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**NEGOTIATING INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES IN THE MUSIC CULTURE OF
THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE MINISTRIES IN NIGERIA**

A Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of
Master of Music in Ethnomusicology
in the Department of Music
The University of Mississippi

By

IF-NOT-GOD MOSES

May 2023

ABSTRACT

Christianity is the largest religion in the world with a population of over two billion. More than ever before, the rapid growth of this religion is getting more diverse due to a great variety of doctrines and practices that it accommodates. From the inception of Christianity, music has been prominent and a powerful bedrock of its religious worship. This thesis, underpinned by the paradigm of sound as a social structure as espoused by Steven Feld, examines the intersectional identities in the music culture of the Deeper Christian Life Ministries (DCLM) in Nigeria. This research aims to fathom the musical functions of the focus group and understand how their music reflects societal idiosyncrasies as well as ethnic and national identity. In addition, the survey elucidates the relations between sound events and the social structures of the specified church. Moreover, I explored how music serves as a partial defining homology of all DCLM congregations while acknowledging regional stylistic differences. I conducted individual interviews with choir directors, choir members, pastors, church members using semi-structured interview guides. Findings from the research have yielded the history of the church and its music ministries. Thematic analysis of data also showed the meaning, continuity, and changes in the worship music tradition of the DCLM as well as intersections of gender, ethnicity, and other identities in the musical practice of the DCLM.

Keywords: Church, identity, intersection, music, Pentecostalism,

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
DCLM	Deeper Christian Life Ministries
DLBC	Deeper Life Bible Church
GCK	Global Crusade with Kumuyi
GHS	Gospel Hymns and Songs
MBS	Monday Bible Study
PC	Personal Communication
PFN	Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria
SDWS	Sunday Devotional Worship Service
TRETS	Thursday Revival and Evangelism Training Service
YPF	Young Professionals Forum

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem and Contextualization

The African Church has long grappled with questions and issues surrounding culture and music (King 2008, 6). Nevertheless, music and religion remain important domains of culture. (Pass 1989). Unarguably, the symbiosis of music and religion is conspicuously evident in Christian worship. Celestine Mbaegbu describes Church music as “an inseparable handmaid of worship” (2015, 177).

The music used in any form of religion is culture dependent. Christianity is a religion that is foreign to Nigeria and Africa at large. However, it has been adopted and domesticated to ensure that African Christians are not estranged from their own culture. This adaptation manifests in the use of indigenous non-Western music in worship and therefore corrects the misconception that Christianity is a Western monolith which in the past has hindered the growth of culturally relevant churches in Africa and elsewhere (Pass 1978, 9, 10).

The conceptualization of Christianity and church music that is divorced from its cultural perspective is what I find problematic. I do not believe that there is a reality such as “the music itself” – that is music exclusive of cultural correlates. Hence, my approach to the music of the DCLM goes beyond the study of music as a mere sonic phenomenon but as a cultural reality.

In addition, my study seeks to examine a school of thought that considers indigenous music as inappropriate for church use. Johansson (1992) reasons that culture has the potential of weakening the church. Similarly, Oputeh's opinion on a melded music practice in the DCLM is one that denigrates African music. He declared that "the Church will never deteriorate to that point." Such stance stirs up controversies and contradicts the fact that religion (including Christianity) is a domain of culture. Ultimately, the goal in this case is to make Christianity meaningful in an African context.

The absence of this reality results in lingering questions including: what then is culture? Is the church an isolated institution which has a different culture altogether? Is a Nigerian Christian not supposed to portray a blend of identities? Is there no point of convergence between their indigeneity and religion? My contemplation is contrary to the claim that the church is supracultural (Johansson 1992). How can the church be above culture when religion is a domain of culture? I believe the notion that the church supersedes culture is due to the misconception of cultural issues. Oyèrónké Olajub[ugrave] distinguishes between syncretism and Africanness and enjoins that "the music and worship by the African Christian be viewed in the light of Africanness as opposed to syncretism" (2001, 179).

It is on the strength of these interrogations, arguments and divergent positions that I explore the music culture of the DCLM, knowing that music has been prominent and powerful in Christian worship. I do not intend to approach the study in a formalistic framework, for example, by analyzing the discrete characteristics of the music, comparing musical forms, melodic and harmonic structures, and rhythmic and metrical parameters of genres. Instead, in order to understand the music behavior of the DCLM, I employ the ethnomusicological approach

that privileges the study of music from a cultural standpoint (Titon 2009, xviii). My decision of not drawing on a formalistic framework is simply by choice and not intended to dismiss other forms of methodological approaches.

I understand that the music of a typical African Church is diverse and that each generation or denomination maintains a unique style. Therefore, in order to fathom the depth of wealth in the music of the DCLM, I focus on the fundamental components of music culture as outlined by Titon (2009, 18). I intend to shed light on the Church's ideas about music - belief system, aesthetics, context and history of music. Other areas of attention include activities involving music, repertoires of music which comprises the style, genres, texts, composition, transmission, movement [as well as] the material aspects of music.

Aim of Study

The aim of this study is to explore the history of the DCLM and their music culture in Nigeria. Also, it investigates the continuity, change, and meaning in the worship music tradition of the DCLM. Furthermore, the survey examines the interaction between sound events and social structures of the specified Church. Thus, exploring intersections of gender, ethnicity, and other identities implicated in the musical practice of the DCLM.

Importantly, this study is not only an addition to knowledge but a deliberate attempt to bridge an existing gap, as evidenced by the literature review below that not so much has been written on the music of the DCLM.

Delimitation of Scope

The research is centered on the DCLM of Rivers State in Port Harcourt. It focuses on the music ministries of the various arms of the Church, most especially the Youth Choir and Adult Choir. The study maintains a diachronic approach as it investigates the changes and modifications in the music culture of the DCLM over time. My survey is based on the state headquarters of the Church in Port Harcourt which serves as a pivot of inquiry to other Churches in the regions, sub-regions and districts.

Research Questions

The study was moderated by the following research questions:

1. What is the history of music in the Deeper Christian Life Ministries?
2. What is the scope of the music of the Church?
3. What are the functionalities of the music in the Church?
4. How does the music portray the identity of members of the Church?
5. How does the music relate to class, ethnicity and gender in the Church?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review is organized under the following subheadings: historical background of Christianity and Pentecostalism in Nigeria, the Deeper Christian Life Ministries (DCLM) in perspective, church music as a social structure and cultural identity, indigenization and hybridization in the DCLM, requirements and influences on the music ministry, functionality of music and doctrine in the Church as well as gender ideologies in music.

Historical Background of Christianity and Pentecostalism in Nigeria

Accounts on earliest missionary activities in Nigeria during the nineteenth century have been captured in both formal and informal repositories. Christianity is predominant in the southern part of Nigeria which mostly comprises the Igbo people in the southeast and Yoruba people in the southwest. Generally, the Roman Catholic and Anglican denominations controlled areas in Southern Nigeria. Subsequently, the Presbyterian Church came in the early twentieth century in the Niger Delta area and had missionary activity in the middle belt as well.

Following World War 1, other denominations and smaller sects, other than those in the mainline, emerged including the “Brethren, Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah’s Witnesses and other groups. Later in the nineteenth century, independent movements also known as African Churches came into existence. “The Pentecostal Churches [which were first recorded in the 1970s and in the 80s] created a dramatic impact in the lives of the people. They were mostly ritually and doctrinally identical to the mother Churches however, more African more African music and later dance mixed with the imported Church services” (Ayuk 2002, 193).

Pentecostalism connotes the noticeable presence and activities of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the DCLM is identified as a Pentecostal denomination. Ojo (2018, 78) posits that the Pentecostal

experience is “the most identifiable mark of a Christian [and that] it renews the Church and makes it better prepared to confront the challenges of society”. Pentecostalism became a global phenomenon in the early twentieth century, however traceable to the Montanist movement in the second century. More so, “its modern American roots are associated with the black preacher, William Seymour and the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1900, which was institutionalized in the Apostolic Faith Mission, Foursquare Gospel Church, Assemblies of God, and other smaller denominations” (Ojo 2018, 78). Nigerian Church leaders who were influenced by Pentecostalism in the early twentieth century include “Garrick Sokari Braide, a prophet and evangelist in the Bonny area of the Niger Delta [as well as] Moses Orimolade and other pioneer prophets of the Aladura Churches in Western Nigeria. In the 1960s, Adam Igbudu led a group which was called Olezi in the Isoko area of Delta State” (Ibid.).

The account of Nigerian Pentecostalism is not complete without the mention of the intense religious awakening among college students. Some of these youths were members of the Scripture Union [SU]. A national revival was occasioned in 1968 at the University of Ibadan and spread to other universities. The youths in war-torn Biafra (Eastern Nigeria) were not exempted. “The revival was so strong that some Christian students hoisted a big banner at the gate of the then University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) with a bold inscription, “Welcome to Jesus University” (Ojo 2018, 80). Kumuyi, the General Superintendent of the DCLM was also “active in the Scripture Union [and was] well known for his understanding and teachings of the Scripture, and his commitment to holiness of life” (Ojewale et al. 2021, 67). His Bible Study group which started in August 1973 metamorphosed to the DCLM in 1977.

The DCLM can be categorized under the third stream of Pentecostalism in Nigeria as outlined by Ojo (2018, 82). “The third category, which is the most visible of Pentecostal

Christianity, is the newer Charismatic Churches, which emerged from a revival on the university campuses in the 1970s.” The second stream of Pentecostalism resulted from the visionary experiences and activities of Africans between the 1920s and 1950s; giving rise to indigenous Pentecostal Churches. On the other hand, the first category of Pentecostalism includes the classical Pentecostal Churches which resulted from the activities of Western missionaries in Nigeria. Among them are the Foursquare Gospel Church, Apostolic Faith Mission, The Apostolic Church and the Assemblies of God Church [which] were introduced into Nigeria in the 1930s and 1940s.

The various Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have impacted Nigeria positively. A vital accomplishment (among others) is bringing “worship nearer to [indigenous] people [as they spontaneously participate] through singing, dancing and praising God” (Ojo 2018, 89). Donatus Ukpong adds that although the Gospel in Nigeria was “permeated with authentic African values, customs and mores,” there was no form of fetishism. “They adopted the African religious spirituality and charisma without the traditional cultic paraphernalia. They were puritanical; they preached the importance of prayer and fasting and renunciation of all forms of idolatry” (2006, 5). The indigenization policy of DCLM in May 1994 as recorded in Igwe (2011) upholds the same principle of spiritual and moral standards while conforming to the cultural realities of the people. According to Ukpong (2006, 7), the attempt was “to decolonize Christianity [and make it] an authentic faith encounter in a local context. [Hence,] independent and Pentecostal groups are considered to be the vanguards of this consciousness in Nigeria.”

The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in Nigeria are of different types and appeal to a diverse category of people. Ojo’s typology include the following; “first, [are] the faith

seekers [also known as] conversionists¹ and they manifest this attitude with vigorous evangelistic activities directed at the individual. In terms of social and economic characteristics, they are generally from the lower level of the socio-economic ladder, their asceticism compensates for the inequality they suffer” (2018, 85).

The second type of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements are the faith builders who place emphasis on the realization of human potentials in order to overcome contemporary difficulties of life. This group of Pentecostals and Charismatics “believe that Christians must be wealthy; hence material success, measured by owning big cars, nice clothing and fat bank deposits, is the mark of true spirituality.” The third group is what Ojo refers to as “the faith transformers. They resemble the conversionists but are more concerned with seeking the conversion of large and isolated ethnic groups rather than individuals. They are traditionally the mission-sending agencies sending full time missionaries to work among ‘tribal’ peoples” (Ojo’s 2018, 85).

“The fourth group, [being] the Reformists are those who have been influenced by Pentecostal spirituality. They are found within the mainline Protestant denominations and want to remain as members but are seeking renewal of these Churches according to their own self-defined religious values. They are literalists who see their denominations as their religious inheritance must be improved upon. Socially, they are characterized as second or third generation in [Churches like Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Catholic]. [Ojo identifies] the fifth category as the Deliverance Churches. They constitute a new phenomenon within Nigerian Pentecostalism. They are preoccupied with healing and thus act as “forensic experts” viewing

¹ Conversionism is a religious term that refers to the sudden and dramatic experience of God which brings about a profound change in a person’s religious status. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/conversionism>.

African cultural roots as being responsible for the contemporary dislocation in the lives of individuals and the society as a whole.” Churches that best represent this category include Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries.

Finally, the Modernists are the old Aladura (African Independent Churches) members who believe that they have to present their faith in a more acceptable form to a more enlightened society. T.B. Joshua’s Synagogue Church of All Nations with headquarters in Lagos is an example, but its preoccupation with physical healing shows its affinity as well to the Deliverance Churches.

Relatedly, Ukpong (2006, 16) distinguishes “the three faces of Pentecostalism in *scriptura*² Churches” in Nigeria, including the classical Pentecostalism, the Neo-Pentecostalism and the Third Wavers. The Neo-Pentecostal conglomerations include Churches like the DCLM, the Church of God Mission, and the Latter Rain Assemblies. The DCLM also represents a conservative wing of the Nigerian Pentecostalism [which is] the brand of holiness movement, a continuation of the conservative of the Wesleyan and Keswickan tradition of classical Pentecostalism " (Ibid. 17).

The DCLM in Perspective

The history, growth and impact of the DCLM are documented in scholarly discourse provided by both members and non-members of the Church. Alan Isaacson is a seasoned journalist who conducted a thorough study on the growth of the DCLM. His book, *The Extraordinary Growth of the Deeper Life Bible Church* is resourceful as it captures the personal life of W.F. Kumuyi, the General Superintendent of the Church. Isaacson believes that the

² “[*Scriptura* Churches resulted from] African initiated form of Christianity. They are core Churches of the global Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Their identifying characteristics are the Bible, African spirituality and Western theology, particularly health and wealth theology” (Ukpong 2016, 15).

growth of the DCLM is attributable to the simplicity and practicality of Kumuyi's sermons. He therefore declared that Kumuyi preached Deeper Life into existence (Isaacson 1990). Kumuyi's messages are generally described as Bible-based, in-depth, captivating and challenging. Although his messages speak to the Nigerian situation and African culture, Kumuyi firmly stands against areas where culture is contrary to godly and biblical principles.

Furthermore, the manifestations of miracles, signs and wonders in the DCLM have significantly led to the growth of the church. Falaye (2015) concludes that Kumuyi as well as other Pentecostal leaders in Nigeria are better substitutes for traditional practitioners (*Babalawo*) who use so-called fetish means to cure people of their ailments. Gaiya (2002) observes that Kumuyi discerns the ailments of Church members, reveals it and prays for their healing.

The milestones in Kumuyi's personal life right from when he was born till date is not a mystery. The biographical approach of Ojewale et al. (2021) details Kumuyi's life and ministry from 1941 to the year 2020. *Kumuyi: Defender of the Faith* is targeted at demystifying the life of Kumuyi; his making, motivations and ministries. Hence the book provides an account of his early life, education, marriage and career as a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos. It also features the small Bible Study group of 15 young students which grew into the DCLM as we know it today. More so, the book tracks the various stages of growth in the DCLM right from the scratch and provides insight on how Kumuyi has positively influenced Christianity in Nigeria and beyond.

