

Rethinking Spiritual/Cultural Appropriation in Christian Music Making and Consumption: A Study of Nigerian Gospel Music

Endong, Floribert Patrick Calvin

Department of Theatre and Media Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar-Nigeria

**Corresponding Authors: Endong, Floribert Patrick Calvin, Department of Theatre and Media Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar-Nigeria*

ABSTRACT

There have been multiple revolutions in the contemporary Christian music and from observable trends, more paradigm shifts are predictable in this music industry. Some of these revolutions and paradigm shifts (notably cultural/spiritual appropriation) have been controversial, somehow driven by human reasoning and aesthetical moves to copy the world. This discourse argues that genuine gospel music making and consumption are Holy Spirit assisted or Spirit-led. As spiritual acts, they are spiritually discerned, exclusively by observers "possessed" by the True Holy Spirit. This is in line with the biblical illumination that spirituality is spiritually discerned by spiritual people (2 Corinthians 1:12). Based on this premise, the article castigates the cultural appropriation paradigm in gospel music industry, equating it to the product of human philosophy. Though culturally sensitive, the appropriation tradition tends to offer religion and religious art in a secular mode with the risk of causing gospel artists to adapt to purely secular standards.

Keywords: *Appropriation Paradigm, Christian Alternative Music, Nigerian Gospel Music, Secularism, Music of the Devil.*

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Christian Music has, in the course of its evolution, witnessed the emergence of various postmodern traditions or artistic philosophies. Some of these traditions, notably Christian Alternative Music and the (spiritual/cultural) appropriation movement have received mixed reviews on one hand and informed both debates and controversial theories bordering on Christian music making and consumption on the other hand. This is in line with the fact that the issue of music style has always been very divisive among Christians. Preferred musical styles have most often varied with respect to personal and doctrinal orientations. In most cases, the apologists of these diverse musical preferences have seriously sought to spiritually legitimize or justify their positions. As Mueller (2012) insightfully puts it, instead of recognizing these differences as personal preferences and cultural distinctions, some Christians declare their preferred style of music to be the only 'biblical' one" and by the same argument, categorise all other forms of music as "unwholesome, ungodly, or even satanic". The conflicting traditions and philosophies on music making and consumption have generated what

has been referred to as the "Worship War". This Worship War constitutes a prism through which the making and consumption of Christian music is defined. The War, for instance, very much inspires contemporary critics' views of alternative Christian music and the cultural-spiritual appropriation current.

As a postmodern genre, Christian alternative music has been viewed by most puritanical observers as a questionable, if not, highly secular musical tradition. Some sceptical critics (the detractors of the alternative current) have – for instance – equated the genre with an exclusively artistic and emotional experience which, glaringly neglects or deviates from the basic principles of genuine worship ministry. In line with this, Olsen (1995) diametrically contrasts the genre to pure evangelistic or spiritual Christian music. He opines that the alternative music current has mainly insisted on song lyrics, rather than words and harmonies which are now familiar or imperative in contemporary Christian music. Additionally, while most contemporary Christian artistes have been striving to be evangelistic and somehow spiritual, alternative artistes have shown a greater willingness to experiment artistically as

well as to compose humanistic songs about the dark side of life. Based on these premises, Olsen brands Christian alternative music as a genre which is “too worldly for the Church” and thereby indirectly warns Christians against the consumption of the genre.

This position notwithstanding, some critics have instead viewed Christian alternative music in a good light. Such critics have associated the genre with a positive revolution in the growth of Christian music. According to critics such as Purcell (2015), the Christian alternative music movement somehow permitted gospel music to catch up with secular music. The movement actually seems to have utterly “rectified” or nullified the popular belief/imagination that Christian music was as much as 5 years behind mainstream ‘secular’ music. In effect, by the early-mid 1990’s, following the emergence of the alternative current, it seemed that Christian music wasn’t really so behind secular music industry. A clear index of such a situation is the fact that some alternative artistes came up with musical productions that seriously competed with great secular successes. A case in point is the underground band *Nivarna* which, with their alternative grunge record *Nevermind* (1992), spectacularly replaced pop legend Michael Jackson at number one on billboards’ album chart (Purcell 2015).

