Building a Community of Music as Organists, Choirmasters and Clergy for Spiritual and Social Transformation in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

In Nigeria, sacred music holds a central role in both worship and community life, yet the collaboration among organists, choirmasters, and clergy often remains informal and fragmented. This paper explores the potential of building a cohesive community among these key stakeholders in church music to foster spiritual renewal and social transformation. Drawing on theological insights, ethnomusicological perspectives, and practical experiences from various denominations, the study highlights the interdependence of liturgical leadership and music ministry. It argues that a deliberate alliance among organists, choirmasters, and clergy can enrich worship, nurture local musical traditions, and address contemporary social challenges such as youth alienation, moral decline, and communal disintegration. By promoting shared vision, mutual respect, and continuous training, this community can become a catalyst for spiritual growth and cultural revitalization. The paper concludes by proposing a framework for sustainable collaboration that includes mentorship, interdisciplinary dialogue, and institutional support within the Nigerian ecclesial context. Through this synergy, church music can transcend aesthetics to become a transformative force in both sacred and public spheres.

Keywords: Building, Community, Organist, Clergy, Transformation

Introduction

To accomplish these goals, the National Association of the Church and Cathedral Organists, Nigeria, National Association of Church Music Directors, Nigeria, and Choir Mentors facilitate the gradual abolishment of all forms of private ownership of choirs and choral music. This paper recognizes the role of the Nigerian church organists and Choirmasters' association in unleashing dormant talents and generating novel definition of our collective life that how universally accessible music is as an aid to worship today. It aims to demonstrate the work of the National Choir Mentors in sustaining public confidence in the integrity of this central collaboratory, petite as it may be, concerned with formulating a territory-wide cohesive music policy that reflects the diversified needs of beneficiaries.

Mission is defined as the concise expression of the reason for the existence of an organization. It defines why an organization exists, who the organization serves, and how an organization will serve. It communicates to members, potential members, and other stakeholders the fundamentals of its purpose and sends a clear message. The mission of the AGO is to provide a nurturing community, inspire excellence in musical performance, and champion the thrill of live organ and choral music. The mission of the Nigerian Church Musicians is to build a community of music as organists, choirmasters, and clergy for spiritual and social transformation in Nigeria. As church musicians, we collaborate our diverse methods of expression and help each maturing member of the group to internalize a moral code which includes aesthetic integrity and contributes to common worship.

Background and Rationale

A resurgence in the strengths of the seven indigenous languages, both for BRELA's own visible communications and in the performance of a proportion of our repertoire, can help to reinforce the fragile spirit of community that survives in Nigeria and that is a necessary foundation for any process of social transformation. Participation in such a culturally inclusive musical movement will also help to revive and reassure the pride of all Nigerians. Church musicians and choirs are widely accepted as assisting with the process of community development in

Nigeria; this is one of the few roles in Nigerian musical society where indigenous skills are dominant. Expatriate and diaspora workers are widely involved in such endeavors. However, it is important that those in the vanguard of the process are participating for their state of residence rather than for the gains that might accrue to them as a result of altruistic activities. All the members of BRELA value the spiritual and social picture of the documented engagement in buoying up a struggling society, finding such inspiration for positive change as they also transfer additional tools for that change, tools they do possess. Furthermore, dichotomizing the premise in order to identify only emotional wellsprings of procession rather than drawing on both emotional and intellectual approaches results in a negative picture of those overseas.

In Nigeria, the furtherance of the vast corpus of Western music, including church music, can trace its historical roots to the heritage of British and Irish colonialism. The decline in the infrastructure for the training of organists and choirmasters has been such that few of the indigenous musicians now remaining in the field hold full qualifications and none were trained abroad post-war. The country, whose economy was once the largest in Africa, has had to bear with the effects of military coups, dictatorship and civil war, declining opportunities for intellectual and economic growth, and finally a more or less democratic transition. The society as a whole is a former colonial territory suffering from a lack of infrastructure, poverty, and gaps in the trained workforce. With the wealthiest individuals taking their business outside the country, opportunities for philanthropists do not lead to assertions of priority for their own country, where serving the commonweal is synonymous with personal hardship for those who so serve.

