

# CHAPTER 37

## FROM HYMNS TO GOSPEL MUSIC: THE AFRICANIZATION OF WESTERN STRUCTURES

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### **Abstract**

“From Hymns to Gospel Music” connotes an evolutionary trend in the development of hymnody and faith-based Christian music. Hymns evolved somewhat differently in many parts of the world. In the Eastern Churches, for instance, Saint Ephraim of Syria was considered to be the father of Christian Hymnody—championing the composition and use of hymns. There are obvious indications of cultural peculiarities in the origin and development of hymns especially in the Eastern traditions, English traditions, and American traditions. The focus of this paper is to dissect the utility and functionality of hymns and the progress made towards the emergence of gospel music in Nigeria as well as their suitability to glorify God.

**Keywords:** Hymn, Gospel music, Western structures, Africanization and Nigerian gospel music.

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### **Introduction**

I will love to begin with this prologue:

When we consider music's impact on us, and how many thousand hours we listen to it throughout our lives, it seems wise to choose for

ourselves and our families music which builds up our spiritual reserves rather than that which continually wears them down. – L.D. Azevado.

According to Saint Augustine (354-430 AD):

A hymn is the praise of God by singing. A hymn is a song embodying the praise of God. If there be merely praise, but not praise of God, it is not a hymn. If there be praise, and praise of God, but not sung, it is not a hymn. For it to be a hymn it is needful, therefore, for it to have three things—praise, praise of God, and these sung (Scholes, 1967: 500).

Further definition, however, includes a fourth element which is that a hymn should be sung by a congregation of people. Consequently, “for it to be a hymn, it is needful for it to have four things—praise, praise of God, and these sung, and sung by a congregation of people” (Ibid.). Syria and Constantinople in the present-day Turkey were the centres of hymn writing—hymnody (Apel, 1966).

Apart from the Eastern countries, the tradition of hymns is also evident in the Latin countries where Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, is credited with many innovations and reforms, and is therefore considered “to be the great founder of hymnody in the Western Church” (Scholes, 1967: 501). The reformation that took place in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries in Germany, France, and England engineered a great impetus in the art of hymn writing and hymn tune compositions. Martin Luther, a musician and excellent hymn composer made great use of hymns in worship. Luther and his musical colleague, Johann Walter, published their first hymn book which was a collection of eight hymns in 1524. Thereafter, other hymn books appeared. Example of hymns found in virtually every Christian hymn book are *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott* (A Safe Stronghold Our God Is Still), *Nun danket alle Gott* (Now Thank We all our God), and *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (O Sacred Head once wounded). It is interesting to observe that the tunes set to these hymns were derived partly by adaptations of some ancient plain songs, arrangements of folk songs, and partly from original creativity. For instance, utilizing the melody by Thomas Carlyle, Martin Luther penned what is perhaps one of the strongest hymns of faith, trustfulness, and peace in Christian life in “A Safe Stronghold our God is Still”. Hans Leo Hassler corroborated ideas from Paulus Gerhardt, Bernard of Clairvaux, and James Waddell Alexander in constructing a Passion Chorale that signifies the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ in “O Sacred Head once wounded”. Johann Cruger adapted the melody of Katherine Winkworth in one of the most endearing hymns of adoration, worship, and thankfulness in “Now thank we all our God”.

## Adoration and Worship

10

NUN DANKET.

6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6.

J. CRÜGER, 1598-1662.

*Nun danket alle Gott.*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1 Now thank we all our God,<br/>With hearts, and hands, and<br/>voices ;<br/>Who wondrous things hath done,<br/>In whom His world rejoices ;<br/>Who, from our mothers' arms,<br/>Hath blessed us on our way<br/>With countless gifts of love,<br/>And still is ours to-day.</p> | <p>2 O may this bounteous God<br/>Through all our life be near us,<br/>With ever-joyful hearts<br/>And blessed peace to cheer us,<br/>And keep us in His grace,<br/>And guide us when perplexed,<br/>And free us from all ills<br/>In this world and the next.</p> | <p>3 All praise and thanks to God<br/>The Father now be given,<br/>The Son, and Him who reigns<br/>With Them in highest heaven :<br/>The one, eternal God,<br/>Whom earth and heaven adore ;<br/>For thus it was, is now,<br/>And shall be evermore. Amen.</p> |
|---|--|--|

*Martin Rinkart. 1586-1649 ;*

Following a high poetic standard administered by the Methodists in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with Charles Wesley leading with over 6,000 hymns, the world recorded a great flourishing period of English hymnody. Some of these are “O For a Thousand tongues to Sing”, “Jesu, Lover of My Soul”, “And Can it Be that I Should Gain” (Charles Wesley); “Rejoice, the Lord is King” (Handel); “Rock of Ages” (Toplady), “How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds” (Newton), “O God, Our help in Ages Past”, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (Watts), “Hark, My Soul! It is the Lord” (Cowper), and “Great God of Wonders all Thy Ways” (Samuel Davies) with popular tune *Sovereignty* which choirs present as special ministrations, as well as other lovely tunes such as Croft's *Saint Anne* sung to “O God Our Help in Ages Past” and tune *Hanover* sung to “O Worship the King”. We cannot forget to include Edward Miller's *Rockingham* sung to “When I survey the Wondrous Cross”. These and countless other hymns and tunes make hymn singing the soul winner in Christendom.