Furthermore, Olujobi (2022) celebrates the impact of Dr. Kumuyi from June 6, 2021 to June 6, 2022 which marks his eightieth birthday. Olujobi's book, *The Eightieth Dimension*, captures the various accomplishments of Kumuyi within that time frame including his missionary journeys and the phenomenal Global Crusade and IMPACT of 2022. Olujobi also

presents the Mathematics of Kumuyi's life as a way of highlighting his excellent lifestyle and ministry.

IF: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z =

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

THEN: K + U + M + U + Y + I = 11 + 21 + 13 + 21 + 25 + 9 = 100

(Olujobi 2021, 59)

Substantial scholarly works have been written on the history and growth of the DCLM. Most of them are premised on the personal life and ministry of Kumuyi, the renowned preacher, Mathematician. However, only little has been done on the music ministry of the DCLM. Although Olujobi (2021) and other authors referenced musical activities in their discussion, an in-depth study of the music is lacking, though an important fabric of the DCLM. Accordingly, my research aims to bridge the gap of knowledge by critically studying the music culture of the DCLM in Rivers State.

Church music

The role of music in worship was succinctly expressed by musician and scholar James Beaty "From the very earliest days of history, the human race has expressed itself in music; this has been especially so in expressing worship" (Vaughan 2015, 1). Music is said to be a vehicle of expression beyond words. Furthermore, the term 'Church music' is one that is interdisciplinary and associated with complexities. Vaughan concludes that "not one person has probably ever been, nor ever will be genuinely able to understand and integrate all these fields" (Ibid, 2). Music is viewed differently by both performers and participants due to cultural

differences, knowledge and appreciation. This peculiarity calls for a decision as to what is needed or appropriate for the congregation at every point in time.

There exist two broad styles of church music namely classical and evangelistic music although this categorization is not absolute. The former involves liturgical music from popular composers like J.S. Bach, Isaac Watts and others. Oftentimes, the church invites and pays performers to render classical pieces to the congregation (Vaughan 2015). The evangelistic church music is what Taylor (1994) describes as participatory music since it involves the congregation. The evangelistic music is also characterized by spontaneity, exuberance and emotionality. Vaughan (2015) observes that Pentecostals did not rehearse; instead, there was an emphasis on the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit. However, his observation does not hold true for all Pentecostal churches. In most Nigerian Pentecostal churches, rehearsals are crucial. Oyekan (2023) believes that the Holy Spirit manifests on the platform of excellence. He asserts that “when every element of music is in place, [the Holy Spirit] comes early.” The music ministry of the DLBC for example is known for their regular rehearsals both on monthly and weekly basis. Also, during church activities, music ministers are expected to come earlier in order to rehearse. Those who miss rehearsals are usually not allowed to perform.

Elements of evangelical music include “easy texts, repetitive melodies, interesting rhythm and uncomplicated harmonies. Often the songs were sung from memory” and the music was also accompanied by “any instrument they could find” (Vaughan 2015, 5). Observably, the music of Pentecostal Churches is usually fast, energetic and borders on themes like sanctification, Holy Spirit baptism and the return of Christ. Ogasapian and Orr (2007) observed that the rich of the Gilded Age preferred the classical style of music which is closely associated

with the Episcopal Church whereas the working class in other Churches (Pentecostal, Baptist, Methodist, Holiness and others) leaned towards the evangelical style of Music.

Church music as a Social Structure

Church music is considered a means of creating unity and cohesion and also serves as a ground to express a shared set of values. Worship practices, hymn singing for example represent a structure of social form and relationship. Feld (1984) emphasized the correlation between music and social structure. It is therefore explicit that the structure and meaning of sound is inseparable from the social fabric of a group of people.

Music as well as other elements such as speech, movement and dressing are central to church music and also important for self and community making (Brennan 2018). It is believed that good musical performance combined with other ritual modes like dance, dress and oratory guarantees the presence of the Holy Spirit and answers to prayers. Music sets the pace for spiritual encounters and manifestation like speaking in tongues, prophecies and falling into spiritual trances. Broadly speaking, Christian worship can be categorized among human behaviors termed ritual. This is owing to the fact that it is a behavior that is repetitive and also serves some communal function. Also, posits that

Music, Culture and Identity

Church music does not exist in isolation as it propagates the behavioral, ideological and social aspects of the people. Corbitt in Van de Laar affirms that “the meaning of music resides in people, not in sounds. In a general sense, our evaluation of music has more to do with the people who make it, perform it, and respond to it and to the context in which it is performed than the music itself”

(2000, 248). In the same vein, Christopher Small rightly posits that “Those taking part in a music performance are in effect saying to themselves, to one another, and to anyone else who may be watching or listening – *This is who we are*” (1998, 134). This indeed is a serious affirmation of one’s identity through music.

Ayuk (2002, 191) shows the importance of contextualization especially in relation to the success of Pentecostalism in Nigeria. “It is not that it is only in Nigeria that Pentecostalism has succeeded so far.” The remarkable success of Pentecostalism in Nigeria is credited to its close alignment to the Nigerian way of life and worldview. Furthermore, a connection can be established between the music and lifestyle of Nigerians who are known to be very active people. Their exuberance is evident in the way they “sing, swing and move.” This vibrancy is “invariably the nature of Pentecostalism – the free flow of the [Spirit] in music and dance” (Ibid. 193). To an extent, the Pentecostal movement is successful in Nigeria since it suits the African (Nigerian) way of worship.

The Church, although commonly referred to as the body of Christ or the people of God is still a human community. Expectedly, the Church has the tendency to perpetuate itself. Pass confirms that “while economic, social, sexual, national, and historic differences are transcended in the Church, they are not removed” (1978, 107). ‘Discrete allowances’ is a term which describes self-perpetuation that is done with reference to Christ, the head of the Church (Eph. 4: 15). This allowance is occasioned by the cultural diversities that exist in the Church.

Undoubtedly, the Church is a constituent of culture since religion is a cultural domain. More than being a cultural entity, the Church uses other cultural tools to fulfill its mission. Nonetheless, there is an existing tension between Church music and its cultural milieu. Johansson posits that “Accommodating the gospel to culture is often a vexatious problem” and that “The Church has adopted uncritically many cultural expressions and has unwittingly weakened its witness”. Yet, “The only way that Christians can live out the Christ life is in terms of culture” (1992, 20-21). Church music should therefore be a reflector of culture while expressing the divine.

There is a common assumption that people identify easily with the music of their culture. Moreover, the potency of African music in worship cannot be argued. Louw attests to this claim thus: “When one true African Christian musician is brought to disregard any form of Church music that he may have known in the past and breaks forth praising God in the musical medium that lies closest to his heart, half the battle will have been won” (1958, 51).

Conversely, the African church is criticized for singing more Western hymns. King (2008, 3) emphasizes that their music in worship incomplete unless “they sing songs drawn from their cultural roots.” Sadly, Devalve (2018) records a neglect of musical traditions in West African worship. His analysis portrays a loss of identity among Songhai Christians due to the powerful influence of cultural and historical forces including Westernization.

Towards Indigenization in the DCLM

The encounter between Western Christianity and African traditional religion accounts for the complex history of African Churches. Nonetheless, music remains a powerful force in the African continent. Umeojiaka observes that “Christianity in Nigeria spread rapidly when religious (evangelical) music got indigenized” (2021, 193). Also, churches reviewed their mode of worship to suit the temperament of Nigerian worshippers. Traditional instruments were also incorporated into the worship of mainline churches.

As the Pentecostal church movement gained prominence, choruses and dances which were previously forbidden in the mainline churches became acceptable. Idamoyibo observes the development of a new role of indigenous music in Nigerian Christian worship as “musicians, singers and Christian church goers have adopted and adapted the performance of the genres that were once predominantly restricted to the worship of the gods” (2016, 329). This incorporation stirs both “commendation and queries” (Okpeh 2017, 39). Onan and Agbo (2021, 1) are convinced that “Christian religious worship is not being practiced in its truest form” in Nigerian churches. Also, neo-classical Pentecostals like the DCLM and others who are conservative and “tilt towards the Wesleyan notion of Christian Perfectionism” (Okpeh 2017, 39) are really not convinced that such songs “no longer show connection to ancestral spirits” (Idamoyibo 2016, 331) despite the modifications.

The ‘fire of revival’ in the DCLM was ignited in the Western part of Nigeria and spread all over the nation and beyond (Igwe 2011). Although the

DCLM was birthed from the western part of Nigeria, the pioneer members and leaders of the Church were mostly from the southern part of the country. This necessitated the indigenization policy of DCLM in May 1994. Although the DCLM did their best to reach out to indigenous people but did not get a favorable response from the northerners (Ibid.).

Notably, indigenization is a global phenomenon which of course is not peculiar to DCLM. Christianity is considered as the Whiteman's religion; having little or no relevance to people outside of that culture. Idowu in Crane (1967, 160) forewarned that "unless the churches planted by missionary societies from the west, are able to adapt their worship, liturgy, hymnody, clerical dress and, most important, their attitudes to the cultic and psychological needs of Nigerians, they may suffer the same fate as the churches of North Africa in the early centuries of the Christian era." The indigenous Church policy inaugurated by the Alliance Mission in 1927 was targeted at enabling the spread of the gospel through the indigenous church. Through this means, the indigenous church can fully support, govern and propagate itself.

Church indigenization is associated with several problems including ethnocentrism. The church for one is an amalgam of diverse people and languages. If the membership of a local assembly is largely consists of a certain ethnic group, "there is tendency or possibility of seeing others (in the same group) as the minority group" (Igwe 2011, 412). At first, the membership and leadership of the DCLM, which started in Lagos, was modeled after the Yoruba cultural set-up. As a result, the northerner Church members for example felt that the southerners were superior to them. In this light, it has been observed that

leadership successions in the DLBC reflect a balance and adequate representation of various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Another problem associated with indigenization is language barrier. “The indigenes themselves have not yet accepted indigenization in heart and in life, in a lot of churches, English is still very much in use ... at the expense of their native languages” (Igwe 2011, 414). “Before indigenization, most indigenes remained aloof and nonchalant to the gospel” (Igwe 2011, 420). But subsequently other languages were incorporated. “Today, preachers of all denominations benefit from the use of [indigenous languages]. Nigerian preachers of today hardly preach without using relevant indigenous songs in driving home the points in their sermon” (Umeojiaka 2021, 193). The DCLM has a teaming number of language Churches, interpreters and grass-root participation in Nigeria and beyond.

Hybridization in the DCLM

Hybridization cuts across various spheres including the linguistic, cultural, political, racial and also musical as exemplified in the Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK) organized by the DCLM, which will be discussed later. Although the GCK functions as a melting pot for various music cultures, homogeneity is yet to be reached. With time, the rubbing off process may eventually result in a melded musical identity. Homi-Bhabhas concept of hybridity “commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the Third Space of enunciation” (Mambrol 2016).

Shonekan argues that West Africans reflect a duality of the internal and external, of the colonizer and colonized. This reality presents “the concept of hybridity, as it relates to language, connotes the historical merging of two or more forms that nevertheless retain sufficient resemblance to the original sources” (2012, 149). In a broad sense, “theories of cultural hybridity tend to fall into two categories: kinship or genealogy, and diasporic or “rhizomic,” where different influences merge in a sometimes chaotic fashion, creating an exciting new national cultural form” (Ibid.). Paul Gilroy (1993, 193) captures the notion of crossroads as “a special location where unforeseen, magical things can happen [thus creating] a tension between cultural roots and routes, between space constituted through and between places and the space marked out by flows.”

Christianity as a foreign religion has been reinterpreted and modified to suit Nigerian churches. At first, it was European missionaries that came to Africa to spread the gospel. However, the reverse is the case today as “African missionaries are leaving the shores of Africa and beyond to win souls for God” (Eze 2006, S24). The DCLM which is at the forefront of this revolution has established a path through which its traditions have stretched to other parts of the globe, yet looping back to the continent of Africa.

This cultural exchange has led to Church growth in other continents including the USA. One of the overseers in Eze (2006, S24) reported that the Church growth was due to the “frequent programs organized for us by the General Superintendent and the cross-cultural content, conventions and personal evangelism we have introduced” He further confessed that “the last national

convention attracted over 3,000 people, and you don't normally get that crowd in the USA for an African-based church". Till date, the DCLM continues to exhibit a dynamic two-way cultural crossing between Africa and other Church members in the diaspora.

Requirements for Music Ministry

In most cases, music ministers are mandated to meet various strict requirements and conditions before they can serve in the ministry. This reality debunks the assumption that church musicians are mere entertainers. More than singing, the music ministry is a service department which serves as a role model for the church. The stringent criteria chronicled in the Old Testament emphasizes that church musicianship is not a trivial responsibility. Even though these requirements were directly associated with Old Testament musicians, they still possess relevant applicability for the church today. Miller (1993, 11-12) highlights the stipulations for music ministers as follows:

1. They were chosen: I Chronicles 15: 11-22; 16: 4-7, 37, 41-42; 2 Chronicles 20: 21; Nehemiah 7: 1.
2. They were of the priestly family of Levi: I Chronicles 15: 1-2; Nehemiah 12: 4.
3. They were to do a definite work: 2 Chronicles 7:6, 8: 14, 31: 2; Nehemiah 11: 22.
4. They were to give all or part of their time in service: I Chronicles 9: 33; 16: 37.
5. They were educated and trained: I Chronicles 15: 22; 25: 1-8; Nehemiah 11: 22; 12: 42, 46.
6. They were consecrated: Numbers 8: 5-14; I Chronicles 15: 12, 14, 16; I Chronicles 5:11-12.
7. They were to wear robes: I Chronicles 15: 27; 2 Chronicles 5: 12;

8. They were to be paid for their services: Numbers 18: 21; 2 Chronicles 31; Nehemiah 12: 47; 13: 5, 10, 11.
9. They were provided a place in which to live: Ezra 2: 70; Nehemiah 7: 73; 12: 28-29, Matthew 10: 10
10. They were treated as other religious workers: Ezra 7:24; Nehemiah 10: 28, 29, 39.
11. They were to be adults: Numbers 4: 47; 1 Chronicles 23: 3-5, 24, 27.

Influences on the Music Ministry

It is apparent that the music ministry is not a stand-alone arm of the church. It is moderated by other factors; human, non-human, physical, spiritual, ideological or doctrinal. Johansson (1992, 1) corroborates that the “music ministry at its best is a cooperative venture among congregation, pastor, and musician.” As a cultural system, the church, as well as its music ministry is not insulated from the influence of other power domains ranging from the social, economic and political.

The congregation is the focus of the music ministry. Any plan made or song composed, practiced and performed is geared toward the benefit of the congregation. Also, the quality or state of the music ministry is directly proportional to their spiritual and musical standing. While the congregation remains the focal point, the music ministry cannot perform beyond their level of proficiency. Their song selections and renditions will only constitute a reflection of their strength. Hence, church musicians strive for mastery and technical excellence as much as possible. This responsibility is mostly shouldered by the choir director.

