

REVISITING THE "TRAIN-AND-ENGAGE" AND PROFESSIONALIZED MODELS OF CHURCH
MUSIC MINISTRY FOR EFFECTIVENESS IN 21ST CENTURY NIGERIAN BAPTIST
CONVENTION

Udoka Peace Ossaiga, Ph.D
Department of Church Music,
Baptist Theological Seminary, Eku
Delta State, Nigeria
Email: ossaigaup@yahoo.com

&

Oghenemudiakevwe Igbi, Ph.D
Senior Lecturer (Music)
Department of Theatre and Film Studies
University of Africa, Toru Orua
Bayelsa State, Nigeria
Email: o.igbi@uat.edu.ng

Abstract

Church music ministry in 21st Century Nigeria requires the collaborative efforts of music ministers/directors, choirmasters, instrumentalists, and choristers who train, rehearse, and minister through music, especially in the churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. The pastoral church music ministry in the Baptist denomination began with the creation of a Faculty of Church Music at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, in the late 20th Century. Graduates from the Faculty resumed in different pastorates across churches of the Convention to train and engage musicians for her functions. The system, which these authors call "train and engage" model of music ministry, remains prominent in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. However, the socio-economic dynamics of the 21st Century seems to be affecting the "train and engage" music ministry model as there arose a huge number of musicians in the Churches who are requesting financial compensation for their musical services rendered to the Churches, or leave the Churches to where their services are remunerated. Although few Churches of the Convention have engaged professional musicians in critical sections of their music ministries, the unwillingness of many Baptist Churches to remunerate their musicians, against biblical tenets for music ministry, is responsible for the exodus of some musicians to other denominations. This inclination has led to the denomination becoming a breeding ground for other denominations' music ministries. The trend is a challenge to effectiveness in the music ministry of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and demands a modal review. Using observation method drawn from over a decade of engagement in the music ministry of the Nigerian Baptist Convention by both authors, this paper examines the "train and engage" and professionalized models of music ministry in 21st Century Nigerian Baptist Convention for ministerial effectiveness. The article notes the pros and cons of both models, and recommends that effectiveness in 21st century music ministry can be aided through a careful and strategic mix of the "train and engage", and professionalized models of music ministry in the 21st Century Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Keywords: *Church Music, Music Ministry Models, Effectiveness; Nigerian Baptist Convention.*

Introduction

The Church exists for worship, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism and ministry/care (Warren 2007); apart from the Bible, it is through Church music that these objectives can be pursued and achieved

(Ossaiga 2015). Thus, from the Apostolic generation, music has been an integral part of the Church. Church music as a prominent element and legacy of foreign Christian missions in Nigeria; and the perpetuation of music in the Nigerian churches decades after the return of foreign Christian missionaries underscore the place of Church music in Church functions. In the context of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Church music was mainly led by the laity until late in the twentieth Century when the Faculty of Church Music was established at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, to train God-called men and women in specific areas of music ministry. The training led to the graduation of theologically trained ministers whose specialty was music. These graduates were called to various pastorates of the Nigerian Baptist Convention as ministers of music.

