

Gospel Music And Sustainability Of Christian Ministry In The Third Millennium

Alozie Iroanya

Abstract

The paper examined the tremendous power of gospel music as vehicle for the transformation of the nation because of its unique characteristics to impact on the mindset of the audience or listeners. The study adopted a survey descriptive method to ascertain the potency of music as tool for evangelism and national transformation. Interestingly, the prevailing issues explored in the paper include the biblical background of music, the growth and development of gospel music in Nigeria, music and capacity development as well as music and the promotion of cultural heritage. It revealed that music can often touch people in a way that a sermon cannot as it can bypass geographical, ideological, racial or intellectual barriers and take the message straight to the heart. It was recommended that singing groups should develop out of the harmony of the members' lives together, not just the harmony of their music. Christian musicians must be recognized as true ministers and be spiritually equipped and supported as such

Key Words: Gospel Music, Evangelization, Ministry, Transformation, Millennium

Introduction

Gospel music in Nigeria is towing a very interesting and evangelical dimension in recent times. The understanding that God and man met on the altar of praise (Otti:2010) is interesting slogan among Christians in Nigeria. Warren (1995:279) with glowing pride affirms that, music is an integral part of life. Africans eat with it, drive with it, sleep with it, relax with it and even dance to it. The great Nigerian pastime is

neither football nor politics but music and sharing of opinions about it. Consequently, a song can often touch people in a way that a sermon cannot. Music can bypass intellectual barriers and take the message straight to the heart. It is a potent tool for evangelism.

Music is a communication media that can cross almost any geographical, ideological or racial barrier. It has a unique ability to touch the soul and arrest the heart. It is a language of the spirit (Joyner; 1994:88). Those who know this language and can use it effectively, Joyner (1994:88) opined, have been “entrusted with a potent weapon in the battle for the hearts of man. Anointed music will be one of the church’s biggest guns in the battle of the last days.” Hence, music like other works of arts enchants. A good composition and hit evokes instant overflow of powerful emotions. A listener to an artful rendition many either “laugh or cry deliriously, or do both at the same time. Under such a spell, a listener may dance and clap in tune with the song, or sit rooted to a spot and immerse his entire being in the voice, lyrics and accompaniment of the song” (Idam; 2009:23). Accordingly, this paper is focused on the distinctive characteristics of music as a vehicle for the evangelization of the nation.

The Biblical Background of Music

It is evident from the frequent references in the Old Testament (OT) that music played an important part in Hebrew culture. According to tradition Jubal the son of Lamech, who was the father of all those who

“play the lyre and pipe” (Gen.4:21), was the inventor of music.

The close relation between the pastoral and the musical arts is shown in that Jubal had an elder brother Jabal who was ‘father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle’ (Gen.4:20)” (Kitchen; 1992:800).

At a later stage music was consecrated to the service of the temple worship, but found secular use also, from early times. Music, Packer and Tenney (1980:495-496) affirmed, was an “important part of everyday life. Merry making, weddings, and funerals were not complete without music. Even war relied on music, since special instruments sounded the call to battle”. Expectedly, the Hebrews developed the shophar, an instrument like a trumpet with loud, piercing tones (Exod. 32:17-18; Judg. 7:18-20).

More so, music, singing and dancing were common at feast (Isa. 5:12; Am. 6:5). In particular, Kitchen (1992:800) noted that they were “features of vintage festivals (Isa.16:10) and of marriage celebrations (Macc.9:37-39). Kings had their singers and instrumentalists (2Sam.19:35; Eccl.2:8). The young men at the gates enjoyed their music (Lam.5:14). Even the harlot increased her seductive powers with songs (Isa.23:16)”. Again, as music formed an integral part of Hebrew social life, so it had its place in their religious life. The Israelites’ formal worship observed various rituals prescribed by God. Music served as an accompaniment to these rituals. Also, beyond formal worship within the temple, music was a part of other religious activities. For instance, feasts began with a “musical proclamation; then music, singing, and even dancing were part of the celebration. Women singers and musicians were allowed to participate” (Packer and Tenney; 1980:496).