Another contentious/controversial postmodern musical tradition – if not a facet of alternative music – has been the appropriation current, a movement which has sought to literally “Christianize” hitherto secular traditions. Such a “Christianization” has been effected through the incorporation of a range of secular artifacts in the melody and lyrics of Christian songs. Some of the “questionable” traditions recurrently incorporated into contemporary gospel music include the adoption (or rather (mis)appropriation) by gospel singers of contentious – or rather controversial – rhythms such as hard rock, rock and roll, Rap and Beat (R&B), traditional African music (rhythms often associated with ancestral worship) as well as the injection of worldly messages in presumably Christian songs as well as the production of remix versions of secular songs in which lyrical texts are Christianised. To this list of contested or contentious traditions, one should add the secularization and glaring sexualisation of gospel music performance, often manifested by the adoption of suggestive dance and dress

styles during gospel music performances among other traditions.

In view of all these revolutionary - if not “deviational” – practices; and the multifaceted modernization of the genre, the global gospel music industry is most often viewed as a battlefield, where genuine worship and questionable – if not spiritually poisonous – traditions are opposed. To borrow the language of Bulmer (2014: 2), contemporary, Christian music – in its multiple facets – is “like the society it is born from: it is a creation of oppositional forces [as well as] a mesh of styles and ideologies. No other art form is so readily accessible, accepted, and despised”. In the same line of argument, Robin (2014) regards contemporary music as a way through which paganism makes inroads into today’s global church. “Though sadly, many Christians no longer believe music is an area where we need to exercise discernment. They have fallen prey to a number of music myths perpetuated by the godless philosophy of our day”. Robin further notes that Christians’ persistent consumption of “poisonous” religious music is thanks to a number of myths which are grounded on subjectivism, relativism and carelessness. He laments that:

Christians will agree with non-Christians that different types of music are better suited to various activities than other types of music. For example, we could probably all agree that it would be unfitting to play a funeral dirge at a barn-raising or rap music to help a baby get to sleep. It is only when it comes to the activity of worship that Christians tend to make an exception and say that any type of music is just as appropriate as any other type.

The non-Christian community has no trouble grasping this general point. If you were to go into a college dormitory and start asking young people to suggest a type of music to assist with meditation, to work-out to, to create a partying atmosphere, to invoke a melancholy mood, to create a condition of mind appropriate for seduction, to hype someone up before a fight, most people would be able to match certain styles of music to these activities with a surprising degree of consensus. But when it comes to worship music, many Christians hesitate to say that one style might be more appropriate for worship than another. While we are all ready to acknowledge that certain styles

of music are appropriate or inappropriate for a barbeque, a birthday party, or a barn-raising, when it comes to worship Christians will deny that the concept of appropriateness even has coherence. (Robin 2014: 17)

In effect, as noted by Robin, it has long become clear to some well informed, (particularly conservative) critics that contemporary gospel music is not wholly holly, Christian or spiritual. Pagan traditions and worldliness have systematically robbed some gospel music enterprises of their spirituality, and have thus made such artistic enterprises not suitable or prolific for spiritual intercourse with God (Endong, 2016). As Bulmer (2014:56) insightfully explains, in its debut, Gospel music was categorically rooted in Christian religious theology. It was a subject considered “untouchable” by most of the stakeholders of the music industry, be they artists, fans, record producers and executives. “To move a music that was considered “God’s music” into a more secular realm, and to attach to it messages of ecstasy, and sex was considered taboo if not blasphemy”. However today, this reverence and elevation to the sacred is no longer that visible as postmodern traditions, pertinacity and hazardous experiments are now driving the industry. The injection of sex and other secular artefacts into gospel music has, for instance greatly contributed to the decline of gospel music. Such a situation has, of course, called for great caution in gospel music consumption. This paper advocates an original form or model of spiritual appropriation which may enable Christians to conceive both lyrical and melodic contents of gospel songs as theirs. This will mean appropriating such musical contents and using them as their personal sacrifice to God for a fruitful spiritual intercourse with the Lord. In its first part, the paper provides a conceptual definition of spiritual appropriation showing how it is manifested in various aspects of the Christian faith. In its second part, it explores spiritual appreciation in contemporary Nigerian gospel music and ends up (in its last part) by proposing a model of spiritual appropriation in gospel music consumption.

