CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This chapter is intended to integrate the findings that evolved from the various chapters of the study. It therefore comprises the findings relating to church music considering both the western music forms as well as Khasi indigenous tunes in the two denominations under study, and other Christian denominations alike.

Prior to the arrival of Christianity in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the only music that prevailed was Khasi folk and traditional music, known as Khasi indigenous music. The Khasis then were not exposed to any other alien music form but lived in their own culture and music traditions. But with the coming of Christianity, western music form was introduced and used in the church worship services to the exclusion of Khasi indigenous music. This music form is said to have become the sole church music of all Christian denominations till the 1980s, after which, with the change of attitude coupled with the emergence of many local, clergy and lay composers, Khasi indigenous music began to be introduced and church music is seen to have taken a new shape with the mixture of both western and Khasi indigenous tunes.

The study reveals that church music is very rich in both the Khasi Jaintia Presbyterian and the Catholic churches. This is obvious from the volume and rich collection of hymns, psalms and choruses that have been incorporated in the hymn
books of the two respective churches. The 2000 edition hymn book of the Presbyterian Church *Ka Kot Jingrwai Ban Mane Ía U Blei Ha Ri Khasi Bad Jaiñtia* for instance, contains a volume of 639 (six hundred thirty nine) hymns and choruses, and as appeared in the thirteenth edition of the Catholic Church hymn book *Ka Lynti Bneng-Ka Kot Jingduai Bad Jingrwai Katholik* 1998, there are a total of 653 (six hundred fifty three) hymns and psalms. Church music has further been enriched by the manner in which hymns have been systematically classified and indexed into relevant sections bearing appropriate themes and subjects which has facilitated the selection of the right hymns at all services and occasions occurring throughout the liturgical calendar. The Presbyterian Church hymn book which has been classified into 19 (nineteen) sections focuses on themes like- God, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the Church, Outreach and Mission, Christian life, Death, New Year, Christian Stewardship, Christian families, Evangelization, Praise, Khasi Nation, Revival, Children hymns, Youth hymns, Concluding hymns and Choruses. In like manner, the Catholic Church hymn book which has been indexed into 40 (forty) sections contains subjects like- Advent, Christmas, Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, Christ the King, Sacred Heart of Jesus, Jesus the Shepherd, Holy Spirit, Blessed Sacrament and Benediction, Virgin Mary, Holy Eucharist, Angels and Saints, Church and Faith, Christian life, Holy Water, Holy Mass, Word of God, Vocation, Outreach and Mission, Mass for the Dead, Rosary, Sacraments, Christian family, Wedding, Thanksgiving, Repentance, Praise, Trust, Psalms and Miscellaneous subjects.
Presbyterian Church music is found to be originally based on Welsh hymn tunes and other western music forms. Its music form is a combination of Isaac Watts hymn style and Wesleyan hymn traits as to the form and content. As appeared in the hymn book, the hymns are mostly direct translations of western tunes, with a few original compositions again set to western music forms. These hymns have become so popular that they are sung not only in church but also at leisure, at work and homes. Catholic Church music is also originally based on Latin hymnody or Gregorian Chants bearing its own music forms. This music form became prominent in the Catholic Church since its inception till the 1980s when Khasi indigenous music also began to be used. There is therefore, still an overwhelming dependence upon Welsh hymnody in the Presbyterian Church, though less dependence on Latin hymnody in the Catholic Church, as the number of Khasi indigenous tunes already represents a substantial collection.

One prominent hymn singing style found in the Presbyterian Church other than the Catholic Church, is the practice of what is termed as syllabification or breaking up of syllables. Single syllable words (monosyllable) for instance, like ieit (love), bneng (heaven), kdang (satisfied), kmie (mother), and many others are broken up or separated into two syllables by adding the vowel ‘i’ or the consonant ‘y’ which also sounds like a vowel. In their singing form, the above words are therefore broken up into this form, i-ieit, by-neng, ky-dang and ky-mie. Likewise, the two syllable words (dissyllable) like jaipdeh (lazy), diengphna (cross), iakmen (rejoice) and so on are broken up into three syllables in singing leading to truncated pronunciations like jai-py-deh, dieng-phy-na and ia-ky-men.
Such practice is however considered to be irregular as it goes against the music norms which states that sound and sense should coincide, and that tune and text should match. It therefore leads to confusing and ambiguous readings causing discordance in hymn singing. As of now, the practice is longer followed by modern composers and songwriters, though the singing style with regard to hymns already set in the hymn book of the Presbyterians is still continuing.

In the earlier decades, the practice of lining out was quite prominent in the hymn singing style of the Presbyterian Church and other denominations, though very marginal in the Catholic context. It is the practice of having each line read by a minister or leader and followed by the congregation. The practice which is again a western tradition was adapted as a temporary measure, probably because of the inability of the people to read and also due to shortage of hymn books then. Though the practice is still prevailing, its relevance has greatly declined.