Furthermore, Hebrew music involved poetry, song, religion and epic. Music helped narrators recall the wording of the epics, which tended to be extremely long pieces with dozens of verses and many names of people and places. By rhyming the lines, narrators found they could more easily remember the intricate story they had to tell. For instance, the first recorded appearance of story music was when Miriam, Moses’ sister sang with joy after the Jews escaped the Pharaohs’ men (Exod.15:19-21). Many of the Psalms were epics (Psa. 114,136-137) and the prophets sometimes burst forth in epic songs (Isa.26, Hab.3). Hence, Packer and Tenney (1980:497) opines that the “melodies of the Psalms and other story songs were well-known in their time, and were probably sung in verses by choirs”. Accordingly, the Hebrews considered the story songs an essential part of their worship. Their music sprang from the soul of a people whose everyday life was religiously ordered.

Gospel Music: Towards an Understanding

The centrality of music in the Nigerian Church is only natural considering that nowhere in the world is music a part of the very process of living than in Africa. Although there is a diversity of style of musical expression, yet music has become so important in today’s Nigerian Church that it has acquired a ministerial status. Actually, Onwochei (2006) in Hudgens and Trillo (1990) observes that music became so important that “regardless of one’s particular field of

endeavor in Christian service today, music has a major role to play” 428. Therefore, Onwochei believes that praying and praising are still true thermometers of the spiritual health of individual believers as well as local assemblies. Consequently, pastors now invest so much in the area of music. In fact, it is not uncommon to find pastors in Nigeria investing huge amount of money in the purchase and maintenance of musical instruments long before they acquire a personal, non-rented worship centre. Musicians are sought for, and hired and even those already working with another church are encouraged to move oftentimes by being offered better pay package.

Accordingly, evangelism and music are at best partners and the use of music for preaching is a fundamental understanding of the function and purpose of art. This is especially so since it is on record as far back as 1873, that “Dwight L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey formed the earliest evangelistic team of preacher and musician; Mr. Moody will preach the gospel and Mr. Sankey will sing the gospel (Onwochei in Wilson, 2006:427). Overtly, music is one of the main carriers of religious ideas, beliefs, doctrine and myths. It is strongly believed that music serves as a conveyor of religious ideas, and that it has always been a language of religion. This is a fact as far as Peter Lierop is concerned;

It is a well known fact that people often find it difficult to express in words their deep innermost feelings in religion. It has been shown on the other hand however, that where spiritual experience is too deep for verbal expression, music will speak with meaning and power. Music in its elevated state, is a truly important medium of religious expression (Onwochei; 2006:426).

From the foregoing analysis, it is our considered opinion that what makes music Christian or otherwise is basically the lyrics. In other words, a song is Christian or not depending on the choice of words of the composer on his perceived status in his operational environment as a Christian person and on his lifestyle. Therefore, a Christian music is composition by Christians that express either personal or a communal belief regarding Christian life and faith, that is, about God, His attributes, relationship with His Creation, relationship between man and man as stipulated by God. It is that which speaks of the basic tenets of the Christian faith, bringing out most or some of it, accompanied with melody and harmony.

Indeed, gospel music is a composition whose lyrical content has to do with the teachings of the Bible, about norms acceptable to Christendom and based on the understanding of Biblical teachings. Common themes of Christian music include praise, worship, penitence, and lament, and its forms vary widely across the world. Like other forms of music, Wikipedia.Org (2013:1) contends that

The creation, performances, significance, and even the definition of Christian music vary according to culture and social context. Christian music is composed and performed for many purposes, ranging from aesthetic pleasure, religious or ceremonial purposes, or as an entertainment product for the market place.

Among the most prevalent uses of Christian music are in church worship or other gatherings. Most Christian music involves singing, whether by the congregation or by a specialized sub group, such as a soloist, trio, quartet, choir or worship band or both.

The Growth and Development of Gospel Music in Nigeria

According to Adedeji (2013:1-3) gospel music in Nigeria developed from the music used by indigenous Pentecostal Churches on evangelistic parades between 1930 and 1960's. The second source was the music used at Christian social functions such as naming, wedding and other festal church occasions in between the 1920s and 1950's. The third antecedent was the Christian music performed by missionary school bands during the colonial era. Teachers who were talented musically and had learnt how to play some musical instruments Adedeji states organized bands and choirs that performed at special Christian festivals and for the general public. It was in support of this that Okafor (2002:6) declares

That was the era in which Nigerians wrote very beautiful Handelian counterpoints, but in Nigerian languages. And that was also the period when people collected Nigerian folk songs and arranged them for the choral stage and even modified them and used the tunes for worship. That was the trend that really developed into what we call the gospel music of Nigeria...

