Sacred or Non-sacred Music in Church Worship: An Ancient Argument Revisited

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Abstract

Music comprises the lyrics and the melody, rhythm and the beats in which it is set. It conveys a particular mood and the sense of purpose, which it is expected to serve. By these characteristics, it defines itself as belonging to a specified genre. Church music is offered to God as part of the process of worship, which in its simplest term means submission to God-His Will, His desire, His dictates and guidance. In this light, it stands to reason that any music, in its lyrics and its musical setting, used in the worship of God must reflect man's humble realization of his dependence on the almightiness of God Jehovah. Therefore, music used in the worship of God Jehovah must of necessity be music that glorifies the name and overall essence of God while simultaneously edifying the church as the body of Christ. It is in this light that this seminar paper examines the concept of Sacred or Non-Sacred songs in worship. It finds that non-sacred music is emotive and can be distractive from true worship. It is recommended that the church has the duty to determine the quality of the music in use for

worship to avoid self-centredness and sensationalism among worshippers.

Keywords: Church, Christian, Sacred, Non-sacred, Worship.

Introduction

Music is music but purpose differents music from music. If purpose is unknown or neglected, deviation and ambiguity would be unavoidable. Sacred music is meant for worship while non-sacred is not but in recent times, a mixed concept seems to be gradually evolving. A need to identify the thin difference between sacred and non-sacred music in this contemporary age formed the purpose of this research. The aim of this paper is to examine what constitutes sacred or non-sacred music in the context of the church as it concerns the usage of music for worship. Apparently, this is an ancient argument that is being revisited in the light of contemporary trend in worship music being employed by churches especially the Nigerian Pentecostal branch of Christianity.

Since ancient times, even before the advent of Christianity, human beings of every type of religious leaning had always enjoyed good music, even when employed as a component of the worship of their God. Over time and across various cultures, different styles and forms of music evolved and that affected the worship music as well as the general for the enjoyment of the people. Nevertheless, a specific genre known as-Sacred Music, was created to suit the purpose of worshipping God.

Conceptual Framework

Starting with the time of Constantine, the Roman Catholic Church was the first wave of the Christian movement. The second wave of the worldwide Christian reawakening started when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door at Wittenburg, Germany. This second wave gave birth to the Protestant reformation. The modern Pentecostal movement began in April 1906 in an insignificant little building in Los Angeles. The movement, which constitutes the third wave of Christianity spread to every part of the world. In the face of external opposition and ridicule, internal bickering and theological differences, this revival marked the beginning of the renewal of the work of the Holy Spirit. Pentecostalism, the

third wave, continues to impact nations worldwide. In its origin and practice, Pentecostalism is a distinct arm of Christianity that cannot be classified as part of Protestantism as much as Protestantism is distinct from Roman Catholicism. Nevertheless, Pentecostalism from onset is regarded (and probably by some up till now) as being on the fringes hence the older movements are regarded as being orthodox- meaning more traditional in their practices.

It has to be noted that unlike the orthodox churches, at its core, it is experiential feeling, rather than doctrine that drives Pentecostalism. This is to say that although the Pentecostals are conservative in their theology, they are more passionate in their spiritual worship experiences due to the emphasis on influence of the Holy Spirit on man. Almost all Pentecostal denominations believe that the initial evidence of Spirit baptism is the manifestation of speaking in tongues (glossolalia). It has always been established that the true Pentecostal worship experience is defined by manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit, dynamic (usually energetic and loud) worship, and evangelistic zeal. Thus, Pentecostal worship is characterized by praying in tongues, prophesying, healings, hand-clapping, and lively/demonstrative preaching, which are all enjoyed with great zeal and fervency." This worship sty le, which may often look ridiculous to the outsider is what divides Pentecostals from other mainline Christian denominations.