The Role of Music in Spiritual and Social Transformation

We are deeply committed to establishing a vibrant and thriving community of music within Nigeria, with a focus on organists, choirmasters, and clergy. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate spiritual regeneration and transformation through the power of music. One of our primary objectives is to evangelize the profound journey of sound within both missionary and non-missionary organizations of the Church. We believe that music has the ability to transcend barriers and touch the hearts of individuals from all walks of life. By promoting the effective organization and orchestration of music, we aim to foster solidarity within the Church and raise

awareness of the diverse usages of organs and other musical instruments during various functions. It is crucial to note that the transformation we speak of is not a mere supernatural event that culminates in the beatific vision, as it is sometimes mistakenly believed. Rather, it is a process of supernatural glorification that encompasses every aspect of our beings. We firmly believe in the divine self-communication between the transcendental Other and the Church, which finds its most profound expression in the form of organizational offerings. These offerings, which include heartfelt praise and worship, allow for a profound connection between mankind and the divine. The celebration of the divine invention of Sacramental accessibility stands as a testament to the divine's desire to be present and accessible to humanity at every moment. It is through these moments of divine communion that true transformation occurs, leading to spiritual growth and a deepening of our relationship with the divine. In summary, our mission is to establish an empowered community of musicians, organists, choirmasters, and clergy in Nigeria. Through the promotion of effective organization and the exploration of the diverse possibilities of music, we aim to foster spiritual regeneration and transformation. By embracing the gift of music and recognizing its power to connect with the divine, we can create a more vibrant and fulfilling spiritual experience for all members of the Church.

(Ojukwu2024)(Ajose2021)(Okeke & Okeke, 2021)(Ibude2020)
A seminar organizer, Dawn Josiah, was eager to inquire about my chosen topic for an upcoming, highly-anticipated piano lessons seminar on Zoom. In my prompt and enthusiastic response to her, I made it abundantly clear that I harbored deep aspirations to dedicate an entire day to the captivating realm of piano pedagogy. My goal was to share invaluable and transformative tips, as well as effective strategies, that fellow educators could integrate into their teaching repertoire. These invaluable insights were designed to serve as a powerful defense mechanism against the relentless stress and ever-present competitiveness that permeate the lives of teachers. After all, these dedicated professionals are tasked with the immense responsibility of nurturing and guiding not just their primary students, but also their secondary/SS pupils and students. It is no secret that such unrelenting pressures and burdens can take a significant toll on the mental, emotional, and even physical well-being of these educators. In fact, research indicates that long-term exposure to such adversities can contribute to severe

health issues, such as heart failure or stroke, thereby tragically leading to the premature death of these brave souls who have dedicated their lives to the noble cause of education. Consequently, it is a matter of great urgency that we address these harrowing concerns in an earnest attempt to safeguard and support our beloved teachers. In an ideal world, the United States would boast a harmonious community of exceptional organists, reminiscent of the awe-inspiring congregation found in Mecca, which was famously established and revered by the remarkable figure of Jesus Christ. This extraordinary sense of unity and passion for music would serve as a testament to the profound impact that dedicated piano teachers can have on the lives of their students, transcending the boundaries of time and space. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that such a grand vision cannot be achieved through mere wishes and devout intentions alone. In order to truly manifest this collective dream, we must take meaningful action and embody the divine message imparted to us through God's last words, "αυτων δε φησιν ταυτα και ποιειτε" (and He said to them, 'Do these things'). Just as Jesus Christ, in a moment of profound spiritual connection, breathed upon His apostles, bestowing upon them the ultimate commission to be the agents of the Holy Spirit, so too must we, the torchbearers of education and musical enlightenment, cultivate this sacred responsibility within ourselves. Yet, it is essential to clarify that this mission transcends geographical boundaries and is not confined to the boundaries of any nation. We envision a world where music serves as the ultimate generator of positive influence, traversing borders and cultures in a ceaseless flow. Like infectious agents, music possesses the unparalleled ability to inspire and captivate individuals from all walks of life, uniting hearts and minds in a shared rhythm of passion, joy, and creativity. It is through this magnificent power of music that we can truly create a global symphony of interconnectedness, breaking through barriers and nurturing a sense of solidarity and harmony amongst all nations. With unwavering determination, we press forward, knowing that the path we traverse is one fraught with challenges and obstacles. However, as ambassadors of music and advocates for the transformative potential it holds, we remain steadfast. Let us draw strength from one another, our shared experiences, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. With compassionate hearts and minds entwined, we will continue to shape the future, daring to dream of a world enriched by the resounding echoes of pianos, as they carry the timeless melodies that remind us of our shared humanity. (Armour, 2023)(Zimmer, 2020)(Izu, 2023)