Consequently, Adedeji (2013:1) emphasizes that “contrary to what many people think, the origin of Nigerian gospel Music has nothing to

do with American Gospel Music. It started on its own”. Gospel music preaches the ‘good news’ of Jesus Christ and made popular by public performances, the electronic media and information technology such as Radio, Television, the recording world and the Internet. It is dualistic in nature; on the one hand, it is a Christian religious form and on the other hand, a part of urban popular culture. This Adedeji notes is caused by the fact that “the musical elements in it are derived from both indigenous and foreign musical traditions. It is a blend of the sacred and the secular” (2013:1). Several churches have incorporated this brand of music into their liturgy, most churches and members use it for non-liturgical functions such as retreats, revivals and Christian social functions. Therefore, the author opines that gospel music is the most popular Christian religious musical form practiced in many parts of Africa today.

During the formative years in the 1960’s, Nigerian gospel music was church based. Practitioners were the choir masters and music directors in their churches. They later formed their personal independent gospel groups during those years. Hence, at the initial stage it was purely spiritual in motive, solely for evangelism and the upliftment of Christians. It was played solemnly and accompanied by light instrumentation, bell and organ. The trend was to compose long songs often called anthems and wax them into records. Prior to the mid seventies, Adedeji in Adeoye-King (1994) observes that gospel music had been consigned to the relevance of the church alone, but what later become revolutionary developments in the growth of gospel music came in the late seventies.

In addition, Adedeji (2013:1-3) highlights that other major developments within the era included the professionalization of gospel music practice, the introduction of ‘spiritual’ style, the ‘assorted’ style, the introduction of oratorio form and the establishment of Christian singing groups in Nigerian institutions of higher learning which also waxed gospel albums. It was in the 1980’s it was taken abroad and became fully commercialized and assumed more entertainment functions. The establishment of Christian’s music promotion outfits and Christian music producers and marketing companies such as Shalom Production and Rainbow Records, Ibadan greatly enhanced the growth and development of Nigerian gospel music. Again, two national bodies that is, Gospel Musicians’ Association (GOMAN) and National Association of Gospel Artistes (NAGA) were established

during the period. It should be mentioned that the gospel music which was taken out of the church in the 1970s, returned to the church through the new generation churches as their official divine musical form.

Importantly, prominent secular artistes shifted to gospel music as a result of their conversion and divine call. This development boosted the 'ego' of Nigerian gospel music in the 1990's. Admittedly, new radical forms such as gospel 'fuji' and 'gospel-waka' and traditional musical elements were incorporated more giving rise to 'classical' style. This genre (sometimes referred to as style like other forms of music may be "distinguished by the techniques, the styles, the context and themes, or geographical origin. By the 1990s the genre had eclipsed classical, jazz, and new age music, and artists began gaining limited acceptance in the general market" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_music 2013:1-3). Wikipedia explained that contemporary Christian music is diverse, and there are Christian songs that are sung to the rhythm of salsa, reggae, rock, folk, hip-hop or rap, ballads, pop, singer-songwriters and even extreme music such as punk or heavy metal. For instance, the 2000's witnessed the visit of foreign gospel artistes, introduction of high gate fees at gospel music concerts and the beginning of Asaph National Christian Music Workshop at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Therefore, in the growth and development of Nigerian gospel music, two factors had the greatest impact. They were technology and musical styles of the periods. As far as recording technology is concerned, Adedeji (2013:3) asserts that the

1960's, were dominated by the use of phonodisc. In the 1970's, it was cartridge. In the 1980's, the use of cassettes and video tapes dominated the recording medium, while in the 1990s and 2000's, CDs, VCDs and Digital Audio and Video Networks became prominent.

