Structural description (What Happened)**

The storm went around the city.

The levees were compromised

We had to evacuate.

### **Participant 13**

Participant 13 is 5 foot 2 inches and spoke with a strong voice regarding her experience from Katrina. "I have lived in New Orleans for 40 years. I have never seen anything like this in my life." She spoke about having 17 feet of water in her home, which was located in the lower 9th ward. "I went to my son's house because there was so much damage done to my home. The ceiling down out and everything was lost. I had 10 rooms with two baths and oak floors. I was not able to get back into my home for 3-4 weeks."

Participant 13 stated, “I had over 2,000 books in my library from when I taught nursing at Dillard University. All of my books were lost in the hurricane. We got money from FEMA but it wasn’t enough. I had insurance. All of the rentals were lost. We had to get furniture and stuff out of the house in 2 days. There were people in town who would charge individuals to gut out their houses. This was too much for my sons to do. They had their own families.”

When asked about gospel music participant 13 responded, “I love gospel music, it calms me down and lifts me up. We had two CD’s and always had gospel music playing on the radio. It was salve to the hurting heart.” When asked about certain songs she listened to, participant 13 responded, “I had spirituals and gospels playing. One of my favorite songs is *Oh How I Love Jesus*. Gospel music gave me strength to pick myself up. It gave me hope to get back on track.”

Participant 13 is active in the community. “I told Mayor Ray Nagin off at town hall meeting. He told us to build at our own risk.

Participant 13 talked about coping with painful thoughts and emotions that come up for her prior to Hurricane Katrina. “I lost my spouse after being married for 40 years in 1999; at that time I was Catholic. When you lose something you hurt. Pain is pain.” Participant 13 is proud of the work she now does at her church in the grief ministry. “I use the Steven’s Ministry books as I tell others what to do.”

Participant 13 stated not realizing she was so damaged until completing this survey. “Answering these questions is therapeutic for me. Gospel music helped me to become resilient. It opened up my mind to possibilities and pleasant things”.

### **Textural description (What happened)**

I feel like a survivor.

I survived because of God's grace.

I became better after the storm with dealing with emotions.

I am surprised to learn I was so vocal.

I use to be a clothes horse.

I don't need material things to be happy.

I have a two room apartment and don't need all of that stuff anymore.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Gospel music carried me through the storm.

I can't imagine from answering these questions from the survey that I am feeling  
this whole again.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

The 17 feet of water destroyed my house.

I don't have the energy to fight for the house.

Cabinets fell off the wall.

China ware was destroyed.

Connections with people helped me to vent and air my frustrations.

Community had a meeting to talk about the Federal Government.

We came together at Holy Angles to talk about the community needs.

### **Participant 14**

Participant 14 stated not hearing all of the signs regarding Hurricane Katrina because he was watching *Madea* (by Tyler Perry) on television. He and his two sons

stayed on Benton Street in New Orleans when hurricane Katrina took place. “We lost everything. We were not able to save anything. I got a call to open the door and when I did the water came rushing inside my house. I had to go into the attic and stayed there hollering three days for help after Katrina.” “The helicopter had to come and rescue me.” “My two sons and I lost everything in the hurricane. We stayed at the Superdome for 3 days and then went to Oklahoma for 1 ½ years at (Camp Gruba). We got tired of being there and checked in a hotel in Minden, Louisiana for a year. We went to Minden on the Greyhound bus. We joined Rest Baptist Church.” “We rode around 6 months after the storm.”

Participant 14 is a pastor and is a well-educated man. He has two bachelor degrees in business administration and philosophy; and two master degrees in theology and religious education. He taught school for 5 years and is the pastor at St. James Baptist Church in New Orleans.

Participant 14 also stated there was damage done to his church which is located in the 7th Ward on Ursuline Avenue. “We were able to save the furniture from the choir stand and the pulpit; the organ and the piano because they were located in a higher area in the church.”

Participant 14 was concerned about the members of his church. “My members were all over the place. Some died and others moved to different places.”

When asked about gospel music he stated, “Gospel music encouraged me; it built my faith a little stronger. When you have gospel music, it gives you something to hold on to.” Participant 14 stated he listened to all of the gospel songs on the radio station. “Songs such as *The Lord Will Make a Way* and *I Won't Complain* are some of my favorites.”

Participant 14 stated the gospel music gave him hope and strength. “I was in the choir all of my life.”

Participant 14 stated he enjoyed being a pastor. He described taking his members to Dialysis at 6:00 a.m. “I am the Shepherd of my flock. We feed the homeless at our church on the fourth Saturdays of the month. My grandfather was a deacon. God is good. I have no need to complain.”

Participant displayed a grateful spirit. He stated it was a blessing to talk to the investigator about his Katrina experience.

### **Textural description (What happened)**

I don't let things steal my peace.

I don't complain about nothing.

Always depend on Jesus.

I feel alright now that the hurricane is over.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Whatever Jesus does is OK with me.

I am better since the storm.

The Lord will work things out.

I will learn to wait on Jesus.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

I just told my problems to Jesus.

My TV stay on the gospel show all of the time.

I listen to all variety of gospel music now.

Gospel music helps me to rekindle my faith.

Songs you sing about come to reality.

Gospel songs re-energized me and gave me assurance.

### **Participant 15**

Participant 15 shared her Katrina story with a grateful spirit. “The winds were blowing hard. I slept through the hurricane on the floor. Good took care of me. There was no harm done to my home.” Participant 15 lived alone during Hurricane Katrina and shared about friends who came to her rescue. “My neighbors assisted me with things like food, garbage disposal, and cell phone calls. An acquaintance, a university professor and nearby neighbor, brought me 5 gallons of gasoline to put into my car. There was no gas at the stations available in my area.”

When asked about gospel music she shared, “Gospel music encourages, inspires and consoles me. I like the traditional hymns such as *Draw Me Nearer*, *God Leads His Dear Children Along*, and *God Is Able*. Gospel music makes me more appreciative of God’s grace and mercy. It gives me great joy when I think about the God’s abundant blessings. It inspires me to share with others.

Participant 15 reported not feeling any different about her now that the storm is over. She reported developing more insight after surviving hurricane Katrina.

When asked what it was like to talk to me about her Katrina experience, participant 15 stated, “It released feelings of gratitude and a desire to help others who are in distress and to teach them to take hold of the promises of God.”

Now 7 years later, participant 15 stated she seldom listen’s to gospel music. “Instead I have a several hymns books in which I use. I am inspired by the Holy Spirit to make up my own love songs to Jesus during my morning devotion. I like to sing all



gospel songs. There is not one that I get more strength from than others.” An example of a song that I sing is: *My Love Song to You Dear Jesus* and *You Are Most Holy, Holy, Holy*.

### **Textural description (What happened)**

The winds became fierce, and I was sleeping.

I made a pallet in the hallways between two walls.

The *Bible* says that he that kept Israel neighbors slumber no sleep.

I lay down and went to sleep because there is no need to stay awake, since God is never asleep.

When I awake at 11:15 a.m., the storm had done the damage and passed over.

The sun was shining brilliantly.

The neighbors came swiftly to determine if I were still in my house or in heaven.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

God is truly Jehovah Jireh.

God will always take care of his people.

Do not be anxious, doubtful, discouraged, or dismayed.

For the promises of God are sure.

In them are amen, amen, Glory of God the Father.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

Some of the neighbors had 8 and 10 Tall Pine trees to crush their homes.

The word declares that God rains on the just and the unjust.

The angels of the Lord encamp round about them that fear him.

Several neighbors' had damage to their home but no physical for which I am grateful.

Some people were pinned in for 2 or 3 days and escape damage.

They are still praising God.

### **Participant 16**

Participant 16 shared the following regarding his Katrina experience. "We had just come in at 4:00 a.m. from being out all night partying. We had no idea what was going on. When we finally got word of what was happening, it was too late."

Participant 16 appeared somewhat angry as I listened to his Katrina experience. He lived in a town house in East Crowder when Katrina happened. "I ended up going to Mississippi then to Texas. The government failed us and the military didn't show up until 3 days after. "There were people who tried to take advantage of the situation. It made me mad about the way we were treated." Participant 16 stated, "Everybody (family) turned their back on me. I was up there in Texas, struggling. Started out in Dallas and went to Houston and went back to Dallas. I met a young lady and fathered a child by her. She is about 4 years old now. I am trying to get up there. I call the folks that act like they are better than others 10-cent millionaires—they finally have a dollar in your pocket and you forget where you come from. . . . They have money coming in and you are looking down on other people. The people who live in North Dallas is where all of the ballers live. Then all of a sudden, the Lord said, it's my turn now. I met Monique, the comedian up there. I met a young lady up there and we had a child together. She gave me 4 good years."

Participant 16 stated, "People use to have hurricane parties. You get a bunch of people together, buy a strong structure house, buy a lot of food and alcohol and have a party. After the storm passed everyone went back home."

Participant 16 seemed to recall more about his Katrina experience as he gave examples of things that occurred. "I set on a bench and ate bologna sandwiches while getting closer to the Lord. My family laughed and made fun of me while I was in Texas. I was getting closer to the Lord. I never had to ask nobody on the streets for nothing, God supplied all my every need. All I had to do was to pray and think about it and God would give it to me. The only thing I am claiming is my faith in the Lord. This is the reason he let me go through this mess. There was even a man living on the street that some say could have been a mayor. There were people from every form of life out there living on the streets. There were people living in card board boxes and living under the bridge."

"I even stayed in Beyoncé's Family Shelter. It's behind a big church. You have to take a shower. They give you clean changing clothes. You just had to sign up to get in the shelter. You could use this shelter to get on your feet. I would stay there until 9:00 a.m. and then go to the park and sit on the bench. There were places that would give you a bag lunch. They would give us bologna, donuts, and sometimes chips and drink. There were also places where I get a hot shower. It was dangerous on the streets. I would go to the emergency room and check in like I wanted to see the doctor so that I could have an inside place to be. There were public hospitals. I would check in at midnight and would not been seen until around 6:00 a.m. I would have a good 3 or 4 hour wait. I would never walk with the duffle bag. I think it's so demeaning to walk with the duffle bag." "There

was an elderly lady that we use to drink coffee in the mornings at McDonald. We would eat sausage and biscuit. I got her in the shelter.”