The standing of choir members has been debated as to whether they are really ministers of the Gospel. In some churches, the most important concern is that a music minister should have the call of God. However, some music ministers still struggle for acknowledgement.

It is argued that the ranks in the music ministry require specialized skills. It then behooves music ministers to upgrade their baggage so that the church can also honor the calling of God upon their lives.

Another great influence on the music ministry is pastoral authority. The level of pastoral control over the music ministry varies from one place to the other. In most cases, pastors exert more control than the music directors.

“The degree to which pastors exercise control is directly related to a variety of issues: church polity, the relative abilities of pastor and music director, the size of the parish, and the pastor’s interest, psychological make-up, philosophy of ministry, creative ability, and talent as an administrator.” (Johansson 1992, 5)

The close association of music with worship makes the music ministry so significant, unlike other ministries in the church which are dictated by congregational preference. This importance necessitates a hearty pastoral support. “Strong clergy involvement, without arbitrary control, is the best type of pastoral leadership for advancing the work of an informed ministry of music.” (pg. 7)

Functionality of Music and Doctrine in the Church

Music is an expression that confirms the beliefs already held by worshippers. Through singing, faith is formed and expressed. Tapper (2017) informs that Pentecostal liturgies and spirituality is obtainable through a kind of oral subculture; hence the dominance of oral liturgy. Since the worship experience

tends to be spontaneous and high spirited, the encounter can only be guided by the songs.

The blueprint for church music is traceable to scriptural references including Col. 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19 which emphasized the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. In 1 Corinthians 14, Apostle Paul highlighted the importance of singing with the spirit and the mind. Paul's admonition underpins the need for music ministers to understand what they render, whether vocal or instrumental music. The music of the DCLM as will be discussed in the following chapters alludes to the three essential factors of religious communication as explained by Endong (2016, 117); "the religious convictions/ orientations of the author (sender), the themes (lyrical content) and the spiritual purpose of the communication."

Some churches go the extra mile to establish philosophies and other templates on which their music ministries can build upon. This is because; a philosophy provides a framework on which local churches are free to build upon. Pass (1978, 17) asserts that "without a sound theory for church music, we have no principles with which to transcend our immediate situation and help the church to adapt in times of change and upheaval." Hence, principles and philosophies are much needed to guide church musicians and also help music administrators set attainable goals, although challenging. It is advised that the goals be properly articulated so that every member will understand the purpose of the music ministry.

The utilitarianism of church music cannot be overstated. Titon (2009) observed that people make music in two ways: what music is and what it does. His finding explicates the functionality of music. Music serves as an instrument, a tool and a facilitator. In fact, the worth

of music is owing to its functionality. Music provides the mechanism for creating atmosphere, generating congregational praise and celebrating liturgy. Johansson (1992, 2) conveys the nitty-gritty of church music in that “It covers the noise of walking and talking. It fills uncomfortable silences. Background music enhances prayers, scripture readings, and altar services.” Music sung in church could function as prayer. It is also known to bring relief in cases of physical, spiritual and mental ailments. It was through the instrumentality of music that the demons from Saul were banished. Music also accompanies some activities during worship, for example testimonies, offerings and others.

Music is said to be a signifier of divine presence in Paradise. Besides, music creates a shift from spectatorship to participation as angels take part in the act of worship. Similarly, church members understand music as a requisite to invoke the power of God. This practice can be seen as an angelic mimicry. In some sects, singers and worshippers try to sound like, look like and move like angels in a bid to create a link to the divine. The essence of music in Christian worship is captured in Martin Luther’s sermon at the dedication of the first Church built for Protestant worship, Torgau Castle, in 1544. Luther explains thus, “our dear Lord Himself talk (*rede*) through His holy word and that we, in turn, talk (*reden*) to Him in prayer and song of praise.”

The potency of church worship is manifested in the lives of church members. The power of music is capable of attracting people to church. It is believed that singing together creates the sameness of mind and helps to achieve a “good life” which is a composite of health, joy, happiness, wealth and success. The account in 1 Samuel 16 points to the divinity of music as it applies to healing. These attributes of church music coupled with hard work are regarded as an

ethical remedy for corruption knowing that the “good life” can also be achieved through dubious means.

It is commonly said that people learn more theology through music than they do through sermons. (Pass 1989, 52) St. Basil’s reception of the Psalms is that of a repository of wisdom as well as musicality for the purpose of creating a system that will cater for the ill-inclinations of humanity. Basil (1950) reasons that the Holy Spirit “Blended the delight of melody with doctrines in order that through the pleasantness and softness of the sound we might unawares receive what was useful in the words.” To Basil, the music could be likened to a glass of fruit juice that is meant to help the bitter pill of divine truth go down the throat of a sinful man. Similarly, Mike Murdock in Umejiaka (2021, 193) elucidates that “the power of music in preaching the word is so enormous that the ministry of music preceding the word usually determines how the people will receive the message.”

Music is considered as an act of ministering unto the Lord or praising the Lord. Hence, it is important that such service comes from the heart. Johansson (1992, 3) confirms that “the intense devotional attitude of the participant is its distinguishing mark.” Therefore, man’s relationship with music is an aspect that requires guidance. It can be observed that the way people respond to music differ based on the context in which the music was performed. Jonathan (2010) posits that religious attitudes to music are not only conditioned by religious discourses, such as doctrine but were also conditioned by musical discourse itself.

The true power of this heavenly music comes from God. However, according to Willis (2010, 20) it is undeniable that church music can be embraced sensually or “in a distinctly earthly manner.” Brennan (2018) agrees that music might distract participants from the true purpose of worship. It is easy to admit that “Only, perhaps, in heaven could the human soul be

trusted to react to the affective powers of music in an appropriately virtuous fashion” (Willis 2010, 20).

Liturgical Uniformity, Spontaneity and Variety

Musical variation is a common phenomenon that results from the different uses of music as well as the different users of music. Variables such as geographical region, age, sex, generation, social class and the likes also contribute to musical variation. A style of music can remain the same despite much usage, but reverse will be the case when it is used by different users. This factor is an important consideration in the model of church music.

Music can also undergo sociolinguistic conditioning in terms of experience, thought or representation. It reveals a dual functionality of language as serving and shaping the social nature of human beings. It also shows the variable and changing interplay of language and society. A typical example of the progressive nature of sociolinguistics will be the replacement of the singular pronoun ‘*thou*’ with ‘*you*’ in 16th and 17th century England. This change does not only tell of historical advancement but also of changes in class structure. Relatedly, some words or vocabularies are considered old-fashioned. For example *frock* for a ‘woman’s dress’ or even *tarry* for ‘wait’.

Music, just like vocabulary and grammatical constructions sometimes vary by region or by degree of formality. Importantly, some social factors influence language and the speakers – for example, age, gender, socio-economic class, ethnicity and educational level (Eble 2005). Nevertheless, some kinds of church music are resistant to change; firmly entrenched for generations. In terms of church music, any attempt to alter the routine may lead to shock and other difficulties. Yet, the choir may be criticized for a monotonous repertoire. Despite the

rigidity and stylistic conservatism, there is still hope as some religious sectors are undergoing liturgical innovation, and openness to culturally diverse styles of music in the church.

Printing as a form of technological advancement brought about liturgical standardization. The use of hard copies of mass books from the early sixteenth century for example is owing to this uniformity which was believed to be as a measure of progress. Today, standardization is seen as a stifling factor. Thus, churches seek to change the tide as worship in the twenty first century privileges spontaneity. Still, there is a structure in worship marked by repetition and a high degree of predictability.

There exists a tension between spontaneity and what may be termed scripting in worship. Most liturgical families and traditions are associated with books. White (2000) maintains that there are fixed formulas for words and actions found in books but the spontaneity that comes with the flow of the Spirit cannot be found in prints. He specified that “It is tempting, but dangerous to identify worship with books” (p. 39). There is no gainsaying that flexibility is a vital part of worship. However, there is need for self-discipline to ensure that this freedom benefits the church community. Paul’s admonition captures the essence of spontaneity in worship which is building up the church (I Cor. 14:26).

Music is a clear indicator of cultural diversity. White (2000) identified cultural and historical diversity as an important part of Christian worship. It is quite fascinating that this diversity still retains elements of constancy. Therefore, it is not surprising to see the same structures and services of a church practiced in distinctive ways on different sides of a town for example. The creation of new hymnals is intended to make up for the European expressions of Christian praise which are considered limited. Besides, enculturation is another frantic effort

geared towards embracing cultural and ethnic diversity within the church. By doing so, there is respect, acceptance and willingness to infuse the spice of variety in the forms of worship.

Biblical Model of the Music Ministry

Miller (1993, 9-10) captures the Old Testament foundation of music in worship which serves as a blueprint for churches in modern times. Music is highly functional since it is interwoven into the day-to-day activities of people. Following I.E. Reynolds' categorization, the utility of music can be stated thus:

A. Religious

Creation - Job 38:4-7

Idol Worship - Daniel 3:5-15

Dedications – 2 Chronicles 5:12-14

Worship – 1 Chronicles 16: 4-7; 2 Chronicles 30:21

Funeral - 2 Chronicles 35:25

Sacrifices and Feast - 2 Chronicles 29:27-30

Prodigal Son's Return – Luke 5:25

Singing in Prison – Acts 16: 25

Singing When Happy – James 5:13

B. Social

Partings – Genesis 31:27

Mental and Physical Effect – 2 Kings 3:15

Weddings – Jeremiah 7:34

C. Economic

Grape Gathering – Isaiah 16:10; 27:2

D. Political

Coronations – 1 Kings 1:39-40

Triumphs and Victories in War – Exodus 15:1-21; 2 Chronicles 20:21-22,27-28

A City's Destruction – Isaiah 23:15-17

The music of the DCLM is highly functional since it accompanies the activities and programs of the Church. Furthermore, the Bible exemplifies the organization of music and musicians; clearly showing the variety in presentation of worship music. It also offers an insight into the distribution of roles in the music ministry either based on skillfulness, gender assignment, personal preferences and other criteria. The various categories in the music groups of the DCLM align with Miller's (1993, 10-11) illustration.

1. Soloists:
 - Jubal (Genesis 4:21)
 - David (1 Samuel 16:23)
 - Asaph (I Chronicles 16:5, 7, 37)
 - Heman (I Chronicles 6:33)
 - Chenaniah (I Chronicles 15: 22, 27)
 - Jeduthun (I Chronicles 16:38, 42)
 - Jezariah (Nehemiah 12: 42)
2. Duet: Deborah and Barak (Judges 5:1)
3. Women's Chorus: Led by Miriam (Exodus 15:21);
Led by Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11:34)
4. Men's Chorus: Levites (I Chronicles 25: 1-6); prophets (1 Samuel 10:5)
5. Mixed Chorus: Led by Moses (Exodus 15:1); by David (1 Chronicles 13:8)
6. Choirs: David' Tabernacle Choir – 10 men and a director (1 Chronicles 15:

12-22; 16: 4-5)

Solomon's Temple Choir – 4,000 voices, orchestra, 288 teachers and directors (1 Chronicles 23:5, 27-32)

Zerubabel's Temple Choir – 200 Singing men and women (Ezra 2:41, 65, 70; 3: 10-13; 7:7, 24; 10: 24)

Nehemiah's Temple Choir – 245 singing men and women (Nehemiah 4:18-20; 7:1, 44, 67, 73; 10: 38-39; 11:22-23; 12:27-30,43, 45-46; 13:5, 10)

7. Composers: Moses (Exodus 15, Psalm 90)

David (numerous Psalms including 3 to 9, 11-15, 17-32; 34-41, 108-110; 138-145);

Solomon (1 Kings 4:31-32; Psalms 72, 84-85, 87-88, 127);

Asaph (Psalm 50, 73, 83);

Ethan (Psalm 89);

Many unknown psalm writers.

Church music versus Music in the Church

There have been endless debates on church music versus music in the church. Music in itself is interwoven with complexities. Philip Stubbes clearly expresses the paradoxical attributes inherent in this sonic phenomenon. He describes music as both

“Very ill” and “very laudable”, “a cup of poyson” and “a good gift of GOD”

which both “stireth up filthie lust, womannisheth the minde...enflameth concupiscence, and bringeth in uncleanness” but also “reviveth the spirits, comforteth the hart and maketh it redyer [more ready] to serve GOD”

(Jonathan 2010, 11).

The most explicit theological foundation of church music is chronicled in Colossians 3: 16. Here, specific reference was made to “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” From this exegesis, differentiating between the terms becomes complex. G. Delling in Pass (1989,90) identified the nub of the problem noting that it is scarcely possible to distinguish the three terms due to scarcity of comparative passages in the New Testament. Alternatively, some other deductions have been made. According to E. Lohse, (Ibid) the three terms in totality “describes the full range of singing which the Spirit prompts,” and that the adjective “spiritual” refers to them all.

Similarly, Selman (2022) describes psalms, hymns and spiritual songs as products of being filled with the Spirit rather than mere special numbers. He further explains that such songs serve as a ladder that usher the congregation into a realm of divine encounter and solution to diverse problems and challenges. His position specifies that spiritual songs are occasioned by the desires and needs of worshippers. In the same vein, Osayi (2023) establishes a distinction between psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. He opines that “the essence or strength of a psalm is its melody; the strength of the hymn is its message. Hymns are songs of gravity. It weighs down on your soul and compels you to imagine and think.” More so, he gives a striking description thus, “spiritual songs do not even have wordings. They are just sounds but those sounds are chants from heaven; from the corridor of angels to stir up and quicken your spirit.”

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the benchmark of church music is the saturation of the Holy Spirit; evidenced by psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. This however is not a monolithic stance as there are other perspectives. Ibude (2018) maintains that church music is centered on the gospel and the focal point of the gospel is Christ; his birth, life, death,

resurrection, ascension and return. Whereas, other kinds of music outside this category can be termed music in the church. His perspective offers a broader view on the concept of church music. In this case, there is liberty to use any genre, style or language as long as Christ is the point of reference.

The fluidity of church music is problematic hence the need for discernment in differentiating “simple religious (Christian) music – which merely represents an emotional or economic experience – from spiritual music, which is a divinely provoked experience and an evangelical/salvific movement” (Endong 2016, 118). In close reference to gospel music making in Nigeria, “Christian musicians and audiences [are warned] against Gangsta Rap, R&B, and Makossa³” (Ibid. 122). According to a Gospel rap producer (FDD), “music penetrates more than anything, so all those dancing Makossa, opening their legs and other things are evil. They are just terribly evil. Music shouldn’t be a thing that corrupts us” (Servant 2003, 65 – 67 in Endong 2016, 122). I recall that during the 2015 Short Term Ministerial Course in Rivers State, Prof. Ugwem U. Gabriel (the then State Campus Coordinator) instructed participants (especially females) to stop dancing in *owigiri*⁴ style as it may distract worshippers.

Nigerian gospel music still retains elements of religiosity. However it has “become a site of inventiveness, a fertile ground for worldliness and arguably moral corruption.” For this reason, Churches like the DCLM guard against “incorporation of impure and contentious music traditions into [their] worship” (Endong 2016, 123, 129).

³ Makossa is a popular traditional rhythm from Cameroon but in a Nigerian context, it refers to “very suggestive dance style used by many secular and even religious musicians” (Endong 2016, 132).