In the same vein, Turner (2008) avers that gospel music is "broadcast over the radio, television or the Internet. Christian albums and video recordings (CD, LP, digital download, DVD) have been increasingly popular and have continued to increase in sale" (18). Again, Christian Musicals (2012) declares that gospel music is a growing area especially with the help of the Internet. Also, church drama groups frequently enjoy doing musical dramas which can be downloaded online for free use (Wikipedia; 2013:2).

Music: A Vehicle for Evangelization and National Development

Music, Warren (1995) avers, has a significant place in both heaven and hell. It has been one of the great spiritual battle grounds of this century and the battle is increasing in intensity. Songs that are now considered sacred classics were once criticized as today's contemporary Christian music. When 'Silent Night' was first published, George Weber, music director of the Mainz cathedral, called it "vulgar mischief and void of all religious and Christian feeling. And Charles Spurgeon, the great English pastor, despised the Contemporary worship songs of his day; the same songs we now revere" (Warren; 1995:283). Perhaps most impossible to believe, Handel's Messiah was widely condemned as vulgar theater by the churchmen of his day. Like the criticism of today's contemporary choruses' Warren (1995:283) remarked "the Messiah was panned for having too much repetition and not enough message, it contains nearly one hundred repetitions of Hallelujah".

However, throughout church history, great theologians have put God's truth to the music style of their day. For instance, the tune of Martin Luther's 'A Mighty Fortress Is Our God' was borrowed from a popular song of his day. Charles Wesley used several popular tunes from the taverns and Opera houses in England. John Calvin hired two secular song writers of his day to put his theology to music. Also, Calvin's first act at Geneva was the introduction of the singing of the Psalms into the worship of the Reformed church (Lockyer; 1983:45). Consequently, God had always placed chosen vessels in strategic positions of visibility from which they will prophesy and help steer their generation toward its ultimate destiny. The ultimate position of the prophetic minstrels is not "just to copy the world's style of music and try to do it better while adding Christian lyrics, but to capture the music that the Father loves, which is played in heaven, and transfer it to the earth" (Joyner;1994:91).

Therefore, it is important that one comprehends just how powerful music is as a spiritual force. As witnessed during the 1960's and 70's, music can prophesy and sustain major sociological shifts like the erosion of moral foundations. It can also fuel revivals and spiritual awakenings such as the great Salvation Army Movement, and the Welsh Revival at the turn of the Century. Overtly, Warren warned "if we do not use contemporary music to spread godly values, Satan will

have unchallenged access to an entire generation. Music is a force that cannot be ignored”(1995:20). Significantly, Joyner (1994:90) prophesies that God is

Presently placing many in positions of “secular authority and visibility in music and many other fields. At the proper time they will use those positions to initiate a mighty deliverance and victory for the church. Many Christians whose songs will reach heights on the pop charts will be used as role models...

Continuing, the author said that the music will be loved by the young and the old alike. It will impart peace to the listeners and give them freedom from the fears and pressures of this world just as David was able to do with his harp. The music will be so compelling that those of every possible genre will be drawn to it and every other style of music, from country to the classic, will be impacted and changed by it.

More importantly, through music a wonderful exchange is accomplished by God. He gives His own ‘beauty’, His own ‘oil of joy’ and His own ‘garment of praise’ if we hand over to Him our ashes, our mourning and our spirit of heaviness (Isa. 61:3). In this matter, M’cheyne (1982:141-143) gave a graphic illustration with the life of John ‘Praying’ Hyde. John Hyde and his team were sad about a village, how long the Gospel had been preached there and how little interest had been aroused among its people. But the children were so happy that they sang, and went on singing psalms and hymns one after the other. This was infectious and the men were constrained to join them, and they were so carried away with the spirit of praise that they all continued singing till they came to that village and found the people full of real interest and zealous to confess Christ and follow Him. Understandably, the first Gospel triumph in that village was heralded and brought about by the spirit of praise which the children had evinced.

Upon the foregoing, gospel music will propel the church to higher realms of worship, which will cause the entire church to more fully abide in the Lord. When the church enters into the higher realms of worship, the result will be increased focus, and a power that releases extraordinary spiritual advances. It will help take all of the light that we have been given and focus it like a laser. The more focused it is, the more power it will have to cut any barrier or darkness. Also, visions and strategies put into songs will help to seal the hearts of the

people with those visions. It will grip men's hearts like no music that has ever been played before. It will lift up those who have fallen to the depths of self and idol worship, and turn their attention back to the Lord. Some of this anointed music will be received through dreams, visions and other prophetic experiences (Joyner; 1994:91).