Participant 16 stated connections with people helped him after Katrina to be strong and in some ways it made me weak. “My daughter who is around 35 is the one who helped (and continues) me the most. When I was in Hattiesburg, she wired me money. She lives in Houston and is a correction officer. She helps me good. It made me strong—gave me strength in God. We are not in control of our lives. We think we are in control, but God is in control. It gave me weakness because of my family and friends.”

There were tough times participant 16 experienced before Katrina. “I use to help people get their insurance. I use to help people cheat to get the answers for the test. I went to jail for this.”

Participant 16 described being filled with the Holy Ghost. “Life helped me to change. I learned how to turn things over to God. I am trying to put everything in his hands now so that my life can be smooth and have balance.”

Participant 16 stated, “My belief in the Lord is better now that the storm is over. A couple of weeks after Katrina, I could see God working in my life. For instance, my brother use to be a crack head on the streets and is now living for God. You ought to see what God blessed him with.”

When asked about gospel music, participant 16 stated, “Gospel music is like a love song when I am lonely. The kind of love that comes from Christ, this is the most unconditional love; means healing, inspiration, and comfort. The type of love you think about that never leaves you.” Participant 16 reported listening to songs such as *Amazing Grace* by Mahalia Jackson, *Something About the Man Name Jesus* by Rance Allen, and

*Never Would Have Made It*, by Marvin Sapp. He reported listening to lots of gospel songs after Katrina. Participant 16 said, “gospel music gave me strength and comfort. It replaced human compassion and love for me.”

Katrina was a life-changing experience for Participant 16. “The aftermath of Katrina will never be over. I could not ever feel normal again. I am hurting in a sense but have a different outlook.”

Participant 16 stated, “I feel better about myself. With the change that is coming, I have my business and trying to get a cab. It’s coming along. I will never leave New Orleans. There is so much to do here. I have been a lot of places and it isn’t no place like New Orleans. You can go to the casinos, have all kind of parties, throw any kind of meat on the grill; it’s a great place to live. There is no better to live.”

Participant 16 was happy when he talked about New Orleans Madras Gras. “You need to be down here when Madras Gras takes place. You can see everything during that time. All kind of people come to New Orleans. It’s known as the party city of the world.”

Participant 16 stated, I never had anyone to interview me. I want to get my story documented so that I can tell my story; even if I can write a spiritual song. If I can write a song, I’ll feel like my dreams have come true. I want everybody to know about the wonders of God. For the first time I plan and want to do. It’s by his plan and grace that I live my life.”

Participant 16 stated, “When you know God’s word you can tell people how God can bring you out. My mom said why you keep telling people this . . . I told her I am not ashamed that God will bring me through.

Participant 16 stated, With Joy in his voice, “sometimes just a simple prayer .I saw the wonders of the Lord. There was a time when I was going to try to steal to eat. A lady gave me \$5.00 when I needed the money to eat. This is a wonder of God. I realized that God had a purpose for my life. To live the fulfillment of life is wonderful. I don’t exactly know his purpose for me But, I think it’s is to live by his guidance I had everything in life, but I wasn’t serving God.”

**Textural description (What happened)**

Katrina caught us off guard.

It was unpredictable.

You wouldn’t get a warning on what was going to happen.

Forecasters were giving information about the weather.

We had full news coverage.

Katrina is something that wasn’t supposed to happen. The people were supposed to get out of the city.

Hurricane Katrina came through and wiped out everything.

I don’t think people Katrina was going to be as bad as it was.

I didn’t know it was going to be as bad as it was.

It never occurred to me that God was going to use one of his wonders like Katrina.

Out of all of the storms that had taken place, God had his hands on it.

Every day it posed a threat when the water rises.

We don’t feel right until the levees go down.

The levees breaking is what we didn’t predict would happen.

When you look at the city you see all of the bodies of water.

The water had the city surrounded.

The Gulf brought a lot of water in an area called Shamet (Simnal Parrish).

A hurricane here in New Orleans was always taken for granted.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

I am trying to claim the victory in my life.

Katrina was just a storm that I went through. I am coming out of there.

You can always count on The Lord when you don't have anybody else.

Katrina brought on a change. It made me look at life a whole lot different.

The name Katrina when I looked it up meant cleansing. It meant the cleansing of  
the city.

Katrina made me think about the book of Jeremiah. This book talked about  
changes. Jeremiah talked about a spiritual storm.

Some of the people who didn't have anything now have more.

Katrina brought about a lot of changes. It is something that God had his hands on.

I now have more compassion for people suffering.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

We heard loud noises, like an explosion.

It was like boom, boom, boom.

The booms surrounded the city.

All of our possessions were wiped away. It makes me sad.

I was having lots of fun and then God slowed me down.

I was walking around the streets of Dallas with no one to trust but God.

You looked at some of the city and how it had been re-built, it is different.

In my life, I was just living foolishly before Katrina. I had a degree and was making money and did not realize the value of my life.

The fastest I could make money, the fastest I could get with women and be drinking. I got rid of my money real fast.

I was running around being foolish.

I ended up losing money, my wife, and friends.

I saw those who had and those who did not have.

I saw a lot of foolishness in this world.

### **Participant 17**

Participant 17 stated she was with her daughter when Hurricane Katrina happened. “We went under a car port and had feelings that we were not going to survive the storm. My daughter had a fear of rain, so we ended up not being at their own homes but going to our pastor’s house. His house had a better foundation than ours.” Participant 17 stated they were not prepared for the storm. Unfortunately, her pastor’s house ended up having a tree come down on the top of it that split it in half and caused a gas leak. “We ended up having to leave our house due to safety reasons.”

Participant 17 stated, “It was the most frightening time of my life not knowing if I would live or die. We were without electricity for 2 weeks and even though we had money, we could not use it. We ended up staying with others in a three-bedroom apartment. I didn’t feel that I could live with others but found the strength to do so.”

When asked about gospel music, participant 17 stated, “Gospel music is another channel where God can speak and his presence can be known. Singing songs of praise



and listening to gospel music after the electricity had been restored gave me another channel where I felt the presence of the Lord. Gospel music acted as a calming effect. Listening to gospel music gave me strength and hope. No certain songs, but just listening to radio songs. The songs let me know that everything was going to be all right.”

Participant 17 stated, “The outpouring of support from friends and family was overwhelming. We had more than enough.”

Participant 17 described coping with painful thoughts that come up for her with tears. “The tears eventually turn into joy. I am much better of a person now. I always thought I was a strong person. Going through Katrina made me stronger. I am a better person and a church member. I am now closer to other members of her church as a result of this catastrophic event.”

Participant 17 reported listening to some of the same gospel songs as after Katrina. “Artist like Marvin Sapp’s *Never Would Have Made It*, is a song that I truly love.”

Participant 17 said, “It’s a joy to tell my Katrina experience. It’s a happy time to share this.”

### **Textural description (What happened)**

A tree fell into my house and split the house in two

I thought the roof was going to fall off

I wasn’t prepared for the storm.

I depended on other church members to survive.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Gospel music let me know everything was going to be alright.

I am very grateful.

Katrina made me realize I can make it through anything.

I am just grateful to be able to share my experience.

**Structural description (How it happened)**

A tree fall on my pastor's house

We had to leave.

We went to the church.

I didn't know if we would make it out alive.

We went without electricity for 2 weeks.

I didn't realize how important things like food, water and shelter are taken for granted.

Katrina seemed like the ultimate disaster.

Other hurricanes seem small compared to Katrina.

**Participant 18**

Participant 18 stated that he never experienced any type of hurricane activity until Katrina came along. He reported looking out after the hurricane and it looked like a war zone in Purvis, Mississippi. "There was no running water and we had no power for 2-3 weeks." Participant 18 did not experience any severe water damage. "The power lines were down."

Participant 18 stated that his home did not have any water damage, but a tree did fall on the back half of his home. He stated they are still trying to recover from Hurricane Katrina. He feels others had experienced trees coming down on their roofs. "My assistant

pastor had a tree split his house in half and it landed on his bed. He was able to get out of the way in time.”

Participant 18 reported that gospel music was an inspiration to him especially since he came from a family of singers. He stated, “Gospel music it is the good news and the word of God; it is there to be a reference to ministry. “It has inspired me and made me a better person, husband, father and pastor. I have grown spiritually and have more patience now. The experiences that I endured from Hurricane Katrina gave me more trust in God. A gospel song that has been very inspirational to me is by Walter Hawkins called *Thank You Lord*. Part of the song says, ‘It could have been me because it was me.’”

Participant 18 feels gospel music gave him hope and strength. “I can’t live without the word of God. It’s amazing now that the storm is over. I can now say that I know the meaning to the statement, ‘I am more than a conqueror.’ The word of God is true.”

When asked how he coped with painful thoughts and emotions that cope up he stated, “I look higher and higher. Dealing with God is another level of faith. My brother-in-law in Indiana had to relocate. It increased and intensified my faith. I was encouraged by watching him go through the process. He never lost his cool during the process. He got an even better job and is doing better now.”

Participant 18 stated this was the first time that he has been interviewed about Hurricane Katrina. “It has been interesting.”

### **Textural description (What happened)**

Hurricane Katrina ravaged our community.

We had experienced anything like it.

Through loss, our faith and trust in God helped us to recover

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Patience and perseverance has made me a better person; it has increased my faith in the God.

I am now able to tell others with experience how to trust God.

I am still Pastor Gatling, the person who trusts God.

I am encouraged by watching my assistant pastor go through the process.

We lost and have been sustained by God.

All the way through, my relationship with God has become greater.

I am a better husband and a better father.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

There were recorded situations of people lost from the hurricane.

No severe water damage.

I am better since the storm.

There were tough times that I'd went through prior to Katrina.

### **Participant 19**

Participant 19's home sustained a lot of damage from Hurricane Katrina. She had to rebuild and elevate it but at the same time lost many precious memories that cannot be replaced. "I lost my photos of family member's graduations and also a tape copy of my parent's 50th wedding anniversary celebration. I was the only sibling in my family with a copy."

Participant 19 stated, “After the hurricane my neighbors thought I had been killed. It turned out that I was at another location. I went to stay with my kids in Columbia, Mississippi. My neighbors were relieved to find out that I was not harmed.”