### The Structure of Hymns

A hymn may be structured in verses or stanzas sung to the same music, a structure that is referred to as *strophic*. A hymn may also be structured in stanzas with a chorus; in each case, the stanzas are sung with the same music with different lyrics or text, but the chorus is repetitive with the same lyrics. Most hymns have metrical structures in conformity with the poetic footing such as *iambic* and *trochaic*. Meter, as a matter of definition, is the rhythmic element in poetry covering the number of lines in a stanza or verse, the number of syllables in a line as well as the arrangement of the syllables as to accentuation (Scholes, 1967). Any metrical structure involving an unaccented and an accented syllable is referred to as *Iambic*, while a poetic footing consisting of an accented plus an unaccented syllable is referred to as *Trochaic*. Furthermore, any metric structure with an accented syllable plus two unaccented syllables is referred to as *Dactylic*. Consequently, a hymn may be sung to any tune of the same meter. Long meter or long measure (LM) is “a poetic meter consisting of four-line stanzas in iambic tetrameter with alternate rhyme pattern of A-B A-B”. For instance “Abide with me” has a 10.10.10.10 (10.10 D) metrical setting. Choral music composers work around the *metrical/poetic* structures to compose or set *tunes* and *harmonies* to the text.

The metrical structures of hymn tunes are the common meter (CM) (popularly called ballad meter in English poetry), short meter (SM), and long meter (LM). CM consists of 8.6.8.6 number of syllables per line, respectively. SM consists of 6.6.8.6, reflecting number of syllables per line, respectively. As previously explained, LM consists of 8.8.8.8 number of syllables per line. There are other meters with *Hallelujahs* and *Refrains* as well as double meters and irregular meters. Examples are as follows: *Christ our Lord is Risen Today* (tune Easter Hymn) has metrical structure of 7.7.7.7 with Hallelujahs; *Will Your Anchor Hold* composed by William James

Kirkpatrick (1838-1921), has metrical structure of 10.9.10.9 with Refrain; *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, composed by Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847, tune Mendelssohn), has metrical structure of 7.7.7.7. D and Refrain; *Who is on the Lord's side* was adapted by John Goss (1800-1880, tune Armageddon) with double metrical structure of 6.5.6.5.6.5.D., while *In Dulci Jubilo* (Good Christian Men Rejoice) and *Adeste Fideles* (O Come, all ye faithful) are examples of tunes with Irregular meters.

### **Instrumentation and Performance Settings**

Instrumentation and the performance settings must be sanctified and dedicated, as well as the singers and the instrumentalists, if they are for the praise of God. In actualization of David's promise to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel, and in recognition of the purity of the heart of David, 2 Chronicles 5: 12-14 of *The Holy Bible* revealed the power of music in bringing down God's glory, when, by the reason of the **cloud**, the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God:

Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the alter, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets.

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of musick[sic.], and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord;

So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God (2 Chronicles 5: 12-14).

*One hundred and twenty (120) priests* playing the trumpets on one alter, joining singers and other instrumentalists in playing in one accord! What a glorious outing to praise and thank the Lord for His mercies, favours and kindness! God came down in a CLOUD! In validation of the spirituality of God, the gospel according to Saint John 4: 24 states: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth". How many of our priests support, let alone join, the Music Ministry in our churches nowadays? Your answer is as good as mine.

Hymns are usually performed with accompaniment based on the location and facilities available in the church. Traditionally, hymns are accompanied with the organ/keyboard instruments. In some other settings and climes, hymns are accompanied with the full complements of the orchestral instruments (as in the Apostolic Faith Church). There are also some Pentecostal churches that accompany hymns with traditional African instruments, for instance the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim. The Anglicans as well as the Methodists largely sing hymns and perform/present their anthems with organ accompaniment. However, there are also indigenous anthems, sacred art compositions and native airs that are accompanied with indigenous musical instruments, especially as stipulated by the composers of those anthems.

*Uses and Relevance of Hymns to Contemporary Worship Settings:* Uses and relevance of hymns to worship setting are enormous as are demonstrated and evident in the contemporary worships in different churches. The hymns set the mood for the worship services, from the processional to the recessional. In line with psalms and anthems, hymns project the praise, adoration and worship, and purify the mind sets of the worshippers towards righteousness. Hymns provide the ideal ambience for the hearts and minds for scriptural holiness, contemplation, sacrifices, consecrations of ministers, religious rites (solemnization of holy matrimony, baptism, child dedication, thanksgiving, pilgrimage, national and community services, full membership confirmation, holy communion, death, burial, memorial), liturgical settings and Christian seasons and festivals, and even the sermon. In close study and analysis of the attendant inspirations and liturgical implications, most hymns are complete sermons unto themselves.

### **Gospel Music—What Is It?**

Gospel Music may be defined as a simple repetitive folk-like music usually in stanzas and choruses, verses and choruses, or verses and refrain, whose texts are largely drawn from the gospel. Gospel Music can be referred to as the music depicting Christ's life and His teaching in the Gospels as recorded in the New Testament of the Bible. According to Williams (2022), “Gospel music was born from the traditional hymns and spiritual songs the Africans sang during the slave era. The spirituals were songs of hope sung by the enslaved people before [they gained their] freedom/emancipation.”

