

## AN APPRAISAL OF AFROCENTRIC WAVES IN CHURCH MUSIC OF MOLETE BAPTIST CHURCH

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines Afrocentric waves in church music, using Molete Baptist Church as a case study. The findings underscore the significance of church music in conveying and preserving doctrinal beliefs. Music plays a crucial role in communicating the church's teachings and values, making it an essential aspect of worship and ministry. The study highlights the necessity of a disciplined music ministry, pointing out that effective church music demands a solid understanding of biblical objectives and disciplined performance. Church music also allows Christians to use their gifts in spreading the gospel, making it vital for stewardship and evangelism. To improve church music, the study suggests providing necessary musical resources and promoting music education. Theological educators should stress the importance of music in church life, ensuring that songs are theologically sound and heritage is upheld. By adopting these recommendations, churches can cultivate a vibrant music ministry that supports their mission and values.

**Keywords:** Afrocentric waves, Molete Baptist Church, Music, Music Pastor

### INTRODUCTION

Since colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade began, African history has often been viewed through a European perspective. This perspective aimed to justify the colonization of Africa and the enslavement of Africans by praising slavers and colonizers while ignoring African contributions and viewpoints. Following the liberation of Africans from colonial rule and the emancipation of American slaves, some Africans called for knowledge to be viewed through their own lens, leading to the concept of Afrocentricity in academic discussions.

Afrocentricity is defined by its methodology, theory, and ideology aimed at promoting an African-centered view of knowledge. Methodologically, it addresses the intellectual colonization that supports political and economic colonialism. Theoretically, it focuses on placing African people at the centre of any analysis of African behaviour and actions. It emphasizes that what benefits African consciousness is central to ethical behaviour, promoting the idea of "Africanness" as a core set of ethics. Ideologically, it reflects a desire among Africans for ideas that unite them as a community, providing an alternative to European assimilation, which is often seen as a sign of inferiority. Thus, Afrocentricity works to unify African and African-Canadian studies into a coherent discipline with shared goals and methods.

In addition, singing is connected to religious experiences and expressions. In various traditions, including Lutheran and Reformed, music plays a vital role in worship. Luther viewed music as essential to the church, while Calvin described it as "sung prayers. " Music is intricately linked to life, and in African culture, it is often tied to movement and action, like dancing and using percussion instruments. Many African people prefer lively church environments where emotions are openly expressed, in contrast to more restrained settings.

Despite the perception that the gospel may be well known in Africa, there are still areas where people have never heard it. The gospel, which signifies "good news," is more than just a call to salvation; it transforms lives and builds communities. It is communicated continuously in churches through messages of salvation and edification, underscoring its significance in shaping lives within the faith community. Running parallel to this is the training of musicians in a quasi-formal manner. Quasi because of the informal, flexible setting and timing, yet formal due to the understood content, expected level of attainment, and desired enrolment age. This training takes into account aptitude and interest. It is

demanding and comprehensive, as by the end, the graduate is an accomplished instrument manufacturer, technician, and player, as well as a music composer, performer, and teacher. These comprise the various 'modules' of the unwritten, yet clearly understood syllabus. The mode of delivery is practical through apprenticeship and total immersion of the learner in the subject.

The objectives of this study are to examine Afrocentric Waves in Church Music. Specifically, it will explore the views of Baptist churches on making church music more African, identify the types of music accepted in Molete Baptist Church, and investigate the factors affecting Afrocentric music within the church. The findings will help to explore the church's perspective on ethnomusicology. This research is important for preserving the songs of early composers and educating modern composers to continue the tradition of creating music that reflects the Church's core beliefs. The study provides valuable ethnomusicological information on the liturgical songs of churches in Ibadan and contributes to the understanding of liturgical music in the area. This documentation and analysis will benefit scholars, pastors, choristers, and professional musicians in Ibadan. The study focuses on Molete Baptist Church in Ibadan, which was chosen for its modern facilities. The Music Pastor will be interviewed; however, there have been delays due to scheduling conflicts with the Nigeria Baptist Convention's preparations.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Christianity, which began as a small, persecuted Jewish sect, has spread across continents, with music serving as a significant aspect of its observance. The only record of communal song from the early church, found in Matthew 26:30, documents the last meeting of the disciples before the crucifixion. Outside the Gospels, Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 indicate that Saint Paul encouraged the brethren to use Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Some of the genres that shaped the musical traditions of the early church include Gregorian chant and the Mass, a musical form that sets the parts of the Eucharistic liturgy, chiefly associated with the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion, to music.