The practice of congregational hymn singing in all Christian denominations in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is found to be monophonic in style, with the whole congregation singing the melody in unison with or without instrumental accompaniment. But with the formation of different church choirs and singing groups, the practice of polyphonic singing style began to take place in which two to three or four voice parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) perform in harmony. The music form of polyphony has become a regular feature in all church choirs, whether they are standing, temporary, amateur or professional church choirs.
Vernacularization of language and music in the liturgy form the two important aspects of inculturation. The aspects imply that every part of the liturgy or service be translated into the vernacular language, and that all liturgical texts, religious writings, prayers and hymns be created in a genuine Khasi Christian terminology. With regard to music the term also implies the use of Khasi indigenous tunes in its form and content. In the Presbyterian Church and other denominations no doubt, Khasi indigenous tunes have already been introduced in recent years, but the aspect of vernacularization of music in the true sense is still found to be partially achieved. The same aspect is however, found to have been translated in the Catholic Church music since 1990 with the initiative taken by Fr. Francis Kharwanlang, D.T. Laloo and others, under whose efforts a study has been undertaken to analyze the different dialects spoken in various places, which has enabled them to coin the right and meaningful terms used in prayers and hymns of the Catholic Church today. It is also interesting to note that in other denominations like the Church of God, the Unitarian Church, Church of Christ and others, the use of Khasi indigenous tunes in the church as well as in open air celebrations, have been introduced right from the time of their establishment.

The Khasi indigenous hymns that have so far been incorporated in the hymn books of the Presbyterians, Catholics and other denominations have their tunes which can be notated in both the staff and tonic sol-fa notation systems, and are found to blend well when accompanied with western musical instruments like the piano, organ, guitars and drums. However, since they are primarily melody based, they are found to be better expressed when accompanied with Khasi traditional drum
beats, which again, can be notated in both the above systems. Therefore, depending on the beats, these hymns can be accompanied either with the drum beat of *ka Ksing Shadwait Kynting Dieng* (Sword Dance by tossing up the stick), *ka Ksing Shadwait Tem Beit* (Sword Dance), *ka Padiah Ardieng* (Small Drum by using two sticks) or others.

The Presbyterian Church like other denominations takes care to emphasize four things in its worship services namely, Reading of the Bible, Praying, Preaching and Singing. With regard to singing, the past decades show that special efforts were made to popularize hymn singing by teaching hymns and tonic sol-fa classes in the Church and primary school levels. Today, training in music and singing is being imparted by music schools and music institutes like the Board of Synod Institute of Music, Shillong which started in 1988 followed by others in subsequent years. The Catholic Church however, because of its lengthy and complex type of liturgy, does not lay stress on any particular aspect as such, but gives equal importance to each and every aspect of the liturgy. Undoubtedly, efforts have been there to impart training on music and tonic sol-fa courses initiated by the Archdiocesan music ministry which started since 2001, in addition to the emphasis that training be imparted in Seminaries, Training Houses, and other Centres of study. But these courses are still inadequate and lack specialization. It is perhaps this difference in emphasis and specialization that has made singing in the Presbyterian Church to obtain a better quality and standard in comparison to singing in the Catholic Church.

The practice of adapting some popular songs and catchy tunes from other sources, like cinema music, anthem tunes of some countries, or from audio cassettes
etc, into church music is quite common and is being done in many church denominations. It is however, noted that at times such adaptations fail to acquire the essential elements of dignity, solemnity and simplicity of church music, making them become inappropriate and unfit for church use. No doubt, they have been adapted bearing biblical texts or the psalm texts, but they seem to degrade or lessen the true dignity and solemnity of the service, as for many who are aware of their origins will divert their minds to the original implication of the songs, rather than as devotional hymns for which purpose they have been adapted.

Referring to the attitude of different churches and their respective church communities towards Khasi indigenous music, it is observed that the Welsh missionaries, right from the start had a negative attitude towards Khasi culture and religion. They considered Khasi traditional religion as pure animism, uncivilized, superstitious and had many aspects which did not go in harmony with Christian faith. Another reason perhaps which has added to this attitude is because of the native character of Presbyterianism which had deep impact on the policy of the Church that has led to the rejection of Khasi cultural elements and indigenous music from the church. This trend however, did not seem to have lasted very long, as a change of attitude started taking place particularly from the 1990s among the youths, even among many church leaders, elders, composers, and songwriters. A similar attitude is also found to prevail among the different sections of the church communities of their desire and enthusiasm to have an open mind towards Khasi traditional music and its use as a regular component of church music.
Today, the different church denominations have no restrictions on the use of Khasi indigenous music be it in the church or outside celebrations. In addition to the already mentioned denominations, there are other denominations like the Church of North India (CNI), the Assembly Church of Jesus Christ (India) and others who are also of the opinion that Khasi indigenous tunes which are well composed, solemn and appropriate for church use, are always accepted for use in church and other services. Therefore, on analyzing the overall scenario, it is observed that the present trend however slow it may be, yet it is positive and the process is on.

Church music in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, whether they are of Welsh or Latin sources, has been well accepted by the early Christians and the present Christians alike. The fact that these hymn tunes have gone deep into the singing culture of the people, shows that they are recognized and cherished by these churches and the Christian communities at large. In like manner, it is observed that for Khasi indigenous tunes to find place in the church music of any denomination, it depends on the inculturizing attitude of a particular church and how far it is able to give recognition and acceptance to these tunes. All hymns for that matter, whether of western or indigenous forms serve the same purpose of praising and worshipping God. Therefore, until and unless the church gives its recognition to these tunes, they will remain stagnant.

It is however, admitted that church music in all its forms and elements, continues to meet the spiritual needs of people, to unite congregations through hymn singing in worship services, to teach them about faith and morals, and to derive their spiritual satisfaction in praising God through music.
The study therefore, is expected to help the different church denominations to cherish with deep appreciation the music brought into Khasi and Jaintia Hills by the good missionaries, which should be preserved, treasured and used. At the same time an awareness has been created among churches and Christian communities that cultural elements and music culture of the Khasi people are not to be disregarded but to be respected, revered and used by giving them due exposure in the church music proper to praise and worship God along with other music forms.