“When I did get to my home, it took had taken in 4 ½ feet of water. The roof was torn off, but the bricks had stayed intact.” Participant 19 stated her community received lots of support. We got lots of assistance. Former President Clinton and Dorothy Height came to Gulfport. Youth Build helped Gulfport after Katrina. We got a grant called the “Katrina Grant” which helped us to rebuild. It was extremely difficult for me because of the operations that I needed to have due to knee and hip problems. It has not felt good all that I have gone through.”

Participant 19 stated, “It was a great relief that I had my church to distract and help me to keep pushing on one step at a time. I use to work for the Boys and Girls Club for 15 years. I really enjoyed working with children.” Participant 19 reported having been a choir director for over 40 years.”

Participant 19 stated, “Gospel music gave me the inspiration, hope and it tells a story. Gospel music is was very soothing to me as well as to the rest of the church. Participant 19 stated, “Jesus is the center of my joy and the best thing that has ever happened to me. Gospel music has given me strength to take things one day at a time and even one step at a time.”

Participant 19 stated this interview brought up feelings that I thought were hidden. “Being packed up makes me feel bad.”

Participant 19 stated she coped with painful thoughts and emotions that come up for her by singing, “with the ability to pray with a song in my heart.” It keeps me mentally from thinking about the storm.”

**Textural description (What happened)**

I received 4 ½ feet of water in my house.

The roof came off of my house.

I had to tear down my house.

Nothing was left on the ceiling.

The hurricane messed up all of the furniture in my house.

There were no windows.

The bricks fell off.

I had no way of listening to gospel music after the hurricane.

I had to have gospel songs in my heart.

Hurricane destroyed many memories that cannot be replaced.

I played a vital role in my community.

**Meaning units/significant themes**

Organizing church events helped to distract and gave me hope in the Lord to take things one step at a time.

I am grateful that God spared me.

Many people died after the storm.

I now have a heart and mind to pray for the senior citizens and little children.

**Structural description (How it happened)**

I learned that in keeping one foot in front of the other, I will make it.

Connections with people helped me to make it through bad memories and sad times.

Going through a disaster is an amazing trip.

I have been depressed at times.

There were lots of challenges

I did not think I could go through something like this.

Helping others helped me.

### **Participant 20**

Participant 20 is a 5<sup>th</sup> generation pastor who lives in a community called Orange Grove located in Gulf Port, Mississippi. He reported being a preacher for 11 years and a pastor for 4 years. According to participant 20, “My family was not prepared at all for Hurricane Katrina.” He and his family’s home did not suffer much damage. “I saw and heard the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on my neighbor’s homes and believed that God was gracious and spared us.”

Participant 20 reported never realizing what he actually had until the storm. “The fact that we were only allowed to take a certain amount of money out of our own bank accounts. There were security guards at the local Wal-Mart stores. Everything had to be rationed.”

Participant 20 stated that people complained about things but have no right to complain because others might not have anything. “Because of this, I am more humble and a better father, husband, and pastor as a result of the hurricane.” Participant 20 stated, “I am blessed to be a blessing,” when asked how he feels about himself now that the storm is over.

Participant 20 states that gospel music is his life. He described coming from a long line of singers. “Gospel music has always been a source of strength to me and to others that did not have much. A song that really helped him was *What Shall I Doby* James Cleveland. “It always uplifted and moved me to have faith in the Lord and to have faith in other as well.”

When asked how he coped with painful thoughts and emotions that may come up for him, he answered: “Simply reflecting upon the goodness of God with others things I have gone through. I have gone through tough times before the storm but I have also been worse off.

Participant 20 stated finding this interview fulfilling and rewarding. “Gospel music is not just an art form and about the industry. It’s about the death, burial and resurrection. When you deal with the word of God, you deal with life.”

#### **Textural description (What happened)**

I wasn’t prepared for Hurricane Katrina

I never realized what I had and was thankful the Lord watched over us.

I learned after surviving Hurricane Katrina that I was surprised to have stepped out of my comfort zone (the box).

Lots of folks embraced us at home.

After the hurricane, I became better at encountering situations.

#### **Meaning units /significant themes**

The Lord gave me the strength to appreciate what I have.

I have to help others in return.

The goodness of God regulates and sustains me.



Now that the storm is over, I have learned to be thankful for what I have.

### **Structural description (How it happened)**

The shingles fell off of our home.

Simply reflecting on God's goodness has helped me to cope with painful memories.

The song, Lord you brought us through came alive after the storm

I have been preaching for 11 years.

I have been pasturing for 4 years.

I am blessed to be blessings.

I haven't arrived yet.

### **Individuals Who Supported Hurricane Katrina Survivors**

There were individuals who supported the survivors of Hurricane Katrina. I will refer to them in this section as helpers. Although, they were not directly affected, their information will be used indirectly for my hypothesis. It is interesting to know how the helpers gave of their time and resources. The helpers aided the Katrina victims by providing shelter, emotional support, and needed resources. The following is a detailed account of their experiences.

In addition, it was interesting to know how the helpers felt about gospel music regarding their own experiences. Some of the helpers assisted the survivors on their jobs, in their communities and through their churches.

#### **Helper 1**

Helper 1 was an African American male, 24 years of age. He was a recent graduate of Howard University when Hurricane Katrina took place. He worked for a

company that serves Katrina survivors. Helper 1 knew the investigator as neighbors from San Diego, California. “During Katrina there were also unknown individuals who were affected by the storm and also who worked in support of others. These individuals like many unnamed had *big* hearts to lend a hand during such a critical time.

While helper 1’s parents experienced the hurricane, he was helping others who were in need of housing. He stated the school donated clothing to the survivors of Katrina. He reported having visited New Orleans with his parents a week before Hurricane Katrina hit. Helper 1 stated Katrina was devastating.

Helper 1 stated applying for a job while at Howard University. He was hired by a company who supported Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors. “You have no idea of where God is going to take you. The first job that I applied for was with a company that was based out of Washington, D.C. They administered section eight affordable housing.”

When asked about gospel music he stated, “Gospel music is the heart and soul of anybody that deems himself spiritual; it is the life blood. Music makes you feel good. Any genre of music if it good music makes you feel good. If it has a good beat, it makes you feel good. Gospel music is the message of that God loves you no matter of your situation; you can be down in the dumps. It makes you feel good. The gospel is supposed to mean the gospel and God’s word.

Gospel music made and uplifted the people. “You saw the bad news and the devastation. You did not see a lot of positivity around you. The only thing the people could go to was the good book and gospel. Gospel music played an integral role. The beat, the words, the message, gospel music makes you feel love, you can be down in the dumps. It makes you feel good.” Helper 1 stated, “The song that captures Katrina the

most is, *We Fall Down* by Donnie McClurkin. Gospel music gives hope and strength to people. It helped people get through that natural disaster.”

“Katrina was the biggest natural disaster in US history. The part that I played was a small role. “Back during slavery, I believe that the two things that got the blacks through slavery were the black woman and the gospel. It was the belief in the Lord through their trials and singing and dancing. It got the slaves through slavery. For then to now, there was something better out there is what helped the slaves.”

Helper 1 stated, “Katrina was my first ever job. I was 24 years old at the time. I was really young. I think I played a small part in it. If you go to certain part of New Orleans, it will never be the same. So much more could have been done. On a bigger scale, I think more could have been done. When I was working and living in Baton Rouge for 3 years on this project.”

Helper 1 stated, “Seeing the residents’ pain and their hurt was emotional. Interviewing the residents and listening to their stories and seeing the swish on their faces hurt. Helper 1 described having dreams at night about all that was taking place. “More could have been done to help the people. I called my mom when I had stress on me. She was my means of support. She always knew what to say. When I got that reassurance from my mom, I can do anything.”

### **Textural description (what happened)**

Seeing the things that happened after hurricane Katrina hurt.

I learned that I care a lot about people.

One day, I will be able to look back and tell my kids that I helped to rebuild New Orleans.

When I was young my mom had foster children in our home.

The trait of helping people is in me.

I found myself waking up during the night sweating.

I was surprised that I can always rise to the challenge.

If you throw a challenge at me and I will try to handle it. Certain neighborhoods are still abandoned. Houses are still tipped over.

The people in New Orleans showed that they are resilient.

Sometimes when I look back on all that happened during Katrina I just smiled knowing I was a part of the rebuilding efforts.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

Katrina was a learning experience.

Look at other natural disasters.

Look at where hurricanes have taken place such as Haiti and the tsunami.

### **Helper 2**

Helper 2 was a 69-year-old community organizer from Gulfport, Mississippi who displayed great compassion after Katrina. He was forced to move in with his parents and siblings to shelter but this did not stop his love to help others. He shared the following with the investigator: “Everyone on the Mississippi Gulf Coast were listening to the weather reports on radio or watching the weather channel on television. The news began to say that the hurricane would hit somewhere on the Mississippi or the Louisiana coast. We were hoping this hurricane would change directions as others had done so many times before. We wanted it to miss us. People begin to prepare to leave or hunker down.”

Helper 2 stated, “As the hurricane approached, we still believed did not believe that the eye would hit New Orleans. I had not made a commitment to stay or leave. I did not know what to do. I did not have a plan. I was playing it by ear.”

Helper 2 appeared to be at peace as we sat in the Oyster Shell Restaurant in Gulfport listening to his stories about hurricane Katrina. “During the first few weeks after Hurricane Katrina a number of writers and filmmakers came to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. They were here to get our story and tell it to the world. I was interviewed and filmed by several people. Dan Greenburg wrote the interview for *Dollars and Sense Magazine*.” “There hasn't been a lot of effort on the part of government entities. The people in Gulfport got the \$2,000 from FEMA. A good number got the \$2,300 from FEMA. The Red Cross came in and gave \$360 per person. But every faith-based organization that you could probably name came to our community and helped us. I can't count the number of college students from different colleges that have been here. A lot of faith base, a lot of organizations, a lot of just individuals, but not a lot of government help.”