According to Johnson (2017),

Gospel music (also known as “Black gospel music” or “African American music”) is a sacred music genre that emerged in the 1920s out of a confluence of sacred hymns, spirituals, shouts, jubilee quartet songs, and Black devotional songs with noticeable blues and jazz rhythmic and harmonic influences. (<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/>).

Nwankpa (2003) defines Gospel music as composed vibrant songs or hymns influenced by neo-spirituals, blues, and jazz rhythms. The texts are religious, devotional and inspirational, drawing from biblical and evangelical contexts. There are Black Gospel music as well as White Gospel music. Black Gospel music is characteristically more expressive and intensely personal—a reflection of the magnitude of faith and hopes of the blacks through the years of slavery and torture. Gospel music expresses the message of Christianity, Christian faith, and Good News. Through Gospel music, joy is experienced and hope is expected. Gospel music provides succor to the challenges in human lives and strengthens faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) and his musical colleagues Ira D. Sankey (1840-1908), Philip P. Bliss (1838-1876), William Howard Doane (1832-1915), George Frederick Root (1820-1895), and Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) created and popularized what we now know as the gospel hymn or gospel music. The religious revivals of the 19th century are the source of the gospel music genre, which is a form of American Protestant music. Gospel music evolved into a well-liked commercial genre in the latter half of the 20th century, with gospel artists touring all over the world. Gospel music is not only a diverse Christian music genre, but it is also an intricate part of popular culture. Despite its roots in the church, gospel music is no longer bound to its walls.

Although, sometimes referred to as music of the lowest class in some quarters, gospel music is wildly sung in American camp meetings and the influence of this gospel music can also be felt in Britain and in many other parts of the world. The tunes of this gospel music are usually adapted from popular folk tunes and rhythms with a little more than alternations of the three primary chords of a key, namely the tonic, the dominant, and the subdominant with little variations.

Further exploration in the evolution of Gospel music explains it as a traditional music genre of Christian music laced with culture in which this music exists. Fundamentally, the implication of the gospel in gospel music shows that gospel music is the music that is derived from the liturgy and lyrics drawn from the four gospels—Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John. With simple popular tune in solo or in responsive pattern/call and response, gospel music explores and exploits the Christian faith based on the life of Jesus Christ, His teachings, commandments, death and resurrection and their implications. Gospel music varies according to culture and social context in which it operates. Consequently, its musical creativity, performance, and significance invariably echo the cultural idioms of the people. The creation of this genre was precipitated by the huge demand for popular songs that suited such occasions as camp and revival meetings, funerals and other individual occasions for which this art form provides hope and succor. As could be witnessed, this demand of creating this art form resulted in an outpouring of large number of hymns from composers and lyrics writers of all shades who drew their texts from or around

biblical ideas, expressing the dilemma, faith and hope of the commonplace people in the language they could discern (Nwankpa 2002). In relation to this socio-religious milieu, Loko and Loko (2018: 169) opine:

In religious and social gatherings, gospel music inarguably provides a special kind of window into the theological, liturgical, and social-cultural traditions among Christians. As a functional art, it has evolved to be an important Christian musical practice with diverse musical expressions serving as means of communication between God and persons as well as offering basis for socio-religious human response.

### **Gospel Music Genres and Typologies**

There are four genres of Gospel music. These are: Contemporary Gospel, Traditional Gospel, Quartet Gospel, and Praise and Worship. However, since gospel music functions as basis for socio-religious human responses and communication link between God and man, different types exist. These gospel music types include:

**1. The Spirituals:** The Spirituals were developed by the Black American slaves. The Black Americans applied their African musical idioms and heritage, with their experiences of being held in bondage in slavery, to Christian themes. With many negro-spirituals in a simple call and response pattern, the Spirituals are used both in the church and in the fields or work places. The term “spiritual” is derived from spiritual songs as recorded in the King James Bible translation of Ephesians 5:19— “speaking to yourselves in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord”.

Examples are “Lord I want to be a Christian”, “Over River Jordan”, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot”, “Deep River”, “Down by the Riverside”, “Every Time I Feel the Spirit”, “There Is A Balm In Gilead”, “When the Saints Go Marching In”, “This Little Light of Mine”, “Were You There”, “Kumbaya”, “I am so Glad”, “Go Down Moses”, “Go, Tell It On The Mountain”, “Steal Away to Jesus”, “Ezekiel Saw De Wheel”.

**2. The Traditional Gospel Music:** Composer/singer, Reverend Thomas A. Dorsey formed the name Traditional Gospel which features large church choirs with one or more soloists. As it is traditional with African Americans, the traditional black Gospel provides music expressing Christian lives. Popular in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Traditional Gospel music provides the source for urban contemporary gospel and Christian hip hop.

**3. The Gospel Blues Music:** As the name implies, Gospel blues is a form of blues based gospel music which is a combination of blues guitar and evangelistic lyrics. Among the notable Gospel blues performers are Thomas A. Dorsey, Blind Willie Johnson, and Rev. Gary Davis.