The duties of the ministers of music, among others, were to train Church musicians in singing, instrumentation, and conducting. The trained Church musicians were to be deployed to sing, play musical instruments, and conduct music in the Churches. While the earliest efforts were successful in some places, national socio-economic realities in 21st Century Nigeria resulted in an increase in the number of Church trained musicians demanding financial rewards for their musical services, or leave for other Churches where their services are remunerated. While some Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention have professionalized critical sections of their music ministry through the recruitment of proficient Church musicians, many Churches are still opposed to the idea. The development makes many Baptist Churches become breeding grounds for musicians who easily leave for other churches or denominations once or before they master their art. Also, the development weakens the effectiveness of music ministries due to the dearth of proficient musicians in critical sections of the Church music ministry; thus, challenging the effectiveness of music ministers in the Churches. Furthermore, it calls for a review of the "train and engage" and professionalized models of music ministry for more effectiveness. This paper draws from experiences in excess of a decade of engagements and interactions on the subject to review the Church music ministerial models for effectiveness in 21st Century music ministry of the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Church music, as a term, expresses the ecclesiastical possession and functional utilization of ordered sonic and its allied arts in pursuit of worship, discipleship, evangelism, and education. According to Eniolawun (2020), Church music is the music of the Church. While his definition reflects the union of the Church and music in the definition, the functionality of the art is not evident in the concept. Thus, Grudem (1994) is of the view that Church music is the art of the Church that is sung and/or performed on musical instrument(s) as ministry to God via worship, education, evangelism; and discipleship. His definition presents Church music as a functional art that is in tandem with Church functions. Thus, Hustad (1981) avers that Church music is a functional art that is given to man by God for emotive expression and cultural re-enforcement; stating that Church music should pursue church functions. Indeed, Church music as a cultural expression reflects and reveals the nature of the Church as a functional community. From these definitions, it could be deduced that Church music is owned and utilized by a community of Christians to pursue its objectives. Thus, Church music is governed by Church norms.

The Meaning of Church Music and the Position of the Holy Bible on Remuneration of Musicians
Church music emanates from the Bible wherein in Genesis and Exodus, God created humans with musical abilities that were deployed in praise to God by Israel under the leadership of Moses and Miriam (Exodus 15:1-21). To concretize music ministry, God appointed the Tribe of Levi with the

musical task of leading Israel to worship God, among other responsibilities. Thus, in 1 Chronicles 9:33 and 25:7-31, Levite musicianship provides organizational, administrative, educational; and professional foundation to music ministry through templates for enlistment, training, deployment; and remuneration of Levite musicians who ministered in the house of the Lord before His people. In 1 Chronicles 15:16-24, David instructed the heads of Levitical families to constitute orchestra and choir that accompanied the Ark to its tent in Jerusalem, arranged for regular music performance during daily burnt offerings (1 Chronicles 16: 4-6, 37-42), and planned for elaborate music ministrations at the temple that was to be built by Solomon (1 Chronicles 23:2-26:32). The Davidic model of music ministry ensured the sustainability of music and the sustenance of Levite musicians. The roles and culture of music in worship are evident in the Psalms being the chant liturgy of Israel. Jesus and his disciples, in the Gospel accounts (of Mark 14:26; Matthew 26:30) engaged in hymn singing, while Apostle Paul admonished in Colossians 3:16 that believers should admonish themselves through music. While the Bible provides basis for enlistment, training, and professionalization in Church music ministry, these basics are undergoing radical mutation as some Church practitioners retain the import of training, discipleship, spirituality, and commitment in Church music while disposing the engagement of professional Church musicians in Church music ministry as though Church music professionalism is averse to biblical spirituality, discipleship, and commitment.

Although the Davidic model of music ministry provides biblical basis for Church music ministry, literature indicate two models of Church music ministry, namely: the discipleship and celebrity models of Church music ministry. The discipleship model of Church music ministry involves a balance measure of musicianship, leadership, spirituality, and fellowship in working with Church musicians. Mason (2016) is of the view that if there is lack of efficiency and/or effectiveness in any of the four areas, there would be crisis in the music ministry. The discipleship model of Church music ministry involves musical and pastoral leadership, and is fitting for Church music ministry. However, it does not provide information on the song-type and song-source that characterize the model. It is in pursuit of Church music that is promoted by celebrity Church musicians that Myrick (2018) observes the rise of the celebrity Church music ministry model. According to him, there is the celebrity model of Church music ministry that is characterized by the utilization of songs that have been released and are being performed by Church music celebrities. The model promotes worship as a lifestyle and de-emphasizes conversion unto salvation as the centre of worship. It is noteworthy that Church music ministry has produced several celebrity Church musicians in the 21st Century. While the celebrities' personalities and music continue to influence Church music, especially, among youthful congregations, worship cannot be totally divorced from salvation and discipleship. The Church as a worshipping community is first a saved community that appropriates the benefits of fellowship with God in worship to glorify God and improve itself.