Helper 2 observed relief efforts that took place throughout Gulfport, Mississippi. “The only time that we saw government help was when Bill Clinton's visit was announced. FEMA came out with a hundred trucks and removed all the garbage and stuff from the street. That was their aid. That was it. And the people were mad at them for removing it. We wanted them to see the true condition of the community. So when the cameras came in, it was clean, as if we were doing all right. But in terms of them rendering aid, it wasn't there.”

**Textural description (what happened)**

Katrina happen despite us hoping it would not take place.

The devastation was unbelievable.

It was hard to believe the way Gulfport looked after the storm.

**Meaning units/significant themes**

I tried to help everybody I could.

Katrina was a time to pull together and lend support to whoever was in need.

**Helper 3**

Helper 3 was a 50-year-old African American female and a pastor's wife. She is a native of Calcasieu, Louisiana. Helper 3 was a homemaker and no stranger to lending a hand. She stated their home received rain damage and hail from Hurricane Katrina.

Helper 3 stated that as a way of thanking God for his rich blessings ,her family helped others who had experienced losses.” She described helping people from their church and from the community. She reported feeling good about the help she provided to the hurricane survivors. “My heart went out to some of the survivors who lost everything. I went to the parish to get various items for the survivors.”

When asked about gospel music she stated, the core of what we believe is what gospel music means to me. It played a role in how I coped with Hurricane Katrina.

**Textural description (What happened)**

I saw a lot of discriminating.

I remember seeing this baby that was in pampers and it was hot.

The baby was in the heat and needed clothing.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

The Lord will see us through. You can always depend on God.

I am grateful my family had no major losses

Helper 3 attends the same church as the investigator. She was interviewed at the City of Refuge Church in Gardena, California.

### **Helper 4**

Helper 4 was an 83-year-old African American female from Minden, Louisiana. This retiree's home did not receive any damage during Hurricane Katrina. She was helpful to her daughter with a family of five, who were affected by the hurricane. Her daughter had six dogs and came to live in her house. "The hurricane was like when we went through World War II. It gave me energy. I learned that more people can live in one house.

Helper 4 received strength also from God's word in the scriptures. "I feel stronger in the Lord and continue to grow every day. I listen to religious channels on Sundays. I look for scriptures in the *Bible* that relate to my problems. I try to mediate on the scriptures."

When asked about gospel music she stated, "Gospel music is a part of my life. It's what black people believe and rely on. It reminds me that God is there and you can always depend on him." She reported not having any particular songs in which she listened to after the storm. "I just listened to the songs that I know in my head." She stated gospel music gave her hope and strength. "It makes you feel stronger. The songs, *Jesus Is the Highest Praise* and *Jesus the Center of my Joy* are my favorites."

### **Textural description (what happened)**

The hurricane was like World War II.

It's sad that some people have not to New Orleans

I never had it easy.

I went to beautician school and because of the smell from the chemicals, I had to  
leave.

I taught at Grambling University.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

I thank God for bringing me this far.

I have always relied on God

Helper 4 was introduced to the researcher by Minister of Music, Brenda Hatcher  
son. She was interviewed at Mount Calm Baptist Church in Minden, Louisiana.

### **Helper 5**

He lived in Minden during Katrina. When asked about gospel music, participant 5  
stated, "I came here after my mother died, I was in Atlanta. And a year or two before I  
came back my pastor died. If you have any idea of what it's like for a person to pastor a  
church for 40–50 years and then he dies even though you knew he was not in the best of  
health. The church went into a deep depression and it stayed that way for several weeks.  
One Sunday morning the choir decided to sing, *I've Got a Feeling Everything Is Going to  
Be Alright* and just that (snap of finger), the church came out of its depression. We had a  
wonderful worship service and we went on. To me that is a classic example of what you  
are asking about. It has nothing to do with Katrina, but that one song at that time (caused  
healing to go through the church). "Momma done told me everything is going to be



alright. Jesus done told me everything is going to be alright.” When that song was over, the whole tenor of the service and the congregation had change. I think for those who came out of Katrina into the various areas that same effect applies. When you the song has a message that you need to hear, it can change your life.”

Helper 5 stated, “In my younger days my favorite song was, *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me*. That was during a time that I didn’t think I had a lot of friends. Now I like, it is well with my soul. I like that part that we don’t sing in the black church. Like our fore parents, you just start humming a song. In the black church, music can lift you or lower you.”

Helper 5 stated that most of his involvement was in helping individuals who came to Minden after the storm. “One of the pastors who lived near Minden organized a caravan of churches to come to Minden.” Helper 5’s church sent a bus to New Orleans to help those in need of transportation and brought them to Minden. His church owned a house and put a family up in the house for two years. His church also helped individuals with housing, needs, emergency shelters that the people need. The church also had various people who worked in relief centers. “We put one family in housing for a year. He was involved in helping with many people who came to Minden by bus. His home did not have any structural damages. Participant 5 stated, when asked about gospel music, “in the black church music can help you.” He stated after Katrina listening to the song, *It is well with my Soul* rang true in his heart.

Helper 5 gave his view of the overall experience. “We have two different cultures in Louisiana. South Louisiana and North Louisiana are totally different. North Louisianans would sort of disown South Louisiana. Now they are trying to pick up on

things such as Mardi Gras and all of these things that they looked down their nose at earlier.

There is still a fundamental difference.

North Louisiana is easily part of the Bible belt.

The culture in the South is totally different.

“When the evacuees came north there was culture shock on both sides. Things that were normal everyday activities down south were no’s up here. Children got in trouble in school for doing what they normally do. There was not enough done to tell folk up here what to expect. A simple, OKI know you do it like that down there, but we do it this way up here. And since you are here now, you are going to have to adjust to the way things are done as opposed to the heavy-handed way things were done. They should have been told what the differences were and we should have been told what to expect. It caused a lot of conflict with the people up here. A lot of people up here didn’t know what to expect and this cause a lot of conflict with the people in the schools and out of the schools.”

### **Textural description (what happened)**

Some things there are no need to worry about.

I learned patience as a way to cope with painful thoughts and emotions.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

It was encouraging and inspiring to see how many people gave of their time and money after Katrina. (B. Martin, personal communication, June 22, 2012).

## **Helper 6**

Helper 6 was a 66-year-old retired African American female and native of Minden, Louisiana. Her home was not affected by Katrina. She stated gospel music was an extension of her prayer life. Helper 6 stated that her means of coping with life is by going to God. She checked on her sister, Charlotte from New Orleans. “It was heart wrenching to see all of the devastation from Katrina. I told my sister Charlotte not to stay in New Orleans so long and to get out of there” (G. Flournoy, personal communication, June 22, 2012).

### **Textural description (what happened)**

Katrina did damage to lots of homes.

It was the worst storm I can remember in a long time.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

We have to look to God when trouble comes.

I prayed to God regarding the storm situation.

## **Helper 7**

Helper 7 was a 45-year-old African American female from Minden, Louisiana. She was full of cheer and gave me this account her of Katrina experience. “Well, I had relatives you know who were affected from the storm. I wasn’t affected directly by the storm whatever. But I did have relatives that were affected by Hurricane Katrina. You know but quite naturally they heeded the warnings, they got out of town. They talked about how people were still there riding it out, just hanging out. My uncle said, ‘They need to get out of there!’ But had no idea ya know, the magnitude how severe the storm

would be. I was grateful that like I said heeded the warnings and came up and stayed with us. There were even other relatives that came down to stay with me and my aunt.”

When asked about gospel music helper 7 stated, “Gospel music played a very important role in my life. One of my favorite songs is, *In the Midst of a Storm* by the 1986 Gospel Music Workshop. When my son got in trouble, if I hadn’t been in the church my life would have gone a completely different direction. I had just started coming back to church. Well, it had been a few years. I would be in and out of the church. I had always been in the church. I had always been a—well not a singer per se. I had always loved to sing. I would sing in the church. I would sing in the church but had absolutely no idea what I was singing. I wouldn’t truly understand, truly what I was singing. As an independent gospel artist, I started back in the choir actually reading the *Bible*, going to Sunday school and then realized, ‘Oh that’s what that means!’ And ya know, Satan has his ways of throwing those darts at you and mine was with my son. He got into some trouble and, as a matter of fact, we were at a pastor’s honorarium. My whole family came and I was like, ‘Oh my goodness, I’m so glad to see all my family at church!’ You know, but they came to tell me my son had gotten in trouble and he was in jail in Texas. Immediately it was like no reaction. I started thinking, because I had been writing a song about going through some things, just stories and twist and turns of life. I was saying how sister so and so could sing this song because they probably going through some stuff and they could do justice to this song. It wasn’t until after that happened I was like, ‘Lord is that you wanting me to sing my own song?’ You know about the journey of life and how hard it is. I want you to know that God, he will be there. If I had not been in the church I could’ve gone completely off. I could’ve gone the

other way and gone and be upset with him (being upset with society). I did not. I have to practice what I teach. When I got back to church they had the nerve, ya know, to ask me to start teaching. So I'm like okay. I have to start practicing what I teach. I had to be patient. It was a hard thing and I tried to be as calm as I could with my song. I now I sing my own songs. Yes, I write my own songs; a lady asked me to do some music for her book trailer. Well she asked me to sing a song. She is from Carson, California, Ms. Regina Nixon. She wrote a book entitled, *To God Be the Glory* and asked me to sing for the background. Ms. Nixon she sent me an email, and I was telling Ms. Brown another musician from here what was going on. Ms. Nixon emailed me saying which version do you want to do, the Andre Crouch or the Vicky Winans? I said, well I wrote my own song, you know, for the book. She heard it and she loved it! We went in the studio and it happened in 10 days. She liked it and sent it to California. She told me to send more stuff and a man heard it and asked if I had more songs.”

Helper 7 stated having feelings for the families who were affected by hurricane Katrina. Helper 7 reported giving things to God. “When my son was in trouble, I never held a grudge or was disappointed towards him. I prayed every day when times get rough and out of hand. Helper 7 was pleased that her family was safe. “I have never really gone through anything. You know death is going to happen. My mom was sick for a very long time and died before I graduated high school. I would try to drink while grieving her death.” Helper 7 described watching the choir singing up on the stage at an event. People from all over came to help encourage other Katrina victims and survivors. It was very inspirational and spiritually uplifting.

“Seeing the needs of the people after Katrina made me what to grow.”