The Pentecostals penchant for any music goes can thus be understood as part of its roots of origin in America, on its reliance on experiential worship rather than doctrine, and the influence of syncretic African-American music which crept into the movement. Definitely, all these influences had a lot of say in the dictates for what type of music is accepted for use in church. To the American mind, music is music irrespective of its source, as long as it can be enjoyed. Incidentally, this agrees with the African mindset. So, while the orthodox churches may see sacred music as being more of hymns and the likes based on Western style/classical composition, the Pentecostals are more likely to be influenced by, and readily accept more contemporary music in their worship services.

Music in Ancient Times

More than 5,000 years ago, the people of ancient Mesopotamia built temples to their gods who needed to be exalted and appeased with sacrifices of praise by the

utilisation of appropriate singing and use of instruments. To this effect, reed wind instruments and drums were consecrated to the gods of weather and water. In addition, other instruments such as flutes, horns, tambourines, rattles and plucked string instruments are now known to have been employed in worship as revealed by Sumerian sculpture, reliefs and cuneiform writings. Such clay tablets also revealed that music was used for pleasure outside of the worship in the temples of the gods.

In ancient Egypt (2686 B©), the human voice was considered to be especially powerful in invoking the gods hence priests were carefully trained in singing to the gods. Egyptians too had instruments to accompany their worship songs and they employed solo and choral singing.

Singing for pleasure was also a significant part of their lives. By 2105 BC, there is evidence of the Babylonians employing music in worship and pleasure while the Assyrians used music not only in worship but took music in pleasure to a higher height with their sumptuous banquets and performing dancing girls.

Among the indigenous African people, sacred music was mostly reserved for use in the covens or groves and may not be played outside the coven as that may be a sacrilegious act, at least in some cults. Violation of such restrictions may be attended by heavy penalty, which may include fines, ex-communication, curses or death under some circumstances.

Essence of Music in Christianity

In the course of time, there abounds evidences of evolution of forms of Christian worship music, which was more or less an offshoot of Judaic Temple practices. In order to be able to sing to God in a proper and befitting manner, David, a renowned king and poet, established specific appropriate procedure for the use of songs in the worship of God. These guiding principles as contained in 1 Chronicles 15:16, 22; 16:4, included the formation of a standard choir and the type/content of the songs that would glorify God. It is recorded in 2 Chronicles 35:25 and Nehemiah 12:31 that Prophets Jeremiah and Nehemiah respectively, also organized choirs to sing in honour of God. Nehemiah 12:46 declares that David

was the first person to organize large choirs with multiple instruments and appointed a choir director for the Temple.

In the course of its development, Christianity developed its own form of worship music. The oldest and most characteristic is the plainchant (Gregorian chant).The early Christians avoided the use of musical instruments in their worship because of the association of such instruments with paganism and the abhorrent stage/theatrical actions associated with the performance of music in the secular realm. Thus, plain chants used in church was devoid of accompaniment. Although non-sacred music was thriving outside the church, nevertheless, the identified problems of non-sacred (secular) music performance made many early Christians oppose the importation of secular music into the church. St. Basil commented that "There are towns where one can enjoy all sorts of histrionic spectacles from morning to night. We must admit, the more people hear lascivious and pernicious songs, which raise in their souls impure and voluptuous desires, the more they want to hear.'

In a similar vein, Clement of Alexandria opposed the use of instruments in worship music in his association of trumpets, flutes and drums with the instruments of war. Hence, he said it must be banned, this artificial music, which injures souls. One must not expose oneself to the powerful influence of exciting and languorous modes, which by the curve of their melodies lead to effeminacy and weakness of will." Thus, the early church rejected the usage of non-sacred songs and instruments in church worship.

For the Christians, traditionally, Sacred music/songs are those pieces of music composed to be used in the worship of God. These songs must be found appropriate in lyrics and in tune without provoking unnecessary sensual feelings. They may be directly based on Scriptural texts or may not, but must draw the consciousness of the singers and listeners towards the thoughts of Godliness. On the contrary, secular music/songs (non-sacred music/songs) are viewed as those pieces that are concerned with the promotion of entertainment and enjoyment, in their lyrics and tune, without recourse to drawing man's consciousness towards the thoughts of God.