Speaking about national development and social transformation, a number of programs aimed at this objective had been launched in the past. To truly have a 'Good Nigeria, Good people', there is need for an "inner transformation i.e. an overhaul of our value systems. The change must be from the 'inside-out', with us using every resources and avenue to distil the elements that would help us internalize those values" (Jaiyesimi; 2013:27). Truly bashed by poverty, high unemployment rates amongst the youth, corruption, insecurity and identity as a people, there has been a gradual erosion of our values and the Nigerian has a long list of vices constantly waived in their faces. Jaiyesimi Observes that this has greatly beclouded the feats of our national heroes and the tremendous potentials that we have as an entrepreneurial, colorful and good breed of people, thereby creating a forlorn and near hopeless horizon for the young and upcoming generation of Nigerians.

Transformation as Jaiyesimi (2013:27) rightly states is not *A sprint, it's a long distance journey. A long distance journey however requires stamina, compliance with regulations and a vivid vision of the destination and laurels to be won. Without these three elements, there just might not be a journey.*

The author emphasized the need to create a vivid picture of the envisioned future. This is the link to sustainable change. It is also important to dimension issues that could easily be stumbling blocks. Music is a 'voice' that echoes aspirations, spurs people on and provides a mirror to reflect obstacles on the course. It molds and influences society. It is a tactful social critic and a mender of the breaches. It has the power to move, inspire, transform, educate and reflects both the extraordinary diversity of cultures and our shared human condition in all its vulnerability and strength (Bokora, 2013).

It is therefore, important that adequate support and recognition is given to music to ensure that it is used as an effective vehicle for national development and transformation. The artist is usually an 'evangelist' as he wields the tremendous power of using music's unique characteristics to impact on the mindset of the audience or

listeners. There is now scientific evidence that a gospel message, inspiring patriotic songs or songs of faith, enthusiastically delivered can literally generate energy (Ziglar; 1994:107). Tennant (1989) believes that the message of hope and success creates excitement and that floods the brain with endorphins, dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, and the other neurotransmitter something in hearing about success gives people an emotional charge that releases chemicals into the bloodstream and makes the body function better. This inspiration creates the energy to do the job better and with more enthusiasm leading to better health, happiness and achievement.

Similarly, Sky Magazine (1993) points out that therapist say music is nature's tranquillizer and that is why many people turn to a favorite piece of music to help them unwind at the end of the day

Perhaps one of the oldest examples of the impact of music is that of King David, who resorted to his harp to soothe King Saul of evil spirits. Pythagoras, the sixth-century B.C, philosopher and mathematician, is often credited with founding the practice of music therapy, though he was most likely building on a still more ancient tradition.

Ziglar demonstrates that the right music can be a real picker-upper and keeper-upper. You are charged up on ethical, moral values that give direction and hope on how to be more, do more, and have more. It is, therefore, safe to affirm that some music inspires us to do better and moves us into a higher level of thinking and performance. However, across the board, the music that effectively functions that way is of the same rhythm as that of one's bodies, the melodies, the marches, and the patriotic and religious music.

Conversely, the evidence is growing that repetitive listening to hate messages, immoral, antisocial or self-destructive music can be disastrous. Philpott in Ziglar stressed that "rock music, especially hard rock, is disorganizing to the central nervous system because it comes to such an abrupt end, then starts over and has extremely disorganized patterns" (1994:107). This position is reinforced by Nielson in Ziglar (1994:107) that the "beat of rock music is agitative and antithetical, which literally works not to build harmony in the body but rather disharmony and possibly creates antisocial thoughts and actions within us". Think about the picture those lyrics paint in your mind of killing a cop, burning a building or committing suicide. Is there a chance that

this could be one of the factors in much of the senseless violence and suicide we are encountering in our society today?