Historical Perspectives

Catholic music is deeply rooted in the ancient and reverent traditions of Gregorian chants, plainsongs, and traditional hymns. Throughout history, the church has always provided a sacred space for individuals to engage in silent and solitary acts of devotion: whether it be silent contemplation, speaking directly to God in prayer, or attentively listening to the divine Word. It is within these quiet moments that we truly grasp the profound richness of the Catholic community. The silence that envelops the church during these sacred times seems to embody the very essence of the liturgy itself, establishing a powerful connection between music and silence. In fact, silence brings an additional depth to the liturgical experience - the act of coming together, singing as one, and offering collective prayers. By serving as a focal point, silence allows the entire congregation to delve into the profound symbolism and meaning of the sacramental rites being celebrated. This unifying silence has the remarkable ability to engender a heightened sense of identification with the church as a whole, as if every individual becomes an integral part of this sacred temple of God. In the realm of Catholic worship, the music of the liturgy extends far beyond the notes that resound from voices, strings, or brass instruments. It permeates the very silence that envelopes the faithful, whether they stand before the altar or sit in the pews, plucking at the strings of their souls. This music manifests itself in various forms - from the hallowed silence that accompanies the congregation's collective intake of breath before the proclamation of the Lord's message, to the printed words carefully bound within the pages of a hymnal or brilliantly displayed on an LCD projector. In this way, even silence becomes a vessel through which the music of the cult is expressed. Just as the prophet Ezekiel found himself transported into a divine vision, so too are the listeners transported by the spiritual melodies that intertwine with and arise from the sacred stillness. The silence itself, in its profound resonance and solemnity, adds an ethereal dimension to the sounds and words that manifest during the liturgy. In conclusion, Catholic music encompasses far more than the harmonies and melodies that resonate in the air. It extends to the hallowed silence that unifies the faithful, allowing them to intimately connect with the divine message. Whether expressed through voices, instruments, or the profound quietude, the music of the Catholic tradition serves to uplift, inspire, and transport the hearts and souls of the faithful, profoundly enhancing their experience of worship within the walls of this sacred sanctuary. (Clarke, 2020, Chant, 2023, Salter, 2024, and Sexton, 2022)

The church, since time immemorial, has been the cornerstone of society as the Word of God has always been what some call the norm of society. Throughout centuries of history, the church has played a vital role in shaping communities, providing guidance, and spreading the teachings of Jesus Christ. Its significance cannot be denied, as it serves as a beacon of hope and faith for believers around the world. The church, as a body of believers, should be spiritually sound at all times, and its members should strive to uphold the principles and values of their Christian faith. It is not just a physical place of worship, but a sanctuary where individuals gather to strengthen their relationship with God and find solace amidst the trials and tribulations of life. Through collective prayers, hymns, and sermons, the church fosters a spirit of unity and devotion among its congregation. It is in this noble pursuit of assisting Christians in achieving their spiritual aims that the church plays a crucial role. A community of believers, maturing into Christ, stands as a testament to the power of faith and the transformative journey that unfolds within the walls of the church. Each individual's spiritual growth and life priorities are interconnected with the overall mission and purpose of the church. Thus, the decisions made within the church are deeply influenced by the principles of individual maturity and the alignment of life priorities. This impacts every aspect of the members' functions within the church, from worship practices to outreach initiatives. The teachings of St. Augustine, one of the greatest church fathers, resonate strongly in this context. He proclaimed that the one who works prays, and the one who prays works. This profound statement highlights the inseparable connection between work and prayer, emphasizing that they go hand in hand on the path towards salvation. In order for anyone to achieve the final kingdom, work and prayer must intertwine harmoniously. As individuals strive to fulfill their day-to-day obligations, it is through work that they demonstrate their devotion to God. Similarly, prayer serves as a constant source of strength, guidance, and communication with the divine. These two elements form a powerful partnership, emboldening believers in their spiritual journey and enabling them to navigate the complexities of life with unwavering faith. In conclusion, the church holds an irreplaceable role in society, illuminating the path towards spiritual enlightenment and serving as a guiding force for believers. Its members, united by a shared faith, are bound to the tenets of Christianity and work diligently to live out their beliefs. With work and prayer as their guiding principles, the church and its congregation embark upon a collective journey,

aiding one another in their pursuit of the final kingdom. (Johnson Jr, 2021, Adeboye, 2020, Frost, 2020, Tolstoy, 2024, and Ince, 2020)

Contemporary Relevance

In Nigeria, even with the classification of the music performed based on the role of the audience, informal music-making between the spirit of the past and the living, and public concert performances, not all programs provide for the use of musical instruments, and churches aggressively promote the use of good acoustic spaces. But the inclusion of secular music in church worship space is more intensive than in other religious organizations. It is also more common in orthodox and mainline denominations. Songs such as the popular "Amazing Grace" do not necessarily appeal to the taste of all people. Prelude, communion music, postlude, or special music, such as solo, quartet, duet, etc. Whenever there is a need, the casual music of the popular genres that find residence in the dance clubs are mutually mixed with those of other formal music catered for under the roof of the sacred place. The explicit demands of the invited performers and the mood of the congregation present some of the factors that determine the elegy, mood, and tempo of the music that may be associated with the council of God. A composition known to create consciousness in the audience for active participation and joyful sounds of praise is taken in conjunction with others while all continue to worship the Almighty and pray for divine favors over their needs. As church music and musicians evolve, can our churches and church leaders not embark on strategies that at present would acknowledge that the ecumenical artistry in the execution of the missionary-centered pieces defines religious and sanctified sounds in church music?