For a composition to be a full mass, it must have the stipulated, invariable five sections, which form the ordinary of the mass: Kyrie (Lord have mercy), Gloria (Glory be to God on high), Credo (I believe in one God), Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), Agnus Dei (Lamb of God). Another form of early Christian music is the carol. Most of these forms still exist in many of the first-line churches: Catholic, Anglican, and Methodist. However, a significant form of church music emerged in the 1960s, which can be classified under one umbrella as contemporary church music. This includes a range of styles often influenced by popular music. Musical literature is full of sacred expressions that have conveyed eternal truth from the souls of believers. Perhaps no vehicle of expression has more power than music to address the conscious and subconscious mind of humankind with information that will be retained. Gordon L. Borrer (1982:10)

Gordon Borrer was right when he made the foregoing statement, as music is generally believed to be the language of all living things. Apart from humans, birds, animals, and plants also express gratitude to their creator through singing. In fact, the waving of plant and flower leaves serves as a musical expression. Truths learned through singing have a more positive impact on the mind because they endure for as long as life lasts. They can be easily recalled whenever needed. Music and culture are closely related; people's culture is better expressed in their musical practices. When discussing musical culture, Lederach (1995) defined culture as the shared knowledge and schemes created by a group of people. This idea indicates that musical culture varies from one group to another. According to Akpabot (1986), one method of discovering the culture of a people is by examining how they conceptualize their music. Commenting on the importance of musical culture in Christendom, Ellen G. White (1915:168) asserts that music is one of God's great gifts to humanity and is one of the most important elements in a spiritual programme. She explained that music has the power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures and promote harmony of action. Pipim (2005:457) agrees with the assertions of Lederach and White, arguing that any worship intended to be the worship of God must first examine the musical culture employed in the worship.

To worship is to show love, devotion and honour to God (or a god). The most common worship is the gathering of people in a Church service or a Mosque. Osadolor (1982) described worship in a religious circle as the veneration ascribed to a supernatural being and the series of ritual actions associated with the exercise. According to Allen W. Foster, worship in the Christian church begins and ends on the hope that Christ has died, risen, and will come again. Worship involves an attitude of mind and heart which enables man to love God with all his being. Worship complements liturgy, and Norval (1967) affirms this to be true in his comment on theology and liturgy. He explained that worship cannot take place without liturgy. He further argued that it is in the order of service that theology and liturgy meet. According to him, they meet either to harmonize or clash. God alone is to be worshipped. Christians are admonished to avoid rivals in the worship of God. —Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water. (Revelation 14:7)

Webster's Universal Dictionary and Thesaurus (2010:239) defines history as a record or account of past events. However, Nzewi (2007), in his historical arts of musical events, expands the definition of history as follows: History is a chronological record of events that have shaped the development and advancement of a people and/or ideas over time. It is also a record of events and developments that have altered the normative state of a people and/or ideas. History, therefore, is about outstanding or extraordinary ideas and events in a specific human geographical location at various periods, along with the key individuals at the centre of such momentous occurrences. (p.185).

In a nutshell, Nzewi's expanded definition of history signifies that every individual, regardless of age, residing in a specific environment, contributes to the historical records of that area. Childbirth and dedication in a church, local naming ceremonies, communal wars fought and won or lost, and so forth, all contribute to the history of any given area.

Hustad (1993), Barry Liesch (1996), and Faseun (2005) defined chorus or choruses (lyric airs) as —Spontaneous songs performed often in vernacular but sometimes in other languages. A short song which expresses a single idea of praise, thanksgiving and doctrine. Choruses communicate freshness to our faith and relate Christianity to contemporary culture. They are naturally simple to perform due to their short melodic motifs and are easily transmitted from one group of singers to another in African societies. Akpabot (1986), writing on the nature of African music, explains that it is not documented; rather, it passes from one generation to another through oral tradition. Olaniyan (2002) supports this idea of musical proficiency being passed down from one generation to the next, illustrated by the example of the Yoruba dundun drumming. He confirms that, through this method, musical arts are perpetuated within a musical family.