4. **The Shout Gospel Music:** Evolving from African American brass players this band with trombone, jazz, blues, gospel, Dixie and old-time spiritual idioms, the Shout Gospel music is very soulful and is derived from New Orleans brass band. Characterized by a very fast tempo, chromatic bass lines, snare hits and hand claps on the upbeat of each measure with the organ playing typically dominant seven chords while improvising over the blues notes, the pianist counter rhythms to the established rhythmic structure. The Shout Gospel music has the tradition of breaking into shouts or shouting and other catchphrases. Examples include Mahalia Jackson, Thomas Dorsey, the Georgia Mass Choir and Mississippi Mass Choir.

5. **The Southern Gospel Music:** As the name implies, Southern Gospel comes from the South-eastern United States of America. Its lyrics reveal personal or communal faith in the context of biblical teachings and Christian faith. The Southern Gospel Music commonly known as the quartet music with its traditional four men and a piano setting, this music provides a Christian alternative to the mainstream circular music in Southern USA.

6. **The Progressive Southern Gospel Music:** This is an offshoot of Southern Gospel. Progressive Southern Gospel is characterized its “blend of traditional southern Gospel instrumentation with instruments of country and pop music.”

7. **The Country Gospel Music:** This is variously known as Christian country gospel, White gospel or inspirational country gospel music. This genre is a blend of traditional spirituals with “Country and Appellation folk music” currently, Country Gospel music has progressed into mainstream country sound with inspiring country lyrics. It is a blend of cowboy music, mountain music and the music from the plantations of the Deep South. Country Gospel music has transformed into positive Christian Country music.

8. **The Contemporary Urban Gospel:** This can be considered to be a more polished version of traditional gospel. Its distinctive characteristics are drawn from modern rhythm and blues, jazz, and hip hop. Fundamentally, Contemporary Gospel Music has its roots in spirituals sung by the Southern slaves in the Americas. The songs of Contemporary Urban Gospel Music are usually categorized in the subgenre of praise and worship. In the praise the tempo is faster, the intensity is higher and the volume is louder. In the worship the tempo is slower and the music is more sublime to enable the music sink in.

9. **The Bluegrass Gospel Music:** Rooted in American mountain music, Bluegrass Gospel music is classed as a third subgenre of bluegrass. The Bluegrass Gospel Music has other

variants—the traditional and the progressive. The tempo of the Bluegrass Gospel Music is faster, the instrumental work is skillful with high-pitched harmonies.

**10. The Soul Gospel Music:** This can be considered as a variant of the Black Gospel music with quartet including the soul stirrers and pilgrim travelers. One of its distinguished solo artists that popularized the Soul Gospel music is Aretha Franklin. Although this type of Gospel music exhibits a lot of emotion, its subject matters are religious.

**11. The British Black Gospel Music:** This is the Gospel music of the Africans in the Diaspora living particularly in the United Kingdom. The British Black Gospel Music is variously referred to as urban contemporary gospel and UK Gospel music.

**12. The Celtic Gospel Music:** The Celtic Gospel Music is considered a hybrid of traditional Southern gospel music with Celtic influences which are part of Irish tradition.

**13. The Reggae Gospel Music:** It is identical as popular reggae with offbeat accentuation and with some type of Rastafarianism as the lyrics are drawn from the Gospel and Christian faith). See the lyrics of Bob Marley's "Redemption song" and "Amen" by unknown

**14. The Sacred Harp Singing:** This is traditional American sacred choral music with harp.

**15. The Sacred Steel Gospel Music:** This type of Gospel Music has the inclusion of the steel guitar which replaced the organ during worship.

**16. Black Gospel Music:** This is a synthesis or fusion of African based musical idioms and traditional European Christian hymns. (Gleaned from alan.white@earlygospel.com)

### **Structure and Characteristics of Gospel Music**

The structure is based on the adaptation of the music of the Western culture with African traditional idioms in the area of rhythm, language and text-tone relationship, singing style and instrumentation. As to be expected in Nigerian/African music, Gospel music particularly x-rayed in praise and worship genre attracts calls and responses, dancing, shouting and clapping of hands and foot stomping as part of rhythmic accompaniment. Consequently, some of the key elements in gospel music are call-and-response patterns, group singing, employment of diverse rhythmic instrumentation, intriguing dance steps and complex rhythms. Traditionally, the gospel music

reflects ethnic nationality, dialects, tones, cultural identities, and affirmation of the faith of the creators and users.

According to Gorlinski (n.d.), the structure of Gospel music is

Generally strophic (in verses) with a refrain, and its texts typically depict personal religious experiences and stress the importance of salvation. Most of the repertoire is set in a major key and is arranged in four-part harmony—similar in style to barbershop singing—with the melody in the top voice. Early gospel hymns had a relatively straightforward rhythmic and harmonic structure (using three basic chords: I, IV, and V), but as the tradition absorbed more influences from popular music, both its rhythmic and its harmonic vocabulary expanded. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/gospel-music>

It is imperative to note that in the midst of its traditional reflectivity, personal experiences are expressed or couched in the religiosity of the gospel music.

