

NBTS
Ab 51-h
M. Div.

**HISTORTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF
NIGERIAN BAPTIST MUSIC WORKSHOP
(1971-1999): ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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ABSTRACT

One of the ultimate purposes of music in the Church is to lead worshippers to sense the presence of God, as Lord, God Almighty, in their midst. To achieving these divinely roles, such music must be led, played, and used by devoted people, skillful enough to give the best music to God. Knowledgeable enough of the saving grace of God, willfully offering their music as a worthy sacrifice to God, and evangelistically using same music as a proclamation of God's love, fully and divinely revealed in the person of Jesus Christ to the world. The Nigerian Baptist Convention's efforts to reach this ideal started in 1971 via the Committee of Nigerian Baptist Music Workshop. This committee's activities is the focus of this research project. While the project underscores the fruitful activities of this body, over the years, to improve the skills of music leaders in the Church, it observes that twenty-eight years after the inception of the Music Workshop much still needs to be done in the writer's opinion as regards qualitative church music for effective and meaningful worship experience among Baptist churches. The writer equally believes that more emphasis should be placed on ministering through music - as such, courses on hymnody, hymn in worship, praise worship administration, and church musician's ethics, among many, should be packaged into learner's experiences at the workshop. The research project recommends the revamping of hymn singing heritage to which Baptists are famous. It supports use of church orchestra, as well as the use of ethnic instruments in worship, but the writer's concept of "doctrine of moderation" should guide such performance practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Need for Recommendations

Paul's words to the church in Philippi are pertinent here: "... But one thing I do forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize . . ." (Philippians 3:13-14). By Paul's thesis here, the NBMW needs, in its future endeavours, to strain toward the goal for the prize to be won, hence, the need for recommendations.

To maintain the status quo, and debunk the impression of resting on its oars, the Workshop's Executive Committee welcomes critique and comments both verbal and written. Such comments are processed and suggestions effected for the enhancement of set goals.

Two letters have been picked concerning observations, comments of some people, that definitely call for need for recommendations.

The Secretary of The Music Committee, Lagos State Baptist Conference, Mr. O. Faniran, in his letter dated March 28, 1989 had observed:

From all indications, most instructors were hand-picked at the last minute to teach during the workshop . . . No wonder why many of them were ill-prepared when the session began. The activities of instructors were never monitored including what to teach, the stuff to teach, their method of presentation, etc. The level and/or knowledge of students being taught were not known, therefore, they could not be classified for effectiveness.

The indigenous music class concentrated more on teaching indigenous music rather than teaching how to compose them. From all indications, it did not look as if what we used to have from year to year was a result of any committee but a solo-effort of a devoted and energetic individual.¹

¹Mr. O. Faniran, Letter to the Chairman, Music Workshop committee, NBC, 28 March 1989, pp. 1-2.

Earlier, Mrs. Eveline F. Miller, had made an observation of a music performance at Iwo. In her letter dated March 14, 1989, she observed:

The service was a disaster. In most cases - 3.5 hours long and most of it taken up in introductions and dancing around the church The basic reason for my being upset was the disastrous music. I've never been in a situation when ALL of it was so bad! I talked to Osad about it on Monday and we both felt we should write you and see if Julius Abioye (the writer) or you (Chief Alma Rohm) could talk to the music leaders at First Oluokotun about what is happening there and see if help could be rendered.²

Attached to the letter was a sheet tagged "Observations of Music in Service on March 19, 1989, by Mrs. Eveline F. Miller, NBTS, Ogbomoso." The observations include:

1. Western instruments - all playing too loud, too fast, too jazzy and not in key with one another.
2. Musicians seemed to lack any sensitivity to tone, pitch, volume, tempo, Do any of them know anything about music?³

It is as a result of comments like this that the writer, through set of questionnaire, asks for opinions, suggestions and comments from NBMC participants - learners, instructors as well as pastors. Below are recommendations from participants:⁴

1. Counsellor E. O. Afolabi, FBC, Ekosin:

"The NBC should reduce the cost of registration to encourage more churches to participate.

2. Mr. O. Faniran, Music Director, Lagos Conference, Member, FBC, Oke-Oba, Agege:

"The NBC should mount up strategy to generate interest in music among Baptist pastors - many show lukewarm attitude."

²Eveline F. Miller, Personal Letter to Chief Alma Rohm, March 14, 1989, p. 1.

³Miller.

⁴All comments/ recommendations from participants are taken from questionnaire, administered; August 9-13, 1999

3. Mr. Gregory Akenuwa, Central Baptist Church, Benin City, Edo Conference:

“All conferences should have workshop committee to do workshop at conference levels.”

4. Mr. Temitope Alade, Gateway Baptist Church, Ibadan

“The awareness of NBMW among Baptist Churches is not wide enough. The P. R. O. of the NBC should act on this.”

5. Mr. Soruke, T. A., Ibara Baptist Church, Abeokuta

“The venue of NBMW should never be shifted to other place. But accommodation should be improved upon.

6. Mrs. A. Oyetunde, Christ Baptist Church, Alimoso: Lagos Conference

“Since this forum is a worship avenue, encourage stewardship of giving through taking of offerings like the Convention session sort

7. Mrs. M. A. Amoo, FBC, Idikan, Ibadan Central Association.

“The NBC should think seriously about the NBMW, as a forum for grooming for youths. Heavy premium should be placed on this.

8. Mr. Z. A. Majonagbe, Ifako Baptist Church, Ifako, Agege.

“Participants should be endorsed by their pastors, to forestall unChristianly attitudes stealing, offensive dressing, etc.”

9. Rev. A. A. Adeola, Oluwole Baptist Church, Iseyin

The cooperation of the music workshop needs a review. For example, the Chairman, NBC Music Committee, Dr. P. O. Davidson has not been seen much at the Workshop, yet he is a member of NBMW Committee.

(Also) The participants in the Music Workshops should be limited to the ones duly recommended by the churches just as it is with the registration for the NBC Convention sessions. The NBC should not fold her arms concerning the quota given to the Baptist missionaries which leads to the proposed exit of the coordinator of the Music Workshop from Nigeria.

2. Recommendations of the Writer

Apart from the copious recommendations of the NBMW's participants, the writer believes that for the workshop to fully fulfill her set objectives, and for her to rightfully take her place in the "Prognostic Years" (2000 - 2007), some further recommendations are pertinent. They include.

1. The Registration Form should request for more information from participants whereby educational background of participants/instructors is made available as further guide to classification of students into classes, as well as fixation of instructors to suitable classes.

2. Although some school of thought believes that workshop participants can live in hotels and houses of relations around the "Workshop Camp", the writer objects on grounds that music workshop sessions call for basic teaching of music concepts, and not avenues of meetings to taking reports, and endless debates. As such adequate account should be provided for participants and Lydia Directors, Royal Ambassador counsellors, and youth leaders be used as hostel wards.

3. Workshop routine-checkers, should be put in place to forestall aimless wandering about of learners; as well as monitor teaching effectiveness of teachers.

4. The NBC should expand the function of her Music Committee, to include participation in NBMW activities.

5. The Chairman of NBC Music Committee should, as a matter of protocol, be mandated to be involved in the planning, execution and evaluation of workshop proceedings.

6. The NBC should, as a matter of necessity, budget for, and subsidize workshop expenses, so as to allow for minimum comfort of instructors who sometimes are made to sleep on bare floor, for lack of sleeping facility, and are never paid any stipend!

7. At whatever area of participation of instructors, the minimum qualification should be the NCE certificate.

8. Participants should be made to wear identification tags - to forestall intruders sneaking in to steal instruments, and items of participants.