Sacred songs were generally dictated by a specific verse or verses or passages extracted from The Holy Bible. They vary in lyrics, in tune, in length and times of application in terms of liturgical seasons. Even if the song is not a direct offshoot of a Biblical passage, it will have a clear line of message, which may be moral or spiritual. Such spiritual theme may be an exhortation to holy living, seeking righteousness, dedication of self to God, or the development of a better relationship with God, His Son, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit.

That this is so, expresses the concept of worship music being a tool for communicating with the Divine Being. Thus, through music, man expresses his faith in God and thereby, his appreciation in singing His praise and altogether, man's submission to the Will of the Father, the Creator of all things visible and invisible. It has been generally recognized that this full submission to the Will of God is what worship is all about. Before the advent of Christianity, concerning the use of musical instruments in worship, the ancient Greeks dedicated the gentle sounding lyre to Apollo, the god of intelligence, enlightenment, self-control, and balanced judgment whereas, the very loudaulos was dedicated to Dionysus, the god of wine." Such choice of what instrument to dedicate to which god was most probably not just a coincidence but a reflection of the intuitive appreciation of sound effect on the human psyche.

A gentler sound will stimulate the finer aspects of man, whereas, a much louder, coarser sound will most likely appeal to the base aspect of man. This is in line with the words of Con fucius who is quoted to have said ‘the music of a noble mind is gentle and delicate, maintains a uniform mood, enlivens and moves.' Aristotle was of the opinion that music influences a man's character and thus, he insisted that in the learning and performance of music, music students must stop short of the artistry of professional (secular) musicians. This is to ensure that music students could feel delight in noble melodies and rhythms. Aristotle's opinion was probably based on observation of the tendencies of secular musicians to unwittingly over-excite the psyche of their listeners in the realm of the sensuous to the point of distraction from noble thoughts.

In early Christianity, music in worship was described as decent and majestic with the youths and maidens, old men and young singing psalms.'" To buttress that

point, Saint Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan (374-397AD) was quoted to have said 'Psalms are sweet for every age, and are becoming to both sexes... they create a great bond of unity when the whole people raise their voices in one choir.

Can Music be Distractive?

Many scholars and non-scholars do argue, and will continue to argue that there is nothing like sacred music and that music is music. They base their position on the fact that there are no special musical notes to differentiate sacred from non-sacred music-so, every piece of music is of same origin and depict same entity-music. They go further to say that music is evolving and as such, if anyone would argue for a special genre called sacred music, then churches should go back to the use of ancient Jewish chants since that is what The Bible described. The argument has been and still remains-does the type of music associated with the words distract the mind from genuine worship in truth and spirit? This old argument is being revisited in the context of contemporary trends in which many people pastors and their congregants are of the opinion that it does not matter what kind of music is adopted for worship.

In contemporary time, apart from the problem of poor voices and unsuitable melodies, a serious compounding problem is that a good number of songs are no longer based on Biblical inspiration. While The Bible talks about exhorting each other in psalms and the likes, the lyrics of many modern church songs are now inspired by purely secular stories and occurrences. This problem is more prevalent in the newer churches outside the mainstream traditional orthodox churches such as the Anglicans, and the Roman Catholics. It is to be borne in mind that traditional sacred music has always been regarded as an offering to God hence such an offering must not be profaned by improper acts of man. Thus, the theme of sacred worship songs was always God-centred. Worship songs were, therefore, not designed primarily for human entertainment but solely for the glorification of God and the edification of man.