CONCEPTUALIZING APPROPRIATION

The verb “to appropriate” generally means to take something or someone’s ideas for your own use, mainly without permission or in an illegal

manner. In tandem with this, the Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary defines appropriation as the act of taking something which belongs to someone else, without permission. However, the conceptualization of appropriation has largely varied with respect to contexts. In the sociological, anthropological or cultural context for instance, theorists have, designed the term “cultural appropriation” to describe a situation or process in which a culture adopts, borrows or “steals” specific icons, rituals, aesthetic standards, and behaviours from another culture or subculture. According to Forbes (2011), such an appropriation is generally applied when the subject culture is a minority culture or somehow subordinate in social, political, economic, or military status to the appropriating culture. This form of “appropriation” also often occurs without any real understanding of why the original culture took part in these activities or the meanings behind these activities, often converting culturally significant artefacts, practices, and beliefs into “meaningless” pop-culture or giving them a significance that is completely different/less nuanced than they would originally have had.

Cultural "appropriation" could therefore circumstantially be regarded as a form of "misappropriation" or worse, a form of desecration especially in situations where in the adoption or borrowing of these cultural elements is done in a colonial or/and non-deferent manner. In such a context, cultural elements are copied from a minority culture by members of the dominant culture, and these copied or borrowed elements are employed outside of their original cultural context – sometimes even against the expressed wishes of representatives of the originating culture. In the process, the original meaning of these cultural elements is often distorted and used in a way which may be interpreted as disrespectful by members of the originating culture. Such cultural elements may be reduced to “exotic” fashion by those from the dominant culture. When this is done, the imitator, "who does not experience that oppression is able to 'play,' temporarily, an 'exotic' other, without experiencing any of the daily discriminations faced by other cultures.

In line with culture theorists and anthropologists’ conceptualization(s) of cultural appropriation, this paper constructs spiritual appropriation as the adoption, borrowing or theft of spiritual artifacts, (namely what is commonly - though arguably – being referred to as “Satan’s

property” by puritanical Christians), mainly for an evangelistic or salvific purpose. Contrarily to cultural appropriation which is a by-product of cultural imperialism, capitalism, assimilation and oppression, spiritual appropriation is mainly motivated by the desire to revolutionize methods of proselytism. And similarly to cultural appropriation (which may imply a cultural war between the subordinate and subaltern cultures), spiritual appropriation emanates from an “imaginary” spiritual warfare between the forces of Satan/the world and the Church. In accordance with biblical exhortations as in Ephesians 6:1-12, most Christians (particularly Pentecostals) imagine or consider themselves in a perpetual (spiritual) war against satanic forces or the forces of the world. In such a war, Christian structures are to crystallize and mobilize their forces to win various battles at various fronts. Part of the battles is to (spiritually) conquer the world and vanquish satanic forces, through seizing the very weapons of the “Devil” to henceforth use them against him. Here in comes spiritual appropriation. Spiritual appropriation is therefore often manifested by the Christians’ culture or tendency of turning establishments such as brothels, cinema halls, strip tease establishments, bars, nightclubs and the like (arguably considered instruments of the devil) into churches and spiritual temples which henceforth will be geared towards the salvation of masses (Fakoya 2008). With respect to Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria, Servant (2003:54) insightfully makes allusion to this manifest spiritual appropriation when he passionately deplore the razing of iconic and symbolic cultural establishments as “the Shire” (founded by Nigerian afrobeat legend Fela) and the construction at their respective sites, of various types of spiritual establishments, particularly Pentecostal churches.

Spiritual appropriation may equally take the form of the conversion of influential figures (as global music stars, famous politicians, actors, and other personalities and opinion leaders). Being opinion and role models, these figures are often considered – according to puritanical imaginaries – weapons of the Devil, so long as they are gentiles and predisposed to be employed by the Devil to concretize his dark designs. Their conversion is often interpreted by overzealous Pentecostal Christians as an appropriation or conversion of Satan weapons. This belief principally rest on the imagination

that these “high calibre” proselytes are expected – while being converted – to henceforth be vessels in the hands of God. The transformation of such “satanic” establishments into salvific tools and the conversion of iconic figures or personalities from the world are highly symbolic experiences in that, they mark the spiritual conquest of the world, the disarming of Satan and the spiritual appropriation of his weapons or tools.