### **Africanization of Western Structures in Hymnody and Gospel Music—the Nigeria Experience**

Africanization can be regarded as the process of indigenizing structures or models which were hitherto foreign to the African culture and practices. It involves restructuring and adaptation of African ideals and ideas to service institutions, agencies and organizations in Africa for the use and benefits of Africans. Africanization connotes Afrocentricism, Afrocentric ideology and philosophy. Africanization reflects African conscience and consciousness, with a conscious attempt to do things the African way without sacrificing value, quality and standards. Supporting the effort towards indigenization of hymns and gospel music, Udoh (2020) opined that “there was need to create music types that were meaningful to worshippers, leading to proliferation of Church music types apart from hymns.” He further stated that “in order to touch lives at the grassroots level, and make singing meaningful, and in the name of indigenization, indigenous composers emerged with their indigenous composition coupled with the translated hymns to local languages” (p. 215). The foreign hymns lacked meaning to the indigenes, hence the need to Africanize these hymns. However, care has to be taken in the proliferation of music types and adaption of same to Church Music.

In clear terms, Nwankpa (2017) recommends careful use of philosophical adaptation in the creation of music types in the Church which he claims can be “likened and relevant to the process of rebuilding and reorganization.” In his opinion, the process of rebuilding and reorganization which can be corroborated with the Jerusalem walls “highlights the need for rebuilding Church music in Nigeria. This is because it has become obvious that in many churches, what parishioners

are exposed to turns out to be what may be referred to as music in the Church, and not Church Music.” He advises that “while church music is sanctified and has characteristic elements of sanctity, piety, and spirituality, music in the church can be described as unsanctified, worldly, profane, and unsacrosanct music played or performed in the church environment” (p. 383). The result of this is that the sanctity of worship service in which these music play significant roles, has been dragged into muddy water of “glorified secularism”. Therefore, in incorporating and adapting contemporary popular African/Nigerian musical practices for use in the Church, obscene lyrics and profane dance steps and gestures must be discouraged in our worship services. In Nigeria, gospel music has existed since the 19th century following the advent and arrival of the Methodist missionaries on September 24, 1842, and Anglican missionaries on December 19, 1842, with the introduction of choral music through the hymns which built the foundation of what is now known as Nigerian gospel music. Not long after, a Nigerian version was born out of a style and rhythm that was unique to the rich culture of its indigenous listeners, pioneered by Reverend Josiah J. Ransome-Kuti (grand-father of Fela Anikulapo-Kuti), who, as Church Organist of St. Peter's Church, Ake, Abeokuta, fused choral music with Yoruba language and new musico-rhythmic structures of the Yoruba culture. In that vein, Ransome-Kuti is considered the father of Nigerian gospel music and is recognized as the first Nigerian to record choral album in 1925 (Keazor, 2015; Obi, 2020). The Nigerian gospel music became indigenously derived hybridization of American gospel music, driven by the culture and needs of the users and audiences.

Consequently, the emergence of Gospel music in Nigeria dates back to the 1890s and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the times of Josiah J. Ransome-Kuti who himself was a composer of choral music that integrated the Yoruba music that was sung in the church. In the Eastern zone was the singer, composer, music director, teacher and preacher, Sir Ikoli Harcourt Whyte, who, as a patient at the Methodist Leprosy Colony, Uzuakoli in the present Abia State, became the first to write Gospel standard music in Igbo language. He composed over 300 works some of which have been published by Thomas Nelson Nigeria) Limited and the Methodist Church Nigeria (see Harcourt Whyte's *Abu Ekele Na Otuto*). It is also gratifying to note that there is a new (2022) publication of Ikoli Harcourt Whyte's works titled *Messages of Life and Living in 50 Select Songs*. This collection was compiled and produced by Achinivu Kanu Achinivu, under the Achinivu-Harcourt Whyte's Choral Association (The Chorale), Arochukwu Incorporated in partnership with the German Leprosy and TB Relief Association (GLRA), Enugu, published in both solfa and staff notations. *Bianu, Ndi Enyim Niile* (Come, All My Friends) and *Eb'obula O Na-aga, Udo* (Wherever He Goes, Peace) are two examples presented here of the hymns/gospel music compositions of Ikoli Harcourt Whyte in Igbo language and musical idioms (with English translation) (see Achinivu-Harcourt Whyte, 2022):

### 35. Bjanu, Ndi Enyi M Niile (Come, All My Friends)

Sir Ikoli Harcourt Whyte (1905-1977)  
 Composed August, 1940

**Doh is A**  
 Time: 4 crotchet beats per bar  
*In a lively style*

**SOPRANO ALTO**

1. Bia - nu, 'n - di e - nyi'm nii - le. ——— Bia - nu, u - mu Chi -

**TENOR BASS**

ne - ke; ——— Bia, k'any' nii - le we - ro - tu'o - lu ——— di'e - lu

too ——— Chi - ne - ke a - nyi. ——— O bu Ya ke - re'm -

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music. Each system has two staves: a soprano/alto staff and a tenor/bass staff. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first system covers measures 1-3, the second system covers measures 4-6, and the third system covers measures 7-9. The lyrics are: '1. Bia - nu, 'n - di e - nyi'm nii - le. ——— Bia - nu, u - mu Chi - ne - ke; ——— Bia, k'any' nii - le we - ro - tu'o - lu ——— di'e - lu too ——— Chi - ne - ke a - nyi. ——— O bu Ya ke - re'm -'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