To highlight that point, worship songs were generally devoid of the acconpaniment of dance, even in the days of the Old Testament. However, there was the reported case of a particular occasion in which King David got so carried away that he was said to have danced with all his might and Michal, his wife

despised him for it because she felt the dance was excessive, (2 Samuel 6: 16-23). The Bible indicates that God was not happy with Michal's scorn of David. This implies that God is not necessarily against dancing as long as the motive is purely to worship Him. This is to say everything about the worship of God the song and its lyrics, the instrument type and how they are used, and whatever accompanying dance steps must all be properly situated in the context of the true worship of God. Otherwise, the essence of worship will be lost due to the distractive effect of the music.

Music Classification-Sacred or Non-sacred

From time immemorial, music has been classified in different ways, one of which is Sacred as distinct from Non-sacred music. From the viewpoint of the church, this classification is expedient as it succinctly defines the role/function of music in the worship of God. Thus, any music for church use that is based on acceptable Scriptural/doctrinal teaching would be deemed as music consecrated unto the Lord. On the other hand, any music that does not fall directly into the sacred music group is non-sacred. Thus, non-sacred music includes what is now generally referred to as secular music of which pop music is a form. Music as an entity can always be defined in different ways depending on who is making the definition. Aiello and Slobada see music as the art form that expresses feelings and meanings through the qualities of sounds and the relationship between sounds. In this view, the expression of feelings and meanings is realised through the quality of sound production. However, a combination of musical elements such as rhythm, tonality, dynamics, and so forth are also involved in the understanding of musical sounds. In other words, music can be summarily defined as organized sound and noise. Davies adds that music is the language of emotions?

Thus, it can be said that music is whatever the individual or the collective find meaning in, and can relate to, and which he or she can respond to and also use to express his or her emotions. Without any doubt, music is recognised as a universal phenomenon. Most people spend a lot of time listening to and enjoying different genres of music but they hardly ever stop to ask why they care so much about the particular brand of music or what influences such music exert over them. It is common knowledge that many school age students figuratively live inside music, with their headphones being carried all over the place. To all intents and purposes,

their music dictates their life styles and many never realise that. Unfortunately, such musical control may also include their spiritual lives. People become so engrossed in music as a source of stimulus because they find something vital, vigorous, and intense in it. Hence, it holds their attention and they inadvertently respond to it.

Outside the church, there is no gain saying the fact that music has a unique place in popular culture. It has evolved to achieve a position of cultural dominance compared to other forms of cultural expression. This is so much so that it is generally assumed that whatever music many people in everyday life find themselves enjoying a lot of the time is of necessity connected to God or to things that are related to God. Thus, many young people will readily describe their pop music as divine because they do feel their enjoyment of the music. Whether in its serenity or other forms, what they feel is enough evidence of Godly connection and blessing.

This kind of assumption that supposes that because the music is good and is enjoyable, therefore, it has a divine connection has become a big problem in the eyes of those who rely on scripture to define divinity. Clearly, it is no longer just the theologians and religion scholars who are interested in pursuing the divine. While many people would say only theologically compatible music composed for the worship of God is sacred, many scholars do think that irrespective of the kind of music, there is something sacred in the appreciation of any music in everyday life. It may well be that the two opinions may not both be simultaneously correct. In view of the domineering influence of secular music, a number of theologians try to make sense of what happens to religious experience in a world heavily influenced by popular media culture, a world in which songs, movies, musicians, actors, and celebrities influence the individual and the collective imaginations and their worldview. Cobb (2005), for example, argues that theology cannot remain unchanged when whole generations in the West have had their basic conceptions of the world formed by popular culture.

That Cobb's view has validity is shown by the fact that many churches all over the world now see nothing wrong in importing into the church any kind of music as long as it can entertain and hold the congregants' attention. This is more especially

so, if the music encourages energetic/demonstrative dance steps no matter how wild and seductive such dance steps may be. The excitation occasioned by sensual music and dance thus becomes a distractive tool in the context of solemn worship.