APPROPRIATION OF “THE MUSIC OF THE DEVIL” AS A POSTMODERN TRADITION IN GOSPEL MUSIC MAKING AND PERFORMANCE

Appropriation in the context of gospel music making and performance is mainly envisaged as an attempt by Christian artistes to reshape, redefine and re-orient musical artefacts commonly branded secular or the instruments of the devil. Headlam (2003:158) refers to the phenomenon as the act of “taking musical and textual elements [of a secular song] and recombining them in new contexts”. In the same line of argument, Echezonachukwu (2015) associates the process of appropriation with the art and practice of “transmuting a well-known secular song into a religious/gospel song and vice-versa”. He further refers to such a process as the “gospelisation” of a secular artefact. In line with this, musical performances by famous hip-hop secular artistes are played in religious settings. The secular lyrics of such productions are circumstantially changed to religious texts in view of adapting them to the occasion; while other elements such as the original instrumentation, rhythm, harmony, and overall vibes are maintained. These definitions may arguably suggest that appropriation is more like a kind of crafty remix. However, appropriation is more than that. It is conceived as a spiritual act or process through which those cultural and spiritual artefacts arguably referred to as the “music of the devil” or the “satanic way” (Satan’s weapons) are used against him, principally for a salvific purpose. As noted by Lauritsen (2011), it is this particular aspect of the phenomenon – the fact that cultural artefacts that were hitherto considered to be spiritually harmful could be use for evangelistic purpose – that spurred some fundamentalist Christian quarters to progressively and fervidly support the idea of appropriation.

If Christian musicians use what were once thought of as secular genres to transmit the Christian message, then to many Evangelicals,

that particular music can and should be appropriated for religious purposes [...] the emphasis here is that Evangelicals believe it should be used for religious purposes. That is to say those Evangelicals who once opposed the [secular] style of music now embrace the medium because it promotes a Christian message that carries with it Christian values. Even certain contemporary musicals [...] are being embraced by the Christian community to get younger people excited about Christianity. (Lauritsen 2011:14)

A good discussion on the phenomenon of appropriation in gospel music making and performance should therefore start with an exploration of some of the cultural and spiritual artefacts commonly referred to as the “weapons or tools of Satan/the world”. A number of popular musical cultures have arguably been branded “satanic”, “nefarious” and secular/pagan. In line with this, terminologies and coinages such as the “music of the devil”, “poisonous music”, “contaminated music”, “pernicious/satanic music”, “alternative music”, “bad music” among others are commonly employed in Christian parlance. In this more or less arguable – and highly questioned – spiritual (re)definition and (re)branding of music, specific rhythms such as rock and roll, hard rock, metal, rap, raga and R&B, forms of traditional music among others, have been demonized in highly conservative Christian circles. Rock and Roll is for instance, often “maltreated” and pejoratively defined by a number of negative myths and Christian imaginations. One of these myths is that the rhythm is a satanic design, geared towards derailing the youths and making them first hand advocates and instruments of the Antichrist. The detractors of this music style have mainly associated it with voodoo and satanism. In line with this, Ventura (1987:30-31) associates the rock musical style with rituals or exoteric practices of pagan (African) religions. Rock, according to him, perfectly replicates animistic forms of religion, particularly voodoo rituals of possession which have as principal objective to “experience the intense meeting of the human world and the spirit world”. He contends that in typical animist rituals involving music and dance, performers are spurred by the holy drums. Being deep in the meditation of the dance, they (the performers) are “literally entered by a god or a goddess”. Their body

therefore literally becomes the crossroads, facilitating the union of the human and the divine. Any performance of the rock genre perfectly replicates exoteric scenarios in Abomey, Africa, where specific calibres of deities (vodums) speak through humans. The word voodoo is derived from this vodum, and it is Voodoo that must be regarded as the roots of contemporary rock music. Ventura further explains that:

The Voodoo rite of possession by the god became the standard of American performance in rock ‘n’ roll. Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, James Brown, Janis Joplin, Tina Turner, Jim Morrison, Johnny Rotten, Prince—they let themselves be possessed not by any god they could name but by the spirit they felt in the music. Their behaviour in this possession was something Western society had never before tolerated. And the way a possessed devotee in a Voodoo ceremony often will transmit his state of possession to someone else by merely touching the hand; Western performers transmitted their possession through their voice and their dance to their audience, even through their records. (Ventura 1987:32-33)