Akpabot (1986) asserts that fourteen categories of song texts are easily recognizable in African music. He, therefore, grouped them under three main headings: praise songs, songs of insult, and songs for entertainment.

### **Emergence of New Musical Genres in Nigeria**

Nigerian Gospel music developed from celebrations of Christian festivals such as Easter, Christmas, and harvest thanksgiving. During these occasions, special indigenous songs were performed by the choir. Initially, English hymns and canticles were accompanied by the organ; later, instruments such as the rattle (sekere), bell (agogo), and drums were incorporated. In discussing Nigerian music as entertainment, Akpabot (1986) indirectly noted that Nigerian gospel music is among other hybrid forms used for entertainment at social gatherings. Conversely, Ekwueme (1973) reiterated that one of the prominent characteristics of African music, in comparison to Western music, is its functionality. The African

lifestyle is musical from cradle to grave. Omibiyi (1979), in her discussion of Nigerian composers, integrated this with the history of indigenous church music in Nigeria, aligning with Sowande (1967). She further explained that indigenous church music provided the foundation for Nigerian creative music, which, she observed, belongs to Indigenous Gospel music. She asserted that the incorporation of indigenous music in churches emerged from the need for educated Christians to discover and preserve their culture. The contributions of these early church musicians played a crucial role in establishing a solid foundation for modern Nigerian creative music. Etim (2006)

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the concept of identity. Identity has been defined as the individual characteristics by which a thing or person is recognized or known. Several scholars have used this concept in various ways. Strokes (1994) and Palmberg (2003), explained it as the unique individuality of a person, that trait that marks somebody or person out from someone else. Furthermore, Olajubu (2003) also noted that identity as a phenomenon encompasses a compendium of different elements that are nevertheless interconnected. According to him, ingredients for the construction of identity are supplied by a combination of culture, religion, power relations and myth.

Ethnomusicologist Waterman (2002) employed the concept of identity to discuss the social role of music in post-colonial Africa. According to Waterman, this concept relates to the concept of 'self' and 'person'. He portrayed the 'self' as the internal aspect of identity that is subjective, psychologically unified, and real, while the 'person' refers to the external, socially constructed, represented, and enacted identity of the individual. Waterman further scrutinized identity as a multi-dimensional product of the interaction between self and society. In doing so, he delineated the concepts of the inner and outer eyes. The inner eye (*ime anya*) is the locus of contemplation, imagination, and creativity, while the outer eye (*azu anya*) serves as the primary social organ, the locus of self-expression and the tactics of self-construction through interaction with others.

### **Music in Nigerian Pentecostal**

Churches, music, and religion are closely linked in various traditions, including Christianity and Islam. In Christianity, music plays a key role in church services and worship, uplifting the soul toward God. During the early missionary period in Nigeria, church music primarily consisted of hymn singing, chants, and anthems, lacking the incorporation of local musical styles or instruments. The missionaries influenced the churches to adopt European musical practices, often neglecting indigenous methods and instruments.

According to Vidal (2012), the music in early churches featured Gregorian chants in Catholic services and Anglican chants in Protestant services, with an emphasis on traditional forms. About sixty years ago, Pentecostalism emerged as a movement seeking a deeper relationship with Christ and introduced new musical styles that embraced emotional expressions and gestures. This integration included African musical idioms and instruments, with many Nigerian composers concentrating on indigenous languages and forms rather than early missionary religious dogma. As a result, the serious tone of traditional worship evolved into contemporary styles.

Contemporary Christian music, which originated from the Pentecostal movement, emphasizes modern musical styles like pop and rock, with lyrics that focus on themes such as salvation and worship. This new style has sparked debates within churches, with some rejecting the notion of Christian pop/rock due to its historical associations with themes that contradict Christian teachings. However, studies indicate that churches adopting contemporary music styles often experience growth, as noted by James Emery White, who emphasized that many growing churches in the Southern Baptist Convention embraced contemporary Christian music.