### **Textural description (what happened)**

It sent chills through my body seeing all of the devastation.

I was concerned about my relatives.

My uncles and aunts lives were spared; they are okay.

It could have been me who was affected by the storm.

The Hurricane Katrina experienced has enlightened my life.

### **Meaning units/significant themes**

I know that I am strong and blessed

Just knowing the lyrics to songs was helpful.

I knew that God's got it.

It is going to be okay.

I am more thankful for every day since the hurricane

The participants in this study appear to be sincerely grateful to have survived Hurricane Katrina. They are thankful for the lives that they have now. The participants hold precious memories close to their hearts regarding life before the storm. They have settled into their new lives and are living each day as though it could be their last. The participants describe the events immediately following Hurricane Katrina as terribly frightening and toxic; they have come through this event with a better understanding of the importance of community, family, faith, and a greater appreciation for life with a purposeful existence since the storm.

The investigator found there was a high correlation between gospel music and crisis with four of the helpers who aided the Katrina survivors. The emotional energy

from the Katrina ordeal was overwhelming for some of the helpers. In addition to being a support to the Katrina survivors, they were saddened by the aftermath from the damage.

Helper 1 was impacted emotionally after seeing the devastation from the residents' pain and plight. Helper 1 relied on his mother for support while aiding the Katrina survivors. "Her words gave me comforted and assurance not to worry."

Helper 2 did not have a connection with gospel music. He took pride in being a community activist. Helper 2 spoke with cheer while describing scenarios for providing aid. He created a disaster preparedness plan (and share the investigator) that will help to alleviate future hurricanes.

Helper 3 felt good about the service she gave at the parish in Louisiana. This pastor's wife was grateful that her family was not badly affected by the storm. Helper 3 described the discrimination she saw that took place with people in need. She explained to this investigator that gospel music helped her to cope with Katrina.

Helper 4 opened her heart and arms to her daughter and family who lived in New Orleans. She reported memorizing her favorite gospel songs. Helper 4 played her *Jesus, the Center of my Joy* and *Jesus Is the Highest Praise* in her head after Katrina when things were chaotic.

Helper 5 extended his love to those who came to Minden for shelter. His church helped in many ways including working at relief centers. Helper 5 reported learning to cope with painful emotions and thoughts by being patient. Helper 5 stated he knew the power of gospel music. He described how gospel music lifted his church one Sunday morning after the pastor has died. Songs such as *Amazing Grace* and *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me* among his favorite.

Helper 6 provided supported support for her sister and her family from New Orleans. She stated gospel music was a part of her prayer life. Also, she stated gospel music connects her to the *Bible* and lifts her up.

Although Helper 7 was not affected by the hurricane, it helped her to be more grateful. Helper 7 stated being in and out of the church for years. It wasn't until her son got in trouble that she stretched out on faith. She stated learning how to "Let go and trust God." Helper 7 credits her years in church and sing gospel songs as her saving grace.

The positive correlation with gospel music and crisis with the helpers was found with helpers 3 through 7. In addition, helper 5 added patience as a means of coping.

Helper 1 relied on support from his mother even though he knew the power of gospel music. Helper 2 had no interest in gospel music but rather helping those from the community who were in need.

### **Hypothesis/Questions**

The hypothesis as stated in Chapter 1 sought to find if there was a significant positive correlation between listening to gospel music and having a high level of resilience. The 11 research questions as listed in Appendix H inquired about the impact of gospel music had during crisis on the survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

### **Results**

The following section will discuss the themes that came up during the interview process with the Hurricane Katrina survivors.

The interviews lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews took place at various places, including churches, homes, and a hotel. The investigator traveled to San Diego, California, Louisiana, and Mississippi to conduct the interviews.



The interviews were recorded and transcribed for data analysis. The subjects will not be identified to ensure the study participants' anonymity.

Twenty subjects were selected to participate in this study. The participants' ages range from 27 to 73 years old. Of these 20 participants, 13 were men and 7 were women. Their ethnic backgrounds were African Americans, Nigerians, and Caucasians.

All of the subjects were in Laurel, Hattiesburg, and Gulfport, Mississippi and New Orleans when the storm hit. Most of the subjects were relocated and none were currently homeless. Of these subjects, 80% returned to their former home while 20% did not. Eighty percent of the study subjects had property damage or their homes destroyed due to hurricane winds, rain, or flooding. Twenty of the subjects returned home.

Upon reflection, 10 subjects shared that things were better and that things were much better. None of the subjects felt things were worse than before Hurricane Katrina took place. Most of the subjects shared that they are aware of how to prepare due to the storm.

Most of the survivors found themselves leaning on gospel music for strength and hope. They shared with the investigator their experiences which gave them solace after this unexpected natural disaster.

Question 1 asked: What role did gospel music play during Hurricane Katrina? What does gospel music mean to you? Participant 12 stated "The words of old faithful hymns that resonated (internally) and acted as a balm. Songs like *Amazing Grace*, *Oh for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*, *Turn your Eyes upon Jesus*, *Joyful, Joyful*, the words were ingrained from years of repetition . . . they had become a part of me, an internal resource that shaped the way I looked at the situation. All of those songs are reminders of what is eternal they are reminders that God is in charge when everything seems out of control,

that he is the giver of all things and that he will provide for every need and restore that which is taken from us. That he is provider, comforter, counselor, and friend. That he will provide for all our needs according to his riches exceedingly and abundantly above all we could ask or need. The words of those hymns were like a warm blanket on a cold night.”

Question 2 asked if the participants listened to certain songs and if so to name them. Participated 1 stated, “I always did like gospel music. It helped me to stay in touch with God. *Take My Hand God, by the Mighty Clouds of Joy* was one of the songs that helped me to cope with Katrina. This song gave him peace.”

Question 3 asked: Did gospel music give you strength or hope? Participant 13 stated “*Oh How I Love Jesus* as one of her favorite songs. She reported that gospel music gave her strength to pick herself up. It gave her hope to get back on track.

Question 4 asked: How do you feel about yourself now that the storm is over? Participant 11 reported feeling stronger and able to endure anything since Katrina. He found the storm reinforced his strength.

Question 5 asked: How did you cope with painful thoughts and emotions that may come up for you? Have you become better at it since the storm? Participant 4 responded by stating, “Gospel music gives me the answers that I need to deal with life. There were certain songs that I listened to such as *Safe in his Arm* sand *God has smiled on me*. My favorite one was *Praise Is What I Do*, by Shenkinah Glory. “Praise is what I do when I wanna be close to you’ talks about praising God. All songs had a meaning. Gospel music gave me strength to deal with the heart aches and pain. It gave me hope to know that we would get through this ordeal.”

Question 6 asked: Were there tough times you went through before the storm that helped you to get through Hurricane Katrina? Participant 2, learned not to take life for granted. He was in the Vietnam War and almost saw death. He reported that counseling helped to deal with life after the war.

Question 7 asked: Have you learned anything new about yourself after surviving Hurricane Katrina? Has anything surprised you about yourself? Participant 13 realize she was damaged until completing this survey. She stated, “Answering these questions is therapeutic for me. Gospel music helped me to become resilient. It opened up my mind to possibilities and pleasant things.”

Question 8 asked: Did connections with people help you to get through some of the bad memories, sadness or pain you felt after the storm? Participant 8 found connections with people helped him to deal with some of the sadness and memories that he experienced after the storm. He stated that messages from people kept him encouraged.

Question 9 asked: Is there anything that I did not ask you that you would like to tell me? Participant 7 stated, “It is true that Christian music has a therapeutic effect. Gospel music helped my family members as well.”

Question 10 asked: Do you listen to the same gospel music that gave your comfort or relief? Participant 8 stated, “Gospel music really played a vital role to me and my family. It was an outlet to come into praise and to help with hope. Gospel music lets you know God is there. The words touch you and have meaning. Some words bring you peace.” Participant 8 continues to listen to some of the same gospel music as before such as *City of God* and *Highway Home*.

Question 11 asked: Can you tell me a little about what it has been like to talk with me about these experiences? Participant 20 reported finding this interview fulfilling and rewarding. Gospel music is not just an art form and about the industry. It's about the death, burial, and resurrection. When you deal with the word of God, you deal with life.”

The PGTI inventory results indicated the majority of the subjects responses were high in the Personal Strength, Relate to Others and Appreciation for Life categories. Personal Strength was consistently the highest category for each of the subjects. During the interviews, many of the subjects described using their faith through singing and listening to gospel music as a way of encouraging themselves. The subjects reported going through such a terrible tragedy enabled them to communicate with people they normally would not have. This made it possible for them to relate to other people who also had needs. They appreciated the support others gave them. Most of the subjects stated feeling grateful to have their lives despite what they lost. They stated having a renewed Appreciation for life as a result of experiencing Hurricane Katrina.

CHAPTER 5  
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Summary**

**Problem**

The design of this chapter is to bring the research together through discussion of the process and the results and how these relate to the phenomenological method. First, major thematic elements of the Katrina experience for those who lived it will be illustrated. Second, there will be a discussion of how findings of this study connect with the existing literature. Third, an explanation of how the process furthered the understanding of this phenomenon will be presented. Fourth, the limitations of this research and outcomes will be outlined. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of how these findings may be used as a focus of stabilization and triage treatments for those who have suffered trauma.

**Method**

A principle of phenomenological research is to return to the experience in order to obtain a thorough description that will provide the basis of reflective structural analyses that describes the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). This approach seeks to disclose and elucidate the phenomena of behavior as they manifest themselves in their perceived immediacy (van Kaam, 1966). In this study, the investigator sought to get an inclusive understanding of what it was like to live through Hurricane Katrina and how gospel music was used to illustrate resilience after a crisis with individuals who lived

through this experience. Data for this study was collected through the interview method. The investigator traveled to Louisiana and Mississippi and heard stories from individuals who were impacted by Hurricane Katrina. There were many individuals who loaned their resources to the Katrina survivors. Comments were taken from seven individuals (helpers) who provided support for the Katrina survivors. In phenomenology, the investigator is intimately connected with the phenomenon (Creswell, 1997). This study emerged from my experience of being indirectly affected through family who were victims of Hurricane Katrina. The intention of the study was to gain a sense of how other people, native to that region, experienced the events of Hurricane Katrina, and what tools they used to survive.