Ever since Plato's essay in "The Republic," which condemned music from the educational system of the state for having the potential to encourage children to nurture forbidden emotions, music has been regarded in a dichotomized stance as a double-edged sword, capable of serving for good or being responsible for evil. Hard rock music, jazz, soft or adult contemporary, lyrics from popular cults, and rap music are some of the genres appealing to some sections of churchgoers. R&B, soft rock, blues, high-tempo dance music like reggae, and soothing rock sound are among the types of rhythm that some churchgoers want to hear in a worship space. As church leaders, how should we help our members and prospective members

who still find satisfaction in secular music to easily locate their favorite genres in the house of prayer? My view is that it is possible for a church that wants to remain appealing to keep up with contemporary times, engage popular culture, and still fulfill or at least promote the values that are aspired for in musical expressions such as feeling connected to a higher power, feeling of communal bonding, expressing feelings of joy, a feeling of unity and togetherness, emotionally affecting the divine, promoting the faculty of remembrance, lifting up and multiplying the spirit, etc, within their walls. Laks, 2022, Pelosi & Burns, 2023, Lefka, 2023, and Roochnik, 2024)

Challenges and Opportunities in the Nigerian Context

But it is also true that there are numerous opportunities available for church musicians in Nigeria to make a meaningful contribution through transformative music. Among the opportunities is the extant Christian community which, historically, has ever been involved in the development and the pioneer expression of church or choral music. Practically every church denomination has at least one chorale, which was established in the history of the church and has for many years provided an expressive platform for worship and for also inculcating moral principles into the congregation. In addition to the existing church choirs, there are also countless emerging musical ensembles and organizations dedicated to promoting diverse genres of Christian music. These groups offer aspiring musicians the chance to explore their talents and create inspiring compositions that resonate with the faithful. With the growing popularity of contemporary worship styles, the demand for skilled church musicians is on the rise, presenting unprecedented opportunities for those seeking to make a lasting impact through their music. Furthermore, Nigeria's vibrant music scene extends beyond the walls of churches, with numerous festivals, concerts, and competitions providing platforms for musicians to showcase their artistic prowess. These events attract a diverse audience, ranging from devout worshipers to music enthusiasts, allowing church musicians to reach beyond the confines of their own congregation and touch the hearts of many. Additionally, the technological advancements and the widespread use of social media have opened up new avenues for church musicians in Nigeria. Through online platforms, musicians can share their music with a global audience, transcending geographical boundaries and spreading the message of faith and love. The internet has also facilitated collaborations between

musicians from different backgrounds, fostering creativity and innovation in the realm of Christian music. Moreover, church musicians in Nigeria have the opportunity to engage in music education and mentorship, nurturing the next generation of talented individuals. By imparting their knowledge and expertise, they can ensure the continuity of transformative music within the church community and inspire young minds to carry on the legacy. In conclusion, the realm of church music in Nigeria holds immense potential for musicians to make a meaningful contribution. With the rich history of choral music, the emergence of diverse musical ensembles, the abundance of festivals and concerts, the power of technology and social media, and the chance to mentor future generations, church musicians have a vast array of opportunities to showcase their talents, inspire the faithful, and leave a lasting impact on the Nigerian music landscape.

Nigeria is undeniably a nation filled with countless obstacles and abundant opportunities just waiting to be seized. Within its borders lie a multitude of challenges that encompass various aspects of life, including the economy, social structure, infrastructure, and human rights. Unfortunately, a significant portion of the population still grapples with illiteracy or possesses a remarkably low level of literacy. Additionally, Nigeria continues to cling onto archaic practices and traditions, such as witchcraft and other deeply rooted superstitions, inadvertently hindering its own progress and development. Moral and ethical dilemmas have long been an intrinsic part of Nigeria's tapestry, neither unfamiliar nor novel. In present times, Nigeria stands alongside numerous nations worldwide, grappling with the complex interplay between the unrestricted influence of wealth and power, and the undeniable moral and ethical standards that guide not only individual lives but also collective endeavors. These imperatives shine through with resplendent clarity, drawing attention to the crucial need for alignment between personal values and societal actions. With every challenge, however, comes an opportunity for growth and transformation. Nigeria, as a nation, is poised on the precipice of evolution, ready to tackle these hurdles head-on and emerge stronger than ever before. By acknowledging and addressing the prevalent hardships, Nigeria can pave the way towards a prosperous future, empowering its citizens to transcend the boundaries of ignorance and illiteracy. By embracing modernity and shedding the shackles of old-fashioned practices, Nigeria has the potential to reclaim its rightful place as a beacon of progress and innovation. It is