Music and Capacity Development

As a field of study, music is offered by a number of Universities and performing Arts Schools in Nigeria and abroad and can be done as fulltime degree courses or short-term certificates/diplomas. The music artiste is more versatile than is believed. He can work full time, part time or freelance in musical groups, media houses, the film industry, performing arts establishments, broadcasting, cultural centers, public relations outfits, human resource management etc. It is also possible to successfully set up their business concerns. Accordingly, the church should establish more music academy to train the artistes, evangelists, pastors, teachers and church leaders for the expansion of God's Kingdom on earth. It would be distinctive music academy destined to set standard of excellence in gospel music. This Ohiku (2008:41) affirms would broaden their knowledge, views, speculations, opinions and talents vis-à-vis the Scriptures, as they have efforts to solidify their relationship with God. It would pioneer missionary activities and help the church develop her vision management and spiritual disciplines for world evangelism and missions. It would advance sense of missionary commitment in Nigeria especially "in the rural areas while building upon the strength and contributions of all individuals and groups" (Ohiku; 2008:41).

The training program should be designed in a stepwise fashion aimed towards offering a gradual process of improvement on the quality management system of artistes. The church needs to further strengthen the ministry capacity for the purposes of effective soul winning and sustainability. Proper training of gospel minstrels is key to the success of the industry for evangelism, church growth and national development. It is observed that until relevant agencies in the music ministry brace up to the challenge of human capacity building, there will still be dearth of man power in the industry. Aligbe (2012:36) canvasses that

Establishing a manpower development board is the right way to go, unless they do it we won't get anywhere... There must be a body that has to take a global look on the manpower requirement in the industry, plan for manpower development,

have a data base, carry out research and know which way to go to.

The youths participation would enable them integrate the technologies, methodologies and skill acquired to deal with emerging issues in the Nigerian music industry. It would further strengthen their desire to be fully integrated into the Nigerian labor market. The dream of the youths who are seeking employment is only realizable through job creation via the sector and human capacity building. Also, the program would enable youths explore ideals and potentials that would help in wealth creation and poverty eradication and help them not to celebrate wrong models. Again, it would “empower them to champion the fight against corruption to create a new society with opportunities as the country is largely endowed with quality human and material resources” (Okonkwo; 2008:40). Hence, the church should continue to create an enabling environment for youths to aspire to great heights by looking beyond the present.

Fundamentally, consistent with its heritage and with the demands of an emerging global society, the church should recognize that effective music Ministry combines both curricular and extracurricular activities designed to foster the development of the total person (Ohiku; 2008:41). The church should be committed to instilling in the artistes the desire to learn, to increase the knowledge of their cultural and spiritual responsibility, to develop an appreciation for and understanding of the arts of missions and theology; to cultivate their ability to think logically and critically; to prepare them effectively and confidently in the areas of their calling and ministries, and to develop their respect for prospering in a pluralistic society. These would help promote their achievements and preparations for global competitiveness, purposeful leadership and effectiveness. More so, it would help their performances, promote broad-base knowledge, and nurture young men and women with high moral values and respect for diverse opinions (Ohiku; 2008; Adamson, 2008).

Music and the Promotion of Cultural Heritage

The music ministry is a viable economic vehicle and also goes hand in glove with tourism. Nigeria is a beautiful country with its culture shaped by the various ethnic groups, with over 50 languages and over 250 dialects. Our festivals and parties are

Second to none, displaying a rich array of costume, color and cuisine. We also have great music from traditional to the contemporary, thought provoking folklore, exciting dance and a Nigerian lingo (Pidgin English) that bridges the ethnic divides of the Nigerian dames and dudes (Jaiyesimi;2013:27).

There are a number of tourist attractions that can contribute tremendously to the growth in the economy. With a projected 5% contribution to GDP from the entertainment industry, Jaiyesimi (2013) posits a greater focus would easily push this up and give an opportunity to paint a more positive picture of the Nigeria's dreams in the hearts of foreigners.

Music has proved to be one successful step in the direction of exhibiting Nigeria's exceptionally rich and diverse cultural and artistic heritage as an untapped huge investment opportunity waiting to be meaningfully exploited. It is pertinent to note that Nigerian music has been a source of unity for the country since the colonial era. It has made immense contributions to the socio-cultural, economic, and political development of Nigeria. Its instantaneous presence, and ubiquity, has "more than any other medium, contributed in shaping public opinion, promotion of national discourse and stability in contemporary Nigeria" (Akande;2012:24). It has been used to explore the ideals of African culture for positive social change and to decry the current situation where a large percentage of the Nigerian youth and adolescents are having an identity crisis. Adams (2009) frowned that many of our youths try to copy everything foreign and western. They have made a move from the initial skin toning or bleaching that used to be in vogue in the past to mimicking everything western, their dressing, language and even social belief and values system.