⁴ “Owigiri is the traditional funfair (dance, entertainment, merriment, play, display and celebration) of the Ijaw people” of southern Nigeria. The owigiri dance usually involves wriggling the waist. ([https://www.nairaland.com/1342146/origin-owigiri-cultural-dance-igbo.](https://www.nairaland.com/1342146/origin-owigiri-cultural-dance-igbo))

Music and Gender Ideology

Broadly speaking, there exists a cross cultural division of musical roles along gender lines. The term *gender ideology* emerged in the 1990s and has become an issue in various spheres all over the world (Butler 2019). Gender is said to be an achieved status which is constructed through psychological, cultural and social means. Relatedly, the musical behavior for men and women is dictated by a conceptual and valuative framework (Fenstermaker et al. 2002; Ortner and Whitehead 1981). These ideologies of gender may take the form of religious, moral or legal codification. In light of this, music and musical instruments possess a cultural definition which is evident in everyday existence and at ritualistic instances. Koskoff (2014, 131) captures the “use of musical instruments as tools for asserting power over women.” However, women just like their counterpart “are active participants in their social lives and engage with men in many varied activities where issues of power, authority and control are negotiated on a daily basis”.

Most music traditions present issues of gender both in an overt and covert manner. Some genres or styles of music are embedded with gendered concepts which may be reflected in the lyrics of the song or even the style of performance. Moisala and Diamond highlight that “the discourse about a genre may be overtly gendered, but practices of ‘appropriate’ behavior (rules about who performs what role and how) reflects attitudes about gender that are widely shared, often in the guise of ‘natural’ rather than constructed genderings” (2000, 5). The music culture of the DCLM couches some sex and gender based issues as will be analyzed in chapter four. The criticism of gender ideology as a threat to family and biblical authority has further obscured the power inequality involved.

The issue of music and gender has been a major preoccupation of feminist scholars. There have been attempts to unveil the mechanism and ideals that shape gender constructs within

various cultures. Feminist scholars, through research, have pioneered the task of recovering the works of women who have previously been ignored. Bower is credited for a woman-centered scholarship as she is “continually concerned with women’s agency in music – especially with their music making in heavily male dominated fields” Moisala and Diamond (2000, 6). The GCK of the DCLM is an agency that unearths and gives more visibility to the ingenuity of female musicians. The first appearance of the Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB) was in the GCK. Blessing Itaa, the leader of the phenomenal all-female group attests that the GCK “gave it [the ULBB] a big push. So far, we have been spotlighted in the Global Crusade with Kumuyi” (Interview, March 2023).

The ongoing discourses on music and gender are not akin to any social, cultural or religious group in particular. Koskoff (2014, 136) presents a dinner conversation between two women, Ellen and Miriam (with her husband and children). Miriam hushes Ellen when she began to sing along to a familiar pop tune. Later, Ellen prods Miriam thus, “I know women and men can’t sing together in the synagogue, but does that extend to the home as well?” Miriam’s response points to religious, cultural, ethical and gender related ideals and considerations. “The idea is that a woman’s voice is beautiful. It has a lot of qualities that would be enticing to a man... So, [it is] better you don’t sing. It would distract my husband.” This scenario exemplifies the misconceptions around music and gender. This in turn can amount to subjugation of women and impedance to their freedom of expression.

The Wave Metaphor

The term wave is common in discourses on feminism especially as it pertains to its historical background. Koskoff (2014) gives account of three generational waves and various thematic circles. First-wave feminism originated in the United States in 1848 and ended in 1920.

Within this time, women were granted suffrage (the right to vote) with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The second-wave feminism bothers on the construction of woman as a monolithic category rather than a constructed other. The passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a check to discrimination based on sex, race and other identity markers. Third-wave feminism covers a wide range of issues including intersectionality, reproductive rights and sexual liberation.

The wave metaphor is controversial, within and outside feminism. It is usually characterized by a disturbing flow through space and time and ultimately leads to change; be it physical, social, legal, economic and even religious just like the case of the music culture of the DCLM which exemplifies the wave metaphor (as discussed in the following chapters). Historical and conceptual frameworks of this sort open up intersections of feminism, gender and music; thereby forging new paths of negotiation towards freedom and equality. Relatedly, there is a link between Christian worship and justice. The Quaker movement buttresses justice in worship and brought about a consciousness that none should be marginalized in worship because of sex, color or even servitude. On this ground, women and slaves are at liberty to speak in worship rather than an exclusively “male prerogative” (White 2000, 4). In recent times, the sensitization of injustice in worship has appreciated. Moreover, practical measures have been taken “to change the language of liturgical texts and hymns where they have tended to make women invisible, to redo buildings that have excluded the handicapped and to open new roles for those who were previously not welcome to serve in them.”

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Every research is informed by specific perspectives or worldviews held by the researcher and scholars within the concerned discipline (LeCompte and Schensul 2010). This research is informed by three relevant theoretical frameworks including (a) The theory of sound structure as a social structure (b) Social network paradigm and (c) Intensive study of music culture.

The Theory of Sound Structure as a Social Structure

The theory of sound structure as a social structure as espoused by Feld (1984) reveals that the structure of sound aligns with the social organization and ideology of the people who make the sound. This theory accounts for “the structure and meaning of Kaluli sounds and ways they are inseparable from the fabric of Kaluli social life and thought, where they are taken for granted as everyday reality by members of this society” (Feld 1984, 386). Similarly, the music ministry of the DCLM reflects both the spiritual and social structure of the Church and the society at large.

Social Network Paradigm

The social network paradigm (LeCompte et al. 2010, 66) establishes “the social context of individual life and the recognition that people almost never act in isolation; rather they are influenced by people in the groups to which they belong and with whom they interact and communicate.” This paradigm therefore illuminates that although the music ministry of the DCLM is a definite arm of the Church, it is shaped and influenced by other factors; both human and non-human.

The model of my research spells out an interaction between the music culture of the DCLM and other related elements and concepts. “The dependent domain is the issue or problem

to be studied. The independent domains are the domains that are believed to be associated with or even to predict the direction of the dependent domain.” (Schensul et al. 2010, 110).

Accordingly, the music culture of the DCLM is majorly influenced by the congregation, the musicians, Church leadership and by extension the society at large. Apart from these, other variables like age, sex, class, location, ethnicity and others also apply.

Intensive Study of Music Culture

Merriam (1960) proposes an intensive study of music culture and outlines six areas of inquiry. This in-depth study unveils the social, cultural, psychological and aesthetic dimensions of music. The first area of attention is the musical material culture which involves the musical instruments and other implements through which the music system is carried out. Overall, this aspect bothers on taxonomy, principles of construction, techniques of performance, care and treatment of instruments, problems of ownership and the economics of instrument construction.

The second area of inquiry is on the song texts. Obviously, “the text [itself] can reveal much about the culture of which they are a part,” more so, “the prevailing ethos of the culture... in terms both of ideal and real behavior, as expressed in song.” In addition, the text can lend insight into the “history of the group, underlying motivations, which are often not otherwise expressed, and deep-seated values and convictions” (Merriam 1960, 110).

The third aspect of investigation is to ascertain the categories of music. The researcher can group the music into various categories for convenience and to ensure that an adequate sample of all kinds of music is gathered. With this template, the recording program and data collection can be controlled.

Following is the fourth point of interest for the ethnomusicologist; an inquiry to assess the role and status of the musicians in the society of which they are part. This aspect considers issues of professionalism, factors that shape musicianship, attitude of musicians towards the society and vice versa, cultural expectations test of musical abilities as a measure of superiority, music ownership and other related matters.

The fifth aspect concerns the functions of music in relation to other aspects of culture. “Here is included the synchronic study of music as a kind of human behavior related to other behaviors including the religious, the dramatic, relationships to dance, social control, enculturation and education, economics, political structure, and other aspects.” By doing this, the researcher is “forced to move through the total culture” (Merriam 1960, 110).

In conclusion, music is studied “as a creative cultural activity including such problems as the sources of musical materials, the standards of excellence in performance, the psychology of music, and the processes of creation.” This aspect also foregrounds the aesthetics and functionality of the music. It also deals with “cultural variation as expressed in individual renditions of songs, which leads to possibilities of understanding internal change.” Furthermore, the study tackles the question of “acceptance and rejection of innovations in music in terms of what the culture will allow when presented new cultures from outside” (Merriam 1960, 111).

METHODOLOGY

Research Site

The study was carried out at the Deeper Christian Life Ministries (DCLM) in Rivers State situated in the Niger Delta region of Southern Nigeria (Coordinates: 4°45'N 6°50'E). The 2006 Census informs that the population of Rivers State to be a total of 5,198,716⁵.

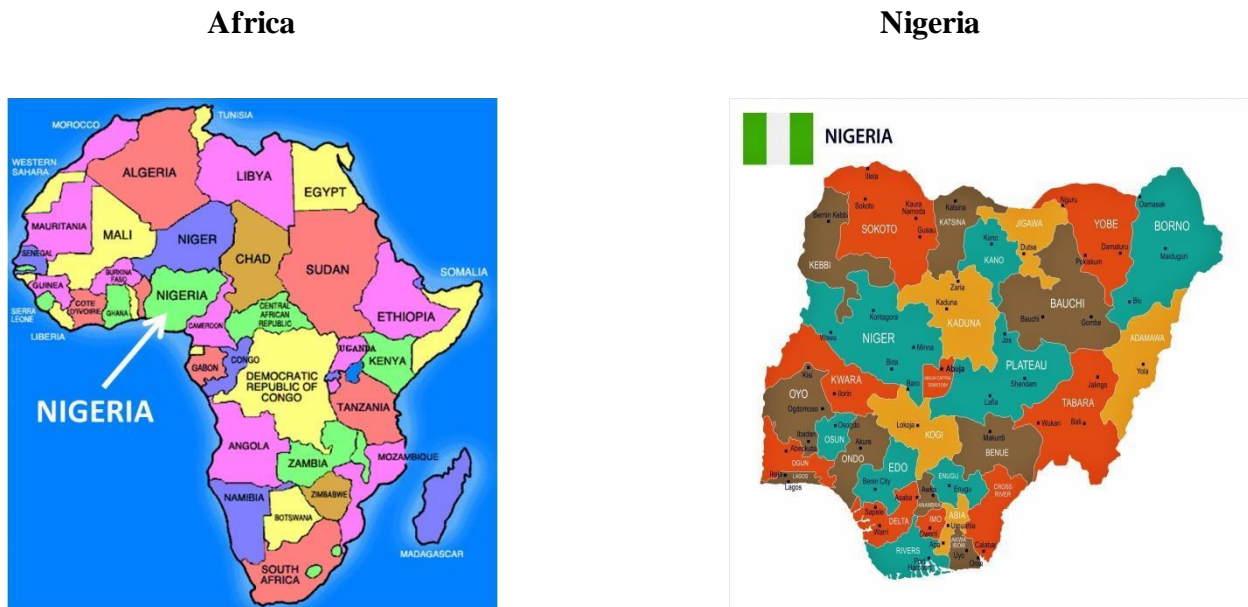


Figure 1: Maps of Africa and Nigeria showing the location of DCLM⁶

Nigeria consists of 36 states and the federal capital territory. The DCLM is found in various states and its headquarters is located in Lagos State, Nigeria. For the purpose of study, I focused on the DCLM in Rivers State which is situated in the South-South region of Nigeria. Rivers State is known for its linguistic diversity, with twenty-eight (28) indigenous languages spoken. The slogan of Rivers State “Treasure Base of the Nation” is consistent with its economic

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rivers_State

⁶ <https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=Map+of+Nigeria+showing+Rivers+State&form=HDRSC4&first=1>

status as the hub of the petroleum industry. In 2019, Governor of the state, Ezenwo Nyesom Wike declared the state a Christian state based on its 90% Christian composition.

Research Design

In this ethnographic study, I used the qualitative approach drawing on a case study design. The qualitative data collection enables a direct experience with a population or community of concern. More so, this ethnography is conducted in a naturalistic setting which privileged interaction with the people, events and other social elements in the music culture of the DCLM, Rivers State. Ultimately, my research was targeted at “[coming] as close as possible to representing and predicting reality both as viewed and understood by the researcher and experienced by members of the study community” (Schensul et al., 2013).

The interactive nature of the qualitative research explains the reason for choosing the case study design. I consider it more appropriate as it allows me to access, assess and describe what is happening in the music ministry of DCLM as well as what has happened overtime, rather than at one point in time, or pre and post. To be in line with the case study approach, my research considers “history, contextual present, culture, ecologically and critically framed factors that relate to the study topic as it affects or is interpreted by individuals or institutions” (LeCompte and Schensul 2010, 96-97).

Research Participants

This research was mostly focused on the music department of the DCLM, particularly the youth arm of the Church. The target population involved leaders and members of the music ministry, including non-members of the youth music ministry. My key research participants were Mr. Segun Agboola (State Adult Choir Director), and Mr. Chidi Oputeh, the Rivers State

Youth Choir Director; who helped immensely in accessing other research participants. More so, I engaged members of the music ministry (boys and girls, singers and instrumentalists alike), including youth pastors and members of the youth Church (non-music).

Using the convenience and purposive sampling, I interviewed twenty-four (24) research participants including the state music director and three (3) other choir leaders, two (4) pastors, eleven (11) choir members, and five (5) Church members. Research participants were drawn from different districts of the state to avoid sampling biases.

Key Research Participants

Mr. Segun Agboola is a native of Osun State. He attended Ebenezer Primary School and proceeded to Ara Baptist Grammar School from 1982 to 1985. In 1995, Agboola earned a Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science. In 1996, he received a commendation award in the course of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Benue State. More so, Aboola is a talented singer and instrumentalist who holds several certifications from the Musical Society of Nigeria (MUSON). He has held the position of Music Instructor in some schools including Jephthah Comprehensive Secondary School in Rivers State. Agboola has just completed a post graduate diploma in music and is now pursuing a Master's degree in music performance at the University of Port Harcourt. Agboola had been a youth choir and orchestra leader, and currently the Adult Choir Director in Rivers State. As a prolific composer and outstanding choir director from 1998 till date, Agboola has a lot of works to his credit including *Save Africa (Let The People Know AIDS is real)*, *Forward Into Battle*, *Technical Knockout*, *No Going Back*, *Faithful Servant*, *Victory Is Sure*, *Weep No More My Child* and many more. In 2014, he released an album titled "Victory is Sure" which "has really blessed many lives" (Agboola, February 14, 2023). In addition, Agboola has authored two volumes of *Key to Music Language*.

Chidi Oputeh hails from Delta State of Nigeria. Oputeh has been a choir leader for over two decades. He assumed the position of State Youth Choir Director in 2022. In this capacity, he oversees the Youth choir and orchestra consisting of over 2,000 people. As the Music Director of the Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB) which was popularized by the Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK), Oputeh is applauded for honing the talents of these young people.

Oputeh earned a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and a Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) in Music Education all from the University of Port Harcourt. Subsequently, he bagged a Master of Music in Music Theory and Composition from the reputable Ignatius Ajuru University of Education in Rivers State. Currently, he plans to enroll for a doctoral program in Music Theory and Composition at the University of Maryland.