As this movement spread, various forms of music emerged to align with contemporary society, even impacting orthodox churches. Differences between orthodox and charismatic churches include diverse instrumentation and spontaneous praise. Although the use of organ music in hymn singing has declined in Pentecostal churches, it has not entirely disappeared. Ogunyemi (2013) noted a resurgence in the use of organs for hymn singing in some Pentecostal churches, reflecting a desire to revisit traditional practices. Thus, the use of organ music, once associated with early missionaries, is being reconsidered in some Pentecostal contexts, signifying a shift in church musical practices over time.

### **Musical Trends in Pentecostal Churches**

The Pentecostal movement is characterized by unconventional traits in religious beliefs and practices that have established a lasting presence. Its defining features indicate that it is a prominent religious sect in Nigeria, rooted in spiritual engagements. However, this movement has overshadowed traditional musical practices in churches to the extent that most mainline churches no longer emphasize or value the solemnity of church music as provided by the early missionaries. These Pentecostal churches are known for a distinctive style of singing choruses, referred to as praise and worship. This is often performed spontaneously, involving handclapping, singing, shouting, dancing, speaking in tongues, and prophesying. Praise worship, being one of the vibrant characteristic activities of Pentecostal churches, has been recognised since its inception for its ability to act as a spiritual electric current with an emotional switch that can ignite power.

While Pentecostal congregations sing and worship together, individual worshippers can also express their love and devotion to God as their hearts and the Spirit of God move them. It is common for Pentecostal churches to include a full musical orchestra or band that motivates the entire congregation to worship God with emotional acts. Another aspect of Pentecostal worship is dancing. Pentecostals believe that both the Old and New Testaments include examples of dance as worship. This is why, in recent years, an increasing number of Pentecostal churches have developed more formalized dance ministries. These dancers choreograph their dances to the church's worship music.

### **Christian Music**

The ingrained religious psyche of humanity necessitates adaptation to align with the modern age. The prevalence of music videos as a marketing tool significantly influences the introduction of various new

musical styles to churches, such as gospel jazz (syncopated and rhythmic character are the distinctive features of gospel jazz), along with other musical genres across numerous regions of the world. This has enriched Christian congregations with a broad array of musical styles. The general expression of music performed in conjunction with Christian faith, beliefs, and perspectives during church services or any Christian function is often referred to as Christian music.

There are various genres of Christian music, such as gospel, Christian contemporary, praise and worship, Christian rap, and Christian rock, alongside Christian songs. According to Daramola (2008), Christian music is a generic term that encompasses all types of music consumed in Christendom, whether by the church, parachurch, or non-church organizations. Some common Christian musical genres used in Pentecostal churches are influenced by popular Afro-American styles.

The revival movement of the Pentecostal church employed the style of popular singers and song leaders. The popularity of these revival singers and the openness of churches to this type of music led to the adoption of gospel music in many Pentecostal churches. This has contributed to various Christian music styles and has later provided an outlet for the creative work of many indigenous songwriters and composers.

### **Contemporary Christian music**

Contemporary worship style is an offshoot of Pentecostalism, with congregations singing choruses and praise music, often raising their hands in adoration. Contemporary Christian music, often referred to as inspirational music, is a genre of modern popular music in which the lyrics are based on themes related to the Christian faith. It emerged after the great revival movement to express themselves in a style of music that is more contemporary than traditional hymns and gospel music. Its origins can be traced back to pop and rock music within the Christian genre. Instruments used include vocals, bass guitar, drums, keyboards, synthesizers, guitar, and piano.

The genre became known as contemporary Christian music due to the revival movement in the 1970s and 80s, originally called Jesus music in the USA. During this time, many individuals professed belief in Jesus and recognized the emptiness of a lifestyle centered on drugs, casual sex, and radical politics. The movement began by playing instruments and singing songs about peace and love as a replacement for the love of God. The themes behind the songs and their lyrics include praise and worship, faith, encouragement, and prayers. Often, the songs focus on redemption, devotion, reconciliation, and the revival of the spirit. The lyrics and messages conveyed aim to evangelize and worship God, while also strengthening the faith of believers.