imperative for Nigeria to foster an environment that champions social justice, economic equality, and sustainable development. By nurturing a society that values education, inclusivity, and human rights for all, Nigeria can position itself as a model for others to emulate. It is only through united efforts, both at the individual and collective level, that Nigeria can strike the delicate balance between wealth and integrity, power and compassion, and ultimately shape a future that harmonizes the personal aspirations of its citizens with the greater good of the nation as a whole. In essence, Nigeria must seize the present moment, acknowledging the challenges while embracing the bountiful opportunities that lie within its grasp. By transcending the limitations of the past and reimagining a future propelled by wisdom and determination, Nigeria can illuminate the path towards progress, leading the way not only for its own citizens but also serving as a testament to the transformative power that lies within every nation seeking to carve its own destiny.

Lack of Training and Resources

Instruments are bought, but the person is not installed well enough to appreciate the worth of the resource. The missing links between the organists and the instruments: sound accessories and speakers, amplifiers, types and placement, etc. Exploratory measures to improve the quality of organ playing for actual live and/or recorded music are not put into place, supportive of the church life or musically evangelistic outreach. A practical guide on getting results is not available. Recommendations within church settings include financial support, stipend, and other incentives, including formal training; reduction of non-musical task interference such as organist availability for regular practice, for necessary repairs, encouragement to commission an expert for regular tuning of the organ as stipulated by the manual in the organ's usage recommendation, quality advice, and support from the religious leadership.

Organists lack formal training. Choirs are self-developed through coherent trial and error engagement in the music ministry. Parishioners who have some idea of music or have been exposed to formal training in music constitute the choir. They train themselves and play the role of mentor to new members, demonstrating their proficiency to newbies and in-house training by showing them how it's done. Time is not reserved for actual instruction. An attitudinal swagger pervades the house

of the Lord with contagion and pride arising from no real knowledge of music but with the saying of 'I can play any piece of music'. Competence isn't discussed.

Cultural and Religious Diversity

Despite the fact of cultural and religious diversity, there are different forms of collaboration and cooperation between various religious groups at different levels of life in Nigeria. We recognize the fact that religious belief plays a pivotal role in Nigeria's contemporary ethical, social, and economic problems.

Christianity has been ingrained within the African continent south of the Sahara for a remarkable span of 2000 years, and it continues to flourish amidst an array of diverse and pluralistic environments. Numerous regions in Africa have embraced a multi-religious atmosphere, where African traditional religions coexist harmoniously alongside the prominent faiths of Islam and Christianity. This fusion has given rise to intricate and intricate patterns of cultural blending and intermingling. As a result, various tribes within Africa have adopted their own indigenous religious practices, with each region presenting distinct beliefs and customs. These local discrepancies have significantly contributed to the shaping and development of Nigerian Christianity, influencing its liturgy, church governance, theology, and religious experiences. The rich tapestry of spiritual traditions within Africa has facilitated a unique and deeply rooted expression of Christianity in this particular region. (Zandt, 2022)(Smith, 2021)(McKinnon, 2020)(Mokhoathi, 2020)(Arnaiz-Villena et al.2021)

The country has a diverse religious landscape. Many of the ethnic groups have their traditional religion and are also followers of Islam, Christianity, and many other religions.