Oputeh is the facilitator for the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music (ABRSM), Victoria College of Music and Dance (VCM), and the Music Teachers' Board (MTB) in Nigeria. By virtue of his experience and expertise, he administers music examinations. Oputeh is the proprietor of an online educational platform (thinkific-hosted) for music theory, sight reading and singing, vocal and instrument training. Through this means, his students are prepared for international music examinations.

Since 2008 till date, Oputeh holds the position of Music Director at the Green Oak International School in Port Harcourt. Concurrently, he serves as a Music Consultant for some other schools and is credited for the establishment and development of music departments (choirs and orchestras inclusive) and thorough training of music teachers. He is the Chief Executive Officer of the music company known as MPA TUTORS. Oputeh has authored and co-authored eleven (11) music books targeted at pupils, elementary and secondary school students from Nursery one (1) to Grade nine (9). Oputeh has produced a lot of musicals including *Oliver*

Twist, Cinderella, The Nutcracker, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Beauty and the Beast, Peter Pan, Concerts, Christmas Nativity Dramas and many others

Martina Dawari Brown popularly known as Marty Brown is an indigene of Opobo, Rivers State. In 2004, she earned a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Accounting. Following, she earned a Bachelor's Degree as well as a Master's Degree in Finance by 2016. Also, she holds a postgraduate degree as a trained teacher. Brown has been a pivotal leader in the DLBC music ministry since 2000. Currently, she serves in the capacity of Choir Leader in one of the sub-regions in Rivers State. Brown is a talented and accomplished songwriter, singer and the Managing Director of the M&B Music Training Centre. She has over thirty published songs and many unpublished works. *Jehovah Saboath, Winner* and *Amazing Grace* are some of the hit songs from her latest album. Brown and her band have also featured in numerous events within and outside the DLBC.

Data Collection and Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative research designs are not mutually exclusive; even though some “purist” researchers prefer to either do qualitative or quantitative works (LeCompte and Schensul 2010). This research necessitated a mixture of research designs including personal interviews, observation, focus group discussion, archival records, video and audio recordings, as well as partial iconography involving photographs and artifacts. Apart from the depth that mixed research design offers, it is also a means of triangulation (Denzel 2005). For the purpose of authenticity, I cross-checked data collected from secondary sources with data sourced from interviews and personal observations.

Along further lines of data gathering, I conducted personal interviews and group discussions through phone calls, Zoom sessions, WhatsApp video and chats, as well as Facebook Messenger. The Zoom meetings and other communications⁷ were recorded with mobile devices and later transcribed. The collected data was analyzed according to the research questions. Conversations, data collection, analysis and presentation were guided by ethical considerations and confidentiality as pseudonyms were used in reporting some respondents.

Credibility of Study

My position as an insider in the DCLM added construct validity to my survey. It is crucial that researchers be familiar with the behavior patterns and characteristics of the population to be surveyed. Data becomes almost useless when the researcher is outside the meaning system and frame of reference used by the people who are to answer the questions (LeCompte and Schensul 2010). As a member of the DCLM from birth and also a member of the music ministry for more than a decade, a pseudo-autoethnographic stance of research is justifiable and authentic. My experiences played a huge role in the study since “researchers’ interpretations cannot be separated from their own background, history, context, and prior understandings” (Creswell 2007, 39). Although, I am aware that such an insider perspective can affect my reflexivity as a researcher, ethnographic methods in ethnomusicology include phenomenology, which emphasizes experiential perspectives. In this case, “phenomenology offers a rigorous method for studying experience” (Berger 2008, 68). While lived experiences of my researched interlocutors shaped the perspectives they shared, my consciousness as a member of the Church informs the interpretation of data collected.

⁷ Adopting this mode of communication rather than going to Nigeria was due to financial challenges and Covid 19 restrictions.

While leveraging on my vantage position, extreme care was taken to avoid biases. It is true that no ethnographer enters the field without some ideas, theories, lived experiences and prior knowledge. Hence, there was a need to guard against preconceived notions and accumulated knowledge that would have weakened the study (Schensul et al. 2012, 5). I was determined to be a good ethnographer who should be noted for making the ordinary new and making the new ordinary (Schensul et al 2013, 1). Although I am not a stranger to the music culture of the DCLM, I approached it with the intent to learn, unlearn and relearn. In the process of study, I made sure to clarify, revise, and reframe my ideas while heeding the advice of Roulston and Shelton (2015, 388) to “be neutral, objective, and impartial.” This approach was rewarding as my survey was revelatory. Certainly, familiarity does not automatically translate to omniscience. It is a worthwhile venture to view the music culture of the DCLM through a different lens.

Limitations of the Study

The main challenge I encountered during the research is with scheduling. Most of the interviews were rescheduled more than twice on account of unavailability of respondents. The DCLM has a minimum of three meetings a week and Church workers mostly go to Church every day in the week. Majority of research participants play active roles in the DCLM. Their preoccupation with church activities coupled with secular and personal engagements made it challenging to schedule meetings with research participants. Nonetheless, interviews were constantly rescheduled till a point of actualization, although I did not get any response from a few of them.

In addition, my research coincided with a time when the state was grappling with local and national issues including flood, unfavorable monetary policies, inflation, and election

amongst others. In the face of such an economic meltdown, it was a struggle for some of my research participants (especially young choir members) to pay for the much needed internet. Most of our conversations were virtual since I was out of Nigeria during the period of research. In such cases, my research assistant was valuable in mediating the interviews between me and my respondents.

Another challenge encountered during my research was the issue of restriction to some vital information. As an insider to the DCLM, I did not encounter so much difficulty in terms of gatekeeping and getting the attention of my key respondents. However, despite my assurance of confidentiality and other high ethical standards, there were barriers to crucial data, some of which were later retracted. This circumstance took a toll on my research but I devised an alternative strategy to tackle this challenge. For me, this situation was a practical experience of balancing and navigating through the insider-outsider dichotomies. The field is no doubt a hands-on training ground.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF THE DEEPER CHRISTIAN LIFE MINISTRIES IN NIGERIA

The Deeper Christian Life Ministries (DCLM), also known as Deeper Life Bible Church (DLBC), is a Pentecostal Christian denomination with its international headquarters in Gbagada, Lagos. The DCLM was founded by the acclaimed *Defender of the Faith*, Pst. Dr. William Folorunso Kumuyi, who has contributed significantly to the course of Christianity in Nigeria and beyond. The DCLM started as a small Bible Study group in 1973 with fifteen (15) young people at Kumuyi's residence. It did not occur to Kumuyi that the small group that kicked off from his sitting room will eventually metamorphose into a large Church with a phenomenal followership. Findings indicate that "As he taught the students Mathematics, he would close their meetings by inviting them to his official Flat 2 residence on the campus for Bible Study. As the mathematician fed the boys and girls with the word of God, he was also dishing out snacks to balance the equation" (Ojewale et al 2021, 59).

A good number of these students graduated from the University of Lagos, Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Lagos and the Yaba College of Technology (Yaba Tech) and constituted the earlier core membership of the Church. The growth of the Church emanated from the southwestern part of Nigeria and spread to other parts of Nigeria and beyond.

It is observable that the history of the DCLM is premised on the personal account of Kumuyi. Isaacson (1990) indicated that the well deserving man of God preached the Church into

existence through captivating and challenging sermons. Kumuyi's preaching style and the themes he privileges are relatable to Nigeria situations and occurrences. Previously, the motto of the Church was "Your Spiritual Welfare is our Concern" but was later changed to "Achieving Heaven's Goal" in 2018 when the new headquarters of the Church was commissioned.

The DCLM boasts of having architectural designs and facilities which are said to be the first of their kind in Africa. "The very gigantic 35,000 seater headquarters building of the Church [was completed] with an access bridge built and donated to the Lagos State government" (Ojewale et al. 2021, 115). The astounding success and massive growth of the DLBC debunks the belief that "unless a Church is tethered to a big denomination in a developed nation in the United States, the UK or Asia, it would not grow" (Ibid.).



Figure 2: The DCLM Headquarters, Gbagada, Lagos⁸

Kumuyi: the Nigerian Wesley

Kumuyi is known to be following the steps of John Wesley, a famous 18th Century preacher in England as well as Charles Finney, Charles Surgeon and Martin Luther. Similar to his mentors, Kumuyi's ministry is characterized by holiness, faith, obedience, miracles, healings

⁸ <https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=picture+of+deeper+life+church+gbagada+lago&form=HDRSC4&first=1>

and divine interventions. Importantly, the DCLM is anchored on twenty two (22) cardinal doctrines namely: the Holy Bible, the Godhead, virgin birth of Jesus, total depravity, repentance, restitution, justification by faith, water baptism, Lord's supper, sanctification, Holy Ghost baptism, redemption, personal evangelism, marriage, rapture, resurrection of the dead, great tribulation, second coming of Jesus, Christ millennial reign, Great White Throne Judgment, New Heaven and the New Earth and hell fire.

Wesley, the great reformer and founder of the Methodist Church is said to be used by God to remedy the spiritual decline in England during his era. He was not blinded by the robust economy of the country at that time. Firmly, he preached outward and inward holiness. It is no surprise that he influenced Kumuyi to teach on holiness which became the core of the Deeper Christian Life Ministries. Ojewale et al. (2021) highlights the hallmarks of the Church as holiness, miracles, signs and wonders.

Kumuyi's preaching method is a prototype of Wesley's, being methodical, holiness oriented and global-minded though unpopular. Just like Wesley, Kumuyi experienced stiff opposition as a result of his stand. "Wesley was barred from preaching in many parish churches. His group, the Methodists, was also persecuted" (Ojewale 2021, 62). Similarly, Kumuyi was excommunicated from the Apostolic Faith Church in 1975. "His traducers took exception to his firm convictions, especially his insistence that personal evangelism was the duty and ministry of every Christian." Conversely, it is the belief of the Church "that only ordained ministers were qualified and mandated to preach the gospel." At this time, "most of the members [in his Bible Study group] had been expelled from their various churches" (Ojewale et al. 2021, 71).

Nevertheless, Kumuyi was strengthened by the resolve of his role models John Wesley, Charles Finney, Charles Spurgeon, and especially Martin Luther⁹ who was also excommunicated as a result of his 95 thesis. Considering the continued opposition, “Kumuyi and his associates realized that they had to move forward with the work that he had begun. This led to the registration of the [Church] with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC)” in 1977 (Ojewale et al. 2021, 72).

Despite the resistance and persecution, Kumuyi is one of the five hundred (500) most influential persons in the world (Foreign Policy Magazine). He is branded as a global phenomenon whose emergence is epochal in Church history. Kumuyi’s recognition is similar to that of Wesley who had been described as the ‘best loved man in England’ at the end of his life.

Growth and Demography of the DCLM

In 1977, the Deeper Life Bible Church was formally established in Nigeria. Coincidentally, the Church was founded during the period after the Nigerian civil war. Apart from the despondency and deprivation across the nation, there was also moral decadence. Kumuyi happened to be an agent of revival. Those who attended the Bible Study began to “see hope and a bright future, beyond the helpless and depressed state of the nation” (Ibid. 69).

During this time, the DLBC was a non-denominational entity since the members also belonged to other Churches. However, due to the intense persecution that members of the

⁹ Charles Grandison Finney was an American Presbyterian minister and leader in the Second Great Awakening in the United States. Finney has been acclaimed the “Father of Old Revivalism” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Grandison_Finney).

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was an English Baptist preacher popularly referred to as the “Prince of Preachers” due to his influence among Christians of various denominations. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Spurgeon)

Martin Luther was a German priest, theologian, author, hymn writer, professor, and Augustinian friar. He is the seminal figure of the Protestant Reformation whose followers became known as Lutherans (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther).

DLBC faced in their respective Churches, there was a need to make the DLBC an independent entity. In 1982, the DLBC became a Church arm under the Deeper Christian Life Ministries (DCLM). The growth of the Church gave rise to other ministries including children, youths, women, students and staff of higher institutions of learning.

Today, the DLBC has over one million members in more than sixty countries around the world. Olofinjana (2019) chronicles that in 1983 Deeper Life Bible Church experienced a dramatic growth through House Fellowships known as ‘home caring fellowships’, and by February of the same year 15,000 house fellowships were established all over the country. Similarly, Ojewale et al. (2021, 76) records that the DLBC “grew geometrically and by 1988, it had become the third largest single congregation Church in the world.” This exponential increase was triggered by the Great Miracle Crusade which took place at the National Stadium in Lagos in 1985. Falaye (2015, 24) collates that “by 1988, the congregation had grown to 50,000 and now numbers in millions making it the third largest Christian Church in the world. Dr. Johan Combrinck reports that the [DLBC] not only has an attendance of 120,000 every Sunday, but also planted 500 Churches in Lagos alone and 5,000 in the rest of Nigeria, with an independent estimate of more than 800, 000 members in Nigeria alone and over 3,000 outside Nigeria (with missionaries to 40 countries of Africa).”

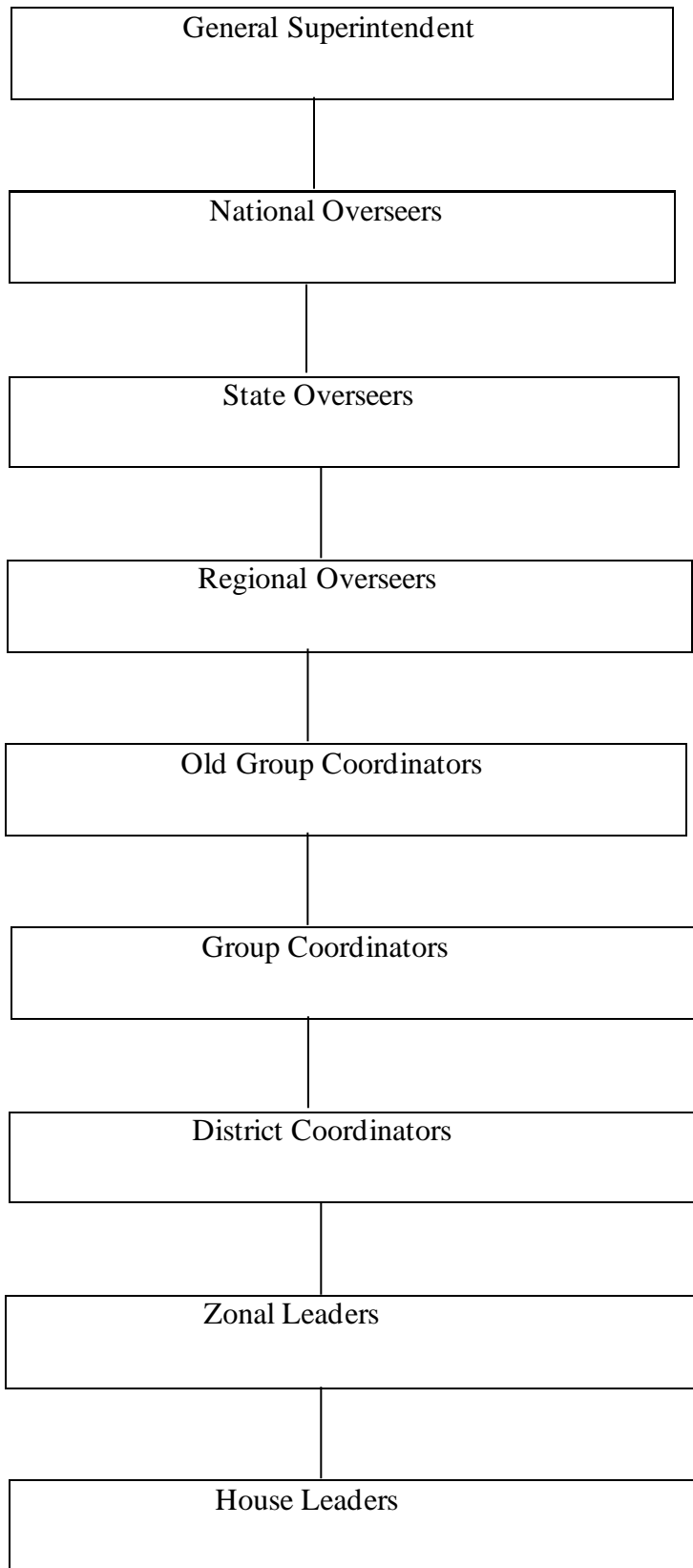


Figure 3: Administration of the DCLM

In the early 1990s, the DLBC had more than 5,000 branches in Nigeria and many other African countries including Ethiopia, Egypt, South Africa, Ghana, Madagascar, Cameroon, Niger, Senegal, Benin, Togo, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire. Olofinjana (2019) informs that about 15,000 congregants converge at the headquarters of the Church at Gbagada, Lagos during the five Sunday services.

