

EFFECTS OF GRADUAL NEGLECTS OF HYMN SINGING IN
BAPTIST WORSHIP

A LONG ESSAY SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF
THE NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
OGBOMOSO

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY
(M.DIV.TH)

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MATRIC NUMBER 12/0135

JUNE, 2015

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of gradual neglects of hymn singing in Baptist worship, with a particular reference to Baptist Churches in Chosen Baptist Association of Ogbomosho Baptist Conference, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study examined ways by which hymn singing can be improved in order to stimulate the interest of the worshippers in the hymn singing and to aid church growth. The study raised some hypotheses to arouse the interest of respondents in order to collect information from them to ascertain the effects of hymns singing in our Christian worship. A set of questionnaire was designed and administered to collect relevant information from the respondents. The population of this study consisted samples of ministers, music ministers, instrumentalists, choirs, and church members of Chosen Baptist Association. Sixty questionnaires were distributed and all the questionnaires were returned and these formed the population used in this study. The views of church pastors, music ministers, instrumentalists, choirs, and the church members were critically examined, and it was revealed that for a meaningful hymn singing in the Christian worship to come to pass, the ministers, especially the church pastor and the music minister, have a great role to play. The church required pastors who are well-equipped with the word of God, great commission, sound in musical knowledge, caring attitude toward church members and people in the community and be able to motivate people toward God's agenda. Also hymn festival and music cantata should not be neglected by the church. If all these are in place, there is bound to be a tremendous increase in the hymn singing in Baptist churches.

CONCLUSION

It cannot be over-emphasized that hymn serves a very important aspect of Christian worship. Hymn enables everyone to take part in the worship service. Good church music lifts up the soul to God. It drives away fear, sorrow, and fills the mind with joy⁷³.

If the worshippers are to have an effective music ministry, the church must include the expenses of Music Workshop in her annual budget. Similarly, the Music Fundamentals taught in the Seminary in Ogbomoso is another advantage to all churches. It is pertinent that all churches in Nigerian Baptist Convention make use of this opportunity whenever it is available.

Another means of training people for the purpose of handling hymn singing ministry effectively is the Baptist Music workshop organized by the Nigerian Baptist Convention and Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Iwo and Ogbomoso respectively. Statistics shows that participation in these courses by our local churches

⁷² Rev.E.A. Adedayo, *Worship RE 591 Notes and Outlines*,(Nigeria Baptist Convention, Ogbomoso), P.2.

⁷³ Frame, John. *Worship in Spirit and Truth: A Refreshing Study of the Principles and Practice of Biblical Worship* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1996), 512.

is not a waste of time. Churches which send delegates to these courses have highly benefited immensely.

The churches under Nigerian Baptist Convention should try to make judicious use of the workshop that the Church Music Department normally organize in Ogbomoso. In the last one offered in 2014, only a few churches attended from Ogbomoso and its environs. Whereas an individual sponsored two of his children in the course, there were three churches that sponsored a candidate each. If more importance is attached to it, it would improve our hymn singing in the church.

Similarly, the researcher admonishes all lovers of hymns to submit themselves to the call of God whenever this is given through the church. May we emulate Isaiah in his answer and submission to the call of God when he said! “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, “Here am I, send me”.

In cases that we did not have volunteer that is ready to go for the training, the church must be ready to sponsor delegates to the seminar. Bearing in mind that God gives each of us some gifts to use for His glory, we should not bury the gifts, but endeavor to use them for the glorification of God through Jesus Christ. In order that we may have this done effectively, the researcher has the following recommendations to give.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All the Baptist churches need to make attendance of the Baptist Music Workshop a point of duty to be performed regularly. The churches should make sure that they sing hymns at least 3 times in a service. Other evangelical

activities in the church are not separable from the music ministry. The music ministry in itself is evangelical, and it is a means of evangelism.

2. On the part of the association, it is advisable that hymn singing or emphasis on music ministry should be included in their programs. During the quarterly meetings of the associations, the need for attending these invaluable music (hymn) courses should be stressed, and the date fixed for the courses should be announced. By so doing from time to time, the churches that had not been sending candidates may then make it a point of duty to do so. In association to all these, there is the need for an Association Music Director. It is of great significance to promote better church music in all the associations.
3. From the responses of some churches to the researcher's questionnaire, it is observed that insufficient publicity is given to the music courses arranged by the seminary because some churches claimed to be unaware of the courses. Secondly, it seems that the course opportunity is limited to the churches in Ogbomoso township alone. For instance, the Music Fundamental course should be made compulsory for all the pastors and should be made a course for a whole session.
4. The Music Fundamental Course that is being organized by the seminary should be a weekend program and the hostels should be opened for use so that the churches outside Ogbomoso will be able to benefit from the courses and should be made as free as possible.

While we glorify God for the improvement of hymn singing in our churches in Nigerian Baptist Convention of recent but mention needs to be made of some deficiencies among the music minister and choirs need to take care of:

a. Choosing of Appropriate Hymn.

The researcher encourages our indigenous choir director to be mindful of the hymn chosen so as to pass across to people the specific message for which the hymn is composed. “The artistic goal of the performer is to reach the audience. A song should therefore reflect what we say and mean”. “Unfortunately this is not the case with some choirs. They sing songs void of any spiritual message. They are not just good music”.⁷⁴

The message of our hymns should relate to the occasion in which it is sung. In his own comment, Dr. Dele Ogunlade in one of the singing seminarian said that the hymn choosing should be appropriate for each occasion and for specific purpose.⁷⁵ It is once said that:

When people of other nations want to make something beautiful, they could draw and paint pictures or carve statues and reliefs. But the people of God could not make any graven image and even picture seemed much like images. They could write poems and stories, and they compose music.⁷⁶

The Christian worshippers are now the people of God. Hence, let us compose music and good hymns. On the composition or singing of praise and worship, the researcher advises that care should be taken such that the song will contain a message which is appropriate with and relevant to the occasion for which the song will be rendered. It is risky to just pick a song, long composed for one occasion, to be sung on another occasion without examining the relevance of the message of the song to the occasion.

b. Drumming and Dancing.

⁷⁴ Kendall, R. T. *Worshipping God: Rediscovering the full dimension of worship* (Ibadan: Scripture Union Press and Books Ltd, 1989).87

⁷⁵ Dele Ogunlade, Singing Seminarian Class, 2012.

⁷⁶ Hustad Donald, *Church Music in Worship and Renewal* (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing Press,1993), 43.