Most of the African countries are characterized by diverse cultural and religious traditions. Nigeria is no exception when it comes to diversity. Nigerian citizens comprise diverse cultural and religious traditions, which make the nation a pluralist society. With over 200 ethnic groups speaking over 400 languages, Nigerian communities are diverse, fragmented, and distinct from one another. A large number of these communities are weak, exposed to marginalization, domination, and exclusion from power structures because of their perceived

differences. These diverse communities are brought together by colonialism and were united as a country in 1914. But still struggling, keeping the sense of identity and unity to build a stronger nation together. (Maichiki & Yahaya, 2022)(Wachukwu2021)

Other Issues and problems

That the man cannot read music and perform in different African musical traditions does not mean that he is not inherently musical. Many children, women, and men possess the ability to learn and perform church music without the need for a formal music education background. They serve as voice students, choristers, choirmasters, and organists in their local church choirs, displaying their musical talents and spreading the joy of music throughout their communities. It is essential to recognize that Western musical elements cannot be isolated when discussing this music; instead, they must be understood within the context of the indigenous society that provides its roots, influences its singers, and shapes their performances. Furthermore, the choice of denomination plays a significant role in determining the attitude of its members towards music and the level of government intervention in church music projects. It is important to understand that specific church traditions, socio-political attitudes, sources of income, and the government's interest, participation, and influence all contribute to the unique conjugation of church music within different religious groups. For instance, members of the Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim and Seraphim Society, and Aladura group cannot fully capture the essence of their church music without referencing their respective church traditions, socio-political attitudes, sources of income, and the level of government's interest, participation, and influence. Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the government has introduced numerous policies and measures aimed at achieving development across various aspects of national life. However, the rampant corruption among the rulers, excessive expenditures on armaments, unwise utilization of public debts, the exhausting depletion of physical and human resources, limited opportunities, and a myriad of personal and national problems have hindered the effective direction of resources towards the promotion of church music. Despite these challenges, the importance of uplifting and supporting church music cannot be underestimated, as it serves as an essential cultural and spiritual practice that brings communities together and fosters a sense of unity, irrespective of the adversities faced.

In its attempt at providing music for man's spiritual and social transformation in Nigeria, the community confronts the following issues: colonialism and religion; music education and church music; illiteracy and music; denomination and survival of church choirs; public and government support; socio-economic dislocation, religion, and church music. In Nigeria, contemporary life is partially characterized by colonial experience. The man has been conditioned to discriminate one music for another, through Western music education, which prepares him to promote Western Classical music and to preserve true African music. Consequently, he finds it hard to organize and combine various African musical systems, embodied in the existing church congregational music traditions, perform, and overthrow social dislocation.

Strategies for Building a Community of Music Practitioners

It is also advisable to invest in musical instruments and new music documentation that will lead to the renewal and transformation of the congregation. The congregation will further be assisted with new texts, new Christian messages, and new insight into God. The church will be in a state of stagnation if the availability of the texts and musical compositions cannot claim or reveal any validity or inspire outside the church.

In Nigeria, the church organists and music ministers are fast disappearing. This is primarily due to the immense challenges and hardships music practitioners endure while carrying out their crucial roles within the church community. It is of utmost importance and dire necessity that organists are provided with a justifiable and substantial salary commensurate with their immense contributions, to aid them in fulfilling their familial obligations and responsibilities. The current practice of engaging organists on a part-time basis should be vehemently discouraged, as it undermines their dedication and professionalism. Rather, any religious institution desiring to employ a part-time organist ought to seriously consider investing in a state-of-the-art sound system as a more viable and effective alternative to ensure the continuity of uplifting and memorable worship experiences. Such thoughtful considerations and actions will undoubtedly safeguard the invaluable role of church organists and music ministers for generations to come.

In order to cultivate an atmosphere that nourishes the spirit and uplifts the members of the congregation, it is essential that the music practitioners receive comprehensive training. This will empower them to collaborate harmoniously with the clergy, ultimately crafting an aesthetic environment that serves as a melodic sanctuary for all who gather. With their expertise, these dedicated professionals will be able to curate a musical program that resonates deeply within each individual, evoking a collective sense of transcendence and emotional enrichment. By dedicating themselves to the mastery of their craft, these music practitioners have the potential to truly transform the worship experience, imbuing it with a profound sense of reverence and joyful celebration.

First, it is necessary for the church musicians to experience a spiritual rebirth and have a renewed relationship with God before they can effectively assist their fellow church members in achieving the same. When an organist is entangled in the allure of lustful pleasures, it becomes an arduous task for them to guide the choir members towards embracing lives of righteousness and purity. Their personal struggles hinder the path towards a virtuous existence. Thus, it is of utmost importance for the musicians to embark on a transformative journey towards spiritual awakening, enabling them to exemplify the virtues they wish to impart upon others within the church community.

There are numerous strategies that can be implemented in order to foster cooperation and unity within our music community, with the shared objective of nurturing and cultivating talents for the betterment of society and spiritual growth. The various approaches that can be adopted are outlined below:

Professional Development Programs

The second perspective is built on the principle of bringing together the vocational goals of organists as professional musicians who undergo music formation in schools, with the research, teaching, and clinical formation in the biomedical arts in academia. This means that structured programs are designed to enable all organists, irrespective of ideological stances, to have a deeper, more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the beauty, complexity, and indissolubility that reside in much of what philosophy, religious traditions, and

science as empirical articulations of reality worldwide hold foundational for transplanting human heart, hands, herbs, memes, and notes into music.