The DCLM grew beyond Africa to other continents of the world including Asia, America, Australia/Oceania, and Europe. “Deeper Life Bible Church started in Britain in 1985 through the pioneering work of Pre Ovia. The Church now has about 65 [branches] in the UK and Republic of Ireland” (Ibid.). The DLBC is also located in Bulgaria, Spain, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, New Zealand, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Norway, Scotland, Switzerland, Canada, Illinois, Minnesota, New England, New Jersey, New York, Texas, Washington DC and many other places.

Birth of the Music Ministry

Right from his early days, Kumuyi has always had great enthusiasm for music and was skillful in playing musical instruments, especially the piano. Ojewale et al. (2021) remarks that “it was habitual for him to return from school, have lunch and mount the keyboard.” It is therefore no wonder that he takes personal interest in the music ministry of his Church. Agboola (2023) recalls that Kumuyi was a music director in Apostolic Faith Church where he was expelled from. This position accounts for his grounding in music. Members of the Church can attest to the fact that he has zero tolerance for musical imperfections. Nene affirms that Kumuyi is an accomplished pianist and that during the early years of the Church, “he would just walk up to you and take over the playing if you make a mistake” (Interview, February 2023).

As an ardent lover of music, Kumuyi's huge impact is evident in the Deeper Life Youth Choir. Having trained himself thoroughly in music, he built a vibrant choir in the youth arm of the Church. Ojewale et al. (2021) confirms that "The Youth Choir is one of the largest youth choral groups in any Church in Nigeria and Africa." Members of the choir are made to undergo rigorous music training, both the theoretical and practical aspects of it. Besides singing, the Youth Choir has a large orchestra with different types of instruments.

Kumuyi's personal involvement in the Youth Choir and other choir groups include selecting song in some instances. Sometimes, he listens to their songs and makes corrections or inputs before their rendition. Kumuyi's investments in the music ministry underscore its importance in the DCLM.

Sections of the Deeper Christian Life Ministries

The Church is segmented based on different categories of people in the Church. The sectioning is geared to meet peculiar needs of individuals; hence the existence of clear-cut departments for language groups, professionals, the women folks, children, teenagers and campus students. Moreover, the different arms of the DCLM have separate music ministries. Besides the ministries for children, youth, campus and women, there are also affiliate ministries including the Life Press, Life Tapes, and Life Transmission. Besides, the Online Church¹⁰ has been enhanced through technological advancements.

¹⁰ The online Church has been enhanced by the establishment of the Church's website: <https://dclm.org> and several social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Ojewale et al. 2021, 79).

The Women Ministry

The women arm of the Deeper Christian Life Bible Church is very active and dynamic. This ministry is led by the wife of the General Superintendent of the Church. She oversees other women leaders including District Women Coordinators, Zonal Women Representatives and Women House Fellowship heads. This ministry for women began in the form of a House Caring Fellowship (HCF) which was intended to reach out to every woman on an individual basis. Through this means, no woman is neglected.

Apart from the House Caring Fellowship which holds every Sunday evening, the women also have special monthly meetings which aim at equipping and empowering women to play their roles both at home and in the Church. Therefore, they are trained as regards housekeeping, child training, cooking tips, health matters, career, business, church responsibilities, leadership and mentorship.

The Women Ministry of the DCLM is credited with the monthly publishing of a popular magazine, *The Christian Women Mirror*. This magazine is in high demand and relevant for both men (Christians and non-Christians). In addition, the Women Ministry also publishes other Christian books, leaflets, calendar, and gospel tracts. In every case, this arm of the DCLM is closely supervised by the General Superintendent of the Church.

The Children for Christ Ministry

Kumuyi's love and passion for children is the driving force of the children's department. Kumuyi strongly believes that the Great Commission is all-encompassing. Therefore, this section of the Church is saddled with the responsibility of child training according to biblical dictates. The founder of the Church finds time to minister to the children. As a talented teacher, Kumuyi

knows how to simply and effectively communicate the gospel to them. At regular intervals, the teachers and workers in the children ministry are trained and retrained for the task.

From a very tender age, the children are taught the doctrine of the Church through songs. There is hardly a child in this ministry who does not have a sound knowledge of the Bible. Books like *The Sincere Milk*, *ABC of the Bible*, *Bible Study Outlines for Children*, *Bible Stories in Picture* and others are provided to enhance their training. Also, the Children Church Choir is given the opportunity to minister to the entire congregation during their Sunday worship services. Children are also allowed to preach on special occasions.

Teenagers and Youths Ministry

Obviously, the Deeper Christian Life Ministries started from reaching out to young people. Till date, he puts in a lot of time and energy on youths in the Church. In 1979, Kumuyi started organizing the Free Vacation Schools for Secondary School Students in Lagos State. This Students Outreach continued as the Annual National Success Camp. Other platforms for reaching out to young people in the Church include the Deeper Life Schools Outreach (DLSO) and the Success Academy for Youths (SAY) which started in 2001. The Youth Home Success Fellowship (YHSF) is an off-shoot of the DLSO and caters for the basic needs of young people.

In September 2010, the Deeper Life High School (DLHS) was formed by Kumuyi in order to produce students who are academically well-rounded, morally upright, and adequately equipped as future leaders. People in this arm of the DCLM are tagged “victorious youths of this generation.” This phrase is usually chanted in their meetings.



Figure 4: Deeper Life High School (DLHS) students

The Campus Ministry

The history of the Deeper Life Campus Fellowship (DLCF) is incomplete without the mention of the university don, Kumuyi who graduated from the Nigerian Premier University (University of Ibadan) with first class honors in Mathematics. Sacrificially, he turned down a University Scholarship for Doctorate Degree for the sake of a greater calling. In 2014, he became the Chancellor of the Anchor University and was later conferred an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Abuja in 2018. As an erudite scholar, Kumuyi realized the need to harness potentials and build the capacity of young people.

The Campus Ministry of the DCLM caters for the mass of gifted and intelligent people who are trained towards leadership and positive influence in various spheres of the society; social, economic, religious and political. Kumuyi places a premium on this set of people, knowing that they are agents of change. For the record, the exponential growth of the DCLM is owing to a few campus students, pioneer members of the Church who spread the fire of revival everywhere they went. Kumuyi believes that the society is controlled by less than ten percent of

its population and that the prime movers of the society are less than one percent. He is also convinced that people in this category pass through institutions of higher learning.

As a strategic and visionary leader, Kumuyi created a niche in the intellectual arena including colleges and universities. In the late 70s and early 80s, Kumuyi established the Higher Institution Program (HIP) which later became the Deeper Life Campus Fellowship (DLCF). As a means of solidifying the theological base of these young people, the Short Term Ministerial Course (STMC) was put in place. From inception till date, a lot of resources have been put into this arm of the DCLM. The evidence of this huge investment is noticeable in the population of the Church as there are lots of reputable academics and administrators. In September 2014, the DCLM formed the Anchor University. The motto of the institution is character, competence and courage.

Life Press and Life Tapes

Life Press (formerly known as the Zoe Publishing and Printing Company Ltd) is the publishing arm of the DCLM. It was established in October 1979. This arm of the Church is responsible for publishing books, tracts, magazines (*Life, Campus Pearl, Youth Life and Tender Life*) including other beneficial materials. The Life Press also publishes books authored by Kumuyi, the founder of the Church. The readership attests to the life-transforming potential of these books. The Life Press produces books in different series like salvation, holiness, evangelism, prayer, miracles, healing, deliverance, Christian growth, faith, women and other themes. Generally, the materials produced by Life Press are targeted at the different arms of the Church (children, youths, campus, women, adults and professionals). Life Tapes is a special division of the DCLM that produces Bible teachings, sermons and messages of the General Superintendent in the form of audio tapes, video tapes, CD, VCD, MP3, and DVD.



Figure 5: The DLBC, Rivers State

My inquiries on the availability of archival resources showed that there are no records on the history of the DCLM, Rivers State. “Not at all. I have set up a team of historians to write the history. I am yet to get their publication” (PC with Uko Udeme Robson¹¹, 2023). However, conversations with a few pioneering members of the Church provide insight into the origin of the Church in Rivers State.

Stella Moses, a pioneering member of the DLBC in Rivers State and a District Coordinator notes that the DLBC in Rivers State took off in the 70s from No. 23 Station Road¹². From there, the Church moved to 170 Niger Street, Borokiri (also known as Information Centre). In 1986, the Church moved to its permanent location; East-West Road, Rumuodara in Port Harcourt. (Interview February, 2023)

¹¹ Pst. Engr. Uko is an admired and resourceful leader in the DCLM. He is the current State Campus Coordinator in Rivers State. One shining distinction of his leadership is inventiveness and perfection. His great taste and enthusiasm for music manifests in the incorporation of music studios to campus Churches.

¹² This place is currently the location of the Red Cross Society in Rivers State.

From inception till date, the Church has been led by various pastors including Stephen O. Akinola, Edward Enenta, Joshua Amatare, Francis Iyalo, Edison Idaminabo, George Olofintunyi, and Chike Onwuasoanya. Currently, the Church is under the leadership of Pst. Andrew Osagie. A Church member, Idowu observed that besides spiritual considerations, the appointment of State pastors reflected a balanced representation of the populace, considering the multi-ethnicity of Rivers State (Interview, February 2023).

Following the establishment of the Church, there was decentralization into regions and language churches. I believe this decision is in tandem with the indigenization policy of the DCLM in May 1994 as recorded in Igwe (2011). Currently, the DLBC in Rivers State is divided into several regions including Abua, Afam, Ahoada East and West, Andoni (Opobo-Nkoro), Bonny, Bori, Buguma, Degeme, Elele/Egbeda, Eleme, Emuoha, Etche, Gokana, Isiokpo, Ogubolo, Okrika, Omoku, Oyibo, Port Harcourt, Tai, and Umuebulu.

Furthermore, there are subdivisions into groups of districts. DLBC is scattered all over the districts including language churches to cater for indigenous people. Although minor stylistic differences exist in the music of various regions, there are still overarching similarities.

CHAPTER THREE

SCOPE AND MEANING OF THE MUSIC OF DCLM

The music ministry of the DCLM comprises the Children Choir, Youth Choir, Campus Choir, Adult Choir and the choir of the newly inaugurated group, Young Professionals Forum¹³. Overall, the music ministry of the Church is known for its vast and dynamic repertory. Regardless of the uniqueness of each unit, unity and uniformity still exists between them. Besides, the headquarters of the Church has always been a point of convergence for all musical activities.

Following the trajectory of music in the DCLM, one can observe a great deal of “repackaging and fine-tuning” as Chidi Oputeh explains. He credits Dr. Albert Oikelome as the “pioneer of the entire revolution in the youth music ministry of the DCLM. He was like a forerunner and all we [subsequent music directors] did was to follow his path finding model because he knew a lot about music.” Oputeh is trailing the footprints of Oikelome with the determination to “replicate, train the choir to be exceptional in terms of singing and playing their instruments” (Interview, August 2022).

¹³ The Young Professionals Forum (YPF) is “an interdenominational forum for Christian professionals with Dr. Kumuyi as Grand Patron” (Olujobi 2022, 57).

From the inception of the Church, credence was given to congregational hymns and choir songs which are accompanied by the piano and presented by the music ministry right before sermons are preached. There are usually three electronic pianos or keyboards: one plays the melody; another provides string chordal accompaniment for the song while the other keyboard is used for the purpose of vamping (a repeated chord progression that provides rhythm for the song). From 2000 till date, more musical instruments were incorporated into the music ministry.

Apart from the hymns, “listening to [other genres of] music and trying to mimic what is heard” was the norm in the youth music ministry (Interview with Oputeh, July 2022). Idowu in Crane (1967, 160) echoes that “almost everything about the church is foreign to Nigeria, and there is little to satisfy the deep spiritual needs of Nigerians.” Based on this deficiency, members of the choir and orchestra began to venture into compositions that best suit the churches in their localities.

Typology of Music

Song choices in the DCLM are based on the type of service or function; be it singspiration¹⁴, concert, or during regular Church services. The repertoire of the youth choir cuts across different genres of music including classical, gospel, spirituals, country, and contemporary styles, “and a bit of jazz for those of us who are skillfully advanced. It’s just a flare of different genres in terms of performance” (Interview with Oputeh, August 2022). During concerts, there are different sections for performing varied styles and genres based on the

¹⁴ Singspiration is normally a worship service that involves hymn singing but in the case of DCLM, it is an elaborate concert where the music ministers (youths) are expected to sing with inspiration, as the name literally implies. Vocal and instrumental solos and orchestra pieces are dominant during singspiration. This concert is appealing to young people since the featured songs are mostly songs by popular gospel artistes in Nigeria.

discretion of the music director. The sections may include a cappella presentations, symphonic and instrumental works, excerpts from oratorios and the likes.

Role of the Music Ministry

The DCLM conducts a wide array of programs and events which are usually accompanied by choir renditions. The three main weekly activities in the DLBC are Monday Bible Study (MBS), Thursday Revival and Evangelism Training Service (TRET), and the Sunday Devotional Worship Service (SDWS). The music ministry of the DCLM also features in other programs and events including Leaders' Development, Worker's Training, Power Night Service, Monthly Revival Program, Worker' Retreat, Youth Success Camps, marriage seminars, European conferences, North American conferences and the Annual conventions.

During the Monday Bible Study (MBS), worshippers engage in congregational singing. At this time, a member of the choir (mostly female) is appointed to lead the Church in songs. The chorus leader raises the songs and the congregation responds accordingly while clapping in a rhythmic and stylized pattern. Most times, this session of singing is unaccompanied by any musical instruments. While the exact reason for this exclusion has not been ascertained, substantial explanations were made. It is believed that such style of singing will help worshippers sing meaningfully and not depend on musical instruments.