The origin of the Rock and Roll in particular is often brandished by detractors of the rhythm as an evidence or sufficient justification to strongly demonize it. It is even believed or argued that the term (“Rock and Roll”) is a metaphor of the sexual act (and particularly a metaphor of fornication – thus a sin). The term “Rock and Roll” is, in effect, a ghetto term that was often employed within the Black community in reference to premarital sex performed in the back seat of a car. On such a questionable origin, the rhythm has been relegated by some puritanical critics to an antithetical force to Christian musical ideals. While associating the rhythm with a number of negative stereotypes, Yusko and Prior (2013) pointedly note that rock and roll is highly unsuitable for any spiritual musical enterprise. To this duo of researchers, religious rock and roll is “like the frog and the water”. Its sexual connotation, and negative legacy in ruining the lives of teenagers through suicide, drug abuse, immorality, perversion, Satanism, strongly motivates critics to sideline it from the prolific tools usable for effective worship. Unfortunately, “we live in a day where many Christians and church leaders are allowing this demonic music into their churches, claiming

that the music is holy and sanctified because the lyrics are changed to include some 'religious' words”.

In the same line of argument, African rhythms inviting listeners to suggestive dance styles such as Makossa, Mapuka, Zouklou, Couper-decaler, Ndobolo and other folkloric and postmodern rhythms have been demonized, often on arguable grounds. In Present days Nigeria, the phenomena of religious Shoki, Makossa and Azonto – a number of suggestive musical and dance styles – are fuelling vexed debates in religious circles in Nigeria. Despite this demonization, alternative artistes and appropriation apologists have not hesitated to employ rock, makossa, azonto, shoki and other contentious rhythms as “instruments of worship or praise”. Popular Nigerian gospel artistes such Frank Edwards, Lara George, Ada, Buchi among others have made rap, rock and traditional Nigerian music dominant rhythms for their musical compositions. In their use of rhythms such as rap, these artistes often place particular emphasis on imitating popular secular rappers. Frank Edwards is for instance noted for imitating the performance styles of rappers such as Pulpit (a popular American rapper).

Appropriation apologists so much believe that using secular music styles such as rock, rap, makossa, shoki and the like – types of music that are associated with worldliness – is equivalent to “conforming to the world” on one hand and confronting Satan on the other hand, turning his weapons against him (Elmer 1997:59). However, the tradition has been a complex system with multi-dimensional functions. Some Nigerian gospel artists visibly use appropriation as a capitalistic instrument to fashion their musical production according to the dominant market preference and secure commercial success (Endong 2015, 2016). Secular musical styles have always been in vogue making secular music presumably more lucrative than gospel music in Nigeria. Such a scenario has motivated many Nigerian gospel artistes to adopt the “gospelisation” of popular secular songs and mainstream alternative Christian music. In her diagnostic of the gospel music industry in Nigeria, gospel artiste Ayansina Adefolawe (cited by Dayo 2014:19) posits that “Our message has been contaminated. You’ll even see a so called gospel artiste changing secular lyrics to a church song just to get people dancing. What we do now is

mere entertainer. I will say 40 percent of us are guilty of this [...] We have shifted our eyes from the one who called us and are now chasing after money” (Quoted by Dayo, 2014, 19).

It equally goes without saying that the appropriation paradigm is clearly an attempt to accommodate the gospel to secularism and to a way hybridise ritual sounds with commercial concerns. The appropriation tradition should therefore be viewed within the broader context of the Body of Christ (Christian artistes), venturing outside the church-gates and mingling in the affairs of the marketplace to attempt to give concrete form to the Christian witness. Pannenberg (cited by Brown 2016: 34) insightfully outlines the subtle iniquities of this evangelistic strategy as he notes that appropriation and alternative music constitute one of the absolutely worst ways to respond to the challenge of secularism as they involve that Christian musicians somehow adapt to secular standards in language, thought and way of life. Pannenberg argues that “if members of a secularist society turn to religion at all, they do so because they are looking for something other than what culture already provides. It is counterproductive to offer them religion in a secular mode that is trimmed in order not to offend their secular sensibilities”.