10

ma - du, Mee kwa yi - si n'o - ki - ke;

13

Ya bu k'a - nyi nii - le we - re o - bi zu r'o - ke too

16

Chu - ku, Bi - ko, we - r'o - nu too - nu Chu - ku, too - nu

Bi - ko, to - nu Chu - ku, to - nu  
Bi - ko, jaa - nu Chu - ku, jaa - nu  
Bi - ko, fee - nu Chu - ku, fee - nu

19

Chu - ku, too - nu Chu - ku, Bi - ko, we - r'o - nu too - nu

Chu - ku, too - nu Chu - ku, Bi - ko, to - nu  
Chu - ku, jaa - nu Chu - ku, Bi - ko, jaa - nu  
Chu - ku, fee - nu Chu - ku, Bi - ko, fee - nu

22

Chu - ku, si Ji - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie.

Chu - ku, si Ji - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie.

Chu - ku, si Ji - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie.

25

Koros

N'e - zie, n'e - zie, n'e - zie, n'e - zie.

N'e - zie, O bu Chu ku n'e - zie, O bu Chu - ku n'e - zie'n - ke ke - r'u - wa n'i - gwe.

29

Bi - ko, we - r'o - nu too - nu Chu - ku, si "Je - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie."

Bi - ko, to nu Chu - ku, si "Je - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie."

Bi - ko, jaa nu Chu - ku, si "Je - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie."

Bi - ko, fee nu Chu - ku, si "Je - ho - va bu Chu - ku n'e - zie."

1. Bja-nụ, 'n- dj e-nyl'm nii-le,  
 Bja-nụ, ụ-mụ Chi-ne-ke,  
 Bja. K'any' nii-le we-r'o-tu'o-lu dj'e-lu too  
 Chi-ne-ke a-nyj.  
 Ọ bụ Ya ke-re'm-ma-dụ, Mee kwa  
 y'i-si'n-k'o-ki-ke.  
 Ya bụ: K'a-nyj nii-le we-re o-bi zu-r'o-ke  
 too Chu-ku.  
 Bi-ko, we-r'ọ- ụ too-nụ Chu-ku, too-nụ  
 Chu-ku, too-nụ Chu-ku.  
 bi-ko, we- r'ọ- ụ too-nụ Chu-ku, si: "Ji-ho-va  
 bu Chu-ku n'ezie".

KORQS:

N'ezie, Ọ bụ Chu-ku, n'e-zie, Ọ bụ Chu-ku,  
 N'ezie'n-ke ke-r"ụ-wa n'i-gwe.  
 Bi-ko, we- r'ọ- ụ too-nụ Chu-ku, si: "Ji-ho-va  
 bụ Chu-ku n'e-zie".

2. Chi-ne-ke ke-re 'ụ-wa, na-ra o-tu-t' ụ-mụ  
 G'n-ke ha ji o-bi'n-k'e-ke-le  
 N'e-to n'e-be'a n'e-be nii-le.

Ọ bụ Gj nw'o-tu-t' a-nyj, 'Go-zi Gj bụ kwa'  
 n- K'a-nyj ,  
 'Kpa na'n-so-gbu nii-le' n-k'o-bi Gj  
 g'e-gbo-chi-r'any' ha nii-le.  
 Bi-ko, we-r'ọ-ny jaa-nụ Chu-ku, jaa-nụ  
 Chu-ku, jaa-nụ Chu-ku.  
 Bi-ko, we-r'ọ-ny jaa-nụ Chu-ku, si: "Ji-ho-va  
 bụ Chu-ku n'e-zie."

3. O-tu-tu na'n-sọ-pụ-rụ dj-rj E-z' a-nyj, Ji-zọs,  
 'Ke ji ọ-ba-ra dj'o-k'ọ-nụ gba-pụ-t'any'n'u-  
 gwu Kal-va-rj.  
 I bụ Nwa'n-ke Ji-ho-va, bụ-rụ kwa Nwa'n-ke  
 Me-ri,  
 Nwa'n-ke Chu-ku, Nwa'n-ke'm-ma-dụ,  
 O-tu-to nii-le dj-ri Gj.  
 Bi-ko, we-r'ọ-ny fee-nụ Chu-ku, fee-nụ  
 Chu-ku, fee-nụ Chu-ku.  
 Bi-ko, we-r'ọ-ny fee-nu Chu-ku, sj: "Ji-ho-va  
 bụ Chu-ku n'ezie".

..... 35. Come, All My Friends .....

1. Come, all my friends,  
 Come, ye children of God,  
 Come, let us with a high voice glorify our  
 God.  
 It is He who created mankind, and gave  
 him dominion over all creation  
 Therefore, let us with all our hearts give  
 praise to God.  
 Please, praise God with joy, praise God  
 Praise God please, praise God and say  
 Jehovah is God indeed,

Chorus:

Indeed, He is God,  
 Indeed He is God,  
 Who created the heavens and the earth.  
 Praise him with joy saying "indeed he is  
 God"

2. God, the Creator of the world,  
 Accept the praises of Your children here  
 and everywhere,  
 which they render with thankful hearts,  
 You deserve our praises,

And Your blessings are ours,  
 It is You who satisfies our hearts desires  
 and solve our problems,  
 Please, glorify God with joy, glorify God,  
 glorify God,  
 Please, glorify God with joy,  
 Saying: "Jehovah is God indeed".