## **Results**

There were four major themes that emerged as fundamental to the recovery process of the participants in this investigation: (a) family and community, (b) God and spirituality, (c) future goal-focused thinking, and (d) using the traumatic event to become a better person.

There were many similar emotions reported by participants throughout the experience of Hurricane Katrina and aftermath independent of situation. During the first days and months after the storm, participants uniformly experienced uncertainty and confusion. These emotions were followed by feelings of loss and grief as they began the arduous task of taking mental, spiritual, and physical inventory after the storm.

Spirituality also emerged as a strong theme in all of the responses. The participants vividly described the importance they believed their faith had in their recovery. For many, their spiritual underpinnings and foundations offered them the

strength to move forward when the rest of their life was in total confusion. Participant 9 talked about his sanctified parents and the religious foundation in which he was reared. He stated drifting from what he was taught even though it was still a part of him.

In terms of their psychological recovery, however, the importance of gospel music emerged as a primary strength that participants believed allowed them to navigate through the initial difficult times as well as being a key to their resilience. All of the participants stated gospel music gave them hope and strength. The participant's favorite songs were about hope in God and victory testimonies. Participant 12 remembered certain gospel songs from over the years and felt they shaped the way she looked at the situation. Participant 3 acknowledged Katrina was difficult. She stated that gospel music gave her the strength to deal with the heartaches and pain knowing that she would get through this ordeal. Many of the participants found Katrina was the toughest time they had ever experienced. Participant 19 stated, "With the ability to pray with a song in my heart, it kept me mentally from thinking about the storm." Participant 4 stated, "Gospel music came me a lift, it helped me to feel better after the storm."

The community connection functioned in two ways: The participants were appreciative of individuals and groups who reached out to support them and it served as confirmation of God's love. Participant 1 found that everyone was helpful. She also reported speaking to others who had been through a hurricane helped. Participant 10 stated, "A white man just walked up to me and gave me \$200." These acts of kindness made them feel good and that God was working on their behalf despite the circumstances.

Furthermore, all of the participants cited family as the most important factor in their lives. Participants were fervent in their description of the significance of family during their recovery and rebuilding after the storm. A greater appreciation of life, time, and family because of the storm were themes that were consistent in each interview. The ability to be look forward gave the participants hope in their recovery was cited by all participants as a critical factor in their progress. The participants stated being surprised they could handle this level of crisis and later become resilient.

The combination of community, spirituality, and forward thinking gave participants the energy to forge ahead and plan for their future. Participant 18 stated, “I am more than a conqueror. I can’t live without the word of God. Dealing with God is another level of faith.”

Participant 1 felt better after the storm. She described becoming a new person after the Katrina experience despite recently moving to Louisiana from California.

Participant 6 found that messages from people kept him encouraged. He reported coping with painful emotions that come up just by fighting.

Pastor Andrew Goff of Cornerstone United Methodist Church knows about storms in life. He held onto his faith despite the damage done from the storm. Pastor Goff preached to the congregation with words that were relevant to Hurricane Katrina on Sunday, June 24, 2012. The sermon title was, “Jesus, Lord of the Storm.” The following are excerpts taken from his sermon.

“The people of Louisiana know about waters and storms. When the storms of life are raging, Lord stand by me. The storms of life are all around us. Storms inside can be overcoming. What is going on in the inside of us can cause a storm. You can name your



storm this morning (sickness, no job, family problems, or death). For no reason, life just places us in a storm.

“Jesus is Lord of the Storm. This is what the disciples learn. They lacked faith. Without faith, their lives were at risk. Many of the disciples were experienced fishermen and had experience storms. They went to the stern of the boat and learned that Jesus was sick.”

It was an awesome experience worshipping at Cornerstone Church after communicating with them for months regarding the interviews for my dissertation.

Pastor Goff continues, “What can we learn from the storm? The Sea of Galilee. Storms come up in your life all of a sudden. Who do you cry out to when the storms of life are raging? Things can be going well with me. Sudden things can be doing well. All it takes is one phone call, one ring at the door, or one letter in the mail. Jesus is my savior no matter what. What is going on in the inside can cause a storm. Jesus spoke the words, Peace Be Still. Storms can make me lose my direction.”

As I listen to this sermon, I reflected on some of the interviews where the hurricane survivors talked about the storm came up all of a sudden. Some mentioned being caught off guard by the storm.

“Jesus got up and calms the storm. He spoke to the storm. He commanded the storm to be still. They were looking for human help but found divine authority. Jesus asked them why you are afraid. The disciples were terrified of the one (Jesus) inside the boat. We find ourselves in the midst of a storm. God is always with us. We need not let go of our faith for God is with us. Jesus did not promise that we wouldn't have problems in life.”

## Discussion

In the review of the literature, there is a wealth of information on the profound effect music has to the body and psyche (Scott, 2007). This is particularly important because music is a healing experience and historically, music has been used in major life event from prehistory on—that is how people cope with these life events (BMI, 2001, p. 1). The literature illustrates that historically survivors of trauma can experience a positive change in their roles, find a renewed purpose in their lives, and redefine their relationships with the world (Sheikh, 2008).

Many families' lives were changed the day Hurricane Katrina touched US soil. For some, houses were destroyed and sentimental belongings ruined. For others, their community was in a state of shock and utter disarray. Even worse, other families and friends were mourning the loss of a loved one who died that day or in the days to come. Hurricane Katrina left its mark, but it did not take away many families' sense of hope, their ability to make meaning out of the situation, or their faith in God (Hackbarth, et al (2012).

Consistent with the literature, the participants found gospel music to be the solace that carried them through the storm. The lyrics to their familiar and favorite songs gave them reassurance them of God's promises. Gospel music served as a reminder of God's unconditional love despite the storm. It helped them to cope with the sadness and depression that had taken over their emotions. The participants reported being caught off guard and not prepared for Hurricane Katrina. They related knowing God would see them through and being true to his word. Consistently the participants shared how the healing

power of gospel music resulted in them becoming resilient and their faith was strengthened.

Assessments of complicated grief and diagnoses such as posttraumatic stress disorder have been shown to be related to the lack of, or perceived lack of, emotional support (Stewart, 1999).

The author's findings in the literature reveal that gospel music contains powerful images of loss and grief (DeSpelder & Strickland, 2002). The findings of the literature were consistent with the findings that faith as an eventual triumph over earthly pain is a hallmark of gospel music (Strickland, 2003). The literature illustrates that survivors of crisis can experience resilience. The literature is consistent with the findings that such songs of solace and hope sustain and encourage people through emotionally difficult times.

The literature points to the consistency of music as a therapeutic tool. For example, documented uses of music as therapy can be found following World War I when "miracle cures" were reported, resulting from reaching patients through music when they responded to nothing else (Malchiodi, 2005).

Harbin (2008) found, "Gospel music is known for moving its listeners, regardless of their belief systems." Participant 18 found gospel music inspirational due to coming from a family of singers. He also mentioned as stated in Chapter 4, gospel music helped him to grow spiritually and to become a better person, pastor, and husband. Participant 7 found playing gospel music offered relief and helped him to stay sane.

Personal strength was the highest theme among all of the participants throughout the interview. Knowing the Lord and that he could take care of me was what gospel

musician Lois Tilly depended on the most. “I didn’t have any music around me to listen to after Katrina. I remembered the songs in my head and remembered the words to hymns. I started playing gospel music at 11 years old. My piano teacher only taught church music. This made it easy for me to recall gospel songs when I did not hear them playing on the radio after Katrina.” Ms. Tilly was proud of her musical skills and sent the investigator a copy of her book (L. Tilly, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

Ms. Tilly also stated, “I did not have to bounce back after Katrina. I did not go through any changes. I didn’t feel sorry for myself during, in a crisis like Katrina. I just saw Katrina as a break in my life. It was just another happening. It didn’t faze me at all. I didn’t go through any crying spells. I knew the Lord was on my side just like I know my name backwards” (L. Tilly, personal communication, February 15, 2013).

Walsh (2010) stated, “Spiritual expressions and nourishment can be found in many varied ways, whether through religion or not. Many who do not participate in faith communities are deeply spiritual in their lives. A relationship with God and strong faith was a consist theme throughout the paper. “I give thanks to God especially with the situations regarding my son. I realized how to pray for him and to ‘Let Go and Let God.’ I learned to trust God” (A. Willis, personal communication, June 22, 2012).

The investigator observed some of the New Orleans Katrina survivors were grateful for life. “I felt blessed to have made it through Katrina. There are always storms for us to go through mentally and physically. Remember if He brought you to it, He’ll bring you through it” (J. Cordier, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

“I am thanking God every day that I left New Orleans, because I always stayed for storms. I will never stay again” (C. Hamms, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

“I listen to more Praise and Worship music-because I am more grateful to have come through” (B. Randle, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

A support network may allow one an outlet to reflect and talk about one’s experiences, provides the opportunity to receive emotional support and feedback concerning the stressful event, and may be of substantial assistance when coping with a stressor (Swickert & Hittner, 2009).

Connections with people were valuable in helping Katrina survivors get through the hurricane’s aftermath. “God, family, and friends helped me to maintain my sanity after the hurricane” (G. Wade, personal communication, June 18, 2012). Being a member of a functional community can have broad benefits to mental health (Harvey et al., 2007). The choir (called the Hurricane Choir) comprised hurricane disaster evacuees and survivors who rehearsed and performed to live audiences. The Hurricane Katrina choir provided a non-stigmatized and supportive environment in which individuals could find support and develop social networks. It is hoped such projects assist disaster survivors to feel increased social support and a greater sense of community cohesion, and lead to improved coping skills that may increase resilience to PTSD (Harvey et al., 2007). Participant 2 described how people calling to check on him made him feel supported after Hurricane Katrina.

