

The Emerging roles and challenges facing Choir Directors in Contemporary Christian Worship

The discussions and the assertions of this paper concur with the words of Moody (1995) who observed that the innovation of any kind exemplified in much of the present century's music is diametrically opposed to the continuation and expression of any kind of sacred traditions. Apparently every Christian movement that emerges in the present world gives rise to sacred musical idioms that are intended to advance the movement's religious aspirations and identity. This explains why there are diverse intercultural musical idioms in Christian worship today. While these religious and musical phenomena are being acknowledged by many theologians and theomusicologists (Bediako, 1992; Nercessian, 2000) as an inevitable trend, others have begun to raise the questions regarding their theological relevance and role (Begbie, 2000; Robertson, 1990). Some of the questions being raised include: to what extent are these idioms in tune with the heavenly sacred rite? Have they remained true to the word of God? In other words are they inspired by men and women of God or by the works of the devil? These questions bring into focus challenges facing choirmasters and sacred music in the contemporary African Church and hence the need to examine their role in spearheading an effective and spiritually inspired Christian worship. Consequently, this paper seeks to correct an African misconception of what a choirmaster is about besides outlining qualities befitting a good and a result-oriented choirmaster. In addition, the paper will seek to explain the various intercultural musical idioms utilized in Christian worship today besides suggesting ways in which to determine kinds of musics that are appropriate for worship.

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