Though culturally sensitive, such a worldly accommodation philosophy is visibly not Spirit-led. Secular musical traditions such as shoki, Azonto and Makossa have been designed to produce in the listeners specific ungodly feelings including warm sentimental feelings or very hard emotional feelings. It is therefore spiritually absurd that such feelings be associated with worship. The so called popular secular styles were not conceived to deepen prayer, lead people to worship or open the soul to the sacred. They were designed “to produce shallow emotions about love and romance at best, and lust and sex at worst” (Dwight 2014). Though post-modern, the idea of appropriating them is not new. In his book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Pope Benedict XVI (cited by Dwight 2014) acknowledges that down through the ages this has been a recurring problem in the religious music industry. Hymn writers have cultivated the habit of putting Christian “words to beer drinking songs”. In some other times they adopted the popular operatic style. Now they adopt such spiritually aggressive traditions such as light rock, hard rock, and virtually every other secular style.

So long as these demonized rhythms will be defined according to socio-cultural frameworks and personal musical philosophies, there will never be a consensus on the spirituality or non spirituality of appropriation. What we mean here is that most proponents – like some detractors – of appropriation approach the whole phenomenon of Christian music from the angle of personal doctrine and human construction/philosophy; meanwhile the phenomenon of Christian music must be analyzed with the help of the Holy Spirit. In Colossian 2:8, the Bible implicitly warns against human philosophy and human reasoning as they are susceptible to derail man. Our argument here may sound unrealistic and inapplicable to committed scientists but Christian music is a spiritual phenomenon and on such a premise, its genuineness or spiritual danger can only be spiritually discerned. This is based on the biblical illumination that spirituality (spiritual things) can only be spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2:14). Only the True Holy Spirit can guide the gospel artiste towards determining the spiritual weight or defectiveness of any musical tradition and any version of appropriation s/he wishes to proffer. Most apologists of the two “heresies” of alternative gospel music and appropriation will readily claim to be moved by the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God). However, given the sustained bi-dimensional opposition between them on one hand and between them and detractors of these heresies on the other hand, one is left to wander how the same source (the Spirit of God) will author contradictory theologies. One actually wonders how God will inspire them concurrent philosophies, concurrent theologies and instructions on music. As we have strongly argued elsewhere, it is clear that not all gospel musicians are guided by the “True” Holy Spirit. Thus the guidance of the authentic Holy Spirit is imperative for healthy gospel music making and consumption.

RETHINKING APPROPRIATION IN MUSIC CONSUMPTION

We envisage gospel music consumption to be of two principal typologies: (i) consumption for purely carnal motivations and gratifications and (ii) consumption for systematic and fruitful spiritual intercourse with God. The former typology is liberal, open and more embracing in that it is not shaped and strictly conditioned by the consumer’s spiritual consciousness. Consumption, in this context, deliberately or inadvertently disregards existing or potential

constraints grounded on biblical or divine injunctions/interdictions. De Albatrus (2013) makes allusion to such a scenario in his criticism of “music as Christian entertainment” philosophy. He notes that this paradigm utterly challenges the holy concept of music which defines music in worship as an “accompaniment of instruments joined to the voices of the singing worshippers”. In accord with the Music as Christian Entertainment paradigm, most audiences are made to believe that entertainment is the primary essence of gospel music experience. And of course, the next step is that “any kind of cross-over entertainment is OK as long as it is flavoured with fundamentalist jargon”. However, it is clear that in such a context, music consumption is basically for personal sensual pleasures, the same as in a context of (un)contaminated secular music consumption. Consumption here is greatly dependent on consumers’ musical preferences and may not integrate intuitive or deliberate meditation over the lyrical texts by the consumers. The consumer is made to dance and left spiritually untouched. This point is buttressed by Nigerian gospel artist Busayo Odutayo (cited by Ekpo 2014:12) in his comparison of secular and gospel music.

Every other kind of music, except [genuine] gospel, focuses on making the listeners to dance. There is very little emphasis on message. But gospel music is not like that. Ideally when people, especially worldly people, listen to real gospel music, they should feel a strong urge to turn away from sin. If the music is right, it should inspire them to question the way they have been living. Only gospel music has the power to ignite such feelings and this is what makes it different from other styles.