The investigator was given several responses regarding how New Orleans residents coped with emotions that may come up after.” I cope by praying and singing gospel music. Sometimes crying and talking with others who have experienced the same thing and accepting what happened is how I cope (E. Washington, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

“I try not to think of painful thoughts or emotions that may enter my mind and focus on those people who helped me and my family get through at times. Yes, now I try to help as many people as possible in any way that I can by being kind and charitable” (E. Plummer, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

The investigator asked if there were tough times the survivors went through before the storm that helped them to get through Katrina. This is what I learned, “I learned how to cope at an early age. My grandmother reared me as an only child and bullying and prejudice was prevalent in some public schools. I have had the God-given gift of survival methods before I really knew how to pray and form a relationship with God” (M. Williams, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

The New Orleans Katrina survivors were concerned and did not like the way the news media referred to them. “The most horrific encounters were people referring to us as refugees (W. McKinley, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

“When we evacuated, the news media referred to us, the citizens of New Orleans as refugees. New Orleans is located in the United States of America” (E. Washington, personal communication, June 18, 2012).

To the investigator’s surprise, I did not expect the helpers to share how the storm impacted them. They also expressed how gospel music lifted them emotionally.

Participant 12 had several losses (marriage ended, forced to relocate to another job, and father passed away), yet she held onto her faith .Gospel music ministered to her soul. The lyrics strengthened her when she needed it most. Her story was most inspiring due to her refusal to be defeated despite her losses.

It was a fulfilling to research Hurricane Katrina, a topic that is close to my heart. Being from the South, this topic is personal for me. I was born and raised in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a city hit by Hurricane Katrina. I remember being at my son's school and hearing people talking about the storm in the South. My body stood still as though the world had frozen. The only thoughts that went through my head were, "Lord Protect my family."

My Katrina data collection journey began in San Diego California on June 1, 2012 at the Holiday Inn Express hotel in National City. Prior to my first interview, I was reminded through the devotion by Billy Graham Daily Devotion (Graham, 2012), let my heart learn to sing when everything around me seems so dark. Give me Your grace to praise You Lord Jesus. This devotion helped to prepare me for what I was about to hear during the interviews from the Hurricane Katrina survivors.

My data collection experience was wonderful. It was the trip of a lifetime. I had dreams of traveling to the Mississippi Gulf Coast for months and sitting down with the survivors of Hurricane Katrina and hearing their stories.

Upon returning to California something strange happened and left me scratching my head and looking for answers. I was extremely tired. Each time that I attempted to write up the interviews, it was very difficult. It felt as though someone was pulling on me. I felt drained. What was going on? Perhaps, I have not been taking care of myself physically. Was my iron low? What was it? I was desperate for the truth. A friend and I went to an event the week upon my return and this is when answers were revealed. "You have all of that stuff in your head Sonara. You have been listening to all of those stories and have that information stored in your mind." Jackpot! This is exactly what was

happening to me. This is the reason I was unable to begin my typing the interviews. Could it be that I had internalized this information?

I felt somewhat better knowing I had some information. It did not seem like I was overwhelmed with the Katrina survivor's stories. However, this was exactly the case.

One week later, I attended the Association of Black Psychologist convention in Los Angeles and met psychologist, Dr. Williams, from Florida in a General Assembly meeting. He mentioned his profession and had worked the Katrina aftermath. I was sure going to speak with him after the meeting. I shared with Dr. Williams that I had recently returned from Mississippi and Louisiana in July and described the symptoms (tired, heaviness, and a drained feeling) I had been experiencing. "You have Compassion Fatigue," he said to me. What you need to do is step back and take a break from the writing for a while." I was relieved to hear Dr. William's diagnosis of what I was experiencing. This made me feel good about the time I had not been spending time writing my dissertation.

One Saturday afternoon in July of 2011, I called Dr. Susanne Tropez Sims and thanked her for connecting me to Cornerstone United Methodist (her home Church) in New Orleans East. I expressed appreciation for her support. I mentioned that had I not been an administrator at John Muir Charter School in Long Beach (and attending a conference in Chicago), we would not have met. I also mentioned to her what Dr. Williams diagnosed me as having. I told her I wanted to get back to the writing. She mentioned that I should journal my feelings and put them in my dissertation summary. Why did I not think of that? I was filled with joy because I wanted to write something this weekend. Journaling was perfect, plus it was where I needed to begin. I thanked



Susanne and told her I wanted to give her a big hug. I was happy and begin praising God to working through Susanne on my behalf.

I went into my living room and put the television on the gospel station and lifted up my hands in praise. I thank God for giving me what I needed, a revelation conversation with Susanne. It felt good to work on my paper again. What a mighty God we serve!

### **Recommendations**

There are multiple directions one may proceed from this study. My inquiry was specific to Hurricane Katrina survivors in Mississippi and Louisiana. Based on the myriad of literature that is related to Hurricane Katrina, questions for other studies may include, what was the experience of Hurricane Katrina like for those in who lived in Alabama or Texas? Is there a spiritual or communal component in their recovery from their experience of Hurricane Katrina? It has been presented in the literature that all 50 states in this country had at one point cared for a survivors of Hurricane Katrina. Based on the information from this study, and the importance of resilience as a result of listening to gospel music after crisis situations, further inquiry might examine if the experience for those that chose to evacuate and stay away after the storm was significantly different compared to those that chose to stay for the storm and be an active part of the resilience. Another avenue of pursuit would be to look at the caregivers who care for the survivors. How were they affected from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina? These experiences are important to understand so that we as mental health professionals can be prepared when addressing the needs of those who have suffered during crisis situations.

In conclusion, the subject of gospel music for resilience during crisis is desperately in need of more attention from researchers. However, the lack of literature is not isolated to the field of Expressive Arts Therapy, but common among all of the other disciplines used in this study.

This dissertation was inspired by my passion to find safe and effective ways of providing mental health triage to those who have experienced extreme crisis. Intervention strategies that include the shift of focus from the acute crisis to thoughts of family, community, a purposeful existence, and their spiritual foundations, are key elements in recovery as reported by the respondents in this study.

I was blessed to have the opportunity to experience the healing power of gospel music after a crisis. My stepfather, Elder Jafus Jones, Sr. passed away from prostate cancer in Hattiesburg, Mississippi on July 18, just as I was in the middle of completing my dissertation edits. Shortly after speaking with my family, I needed some fresh air and went for a walk around the neighborhood. I turned my I phone on and begin to listen to music from my playlist. Song after song, the music was soothing. It ministered to my hurting soul. It felt as though someone had put ointment on an open wound. I could feel the relief each song delivered to my heart of sorrow. Once I realized what was taking place, I begin to rejoice. What a mighty God I serve! He allowed me to experience the healing power of gospel music during my lowest hours.

I am grateful for the opportunity to experience firsthand how gospel music gave me solace during my crisis. I am also grateful for the opportunity to experience firsthand the depth of my research, how gospel music is beneficial during crisis. I can better empower people who are hurting because I have my story to share. The experience gave

me the knowledge that enables me to relate to statements the participants shared about the soothing aspect of gospel music. Besides soothing their hurting souls, it enables them to have hope to move forward. In conclusion, I suggest that listening to gospel music not only can facilitate inspiration, but also can provide resilience to effectively deal with life's crisis.”

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## APPENDIX A

### Assessment Tools

The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Modified for Survivors of Hurricane Katrina) was used to assess the participant's growth. It was inspired by the Dissertation of Dr. Marc L. Giudici and written by Richard G. Tedeschi, PhD and Lawrence G. Calhoun, PhD (1998). The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) *will be used as an assessment.*

#### *The Post Traumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI)*

The PTGI is used to assess the positive outcomes that are reported by survivors of traumatic events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). It is a 21-item assessment that mines for factors of New Possibilities, Relating to Others, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life. This is a self-report assessment that incorporates a 6-point Likert-type item response format ranging from:

0=I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis.

1=I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my crisis.

2=I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my crisis.

3=I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my crisis.

4=I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my crisis.

5=I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis.

Following the assessment, one is afforded the opportunity to score it, and is provided with short informational paragraphs that promote reflection on one's responses. As a final

point, the PTGI also briefly explains that change and posttraumatic growth is an ongoing process and that responses may change to these questions over time.

The PTGI was developed based on a literature review of positive changes in specific areas, including perceived changes in self, sense of relationships, and philosophy of life (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). The assessment originally had 34 items, all positively worded, and was administered to approximately 600 undergraduate students from psychology classes at a large Southeastern university. After analysis, the assessment was reduced to 21 items, comprising five factors: Relating to Others, New Possibilities, Personal Strength, Spiritual Change, and Appreciation of Life (Cohen, Hattler, & Pane, 1998). This inventory was found to have good reliability and validity. The PTGI internal reliability in the full scale is .90 and Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the separate subscales range from .67-.85. Test-retest reliability is adequate at .71 (Cohen, Hattler, & Pane, 1998). Validity of the PTGI is more difficult to measure. Self-reported posttraumatic growth is easily confounded with denial, especially in the early stages of a crisis (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). In an extremely *stressful event*, *three positive illusions common to everyday life*, which include *unrealistic positive self-evaluation*, *unrealistic perceptions of control*, and *unrealistic optimism about the future*, are even more evident making self-report of posttraumatic growth questionable (Taylor & Brown, 1988). One way to circumvent this is to validate the responses and self-reports from the respondent with reports from their significant others (Park, Cohen, & Murch, 1996). In 2002, the PTGI validity was tested by assessing stress-related growth in 41 women after being diagnosed with breast cancer. In this study, husbands completed the PTGI based on their opinions of their wife's growth, and the husband's responses were compared with the

self-reported responses of their wives on the same assessment. The correlation between these married partner's reference of posttraumatic growth on the PTGI was positive and moderate in strength ( $r = .51$ ) (Weinrib, Rothrock, Johnson, & Lutgendorf, 2006). In a separate study of validity, correlations were made with social desirability using the Marlowe-Crone Social Desirability Scale, personality characteristics such as optimism using the Life Orientation Test (LOT) and the NEO Personality Inventory, and lastly, a measure of religious participation to determine who are more actively religious.

## *2) Inventory of Strengths and Assets Post Trauma*

I will read to you twelve questions. When answering these questions, please reflect on your experience as a Survivor of Hurricane Katrina. Take as much time as you need, and answer the questions to the best of your abilities. Your responses will be recorded only for the purposes of later transcription. There will be no identifying information that will link you to your responses.

### *Modified Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Used as primer) Scores*

Scores from this modified assessment are to measure growth as a result of living through Hurricane Katrina in five areas:

*Relating to Others:* With a score of 23 or higher, participant may be developing even stronger bonds with loved ones, reestablishing relationships with estranged members and friends, or gaining more compassion for others as a result of living through Hurricane Katrina.