### **Historical Background of Music Education at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary**

Theological education has always included a form of hymn singing during devotions and in classrooms, which also served as a means of music education. However, formal music education commenced at The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho when, in 1954, Mrs. Evelyn Miller was given the responsibility of coordinating the music committee, which was tasked with “organise and prepare the Singing Seminarians for functions.” Church music education was integrated into the curriculum at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, where courses such as music fundamentals and hymnody were taught to all student pastors to ensure they remained knowledgeable about music, thereby enhancing their supervised ministry and, in the long run, benefiting the churches they would eventually serve after graduation.

According to Ayinla, the curriculum of the Seminary did not provide for the inclusion of music ministers aside from the few music-related courses offered before 1992. This trend persisted until a department

responsible for church music was formally established in 1992. This development led to the admission of six students interested in majoring in church music at the diploma level. The expansion of the music curriculum at the Seminary resulted in a fully developed department, which later transformed into the faculty of church music, offering Diploma, Bachelor's, M.Div, Master's, and Doctoral degrees in church music, thereby addressing the needs of the church and society at large.

“The programmes started as a response to requests from the Nigerian Baptist Convention (NBC) churches for trained church musicians and worship leaders. The programmes are designed to equip the students with musical skills, and skills in worship leading worked out in the context of a theological framework that builds on the rich musical heritage of the Christian faith”.

## **The Relevance of Music Education to Theological Education**

Music education in theological institutions presents challenges for both students and instructors. However, it is essential to teach music fundamentals, especially to music students, due to their significance. Key benefits include preserving hymn-singing traditions, maintaining the church's doctrinal beliefs, ensuring proper singing, achieving theological balance in songs, and fostering creativity in worship through skilled leadership in congregational singing. Hymns serve as inspired words of God set to music, forming an important tradition for many denominations, such as Baptists and Anglicans, passed down from missionaries. To combat the gradual erosion of this tradition, theological institutions train music students to effectively learn hymns and lead congregational singing.

George Janvier emphasizes that Christianity is a musical faith because it provides Christians with a profound message to share. Music education enables students to learn church doctrines and convert these teachings into music, helping to preserve the church's beliefs. Students are trained to guide congregations in accurately singing hymns using the knowledge gained from their seminary education. Maintaining a theological balance in songs is crucial, as George Janvier notes that some groups exploit emotional appeal while neglecting doctrinal integrity. John Witvliet also questions whether certain songs accurately support Christian worship; instead, they may evoke personal enjoyment rather than foster genuine worship. Graduates of the church music faculty bear the responsibility of creating sound theological music, addressing issues faced by those without formal church music education. Nonetheless, this faculty encounters challenges similar to those faced by other theological institutions in Nigeria that provide church music training.

## **Challenges of Rudimentary Knowledge of Music**

Every institution has specific criteria for admission to its programs, including the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomoso. Applicants must be at least twenty-two years old, provide proof of a conversion experience and a call to religious work, have a church recommendation, pass an entrance exam and interview, meet academic requirements, demonstrate potential for growth, and, if married, possess a legally registered marriage. Proficiency in English is also required, as instruction is conducted in English. Each faculty and department has its unique criteria. The Faculty of Church Music emphasizes a sense of God's calling rather than prior music knowledge, which can pose challenges for students with limited music backgrounds. This lack of preparation often results in difficulties when learning music alongside other courses.

The Faculty of Church Music programs aim to develop skills in music and worship. The Diploma in Church Music provides training over three years, focusing on musical and worship leadership within a theological framework. Graduates can pursue a degree in church music. The Bachelor's program in African/Western Church Music prepares future leaders by ensuring they possess practical skills and a solid understanding of music principles. The Master of Divinity in Church Music offers advanced training for graduates from any discipline, concentrating on theoretical knowledge and practical skills for leading church music programs.

While the Faculty admits students based on their commitment to music ministry, many face a challenging transition from enrollment to graduation. Some struggle with required music knowledge and may drop out, while others transfer to different faculties. The expectation for professionalism in music education raises questions about the skills students are being trained in for their future roles, primarily as churches demand high standards.

The curriculum aims for students to acquire performance and theological skills over three to four years, which can be challenging for music students who must complete general education courses as well. Many students do not demonstrate a genuine commitment to ministry, using their music training for personal aspirations. The Seminary needs to assist in developing leaders who possess both musical abilities and a solid spiritual foundation. Graduating students encounter significant pressure from presentations and recitals, particularly at the postgraduate level. Financial issues also affect church music education, resulting in limited resources and insufficient materials. Music courses are frequently undervalued, leading to discussions about course credits and staffing challenges that influence the quality of instruction.