This "adiaphora" brings into perspective John Calvin's argument on the basic principles of music. "Music is for the people, so it must be simple. Music is for God, so it must be modest. These objects are best by music of the unaccompanied voice" (Huh 2012, 16). Similarly, Lyons et al. (2016, 88) suggests that some musical instruments can "hinder the worshiper's ability to be penetrated by the meaning of the words." Apart from these reasoning, another debate may arise from the interpretation of Paul's recommendation of "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs"

(Col. 3:16) as an exclusion of musical instruments, regardless of the mention and use of musical instruments in the Old Testament. While Agboola (2023) concludes that the unaccompanied chorus singing during the MBS is simply a tradition, Uko (2023) provides a background that explains the norm. He establishes that,

“The Church places a high premium on Bible study. Since the MBS is a time of learning, the Church uses music to control the mood and the attitude of the worshippers. The music at this time should show solemnity and serenity. It is our belief that musical instruments may raise unnecessary excitement that may not support the seriousness of the message that is [to be] communicated. This practice is not doctrinal but based on the wisdom of the Church leadership [which is furnished by] experience and a lot of considerations” (Interview, February 2023).

Besides leading worshippers in songs, the choir and orchestra also perform during congregational hymn singing. Also, a slot is provided for choir rendition just before the sermon is delivered. For TRETTS, the choir only functions in leading worshippers in songs; this time accompanied by the piano and other available instruments. The songs chosen for this service are usually vibrant as members can be moved to dancing. Uko (2023) juxtaposes that the style of music during other meetings (apart from the MBS) are such “that will ginger us. At these times, we don’t need solemnity. So, we bring in the kind of music and instruments that will spur us up.” (Ibid.) Albeit, the level of expressivity varies from place to place and also depends on the dictates at the place and time. In some cases, dancing is discouraged or even banned. The reasons behind such restriction are targeted at maintaining moderation. For SDWS, the choir features during congregational hymn singing and choral renditions.

Repertory of the DLBC Music Ministry

Most of the songs performed by the music ministry of the DCLM (especially the Adult Choir) are sourced from a wide range of repertoires including; *Broadman Hymnal, Carols of Love, Favorite Hymns, Gospel Hymns and Songs, Heavenly Highway, Mississippi Choir, Mississippi Melodies, Redemption Hymnal, Sacred Hymns, Selected Church Songs, Sing and be Happy, Song(s) with Message, Springs from Calvary, Song with Life*, and others. The Youth Choir sometimes draw from these repertoires but to a large extent, they patronize contemporary songs. To facilitate the learning of songs, the music director will sometimes share YouTube videos for choir members to learn selected songs.

I observed that a high premium is placed on certain songs which are utilized in the DCLM. *Jesus Only is Our Message* which was written by Albert B. Simpson, a Canadian preacher and theologian is considered one of the most popular song in the DCLM. Oputeh describes this song as “the anthem of the DCLM”. I deduce that this song is conceived and treated as a heritage. The validity of this statement is confirmed by the frequent use of this song. Usually, most of the Church events (retreats, conventions conferences, etc.) will commence with the 6-stanza hymn and the best lead singers are usually appointed to sing the song.

Apart from setting the pace for the meeting, the lyrics of this lengthy song is centered on Christ and encapsulates the doctrinal foundation of the DCLM. Ojewala et al. (2021) emphasizes that hymns and songs are carefully selected in the DCLM. They also observed the centrality of Christ and the prominence of cardinal doctrines in the music of the DCLM. The lyrics of this particular song reverberates the tenets of “the Christian life from commencement to culmination” (ibid. p.294).

Jesus Only Is Our Message

Albert Benjamin Simpson, 1890 James H. Burke

1. Je - sus on-ly is our mes - sage, Je - sus all our theme shall
 2. Je - sus on-ly is our Sav - ior, All our guilt He bore a -
 3. Je - sus is our Sanc - ti - fi - er, Cleans - ing us from self and
 4. Je - sus on-ly is our Heal - er, All our sick - ness - es He
 5. Je - sus on-ly is our Pow - er, He the Gift of Pen - te -
 6. And for Je - sus we are wait - ing, List - ning for the ad - vent

be; We will lift up Je - sus ev - er, Je - sus on - ly will we
 - way, All our right - eous - ness He gives us, All our strength from day to
 - sin, And with all His Spir - it's full - ness, Fill - ing all our hearts with
 - bare, And His ris - en life and full - ness, All His mem - bers still may
 - cost, Je - sus, breathe Thy pow'r up - on us, Fill us with the Ho - ly
 call; But 'twill still be Je - sus on - ly, Je - sus ev - er, all in

Refrain

see.
 - day. Je - sus on - ly, Je - sus ev - er, Je - sus all in all we sing, Sav - ior,
 in.
 share.
 Ghost.
 all.

Sanc - ti - fi - er, and Heal - er, Glor - ious Lord and com - ing King.

Public Domain
 Courtesy of the Cyber Hymnal™

Figure 6: The “anthem” of the DCLM (GHS 73)

Jesus Only is Our Message has become a ritual and ancient landmark and the Church is determined to preserve it at all costs. Oputeh recounts Kumuyi’s disapproval when the Youth Choir in Lagos attempted to re-arrange this particular song. Kumuyi’s reaction emphasizes the place and role of this song, *Jesus Only is Our Message* in the Church. While commending their creativity, the General Superintendent of the DCLM maintained that the song should be left in its

original form and style. His instruction supports the reverence attributed to this iconic song. Kumuyi is convinced that *Jesus Only is our Message* is not a mere song, but also an “identity of the Church, and therefore should be untouchable” (Interview with Ihieekaonye, March 2023). Although this song which Oputeh describes as the anthem of the Church was not originally composed by the DCLM, it was adopted due to its resonance with the doctrine of the Church. When sung, it evokes praise and devotion among worshippers in the DCLM.

Another prominent song is *Jesus Send More Laborers* (GHS 257) which represents “the driving force of the Church at the onset” (Ibid.). The lyrics of this song capture the firm belief of Kumuyi, “especially his insistence that personal evangelism is the duty and ministry of every Christian” (Ojewale et al 2021, 71). This imperative is referred to as the “Great Commission” and remains the driving force for the Church “missionaries in over 40 countries in Africa, and 20 nations spread across every continent on earth” (Ibid. 77). *Jesus Send More Laborers* is mostly sung during workers’ and leaders’ meetings (trainings, retreats and congresses). The chorus of this hymn is synonymous to the answer to a clarion call

Oh Lord but start with me

Jesus begin with me

Who will go for you Lord?

Here I am Lord, send me

Send me Lord, send me.

257 Jesus Send More Labourers

Chris Rolinson

1. Je - sus send more la - bour - ers, for, Lord, we see the need the land is
read - y for harv - est, the fields are ripe in - deed. Oh Lord but start with me,
Je - sus be - gin with me. Who will go for you, Lord? Who will go for you,
Lord? Here I am, Lord, send me,
Send me Lord, send me

Lord, we love our country, countless lives to be won;
Jesus bring revival, that thro' us your will be done.

Lord, we sense your moving, touching our lives with pow'r;
we are ready to serve you, to go this day, this hour.

DLBC Choir/Orchestra Hq, Lagos

Figure 7: GHS 257 (Compiled by DLBC choir/orchestra)

Other foundational songs in the DCLM include *I am Ready for Service* (GHS 54) as well as songs bothering on the themes of holiness and consecration. It is not a surprise since the DCLM is known as the “holiness Church.” Other songs in this category include *Holiness Forevermore, Called Unto Holiness* (GHS 190).

Called unto Holiness
God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 1 Thess. 4:7
...without which no man shall see the Lord. Heb. 12:14



1. "Called un-to ho-li-ness," church of our God, Pur-chase of Je-sus, re-deemed by His blood;
 2. "Called un-to ho-li-ness," chil-dren of light, Walk-ing with Je-sus in gar-ments of white;
 3. "Called un-to ho-li-ness," praise His dear Name! This bless-ed se-cret to faith now made plain;
 4. "Called un-to ho-li-ness," glo-ri-ous thought! Up from the wil-der-ness wan-der-ings brought;
 5. "Called un-to ho-li-ness," bride of the Lamb, Wait-ing the Bride-groom's re-turn-ing a-gain!

Called from the world and its i-dols to flee, Called from the bond-age of sin to be free.
 Rai-ment un-sul-lied, nor tar-nished with sin; God's Ho-ly Spir-it a-bid-ing with-in.
 Not our own right-eous-ness, but Christ with-in. Liv-ing, and reign-ing, and sav-ing from sin.
 Out from the shad-ows and dark-ness of night. In-to the Ca-naan of per-fect de-light.
 Lift up your heads, for the day draw-eth near. When in His beau-ty the King shall ap-pear.

Refrain
 "Ho-li-ness un-to the Lord" is our watch-word and song, "Ho-li-ness un-to the Lord" as we're march-ing a-long;

Sing it, shout it, loud and long, "Ho-li-ness un-to the Lord," now and for-ev-er.
 "Ho-li-ness un-to the Lord," sing "ho-li-ness un-to the Lord."

WORDS and MUSIC: Lelia N. Morris, 1900. Public Domain.

Figure 8: GHS 190 (Composed by C. H. Morris, 1862 – 1929)

Requirements and Patronage of the Music Ministry

On a general note, members of the DLBC who intend to join the workforce are required to undergo discipleship training for about three to six months. Meanwhile, only “born again¹⁵” members of the Church are admitted into this program. Those who intend to serve in the music ministry are also required to take extra classes on the rudiments of music. During this period of

¹⁵ The phrase ‘born a gain’ refers to a spiritual rebirth as a result of one’s personal faith in Christ (John 3:3). Kumuyi believes that this conversion is practical. “That means, the life style that I lead [should serve as] evidence that I’m born a gain. If my life does not conform [to] Bible standard, and I am living in sin (Romans 6:2) then I do not have what I profess. I am saved by the grace of God, but the good life is a [proof] that my testimony is real (Isaacson 1990, 105).

training, intending members of the workforce will “get used to the ethics of the choir, and sew their uniforms.”

Findings reveal that members of the Youth Choir are not mere singers and that the group is not for everyone. There are stringent criteria that prospective members must meet. Importantly, they must possess clear evidence of salvation with verifiable proof. Kumuyi believes that the Youth Choir is a serious ministry and that church music is not mere entertainment.

The DLBC provides a huge support for its music ministry. Substantial resources have been invested in the music arm of the Church, including the provision of musical equipment, facilities and recording studios. Uko applauds “the pastors [successive State Overseer in Rivers State who are] passionate about music. [They] invest millions [of naira and/or dollars] in acquiring state of the art equipment and musical instruments” (Interview, February 2023). The DLBC in Rivers State also supports the music ministry to get their uniforms and other accessories needed for their ministry.

Apart from these provisions, there is really no remuneration for members in the music ministry. Agboola submits that “it’s a kind of free service and I don’t think anybody is paid. That’s the way the Church operates. We enjoy the service because we are doing it unto the Lord” (Interview, February 2023). Nonetheless, the Church endeavors to “provide what we [music ministers] need. During major programs, the Church ensures that choir and orchestra members are nourished. We eat a lot of fruits and special meals. The leaders make sure that we don’t fall sick or strain our voices. Some people [members of the Church] think that the music ministry is an enjoyment galore, but they are shocked by the strenuous activities of the unit” (Interview with Chisom, March 2023).

The youth choir of the DCLM stipulates that its members should be between the age of twelve and twenty-two. It is assumed that people above the age of twenty-two should be in college and should either join the campus choir and/or adult choir. However, most alumni of the youth choir still identify as “youth choir for life” and also contribute toward the welfare of the music ministry in DCLM. They and other well-meaning individuals also take on administrative roles in the choir thus enabling music ministers to concentrate on their main assignment.

Standards of the Music Ministry

In 2015, the music ministry in Rivers State initiated a policy to have a professional approach to music. Members of the unit were mandated to write music examinations under the auspices of the Music Society of Nigeria (MUSON). Agboola reports that “over 500 choristers registered for the exam, and nearly about 99 percent passed. This was the turning point for music appreciation and performance in Rivers State. This feat shaped and sharpened the choir for excellence” (Interview, February 2023).

Oputeh intends to boost the musicality of the youth music ministry by organizing a “two-month crash program for the youth choir in order to prepare them for upcoming music examinations” (Interview, July 2022). The outcome of this examination will be used as a yardstick to categorize members of the music ministry. “Based on the cut-off mark, some choristers will be promoted to the Central Choir while the rest will remain at the Group level and continue in the training program until they are able to pass the examination.” Oputeh also explains that the training and examinations continue at every level. There are also plans to “certify music ministers by taking international music examinations (ibid.).

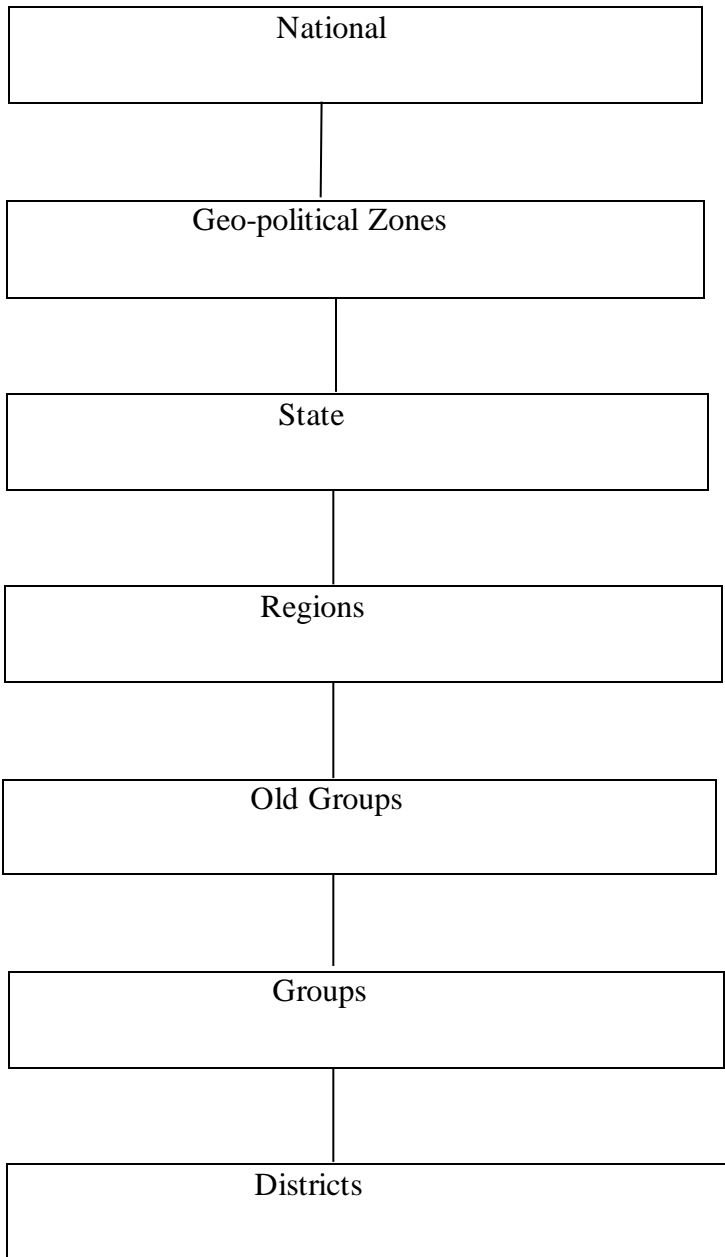


Figure 9: Administration of the Music Ministry

Furthermore, the music ministry of the DCLM is run by directors at various levels and they are appointed on both spiritual and professional grounds. Hence, we find a lot of doctorate degree holders in this position. “The people leading the music ministry are not just spiritual

leaders but are seasoned experts in the field” (Interview, February 2023). The high standards and expectations for the music ministry is not surprising due to the fact the General Superintendent of the Church is versatile in the field of music. The training and practices in the music ministry of the DCLM is almost synonymous to what obtains in an actual music school.