3. Praise and honour belong to our King  
 Jesus,  
 Who, with his precious blood, redeemed  
 us at the Mount of Calvary.  
 You are the Son of Jehovah, and also the  
 Son of Mary,  
 Son of God, Son of man,  
 May all praises be due to You.  
 Please, worship God with joy, worship God,  
 worship God;  
 Please, worship God with joy,  
 And say: "Jehovah is God indeed".

## 21. Eb'obula O Na-aga, Udo (Wherever He Goes, peace)

Doh is A

Sir Ikoli Harcourt Whyte (1905-1977)

Time: 3 crotchet beats per bar

SOPRANO  
ALTO

'Ma-du'n-ke n'e-me u - do k'o di n'e - ti - ti u -mu'm-ma-du'i-be

TENOR  
BASS

6

ya, n'e - me k'e - be nii -le'n - ke gba - r'o-chi - chi - ri n'e - ti-ti'm

11

17

ka e-gwu n'o-chi, ya na o-mu-m'o-ma nii -le'n - k'u-mu Chu-ku, n'e-

23

to, n'a-ba u - ba n'e-ti-ti'n-di gba-ra ya gbu - ru-gbu - ru

Koros

29

E - b'o-bu-la o n'a-ga, u - do, e - b'o-bu-la o n'a-ga, u - do, u - do.

35

do. Ka u - do'n-ke Ji - ho - va'N - na n'O-kpa-ra

E - b'o-bu-la o n'a-ga, ka

1. 'Ma-dụ'n-ke n'e-me u-do k'ọ-dị n'e-ti-ti ụ-  
 mụ'm-ma-dụ'i-be ya,  
 N'e-me k'e-be nii-le'n-ke gba-r'ọ-chi-chi-rị  
 N'e-ti-ti'm-ma-dụ gi-be ya dị-k'e-hi-hie,  
 'Ma-dụ'n-ke n'a-chọ i-me ka e-gwu n'ọ-chị,  
 Ya na o-mu-m'ọ-ma nii-le'n-k'ụ-mụ Chu-ku  
 N'e-to n'a-ba ụ-ba n'e-ti-ti'n-dị gba-ra ya  
 gbu-ru-gbu-ru;
2. 'Ma-dụ'n-ke n'e-nwe o-bi'ụ-tọ n'i-m'ọ-lụ ya,  
 N'e-me i-he nii-le si-te n'i-hụ-na-nya'n-ke  
 Dị n'i-me Ji-zọs bụ'O-nye'n-zọ-pụ-ta  
 N'o-ny'i-kpe ụ-wa nii-le;  
 'Ma-dụ'n-ke n'e-nwe o-mi-koo n'i-m'ọ-kwu ya,  
 Ya na o-mu-me nii-le'n-ke si n'a-ka ya,
3. Ọ g'e-nwe si-te n'e-l'i-gwe'n-ọ-zi n'u-do,  
 Ya na a-ma-ra'n-ke si n'a-ka Chi-ne-ke,  
 Ya na u-ru na'n-dụ'n-ke Chu-ku kwa-do-be-re  
 ụ-mụ Ya nii-le.  
 Ọ g'e-nwe o-ny'i-nye nii-le n'e-ny'ụ-tọ n'o-bi,  
 Ya na a-kụ nii-le si n'a-ka Chu-ku,  
 Ọ g'e-ke-ta kwa'n-dụ e-bi-gh'e-bi  
 Rue m-gbe ni-l'e-bi-gh'e-bi.
4. Ni-hi'n-k'a, we-re o-bi'n-ke zu-ru o-ke,  
 Ya na ọ-chi-chọ'n-ke yi-ri'n-ke Chi-ne-ke  
 N'e-me i-he nii-le'n-ke g'e-me ka n-dụ'n-k'a  
 ju-pụ-ta n'ọ-nụ.  
 Ni-hin'o-mu-m'ọ-ma nii-le'm-ma-dụ me-re  
 N'i-me a-j'ụ-wa'n-k'aa ga-dị-rị-kwa-ra ya  
 na'n-dụ'n-ke dị n'i-ru  
 E-be ọ-gwu-gwu'oge a-ga-gh'a-dị kwa.

Korọs: E-b'ọ-bụ-la ọ n'a-ga, u-do,  
 E-b'ọ-bụ-la ọ n'a-ga, u-do,  
 Ka u-do'n-ke Ji-ho-va'N-na,  
 n'Ọ-kpa-ra Ya, ya na'M-muọ'n-sọ  
 Dị-rị ya'm-gbe nii-le. A-men.

..... 21. Wherever He Goes, Peace .....