### **Methodology**

This study will utilize a qualitative research design method. This type of research design helps to understand people's experiences in the world; it also aids in explaining the behaviour, motivation, and characteristics of individuals within a target group. It can take the form of one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, ethnographic research, case study research, record keeping, and qualitative observation. Focus group discussions will be employed to address the objectives of this study. The study population consists of the Music Pastor at Molete Baptist Church, Molete, Ibadan.

Purposive sampling will be used for this study because the outcome relies on the ability and capacity of participants to provide relevant information. The Music Pastor of Molete Baptist Church, Molete, Ibadan, will be purposively selected as this study appraises Afrocentric waves in Church music. Data for this study will be collected through audio and tape recordings of participant responses. Both dependent and independent variables will be measured in this study. Narrative Analysis will be used to analyse respondents' responses. The responses will be examined and quantified for the presence of certain words, subjects, and concepts in the text. They will then be transcribed to address the various objectives of this study.

### **Results and Discussion**

Conversations with the music minister of Molete Baptist Church revealed to us that hymns are God-given words set to poetry, with composers and others providing the tones, meters, and other musical aspects that make them singable. Hymn singing is a missionary tradition passed down through the mainline Protestant churches, including the Baptists, Anglicans, Methodists, ECWA, and others. Early Christians instilled this practice in their offspring, and the proliferation of hymnals has benefited every major religious group. Theological schools prepare music students to lead congregational hymn singing and instruct church members by teaching them hymns and helping them sing the hymns correctly. Unfortunately, this tradition is gradually being eroded (Anne, 1997).

Christian hymns outnumber those of any other religion, he said, making Christianity the most musical of the world's faiths. The Church's teachings on the Bible are a natural topic for Christian song. The Christian faith proclaims that God exists, that He is holy and worthy of honour, that He has the power to save, that He can give eternal life, that He loves His people, that He provides comfort and assurance in times of trouble, and that His people will triumph over death and the grave. The Bible is the content of the doctrine that the church preaches, either verbally or musically (Jayeolu, 2015). He also revealed that making music out of Baptist principles and associated courses that reflect views practiced by the early church fathers helps communicate and preserve the doctrines of the church. He discussed the need to educate the congregation on how to sing hymns and songs correctly, and how students are provided with the resources they need to do so in the Seminary.

He clarified that the term "church music" simply refers to the music of the church, but that the term is inexhaustible in its interpretations. From a theological perspective, the church is seen as existing for ministry to God through worship, ministry to believers through nurture, and ministry to the world through

evangelism and mercy. The term "church music" is used to describe the music played during Christian liturgical services, but it can also refer to religious music that is performed outside of a church setting. The music of any given local church is expected to fulfil functional roles while keeping in mind the universal mandate of the Church, which includes spreading the gospel message (Babatunji and Omolabake, 2022). Church music serves as spiritual vitamins for the nourishment of parishioners, as a medium for expressions of worship to God, and reaches out to those who are yet to be saved, those who are being saved, promotes Christian maturity among Christians, and enhances the proclamation of the gospel.

In his opinion, church music is heavily influenced by the specific doctrinal emphasis and cultural norms of a given congregation. Nevertheless, music in Christian worship has been variously described as being based on two main New Testament scriptures: "Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thanksgiving in your hearts to God" and "let the word of Christ live in you fully as you teach and instruct one another in all knowledge." "Be very careful, then, how you live; do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is; do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery; instead, be filled with the Spirit." (Emphasis added) "Speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in your life." Christians are urged in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 to "walk as children of light" and "imitate God," who "gave his dear Son" Jesus Christ as a fragrant offering and sacrifice for their salvation. Christians are also encouraged to "let God's word dwell richly in them" and "be wise in the way they live their lives" by using their musical talents to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom and reverence.

Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are all mentioned by Paul, which may indicate that they represent various cultures and godly traditions of worshippers throughout history, thus encouraging the use of different styles in the administration of Church music to fulfill godly roles, inspiring and discipling Christians (Jayeolu, 2015). The task of church music is not separate from the purpose of churches, as the word "church" means a gathering of "the called-out ones." This implies that God, the creator and sustainer of the universe and all that dwells within it, has, by His divine arrangement (through Jesus Christ), deemed some people worthy and has called them out of the darkness of the world, translating them into the kingdom of His dear son, Jesus Christ.