*New Possibilities:* With a score of 18 or higher, participant may be noticing that they are beginning to make choices in more conscious manner according to a plan. Participants may be more likely to try to change things that are in need of changing as a result of living through Hurricane Katrina.

*Personal Strength:* With a score of 15 or higher, participant may be expressing a greater self-reliance, feeling more able to accept how things turn out and developing personal strength that may help them through hardships in the future as a result of living through Hurricane Katrina.

*Spiritual Change:* With a score of 5 or higher, participant may be reevaluating their spiritual beliefs, associating with a community of similar believers, or connecting with their spiritual roots as a result of living through Hurricane Katrina.

*Appreciation of Life:* With a score of 11 or higher, participant may be developing a greater appreciation of life, may be rethinking their values and priorities about what is important, and act differently because of their change in priorities as a result of living through Hurricane Katrina.

## APPENDIX B

### Participant Scores

#### *Modified Posttraumatic Growth Inventory*

Participant	Factor	Score	Typical Score
1	1. Relate to others	19	19
	2. New Possibilities	11	12
	3. Personal Strengths	25	22
	4. Spiritual Change	8	8
	5. Appreciation for life	19	17
2	1. Relate to others	26	19
	2. New Possibilities	13	12
	3. Personal Strengths	23	22
	4. Spiritual Change	8	8
	5. Appreciation for life	8	17
3	1. Relate to others	17	19
	2. New Possibilities	18	12
	3. Personal Strengths	22	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	28	17
4	1. Relate to others	13	19
	2. New Possibilities	17	12
	3. Personal Strengths	9	22
	4. Spiritual Change	11	8
	5. Appreciation for life	12	17
5	1. Relate to others	20	19
	2. New Possibilities	20	12
	3. Personal Strengths	40	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	15	17

**Participant Scores**  
***Modified Posttraumatic Growth Inventory***

Participant	Factor	Score	Typical Score
6	1. Relate to others	20	19
	2. New Possibilities	7	12
	3. Personal Strengths	16	22
	4. Spiritual Change	4	8
	5. Appreciation for life	8	17
7	1. Relate to others	29	19
	2. New Possibilities	20	12
	3. Personal Strengths	26	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	15	17
8	1. Relate to others	29	19
	2. New Possibilities	15	12
	3. Personal Strengths	30	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	15	17
9	1. Relate to others	8	19
	2. New Possibilities	3	12
	3. Personal Strengths	4	22
	4. Spiritual Change	0	8
	5. Appreciation for life	1	17
10	1. Relate to others	22	19
	2. New Possibilities	8	12
	3. Personal Strengths	24	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	14	17
11	1. Relate to others	15	19
	2. New Possibilities	17	12
	3. Personal Strengths	26	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	8	17

***Modified Posttraumatic Growth Inventory***

Participant	Factor	Score	Typical Score
12	1. Relate to others	26	19
	2. New Possibilities	15	12
	3. Personal Strengths	20	22
	4. Spiritual Change	11	8
	5. Appreciation for life	11	17
13	1. Relate to others	20	19
	2. New Possibilities	25	12
	3. Personal Strengths	45	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	5	17
14	1. Relate to others	16	19
	2. New Possibilities	3	12
	3. Personal Strengths	20	22
	4. Spiritual Change	2	8
	5. Appreciation for life	2	17
15	1. Relate to others	9	19
	2. New Possibilities	2	12
	3. Personal Strengths	7	22
	4. Spiritual Change	0	8
	5. Appreciation for life	7	17
16	1. Relate to others	15	19
	2. New Possibilities	11	12
	3. Personal Strengths	15	22
	4. Spiritual Change	8	8
	5. Appreciation for life	13	17
17	1. Relate to others	12	19
	2. New Possibilities	0	12
	3. Personal Strengths	13	22
	4. Spiritual Change	5	8
	5. Appreciation for life	15	17

***Modified Posttraumatic Growth Inventory***

Participant	Factor	Score	Typical Score
18	1. Relate to others	19	19
	2. New Possibilities	8	12
	3. Personal Strengths	31	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	10	17
19	1. Relate to others	23	19
	2. New Possibilities	16	12
	3. Personal Strengths	17	22
	4. Spiritual Change	10	8
	5. Appreciation for life	15	17
20	1. Relate to others	20	19
	2. New Possibilities	10	12
	3. Personal Strengths	20	22
	4. Spiritual Change	3	8
	5. Appreciation for life	14	17



## APPENDIX C

### Songs Cited in Paper

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

Jesus on the Main Line

This Little Light of Mine

Take My Hand God

Safe in his Arms

God has smiled on me

Praise is what I Do

Jesus Never Fail

Open the Flood Gates of Heaven

Amazing Grace

Oh For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Joyful, Joyful

Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus

Mercy Me

I Can Only Imagine

Oh How I Love Jesus

The Lord Will Make Away

I Won't Complain

Drawer Me Nearer

God Leads His Dear Children

God is Able

What Shall I Do

Jesus the Center of My Joy

Jesus is the Best Thing that ever happened to me

We Fall Down

Something About the Man Name Jesus  
I've got a Feeling everything is going to be alright  
Jesus Loves Me

## Appendix D

### Most Cited Songs With Lyrics

"Never Would Have Made It"

Never would have made it  
Never could have made it without You  
I would have lost it all  
But now I see how You were there for me

And I can say  
Never would have made it  
Never could have made it  
Without You

I would have lost it all  
But I now I see  
How You were there for me  
And I can say

I'm stronger, I'm wiser  
I'm better, much better

When I look back  
Over all You brought me through  
I can see that You were the One  
I held on to

And I never, never would have made it  
(Never would have made it)  
Oh, I never could have made it  
(Never could have made it without You)

Oh, I would have lost it all  
Oh, but now I see  
How You were there for me

I never (Never would have made it)

## APPENDIX E (2)

### Most Cited Songs With Lyrics

#### Center of My Joy

Jesus, You're the center of my joy,  
all that's good and perfect comes from You.  
You're the heart of my contentment, hope for all I do;  
Jesus, You're the center of my joy.

*[Verse 1:]*

When I've lost my direction, You're the compass for my way,  
You're the fire and light when nights are long and cold.  
In sadness, You are the laughter, that shatters all my fears,  
when I'm all alone, Your hand is there to hold.

*[Chorus 1]*

*[Verse 2:]*

You are why I find pleasure in the simple things in life,  
You're the music in the meadows and the streams.  
The voices of the children, my family, and my home,  
You're the source and finish of my highest dreams.

*[Chorus 2:]*

Jesus, You're the center of my joy,  
all that's good and perfect comes from You.  
You're the heart of my contentment, hope for all I do...

*[Vamp:]*

Jesus, You are the center of my joy.

*[Ending:]*

Jesus, You are the center of my joy,  
joy, joy, of my joy.

## APPENDIX F

<b>Katrina's Toll in Mississippi</b>	
\$125 billion	Estimated dollar amount of damage caused by Hurricane Katrina
231	Identified dead statewide
5	Unidentified dead
67	Missing
65,380	Houses in South Mississippi destroyed
383,700	Mississippi insurance claims filed (Katrina and Rita)
\$5 billion	Claims paid (as of Nov. 21)
\$141,000	Insurance claims filed in South Mississippi
\$1.3 billion	Claims paid in South Mississippi
44 million	Estimated cubic yards of debris in South Mississippi
21.8 million	Cubic yards removed as of Dec. 5
20,447	Red Cross staff and volunteers in Mississippi
5,543,006	Red Cross meals served
42,768	People sheltered by Red Cross
229	Red Cross shelters opened
\$185 million	Red Cross money spent in South Mississippi as of Nov. 30

## APPENDIX G

Table 1.1 **Estimated Damage from Hurricane Katrina and the New Orleans Flood**

Housing	\$67 billion
Consumer durable goods	\$7 billion
Business property	\$20 billion
Government property	\$3 billion
Total	\$96 billion

## **APPENDIX H**

### **Questionnaire**

1. What role did Gospel Music play in relation to Hurricane Katrina? What does gospel music mean to you?
2. Did you listen to certain songs? If so, please name them.
3. Did Gospel Music give you strength or hope?
4. How do you feel about yourself now that the storm is over?
5. How do you cope with painful thoughts and emotions that may come up for you? Have you become better at it since the storm?
6. Were there tough times you went through before the storm that helped you to get through Hurricane Katrina?
7. Have you learned anything new about yourself after surviving Hurricane Katrina? Has anything surprised you about yourself?
8. Did connections with people help you to get through some of the bad memories, sadness or pain you felt after the storm?
9. Is there anything that I did not ask you that you would like to tell me?
10. Do you listen to the same gospel music that gave you comfort or relief?
11. Can you tell me a little about what it has been like to talk with me about these experiences?

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sonara was born and raised in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where she received her primary and secondary education. After high school, she graduated with a BS degree in Human Ecology and an M.S. degree in Psychology from Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma. She has certifications in Postponing Sexual Involvement, Microsoft Digital Literacy, True Colors, P. S. Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting, and Toastmasters International, as well as a California adult teaching credential. Sonara has a passion for education and is a former school administrator with John Muir Charter School.

Sonara is also the owner of SCB Consulting, which specializes in personal and professional development with emphasis in Expressive Arts Therapy. This certified company's aim is to encourage individuals to strive for excellence, despite failures. Sonara's introduces individuals and groups to Expressive Arts Therapy and shows businesses how to reach their peak in performances.

Sonara has been on the board of directors for San Diego Coalition for the Homeless since 1998. In addition to her board duties, Sonara plays Mrs. Santa at the annual Holiday Magic for Kids party. This celebration gives away toys to 5,000–7,000 needy children throughout San Diego County. Sonara is also a former board member for Adoption Information Center. She is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, American Society of Training and Development, Association of Pan



African Doctoral Scholars, Toastmasters International, NAACP, and the Association of Black Psychologists.

Sonara counseled the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing survivors and released a song titled, *A MAN* which was inspired from her dissertation.

She resides in Los Angeles with her husband, Drunell, and two children, Drunell II and Drunara.