1. Anyone who makes peace between his  
 fellow human beings,  
 Who makes every dark place between his  
 fellow human being be like daylight,  
 One whose desires to make merriment  
 and laughter of God grow and multiply  
 among those who surrounds him:
2. One who derives joy from his work, does  
 everything  
 with the love that is found in Jesus who is  
 Saviour and Judge of the whole world.
3. He will receive/obtain from heaven  
 blessings, peace and  
 the grace that comes from God,  
 And he will partake of the life which God  
 has prepared for all His children.  
 He will receive from heaven all the  
 gifts that give pleasure to the heart.
4. for this reason, do everything  
 wholeheartedly and with  
 the desire that resembles that of God.  
 Do every thing that will make this life full of  
 joy.  
 For every good deed that one does in this  
 evil world will follow  
 him in future life where time is endless.

### **Instrumentation of Gospel Music in Nigeria**

In the bid to Africanize Gospel music, African traditional instruments (shakers, maracas, pot drums, wooden drums or slit drums, membrane drums, gong, xylophone and others) were/are incorporated with the Western instruments (keyboard, guitar, brass, woodwind instruments like saxophone and others), plus the drum set (with bass, tenor, snare, cymbals and so on). As mentioned, the structure of the music is in call and response with improvisation from a skilful caller or soloist.

Nowadays in our churches, especially in the Orthodox Churches, there is the Gospel music in the genre of “praise and worship” now used side-by-side with the well-structured and inspired traditional hymn singing, especially during “praise” (after Call to Worship) and during offerings/thanksgiving. It is not uncommon to find the preachers intone a Gospel music as soon as they mount the pulpit to give the sermon even following the singing of the hymn for message. Sometimes, some of these so-called “gospel music” are not only irrelevant to the theme of the sermon and liturgy, but also do not seem to glorify God. Whereas the hymns are relatively quieter music presentations during church services, the Gospel music, especially in praise type, are the “shouting” ones.

### **Example of contemporary Nigerian Gospel Artistes and their Songs**

In Nigeria, gospel music fans and patrons, both Christians and non-Christians, enjoy listening to top-tier gospel music artistes not only in the church settings, but also in other social and religious activities and events such as weddings, birthday celebrations, burials, coronations, thanksgivings, concerts, and anniversaries. These gospel artistes compose and perform catchy and gratifying gospel songs which the listeners enjoy through music streaming services, CDs, electronic mass media (Radio and TV), YouTube, and other social media outlets. Some of these artistes and their songs are:

- Osinachi Nwachukwu – “Ekwueme”
- Mercy Chinwo – “Chinedum”
- Frank Edwards – “Under the Canopy”, “Omemma”
- Nathaniel Bassey – “Book of Life”, “Hallelujah Amen”
- Lara George – “Dan Saki”
- Emmanuel Benjamin, popularly known as **Eben** – “Victory”
- Osinachi Egbu, popularly known as **Sinach** – “Way Maker”
- Freke Umoh – “Hallelujah”
- Kaydee Numbere – “Oghene Doh”
- Samson Moge kwu, popularly known as **Samsong** – “E Dey Work”

### **Where do we go from here?**

Musical practices all over Christendom go through evolutionary trends. From the Italian Motets

and Masses of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina to the English anthems of Henry Purcell, to the classical traditions of the serious composers such as George F. Handel, J.S. Bach, Leopold A. Mozart, Joseph Hayden, Ludwig van Beethoven, Benjamin Britten, Samuel Sabastin Wesley, John Goss and others, plus the hymn writers Charles Wesley, Ira D. Sankey, John Newton, Isaac Watts, Dwight Moody, up to J.J. Ransome-Kuti, Harcourt Whyte, Felix Nwauba, Sam Ojukwu, Oyibosiya Eberewarie, Erasmus Jenewari, W.W.C. Echezona, Laz Ekwueme, Osinachi Egbu, Frank Edwards, Mercy Chinwo, Emmanul Benjamin, Lara George, Nathaniel Bassey, to mention but these few, music in churches has witnessed diverse structural idioms based on the cultures and traditions in which they operate. With choral competitions in the dioceses, archdioceses, provinces and conference areas in the orthodox churches there will soon be largesse of indigenous music compositions in Nigeria for worship services. Obviously, these compositions would have African cultural musical idioms reflective of the indigenization and autonomy of religions in Nigeria.

As part of the succession plans, religious organizations are encouraged to work out modalities for replacement of their music professionals, training those who will replace the old generations of musicians in composing music, acquiring performance skills, advocating for high standard of spirituality and artistry in music in the church to glorify God, and effective administration. In other not to create a sad lacuna when the current personnel exit either by old age or death, continuous professional development is therefore encouraged.

I, therefore, recommend that the various denominations should set up committees to commission, compile and publish worthy indigenous hymn compositions, gospel music and anthems for use and to enhance worship services in Nigerian churches and church related activities for the benefit of all and to the glory of God. Thus, to qualify to be used in the Church so that the glory of the Lord will fill the house of God (2 Chronicles, 5: 14), hymns and gospel music must possess the quality of praise and glorification of God, and these sung by the people—individuals or as a group or congregation.

### **Conclusion**

When in our Music God is glorified, His presence is manifested before His people (see 2 Chronicles 5: 12-14). As Music is an essential ingredient for praise and worship of God Almighty, especially in the Church, care, discipline, commitment and appropriate scriptural knowledge must combine with sound sonic craftsmanship to advance Church music in hymns, Psalms, and Gospel music to the glory of God.

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