Moreover, music has been a trail blazer in cultural renaissance in Nigeria. It promotes our culture, tradition, character, abomination, language, values, and our concepts of good and bad. For instance, Akabueze (2011:27) mentions the core values of Ndigbo to include prudence, justice, solidarity, self-worth, family pride, integrity, and bravery, hard work and communal aspiration self help". Akabueze laments that rather than reinforcing our strong traditional core values, and seeking to imbibe the desirable ones we lacked, we are progressively jettisoning our core values. Greed, opportunism, falsehood and ostentation seem to increasingly characterize us. Hence,

there is the need to repackage our culture which is the most vibrant in Africa and a very important resource that could be a goldmine to the economy. In this light, Jaiyesimi postulates that with “a generation fast losing its values and sense of history the stage is an awesome platform to keep our heritage alive” (2013:27).

Recovering the Music Ministry

For an efficient utilization of the music ministry as a tool for evangelization and national development, many gifted musicians and artistes would learn how to serve others with their gifts rather than use them as a means of self-fulfillment. Unless one’s contribution is helping and encouraging others, it will never be a spiritual gift. It will be performance, not ministry. The style of worship that is especially needed today is one that is marked by gentleness and simplicity.

Singing groups should develop out of the harmony of the members’ lives together, not just the harmony of their music. This is a fundamental principle which can transform any presentation by a singing group or choir from a musical performance into a spiritual ministry which brings the presence of Christ to other people.

Prophetic ministers should learn to pray and also listen to God. Then there would be those here and there who will come under conviction of sin. Gospel artistes should not imagine that their religion is to be simply another form of entertainment.

The whole church has a responsibility to the music ministry. Christian musicians should be recognized as true ministers and be spiritually equipped and supported as such. When they go out to minister they should be sent out with prayer and sustained with continual intercession just as any other missionary would be sent out.

Parents should stop their bias and misconception of music as a career for drop-outs and never-do-well in the society and grant their young ones the freedom to make their career choices.

The National Tourism Development Corporation should partner with the industry to get a data base on the strength of our religious tourism content in which the country has a comparative advantage. Also, the banking industry should support the industry to checkmate piracy and thereby providing a better means of marketing strategy for her.

Conclusion

According to Lockyer (1983:50-51) salvation produces “music in the soul. The bells of the heart peal out their melody over a full salvation from all past trials and transgressions... Songs of praise will deal the deathblow to all doubts concerning God’s care and provision”. In Psalm 40:3, David said, “He put a new song in my mouth...Many people will see this and worship Him. Then they will trust the Lord”. The clear connection between gospel music and evangelism cannot be over-emphasized. Accordingly, this paper believes that Nigerian music could make more impact on society if it paid more attention to vision and aesthetics. From the experience of some other societies, music in particular and art in general, can lead the quest for holistic development, unfolding fresh pathways of thought, feelings, attitudes, manners and morals, crafting a bright new horizon and creating a fresh impetus for political, economic, cultural, social and spiritual reorganization. Against this backdrop, Warren (1995:288) observes that “every true revival has always been accompanied by new music”.

Therefore, Nigeria can use music to galvanize the vision 20:2020 project which envisages that by the year 2020 Nigeria would become one of the best 20 economies in the world. It is her most noble and commendable project. It is our belief in this paper that government can really power this project with gospel music. Essentially, the power of the music ministry should not be over-looked because Nigerians take it seriously. It draws huge followers with incredible passion. And with 2020 still 6 years away, Nigerian music ministry has already attained a commending height in the world. Hence, the industry is as important as other sectors of the economy, and should therefore, not be underrated by the authorities if Nigeria actually has the genuine intention to actualizing its vision 20:2020. It is important to note that if put to good use, gospel music is not only a viable source of income, but a very powerful medium of communication.

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