Reflecting on the interrelationship rabbinic sages have with music, Neusner (2004) notes that to these very sophisticated people, drawn from the most literate and accomplished people of their own Judaism, music makes a difference. In the classical worldview, that view from which the teachings of the rabbis were distilled, composed, and proven, music does much more than just set a mood, induce a state of mind; evoke emotional response to particular messages or symbols. Ancient music is as much a part of Judaism as it was a part of every aspect of ancient Greco-Roman life, from the cradle to the marketplace to the grave.

There are two major perspectives that guide the content, structure, and delivery of professional development programs in this community. The first perspective is that there is a symbiotic relationship that flows through, between, and from the organist. The community integrates the organist, serving as a musician, administrative or professional personnel, teaching faculty, choirmaster, as well as the clergy, in social settings for both spiritual and social transformation.

Networking and Collaboration Platforms

During the 21st century, a website is crucial to any organization. It must be vibrant and beautiful, child-friendly for those with little knowledge of the internet, and savagely exciting for those who have wandering minds; it should be a lively extension of the musical personalities of the organists, choirmasters, and clergy while overlaying opportunities to sing and listen to the sound of the music. Websites have five dimensions. Information shares the 'what' of life; blogs share the 'why' of life; forums listen for the response to the 'why'; magazines showcase the 'who'; and collaboration is about the 'how'. It was once a dream to showcase a musical life and make virtual friends with like-minded individuals, and it was to be 'one day'. And then came the internet: people can reach out and sing, play, write, love, and argue with previously unknown friends. This essay examines some of the technological triumphs and gaps as talented artisans elevate aspirations to artistic accolades. Build it, and they will come.

Building a community encompasses various platforms like a blog, a magazine, and a forum that encompasses the online world. A social gathering to forge lasting friendships through sharing would include the weekly rehearsal and special events such as concerts. At the Annual International Conference for Musical and Liturgical Exposition, the primary focus is the growth of all members of the community. The rest of this essay focuses on a well-designed website as a dream come true for networking and collaboration, pointing out the talents of this medium as a unique addition to the recognized canvases of these conversations.

Networking and Collaboration among church musicians

But reaching out to our politically oriented clergy and to the needs of a church on a mission in a prevailing situation, earthly relations should be given serious consideration. It is imperative that we actively engage our communities with the culturally creative literature award-winning communities of yester-decades. To achieve this, we must sincerely contemplate networking and collaborating with choirs of various denominations, fostering unity across religious boundaries. Additionally, it is vital that we extend our support and outreach to the civil servants who have been defamed, yet possess immense wealth. By working together in the respective music department of the Nigeria Baptist Convention, church organists, choirmasters, and clergy can forge meaningful connections and collaborate harmoniously. This department encompasses an array of music professionals including music directors, music under-directors, music leaders, music teachers, and accomplished organists, all of whom play a crucial role in enriching our worship experience.

The music for any worship experience should be a magnificent feast of delightful sounds, transcending mere melodies and reaching into the depths of the worshipper's soul. Such a transformative musical journey leaves the worshipper purged of negativity, refreshed with hope, and prepared to bravely face all the challenges that come with living in an increasingly dispirited and troubled world. It is within this sacred musical tapestry that the involvement of church organists and choirmasters takes on a profound significance. These dedicated individuals, armed with their immense musical talents, possess the power to bring about political, economic, and social transformation within the hearts and minds of the worshippers. As the people prepare themselves to face the grand vision that

should animate a church on a mission, the organists and choirmasters serve as beacons of inspiration. Their harmonious collaboration becomes the thread that weaves together the collective spirit of the congregation, guiding them towards a higher purpose. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that without the skills and abilities possessed by these extraordinary organists and choirmasters, and to a considerable extent without seamless collaboration between them, the word of God may resonate in a language foreign to the hearts of the worshippers. It is through the artistry of these gifted musicians that the divine message can truly be brought to life, resonating with the deepest parts of one's being. Without their collective efforts, the lived experience of faith may become marred by a sense of futility or even be faced with a spiritual numbness. Research outcomes in this field have postulated that the disposition that Christians carry throughout the weekdays remarkably determines the nature of the sacred crime – a term here referring to any improper or unfulfilling interaction with the divine – experienced on Sundays. The way in which believers lead their lives and nurture their faith during the mundane routine of the weekdays inevitably manifests itself in their spiritual experiences during the sacred gatherings. Therefore, it becomes of utmost importance for individuals to cultivate a disposition guided by love, compassion, and righteousness so that the sacred crime is transformed into a sacred sublime. In conclusion, the power of music within a worship experience should never be underestimated. It has the ability to ignite the innermost emotions, evoke profound reflection, and act as a catalyst for spiritual growth. Together, organists, choirmasters, and the congregation can create a harmonious symphony that transcends the bounds of language, touching the very essence of the human spirit. May each worshipper embrace their role in this symphony of faith, allowing the sacred music to illuminate their souls and radiate the message of divine love to the world.