It is worth-noting that none of the two Church music ministry models discussed above is totally exclusive (of the other). While the discipleship model dwells on pastoral and musical leadership for Church music and musicians, the celebrity model, without condemning or rejecting the discipleship model, engages Church music as promoted by celebrity Church musicians to execute Church functions. While both models of Church music ministry can be merged in practice, the models do not address the core issue of model(s) for engaging Church musicians. This may spring from the fact that the issue of model(s) for engaging Church musicians in Church music ministry may not have been topical

in the region of the authors; however, the model for engaging Church musicians is an issue in the Church music ministry of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, even in the 21st Century.

The "Train-and-Engage" Model of Church Music Ministry

This model involves the training of Church music volunteers in specific areas of Church music with the hope to engage the trainees in their specific areas of training. The training component of the model consists of the identification, and formulation of tenured, and strategic programmes that are aimed at fixing Church music needs in a given congregation. While the training component of the model is usually executed by the minister of music or music director of the local Church, it is not unusual to engage Church musicians of proven exceptional proficiency in the identified areas of Church music to train the volunteers. The training may be in workshop, or in term format.

The merits of the "train-and-engage" model of Church music ministry are as follow:

- a) It is in tandem with the need to equip believers for the ministry;
- b) It fixes Church's musical needs at little or no cost;
- c) The model engenders cohesion between Church musicians and the congregation wherefrom they hail;
- d) It helps in ascertaining the character of the Church musicians; and,
- e) The model provides avenue for ministerial fulfillment of the minister of music or music director.

It is noteworthy that where and when the "train-and-engage" model of Church music ministry succeeds, the above listed merits are evident; however, the model also has its demerits as listed below:

- i) the training is often challenged by the availability of volunteers as they grapple with other life's needs; thus, musical maturation is delayed and/or denied;
- ii) the minister of music or music director does not have the means to actually engage volunteer Church musicians when faced with educational, job, and/or migration opportunities that disengage them from Church areas;
- iii) volunteering Church musicians are often constrained with the needs for transport and or encouragement which signals the need for stipends or remuneration;
- iv) the exodus of Church trained musicians leaving for other Churches for economic reasons defeats the purpose of the model;
- v) Church music suffers continuous cycle of experimentation with amateur musicians who also leave before they master their art; and,
- vi) it is not sustainable in environments with high emigration rates, especially, among youths.

In spite of the demerits of the "train-and-engage" model of Church music ministry, it is argued that Church members who become Church musicians are not supposed to request remuneration for their musical services to the Church in view of Church's investment in them. Also, it is averred that the model illustrates the stakes of the musicians as members; not as hireling. Furthermore, it is argued that the music from the model remains an act of worship; not as commerce as in the opposite model. While the above listed points are disputable, it could be said that the Bible does not condemn legitimate earning through services that are duly rendered to others, including the Church, should there be an agreement.

The Professionalized Model of Church Music Ministry

This model of Church music ministry involves the engagement of paid Church musicians in strategic areas of need. It consists of identification of Church music needs, sourcing for prospective paid

Church musicians for engagement, and contracting them to minister with volunteer Church musicians as paid workers. This model, though still being resisted in many Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, is the mainstay of the music ministry by many non-Baptist Churches; and it is in tandem with biblical foundations for Church music ministry. The two hundred and eighty-eight (288) Levite musicians that are divided into twenty-four (24) groups of twelve (12) each were employed and daily paid for the purpose of being musicians in the House of God (1 Chro. 9:33; 25: 7-31; Neh. 11:22b-23). Furthermore, in 1 Timothy 5:8, the Bible clarifies that a labourer is, indeed, worthy of his or her pay. Although the professionalized model of Church music ministry is biblical, the model is not without merits and demerits.