Consumption of gospel music for systematic and fruitful intercourse with God, on the other hand, is more organised and delicate as it is a “virtual” sacrifice which must be offered with utmost diligence. Such a diligence, as we know it, must primordially be exercised in the selection of gospel songs and cultural artefacts to use for worship. In line with this, De Albatrus (2013) underlines a number of indicators that may guide audiences towards a healthy consumption of gospel music. He posits that the type of music to consume in such a context should have the following characteristics: (i) their lyrical contents should be true to the Bible (which means that they should lyrically be inspired by the bible), (ii) the music should not

remind people of the world or copy the world in one way or the other, (iii) the music must honour and glorify Jesus Christ in everything and (iv) the authors of such musical production must be so dedicated to the Lord that they will do everything possible, including dress and music style, not to attract attention to themselves or the world but to magnify the Lord Jesus. Their lifestyles should advertise them as role models. To these guidelines it may added the necessity nay imperativeness for the True Holy Spirit to validate the gospel song selected for consumption. As earlier underlined, gospel music making and consumption are, par excellence, two inter-related spiritual experiences. They are spiritually discerned and assisted. In line with this, a more healthy consumption of gospel music is Holy Spirit assisted. Indeed, only the True Holy Spirit may guide one in his/her selection of gospel music for consumption. This is accord with the biblical illumination that the Holy Spirit guides in all truth (John 16:13)

Consumption for systematic and fruitful spiritual intercourse with God is in itself having the same spiritual weight as the composition and performance. This entails and follows from the premise that the consumer is compelled to appropriate the song of the composer and performer in that unique context. This is partially effected by meditating over the lyrical contents of the song and by firmly assuming in one's heart that such lyrical contents reflect one's frame of mind, prayer and offering to the Lord. No doubt Colossians 3:16 enjoins Christians to sing "with grace" in their heart to God. By this biblical recommendation or injunction, gospel music consumption must be accompanied with spiritual appropriation of the totality of the musical production. It should be noted that appropriation here is different from the model described in the preceding sections of the article. The fruitfulness of spiritual appropriation here is conditioned by the divine origin of the gospel songs selected by the consumer. In tandem with this, appropriating a "gospel song" packaged in a worldly mode may just be spiritually unproductive. This is why serious scrutiny is needed in the selection of music to consume.

CONCLUSION

There have been multifaceted revolutions in the contemporary Christian music and from

observable trends, these revolutions are not at their terminal stage. More paradigm shifts can be predicted in the Christian music industry most of which driven by human reason and visible drive to copy the world. This paper has counted the cultural/spiritual appropriation paradigm – as manifested in the current Nigerian music industry – as one of these multiple fruit of human reason. It advocated for another type – or model – of spiritual appropriation in gospel music consumption which enables Christians to conceive both lyrical and melodic contents of gospel songs as theirs.

The paper also strongly argued that genuine gospel music making and consumption are Holy Spirit assisted or Spirit-led. As spiritual acts, they are spiritually discerned, exclusively by observers "possessed" by the True Holy Spirit. This is in line with the biblical illumination that spirituality is spiritually discerned by spiritual people (2 Corinthians 1:12). Based on this premise, the article castigates the appropriation paradigm in gospel music industry, equating it to the product of human philosophy. Though culturally sensitive, the appropriation tradition tends to offer religion in a secular mode with the risk of causing gospel artists to adapt to purely secular standards.

REFERENCES

- [1] Albatrus, A. (2014). Are drums suitable to worship God? *Music and faith*. New York: Sacred Book Ltd.
- [2] Azezonachuku, N. (2015). Gospelizing the secular: The Sarkodie and Chidinma paradigm. *Proxemit Magazine*, December 13 Edition, 32-35.
- [3] Bowens-Wheatley, M. (2009). Cornrows, Kwanzaa and confusion: The dilemma of cultural racism and misappropriation. *Cultural Misappropriation*. Retrieved May 11, 2016, at <http://www.uua.org/leaderslibrary/cyulturalmisapropriation/37852shtml>.
- [4] Bulmer, J. (2010). *Devil music: Race, class and rock and roll*. New York: Openly Classist.
- [5] Dayo, E. (2014). Some gospel artistes now use secular lyrics for upbeat. *Newswatch Times*, No 11, 19.
- [6] Dwight, L. (2014). Why is "Christian" music so awful? *Patheos*, 23(1), 13-24
- [7] Ekpo, N. N. (2014). Gospel music ignites feelings unlike secular music songs – Bussy Crown. *Nigeria Film Com*. Retrieved May 12, 2016 at <http://www.gospel-music-ignites-feelings-unline-secular-music-songs/nigeria-ilm.com>.