Case Studies and Success Stories

The effectiveness of these initiatives demonstrates that people involved in organists, choir leaders, and priests' publications may eventually be taking the institutions and putting their efforts into joint participation. Through seminars and workshops, both parishioners are exposed to teachings, doctrinal preferences, types of music, and church documents. These are then projected through pastoral planning, service prayer, and music ministry. Data analysis reveals increases in

shrinkage from MACRs into altruistic, self-reward, overall religious well-being group homogeneity, resulting in broadening the scope of civil society to large segments. Investing in public goods and offering more religious music brings the possibility of growing the religious congregation and energetic cooperation problems, thereby reducing the potential costs of both groups. Given the key roles of music, outreach, and participation in transition, increasing the church's overall attendance and aids is a reasonable goal.

An academic conference or seminar that brings together priests and lay people from the Christian community and community collaboration could be the most important and most valuable type of project. This seminar was initiated by the Archbishop of Ibadan and hosted by Legend Hotel. The topic of the seminar was "Building a community of prayer, organists, and choir leaders for spiritual and social transformation in Nigeria." About twenty-five Catholic Bishops, Archbishops, and Reverend Fathers from various parishes within the country were invited to this event, as well as parishes across Lagos, Abeokuta, Lagos, and Ondo. The seminar introduced the study's aims, scope, conceptual framework, and projected initiatives, but the usual suspects from religious pilgrimages and divine comedies. The seminar presented the pillars of the church's ten-year pastoral vision and the Archbishop's new vision, taking audience reflection on the music and project of the church.

Impact of Community Building Initiatives

Just as music is a highly complex art with a whole coming together of many harmonious parts, so also is the spiritual and emotional nourishment that results from carefully nurtured caring communities. The congregation must be the community which this music-making can create, a community of love and support in contrast to a ‘rentership’ merely sharing the vicarious experiencing of expensive music. The German Protestant theologians' use of the term ‘Orgelbewegung’ (Organ movement) is deeply relevant: the emphasis of the ‘treue Gut’ (faithful people) is simultaneously to be inward and outward looking. Inwardly, each person is unique, together creating harmony in one huge concert of creation; outwardly, we are within the same circle of love, sharing generosity and suffering, peace and conflict, which extend beyond the music to transform the world in which we live.

'No man is an island…' goes the saying, and to this we could add the inimitable African way. As I write from Nigeria, 'I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.' Clearly, the welfare of the singing community depends on our singing different parts in concert of the Divine creativity. Clearly, also, we cannot afford to exclude any of the members of our community from the action of making beautiful music together. Nor can we afford to exclude those consumers of music who do not perform in order to make melodic choirs of souls. Community identity is often shown in terms of those who are most excluded and seen as different from an ideal citizen, but also an ideal human, if not human being. We are called by tradition to bring glad harmony to troubled souls and to be a salve for those 'making before they die some beautiful mistakes' as Yeats invites us to do.

Conclusions and Recommendation

Research Services I have tried to offer research services in collaboration with national and international music schools to be in tune with church and societal needs in Nigeria. Previous research has been confined to educational concepts and networking factors. In talking to music students and to my colleagues, I have discovered advocacy is important for church music and that music can join other architectures in changing the world by transmitting ideas to people. This is possible with their creative composing techniques and educational strategies. Now it is time to investigate the creative and educational potential and experiences of interested Nigerians. That would empower and entrench the role of church musicians within the church and society. In those ways, the community of musicians can help in steering the ship of global change needed for social transformation.

Conclusions Building a community of musicians who are spiritual leaders as organists, choirmasters, and clergy to spiritually transform themselves, church members, and society in Nigeria has always been occupying my mind over the years. This community of musical people can be known and identified by some identified characteristics. Such a community can work together as agents of social and spiritual transformation. Their interaction is enhanced and maintained by their contribution and participation in creative and educational endeavors. The resultant spiritual leadership of musicians can initiate interaction and responsibility of church leaders and members in church and society in Nigeria.

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