Non-sacred Music as an Inductive Force to Sensual Dance in Church

As a matter of fact, in African culture, it is unrealistic to separate music from dance or from bodily movements. This is due to the fact that unlike in Europe where the body tends to be used as a single block, dance in African and African-American music is somewhat polycentric- that is, dance is split into several independent body areas or centres. The same is true for the plaving of African musical instruments with their time line patterns, which involves a whole combination of body movements in sync with the dance style that may lay emphasis on motions of the pelvis. The emphasis on the use of the pelvis is especially so in the females who naturally have larger buttocks that can shake or roll.

It is a fact that most traditional and syncretic songs rendered in the Nigerian setting are designed for self-enjoyment and entertainment. Among the Yoruba people, such music styles include Apala, Fuji, Juju, and the likes. These music styles have all been successfully introduced into the church as the carrier for worship songs in the name of gospel music. So, when people dance in church, they are basically dancing to the rhythm and beats of the secular music. This is a clear pointer to the fact that although secular music may be good in itself; it sounds nice, it is scintillating and entertaining in form; nevertheless, it does not lead the dancers' consciousness to be in the presence of God. Rather, the whole emphasis is on self: sensuality, enjoyment, self-adulation and other such self-centred feelings. This is the characteristic of secular music that distinguishes it from sacred music.

Non-sacred Music as a Socio-political Manipulative Tool

In today's world, more than ever before, music is a potent force that can be used to train people to succumb to ongoing exploitation and/or of being able to invent new forms of social, religious and political freedom. This is to say music can be a tool to foster rebellion against established order. In this context, popular music when used in the general life is far from simple entertainment. In other words, music can be a tool for brainwashing people without any resistance, and the

people will even believe they are only enjoying themselves. That such pervasive influence is possible and has been occurring is illustrated by James Cone's work. He presented his well-argued point about the power of the blues genre and its expression in the crafting of African American lives. Such musical influence was also well demonstrated in the music of Sonny Okosuns in the days of the South African apartheid government system.

Okosun's used his style of pop music as a manipulative international political tool against the ills of apartheid thereby setting himself as a first-line non-gun carrying freedom fighter. In the Nigerian setting, other secular musicians had also been known to have used their music to influence many sets of the younger generation. Abbas Obesere used his brand of fuji genre to introduce a lot of trashy and obscene language into the society, yet no one really objected because the music was good and was judged as something to dance to. Such world-wide controlling power over people was also demonstrated in the music of the Beatles, Michael Jackson, and Bob Marley among others.

These pop artistes created different eras of musical revolution that indeed were cultic in nature. Thus, it would be fool-hardy for the church to ignore such potentially powerful source of influence over people when they are deluded into thinking music is music, it is meant to be enjoyed; any music goes, it does not matter whether it is sacred or non-sacred.

Frith has done a lot of work to outline the effects of the power of pop music in shaping and controlling the lives of its fans. His position on the theological mechanics of pop music should be of serious interest to the church before assuming that any music is good enough for the use of the worship of God. The key points to bear in mind from his submission are: All non-sacred/secular/pop music is created and made available to certain cadre of the public with the expectation of some subtle manipulative attempt to be placed into people's lives. Such manipulative attempts could be as a result of social, financial, political and cultic considerations among others. Since the goal is to exert control, the more successful the music is, in its lyrics and tune, then the more popular that piece or music genre will be. A good example is the song-

Thriller by Michacl Jackson, which dictated and controlled world-wide, a particular way of dancing for well over 20 years. By the way, some people have described the dance as demonic, yet, people love it and gladly dance it in church. Pop music defines a social group's values, their behaviours, and/or their identities. Thus, it is music made to fit or depict what the category of people are like. Consequently, it should not be too difficult to identify a rough biker type fellow by knowing his preference in music to be hard metal rock. It should also not be difficult to recognise a rather better educated and cultured person by linking his music choice to the classical/baroque style. So, one's music may as well be used to define who that person is and what he or she stands for.