Music that must perform a genuine biblical function is expected to be a disciplined type, performed by disciplined minds, for disciplined people, and this study found that music ministry in any church should necessarily be determined by a good knowledge of the biblical objectives. The above argument of Ashton is very relevant in this study because it implies that past worship musical traditions and their achievements have much to teach us both musically and devotionally. Ashton also revealed that protestant worship in the twenty-first century, and the music suited to it, are not identical with Roman worship in the sixteenth century.

Church music, in his view, "conceived as the impersonal offering of the church, must gather up and embody the aspirations and dedication of those constituting the church." The music played at a Christian service should convey either a heartfelt expression of worship to God or a divinely inspired message from God to Christians, with the goal of preparing God's kingdom people and reconciling them to God. The music at a church should serve several purposes. Church music functions as a priestly service on behalf of God's people to offer musical offerings to God.

Foretelling and revealing Christ's mind through music in the church (I Sam 10:5-8). Utilizing music as a means of spreading the full gospel of Christ to the world (Matthew 24:14) (Psalm 96:2). Church music with an edifying purpose conveys wisdom and morals from one generation to the next (Matthew 24:14; Deuteronomy 31:19-21b). By ministering to the community's spirit, soul, and body, church music functions as a therapeutic healing modality (I Samuel 16:14-17).

Every member of a church-based music ministry should view themselves as a minister of the gospel, and every opportunity to sing, play, or act as a ministry opportunity, because to minister is to serve God, the church, your pastor, and other members through your skills and gifts for the sake of Christ (Okafor, 1989).

### **Simple Resources for Church Music and Ministry**

The text outlines how to create an ideal musical environment for Christian events, especially in churches. It emphasizes the importance of congregational singing, encouraging all church members to participate in worship through hymns and songs. More time should be devoted to this activity to enhance involvement. Choir members must be baptized members of the church or come from Bible-believing congregations. The choir plays a significant role in the church's music ministry, with singers consisting of those who have accepted Jesus Christ. Choir leaders should ensure that song lyrics are theologically sound, representing God's nature and actions, while also employing music styles that appeal to seekers.

The Worship Band, consisting of the Praise Team and instrumentalists, leads the congregation in worship and meets weekly to deepen their understanding of biblical worship. Additionally, musically gifted members can perform solo or in groups, benefiting the church's ministry. Graded-age choirs, such as a Children's Choir for ages five to ten and a Teenagers' Choir for ages twelve to nineteen, provide opportunities for youth to engage in music and grow in their faith. These choirs may participate in events designed to glorify God and support the church community. The church may also feature men's and women's ensembles during special events, enabling older members to learn effective praise through music. Furthermore, members are encouraged to form musical bands or ministries, which must connect with the church's music ministry for official recognition.

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that church music and ministry allow Christians to be stewards of their gifts and serve as a valid medium for propagating the gospel. It provides opportunities for the edification of Christians, contributing to the development of a network of musicians who unite with other church leaders in offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Therefore, ideal music for Christians should convey a message that expresses heartfelt praise to God and/or a divinely inspired message from God to the Christian. Music in the church should be contemplative and ultimately celebrate the Triune God, while considering biblical standards and historical church traditions, reflecting the cultural norms of the worshippers and free from negative associations.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended that appropriate musical instruments, facilities, and materials be provided to boost the teaching-learning process. Music is an indispensable tool in promoting worship, teaching, evangelism, preaching, and preserving the faith of our fathers. Theological educators should take note of the role of music in the lives of the church and promote its teaching so that the church can sing theologically correct songs and preserve her heritage. Abdu-Raheem, M. A. (1992). Islamic concept of tolerance and the task before the Nigerian Muslim. In J. K. Olupona (Ed.), Religion and peace in multi-faith Nigeria (pp. 74). O.A.U. Press.

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## APPENDIX



*Front view of Molete Baptist Church, Ibadan.*  
Members



*Congregational view of Molete Baptist Church*



*Molete Baptist Church Choir*