Rethinking Spiritual/Cultural Appropriation in Christian Music Making and Consumption: A Study of Nigerian Gospel Music

- [8] Elmier, P. (1997). The terrible failure of the secular gospel. *The Christian Post*, No. 17, 28-32.
- [9] Endong, F. P. C. (2015). Glossolalia in the Nigerian gospel music: Aesthetic feature or archetype of a Pentecostal identity? *IJAHS: International Journal of Art and Humanity Sciences*, 2(2), 14-20.
- [10] Endong, F. P. C. (2016). Religiosity versus spirituality in the contemporary Nigerian gospel music. *Human and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 116-132.
- [11] Fakoya, Olusegun (2008). The gospel of materialism – Nigerian Pentecostalism and hypocrisy. Retrieved May 17, 2016, at <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/the-gospel-of-materialism-%E2%80%93-nigerian-pentecostalism-and-hypocrisy.html>.
- [12] Forbes, J. D. (2011). Cultural appreciation or cultural appropriation? Retrieved June 3, 2016, at <http://www.unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2011/09/16/cultural-appreciation-or-cultural-appreciation/>
- [13] Got a Question (2010). Should a Christian listen to secular music? Retrieved may 11, 2016, at <http://www.got.question?org>.
- [14] Kidula, J. N. (1999). Where is your tradition. On the problematic of an African ethnomusicologist research musics. *Proceedings of the SERCAS Fall Conference*, Savannah: SERCAS.
- [15] Kidula, J. N. (2013). *Music in Kenyan Christianity: Logoodi religious song*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [16] Lauritsen, M. W. 2011. Secular mode, sacred message: How contemporary Christian musicians are called by God to perform”. *Sociology Undergraduate Research Paper 2*, Retrieved May 23, 2016, at http://www.Repository.stcloudstate.edu/soc_org_research/2
- [17] Muller, T. (2012). *What the Bible says about Christian music*. New York: Palgrave.
- [18] Olsen, T. (1996). Too holy for the world, too worldly for the church. *CT: Christianity Today*, 40(11), 12-27.
- [19] Olthuis, James H. 1986. *Must the Church be Secular?* New York: McGrawhill.
- [20] Purcell, E. (1995): A year in Christian alternative music. *Faith Music*, August 24 Edition, 61-65.
- [21] Robin, V. (2015). Music: Myths, meanings, messages and mediums” *Christian Worldview Journal*. Retrieved May 12, 2016, at <http://www.christianworldviewjournal.com/html>.
- [22] Savishinsky, N. J. (1994). Rastafari in the promised land: The spread of a Jamaican socioreligious movement among the youth of west Africa. *African Studies Review*, 37(3), 19-50.
- [23] Servant, J. C. (2003). *Which way Nigeria? Music under threat: A question of money, morality, self-censorship and the Sharia*. Denmark: Freemuse.
- [24] Shelton, J. (2009). A perspective on music and cultural appropriation. *Singing Journey*. Retrieved June 23, 2016 at <http://www.Uua.org/publications/singingjourney/worship/57289.shtml>.
- [25] Stouffer, G. (2012). Evaluating music biblically- A concise guide. New York : International Partnership Ministries Inc.
- [26] Tapiwa, P. M. (2010). Gangsters for Christ: Youth identity in gospel, rap and hip-hip music in Harare. *Journal of African Musicology* 4(2) 34-67.
- [27] The Holy Bible. (2007). *Authorized King James Version*. Chicago: Remnant Publications.
- [28] Vendura, J. (1987). *Rock music and spirituality*. New York: Old Saint Publications.
- [29] William, F. M. (2010). Rock music and the antichrist. *The End Times Forecaster*, December 7 Edition, 27-36.
- [30] Yusko, A. & Prior, E. (2015). *Religious rock. The music of Devils in the church!!* Scarborough: The Seed Sower.