The church needs to be aware that pop music, in its lyrics and tune can create a state of consent or dissent to theology in the minds of its congregants depending on the prevailing message in the pop music. This consent or dissent arises because of pop music's ability to promote apparent freedom from all established norms. This should not be difficult to imagine from a few contemporary examples. The influence of the music of Bob Marley, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti and their associates created a generation of people, including church goers, who sincerely believed it was their right to smoke Indian hemp and use other hard drugs. Many young people's lives got destroyed along the line.

This was a worldwide influence that governments could not stop no matter how hard they tried. Fela's African Shrine was such a popular and influential cultic setting that in an attempt at exterminating it, government agents committed acts of arson and murder. Yet, African shrine still exists today, all efforts of government only managed to change its location. This is a warning against the church being careless enough to think any music can be allowed in church irrespective of what such music portends.

Emotive Power of Non-sacred Music

It must always be borne in mind that secular music culture is distinct from church culture. It has to be understood that the function of particular music genre in a society is of importance and must be taken into consideration before allowing them into the church. This is especially important in the light of the relatively new genre of music called gospel music. This particular genre nowadays really mostly

conveys non-sacred/secular thoughts and tunes despite the fact that they may mention the name of Jesus here and there, but then, usually out of context.

People generally take for granted the emotive effect of music and its associated spirit- the controlling force behind the music. Thus, they allow certain non-sacred songs and dance in church as long as people find them enjoyable. For example, African traditions emphasize dance and all the simulations and gyrations that go with it because movement is a significant form of communication to express desire/mood, entertainıment, sensuality, sorrow and other feelings.

When such details are not carefully considered as natural sequela of non-sacred music, then, such non-sacred song or dance can become a problem for the church. Another problem that complicates non-sacred/pop music whether they are labelled as gospel music or not, is the recent trend of musical videos. These videos tend to show scantily clad women, it will be an anomaly to refer to what some of these women wear as dress.

Oftentimes, they are just in the briefest of bikini. Furthermore, the videos tend to exhibit a lot of inappropriate acts and suggestive erotic postures in the accompaniment of the music. This is a real problem in that the depicted indecent acts accompanying the music, which has been allowed into the church ultimately becomes a tacit approval that congregants can act in the ways being suggested by the actors in the music video.

In the Congo, Wenge music is a popular non-sacred music. Videos of Congo origin music abound on the Nigerian market and people have copied the dance. In a number of Pentecostal churches today, their worship songs are set to the tune of wenge, makossa, awillo music and the likes. These churches fail to understand that this genre of music is designed to give Congolese subjects a form of release from their daily hardships. Thus, the music is literally about drink and dance away your sorrow. The force of this music compels the body to escape from itself, by using the body and its component parts such as the buttocks, with the hips swinging like a pendulum; or by simply succumbing to all the complexities the music presents; its rhythms, lyrics, tensions and melodies.

The effect of these secular/non-sacred music is generally noted to be compelling on the congregants by making them to become excited. The excitation makes them to behave in the ways of people in disco dance halls or other open street parties- unruly, agitated, and generally out of control. Since the tune of the music demands accompanying dance, the whole atmosphere is made worse. In some instances, the pastors are noted to challenge the congregants to even more aggressive and rather suggestive wild dancing by telling them that God will not be ready to accept their praise/worship unless they danced so well and sweated before Him.

In one church, a young woman, a choir member, was so bold as to have gone to the ministers' corner to dance seductively to the admiration of the mostly male, young deacons and pastors. In the night club environment, this occurrence would almost certainly have been taken as a prelude to lap dance. Meanwhile, it was a juju genre melody that dictated a lot of waist/pelvic gyration movements, and the young woman was well endowed in the buttocks area so she had quite a bundle to roll and shake. Yet, all this was inside the church during what was supposed to be a time of worship offering to the Lord, God Jehovah.