The merits of the professionalized model of Church music ministry are as follow:

- a) It ensures the engagement of proficient Church musicians; quality is assured at the point of recruitment.
- b) The model is a sure way to fixing Church music needs
- c) Professional demands ensure availability and consistency; and minimize default
- d) The model encourages personal practice, and reduces group rehearsal span per music
- e) It increases sense of responsibility on the Church musicians; and
- f) It is suitable for Churches in high emigration areas.

It is worth-noting that from the standpoint of effectiveness in Church music ministry, the professionalized Church music ministry model is appropriate. However, the demerits of the professionalized model of Church music ministry are as follows:

- i) It is expensive and brings more pressure on limited financial resources of the Church
- ii) The model exposes Church music ministry to intrigues and forces in open market economy; and,
- iii) It does not provide sufficient time for ascertaining the character of critical Church musicians.

While noting that the reported demerits of the professionalized model of Church music ministry can be managed by a competent minister of music or music director, it is being argued that the professionalized model hinders the musical development of aspiring Church musicians as the paid musicians occupy upper positions across divides. It could be said that the unavailability and inconsistency of member Church musicians necessitate the engagement of paid Church musicians. The music ministry of the Church is too critical to be allowed to derail, awaiting the availability of unavailable and non-consistent Church musicians. While aspiration is good in the making of Church musicians, it could be argued that availability is key to effective Church music ministry.

A Middle Line between the "Train-and Engage" and Professionalised Models for Effectiveness

The "train-and-engage" and professionalized models of Church music ministry hold some merits and demerits, but the Bible seems to be in favour of payment for legitimate labour; thus, the provision of reward for Levite musicians (Nehemiah 13:10). However, the cost for managing Churches may not allow for the remuneration of all Church musicians; thus, an argument for the payment of all Church musicians or workers is not sustainable in view of the financial capacity of many Churches. Also, the present socio-economic realities of 21st Century Nigeria that rapidly emigrate youths for education, jobs, and trade from their Church areas do not make the solely "train-and-engage" model of Church music ministry viable, since the trained may not be engaged in the Church after their training. This scenario calls for a careful and strategic blend of both the "train-and-engage" and professionalized models for the purpose of effectiveness in the Church music ministry, and for the purpose of equipping the Church for ministry wherever members may be afterwards.

Therefore, in the mixed model, the Church encourages the training of Church musicians for the purpose of ministry wherever they would be. However, this may not necessarily be for the engagement of the trained against the tide of emigration, while at the same time, working with the minister of music, or music director to recruit proficient Church musicians strategically, in tandem with Church music needs. This compromise is capable of ensuring effectiveness in both per-formative and education dimensions of Church music ministry. The compromise is possible through the collaboration of a supportive pastor, competent music minister and choir-leaders, musically literate choristers, proficient instrumentalists, and proper funding. In turn, this can aid the effectiveness of music ministry in the 21st century Nigerian Baptist Convention.

Conclusion

This paper reviewed the practice of "train-and-engage" and professionalized models of Church music ministry, with special reference to Churches of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, for ministerial effectiveness in the 21st Century. The Century is evolving with dynamic socio-economic realities that challenge late 20th Century "train-and-engage" model. With many youths rapidly immigrating to other places for education, jobs; and trade, the "stay-period" needed for the training and maturation of Church musicians being drastically reduced, the "train-and-engage" model is not sustainable in many parts of the Convention. While the professionalized model of Church music ministry never involved the remuneration of all Church musicians, it can be strategically utilized along with the "train-and-engage" model for ministerial effectiveness. The world wherein Church music ministry is being practiced is changing; Church music being a cultural and functional art is not totally immune from developments in the world in which it operates. The Church music ministerial methods of the past should continuously be interrogated in tandem with current global developments in order to improve models, standards, and ensure trans-generational effectiveness. To insist on any model, irrespective of its ineffectiveness at present, is to decide against effectiveness in the 21st century Church music ministry.

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