It should not take much of anyone's imagination to begin to visualise the potential problems that may be the natural sequelae of such uncontrolled atmosphere occasioned by the music being used in church. In the example above, a young woman, gyrating her waist in front of young men (single and married): what thoughts would be passing through the minds of some of the men--pure thoughts or sexual thoughts? Can it not be said then that the musical setting is creating room for seductive/sexual temptations; as lustful memories and feelings arise in the minds of some of the men? Indeed, it might be true that the young woman concerned did not set out to create the sexually tainted atmosphere and was only enjoying herself in a way that is permissive but officially permissible. That, nevertheless, does not excuse or remove the fact that her inappropriate dance, prompted by suggestive music has become the potential occasion for sin to occur in the church. Remember that Jesus says adultery is not just the commission of the act; it starts from thoughts that progresses to desire irrespective of whether it finally ends in actual sex or not (Matthew 5:28).

In churches where this kind of music and its accompanying dance steps had been observed, it was always a period of chaotic atmosphere as the congregants were seen to be agitated, jumping all over as if they were in a disco dance hall. In some instances, some male members of the church actively sought opposite sex to dance with. To the discerning mind, it should be clear that this kind of music is designed to promote and stimulate nothing other than sensuality in the minds and bodies of the listeners. Such sensual feelings emanate powerfully from the lyrics and tune. Even when the lyrics mention the name Jesus in these so-called gospel songs, the prevailing tune overrides the respect and honour the name of Jesus is expected to command. Consequently, such music can only distract the congregants' focus away from the thoughts of, and the intent of the true worship of God. Hence, it is a profanity of the holiness and majesty of man's creator to bring such music as worship offering.

Expected Function of Music in Worship

Non-sacred music and dance do not really serve any theological or pastoral function other than providing an avenue for people to misbehave before God, in the name of freedom and enjoyment. One could ask the question as to how many of the congregants in such churches can remember anything tangible from their pastor's preaching from the previous Sunday, or how many made any attempt to check up Biblical references. It will not be shocking to find that it will be just a few. But then, it will not be surprising to find that many congregants will readily remember the dance steps that attracted most attention and very probably make efforts to search out and learn new dance steps for the next service. So thereby, non-sacred music and dance take precedence over the sacred words of God from the Scripture.

This is a negation of the Biblical injunction of faith comes by hearing the correct word of God. It is no gainsaying that such churches will breed congregants that will remain not just poor in spirit but will only get poorer over time. That cannot be pleasing to the Lord.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that genuine Christian churches must recognize that not all music is suitable for worship. Necessary control should be excercised as regards

the quality of music used for worship. Specific questions should be asked during evaluation, such as whether the song's words are doctrinally sound, if the text is biblical, if it stimulates spiritual thoughts, properly instructs, and inspires high spiritual ideals. Churches must also consider whether the music aligns with the text, if it is excellent and meets the needs, and whether it elicits a wholesome response. Harmful associations related to the musical style or composer should also be taken into account. The emotive association of music should always be considered since it has the power to engrave and recall memories. Hence, it can be said that music is music but sacred music is different from non-sacred music and only sacred music should be engaged in the worship services of the Christian faith.

Recommendation

It is recommended that genuine Christian churches must learn that not all music is good music and thus, not just any music can be allowed for the worship of God. There has to be some control. Therefore, the church has the arduous duty to determine the quality of the music in use for worship. Of necessity, such evaluation must ask specific questions such as: Are the words of the song doctrinally sound? Is the text Biblical? Does it stimulate spiritual thoughts? Does it properly instruct? Does it inspire high spiritual ideals? Does the music fit the text? Is it excellent? Does it fit the need? Does it produce a wholesome response? Do harmful associations come to mind because of the musical style or the composer's name? This is to say, the church must always consider the emotive association of music because music is a powerful tool in engraving and recalling memories.

a. A good Bible verse to determine the value of a musical piece for church worship is found in Philippians 4:8, 'Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honourable. whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything, worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.' Another good verse to determine the appropriateness of a musical piece for corporate worship is 1 Corinthians 14:26: ...Let all things be done for edification.'

b. We can then confidently say well-chosen music will build up the church through edification, without giving offense or causing anyone to stumble (Romans 14:7-21).

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