Those who join the music ministry of the DCLM are highly disciplined and ready to undertake any task. The quality and spirituality of the songs they perform is proof of their constant pursuance of excellence. Members of the music ministry are revered and cherished. They are expected to be role models to other members of the Church who look up to them. In a conversation with Amina, a member of the youth choir, she admits that the music ministry is mostly regimented. “We are timed to eat our food, wash our plate, retire to the hostel, sleep and report at rehearsal point. Latecomers are usually punished and asked not to sing for a period of time.” Henry added that “during retreats or other camping programs, we may not have time to see our family and friends until the end of the program” (Group Discussion with choir members, January 2023).

Furthermore, members of the music ministry in DLBC are sometimes expected to exude adequacy and balance in every area of their enterprise. They are expected to excel in their academics and profession. Sometimes, the leadership of the music ministry requires that members meet a certain number of credits or Grade Point Average (GPA) before they can join or continue in the ministry. The rationale behind this decision is to ensure that members can keep up with the tasking demands of the music ministry and still excel in other spheres. Members of the music ministry who fall short of expectation are advised to take a break from the unit. During this period of time, they can make up for their lapses.

The Music Ministry of the DCLM is characterized by rigorous practices and rehearsals (both day and night) in order to avoid mistakes. This consideration necessitates that choir members must be in the best state of health. Those with certain health conditions are sometimes excused from the music ministry to regain their wholeness before returning to their choir duties. Apart from praying for them, the Church can also contribute to their wellness by offering financial and moral support. The medical histories provided by music ministers are handled confidentially and used for administrative purposes. The welfare and kitchen departments provide adequate medication and special diet for Church members [including music ministers] during retreats and other major events in the Church.

Peculiarities of the Music Ministry in Rivers State

The Rivers State music ministry stands tall in many aspects. Overall, the music ministry in Rivers State stands shoulder to shoulder with that of the international headquarters. Agboola claims that “most of the changes that [are seen] in the music sphere originated from Port Harcourt.” He strongly believes that there is a residing “burning glory [in Rivers State] that God is announcing to the end of the world.” Musicians from this state are frequently sent to train singers and instrumentalists in other states. Apart from the fact that DLBC in Rivers State serves as the headquarters of other Churches in the South-South of Nigeria, music ministers in Rivers State are proficient. Hence, they are sent or invited by other states in need of musical training and advancement.

Apart from their track record of excellence, a particular occurrence in the GCK further elevated the music ministry of Rivers State. “Whenever it is our turn to host the GCK, we will search and search for guest artiste and not find” (Interview, February 2023). The recurrence of this particular incident makes it extraordinary. Agboola (2023) describes it as the “hand of God”.

Whether this situation is a mere coincidence or divine arrangement, the outcome is astounding as the music ministry in Rivers State continues to minister unpredictably. Port Harcourt choir and orchestra are known for their mind-blowing ministrations since they “do things differently” (Ibid.). Oputeh testifies that the Port Harcourt choir has earned world wide admiration due to their exceptional ministrations and endless innovations (Interview, February 2023). Patience Michael, a choir leader, comments on the salient attributes of the music ministry including rehearsals, prayers, discipline and effective leadership. “We rehearse a lot, we pray a lot and we set a standard and if you cannot meet the standard, no matter who you are, we will bounce you out. [For this reason,] choristers continue to push and press for excellence.” (Interview, March 2023).

Regalia of the Music Ministry

The music ministry of the DLCM is identifiable by their dressing. The main colors of the choir include black, navy blue, white, sky blue, pink, lilac, orange, peach and a few others. The males wear black or navy-blue pants (trousers) and suits (optional) with different colors of shirts and ties. The females wear navy-blue or black pleated skirts with matching head scarfs or turbans and similar colors of blouses (just like the shirts). More stylized uniforms including indigenous wears have been incorporated at the advent of the global crusade which started in 2021. Also, a special committee scrutinizes, moderates, and approves GCK costumes before they are used.

Most times, the uniforms are sewn and purchased centrally to ensure that the styles and colors are exactly the same. Moreover, it is a means of enforcing the acceptable prescriptions of choir uniforms as there is an acceptable length and fitting for the uniforms. Members of the Youth Choir are familiar with the phrase “long, well enough” as coined by a former choir

director, Asimie Okpim¹⁶. Short skirts, skimpy trousers, tight fitted clothes and blouses with low necklines are not acceptable.

Choir members follow a unique grooming standard for the hair, beards and care products. Shoes and other accessories like wrist watches are also regulated. For the sake of moderation and faster mobility to the stage and back “our shoes are usually flat and without glitters or pearls” (PC, October 2022). Make ups and excessive cologne are not permitted in the music ministry of the DCLM.

The leadership of the DCLM insists that members of the music ministry abide by moral and godly standards of dressing as moderated by the Church. Music ministers are believed to be the “face of the Church,” and therefore are expected to “comport themselves accordingly.” (Interview December, 2022) The General Superintendent is known to publicly rebuke music ministers whenever there is misconduct. In 2022, Kumuyi expressed his disapproval for the mode of dressing in a particular state¹⁷ in Nigeria.

“If you’re Deeper Life choir; when you come to sing at the crusade, don’t bring that worldly dancing into the crusade [that] Deeper Life is organizing. Don’t bring all that kind of dressing that I saw last night. A woman shall not put on that which belongs to a man. When you wear a jacket like I’m wearing now, that belongs to a man. When you wear your trousers of whatever make that belongs to

¹⁶ Asimie Okpim was a long-serving music director in the DLBC youth choir in Rivers State. Her impeccable leadership helped to shape the music ministry. As a highly disciplined leader, she motivated music ministers to be their best in the Church and in the secular world. Okpim encourages music ministers to be creative too. During weekend rehearsals, she asks choir members to compose songs using the main Bible reference for *Search the Scriptures* (Bible study class on Sundays in the DCLM). It is not surprising that the Church mostly selects people in the music ministry to participate in quizzes, competitions, symposiums, and debates within and outside the Church. Moreso, Okpim is a notable educator of the English language. It was typical of her to intersperse choir rehearsals with diction classes. She insists that music ministers observe every grammatical rule and properly enunciate vowels and consonants while singing.

¹⁷ Name of state is withheld for the sake of confidentiality.

a man. Crusade does not mean we should forget where we are coming from.

Crusade does not mean that we forget the heavenly vision and we bring the world into the Church. It must stop!” (Kumuyi 2022).

As a result of this incident in March 2022, a dress ban was placed on the choir till date; both nationwide and beyond. Kumuyi’s unpopular opinion generated a lot of controversial responses from the public. Nonetheless, he continues to maintain his unflinching stand on how the music ministry and the DCLM at large should be run. Kumuyi categorizes Church members who deviate from the laid down principles as “incorrigible members of Deeper Life.” He affirms his resolve “to continue with the heavenly vision [regardless their] nature of incorrigibility”.

Music and Doctrine in the DCLM

The DCLM is constantly exploring different means and methods of spreading the gospel. The music ministry of the Church is considered as being an effective conduit. The music allowed in the DCLM is “limited to the scope of ‘sacred gospel music’ [as] there are diversities; some of them are worldly in style” (Agboola, February 2023). The purpose of this framework is to ensure that the music ministry aligns with “what is preached; the ethics of the Church.” (Ibid.)

Songs are vetted before they are released. Compulsorily, the lyrics of the songs tally with the doctrines of the Church. For this reason, some songs are modified by means of adaptation, rearrangement and contrafactum. Glory, a youth choir leader recounted thus; “I remember when the Youth Choir was about to sing “So Close” [by Hillsong]; the Region Overseer asked the choir leaders to either rework the song or change it. This happened a few hours before ministration. So, our choir directors tried to add ‘Jesus’ to some portions of the song before we

could sing it” (Interview, December 2022). The pastor substantiated that the lyrics¹⁸ of the song may be mistaken as a love song by young people since there was no explicit reference of Christ in the song.

Uko (2023) corroborates that the music of the Church resonates with the “background of the founder of the Church; his calling and disposition to Christianity. He is more of a strict, holiness preacher. So, the music and attitude of the singers seem to portray his convictions.” Essentially, “the entire music is turning the belief system of the Church into songs. The music goes along with the tone, presentation and gesticulation of the message [preached]” (Interview, February 2023).

The style of singing in the DCLM also conforms to the regulations and prescriptions of the Church. Agboola (2023) substantiates that singing is not done “in a way that provokes the flesh, throwing the body here and there [in a way] that will distract people’s attention from focusing on holiness” (Interview, February 2023). The music ministry of the DCLM pays utmost attention not only on the selected songs but on the composers too. Songs done by morally questionable composers are not patronized by the music ministry. From time to time, their repertoire is being scrutinized. A former member of the Youth Choir mentioned that the choir had to reconsider some of Ray Boltz songs including *The Altar*, *Thank You*, *I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb*, *Shepherd Boy* and others when he came out as gay in 2008.

¹⁸ I’m so secure. You’re here with me. You stay the same. Your love remains here in my heart. So close I believe You’re holding me now. In Your hands I belong. You’ll never let me go. The solution proffered at that time was to attach “Jesus” and “my Lord” before the pronouns. Hence, the chorus of the song was sung this way: So close I believe **Jesus** You’re holding me now. In Your hands I belong. **My Lord**, You’ll never let me go.

Functionality of Music in the DCLM

Due to the appeal of music, “some people connect to the message through singing.” Uko (2023) describes music as “a key that opens up the hearts of people to receive the main message. Music is like a preamble and the main message is like the icing of the cake” (Interview, February 2023). Hence, songs are chosen according to the theme of the sermon to be preached. Oputeh points out that “the right choice of song coupled with adequate rehearsals and prayers is extremely effective in bringing the people closer to God” (Interview, August 2022).

The music of the DLBC is pivotal in the education of Church members. The Monday Bible Study (MBS) is known to be a time of systematic and expository Bible study. Therefore, the music supports this function by creating an environment that facilitates the learning process. Solomon (2023) declared that “the Church is on a mission. Why then should we encumber ourselves with any music that may not add any value in taking us to our destination?” (PC, February 2022)

The efficacy of the church music is reflected in the positive change of attitude among members of the Church. “Through the singing, a lot of people are beginning to turn away from vices” (Ibid.). A Church member attributes his salvation to the ministry of “four sisters who came on stage to sing *How Beautiful Heaven Must Be*. I just found myself crying. That was how I decided to give my life to Christ. Songs can move people to pray” (Interview, August, 2022). Another demonstration of the efficacy of music in the DCLM is in the realm of miracles. Agboola notes that miracles happen when the Rivers State choir minister. At the October 2020 edition of the GCK, the General Superintendent of the DCLM tagged them “prophetic choir” (Interview, March 2023).

Beyond the spiritual dimensions, church music in the DCLM, provides some economic and social values. The music ministry of the DCLM has always been a medium through which musical talents are discovered and harnessed. A lot of artistes have emerged from the DCLM to global visibility including Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB), Marty Brown, Agboluwaga Minstrels (which were also recorded by The King's Circle¹⁹), Golden Voices and others who also featured at the youth convocations. Uko comments that "it is actually the Church platform that they use to showcase their talents" Agboola added that the huge online presence and followership of the choir is owing to the positive impact of the ministry. The music of the DCLM has gone "viral because it is blessing [the masses]. The number of views and likes proves that the music is impacting them" (Interviews, February 2023).

Furthermore, the music ministry of the DCLM contributes to the economy of the state and society at large especially given the increasing upsurge of music participation in the DCLM. "Vendors of musical instruments [in and outside the Church] are really having a good time. Now, people are developing their musical skills. So, they have to acquire a lot of equipment" (Ibid.). In addition, the music ministry of the DLBC provides an opportunity for networking between musicians who are based at home and abroad.

Agboola (2023) envisages that the music ministry in Rivers State "if given the opportunity to perform, has what it takes to fill up the space of guest artistes in Port Harcourt.". He reasons that "the Church [can] benefit from its own product instead of hiring guest artistes" (Interview February 2023). Ogbuani laments on the extravagant cost of getting guest artistes when talents can be harnessed from the Church (PC, November, 2022). In the same vein, Gideon

¹⁹ The King's Circle (TKC) is a community convened by the General Superintendent of the DCLM for teenagers, campus students, young adults, professionals and youths at heart. Ben Television (Europe's first Black television) is in partnership with TKC and determined to take Kumuyi's program to the world, especially Europe (https://youtu.be/RWH0Mq-r3_Y.)

Akande in Duru (2022) questions this practice in the DCLM. “Are you saying there are no more successful people in Deeper Life Bible Church than those strangers invited? Are you saying there are no anointed brothers who can sing better than Dunsin²⁰ from all the global crusades with different ministrations from Deeper Life choirs?”

Agboola anticipates a time when “the Church can reap from its own seed.” He describes this process as a “feedback, playback and bring back” (Interview, February, 2023). The actualization of this goal will help to save cost. The cost of hiring guest artistes can then be channeled into other projects in the Church. Besides, Agboola comments that the Church can “pride only [in] the artistes that come out from [its] own loins. In addition, Evelyn, a choir member who is cognizant that the music of the DCLM is not commercialized, however suggests that the recordings of their highly demanded songs can be made available to Church members and the general public. She further explains that while the sole aim of this provision is for the edification of people; it could also be an avenue for generating funds to facilitate the supply.

²⁰ Dunsin Onyekan, is a renowned Nigerian artiste who is popularly known as “The Eagle.” He was invited to the DCLM global youth convocation, IMPACT 2022 and was adopted as a kingdom son by the Church founder. Kumuyi (the GS of the DCLM) declared that Dunsin is part of the “young men who God has raised in the kingdom for a time like this” (<https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2022/01/09/pastor-kumuyi-adopts-dunsin-onyekan-as-s0n-photos/>).

CHAPTER FOUR

MUSIC AND INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES: NATIONALITY, CLASS, ETHNICITY AND GENDER

The DCLM is a global Church with a teeming population of people from various geographical locations, vocational backgrounds, age, ethnic, cultural and gender orientations. Although there is a push for uniformity as an overarching homology of DCLM, peculiar differences within the various groups of people still exist. While the thrust of my research is to investigate the reality and extent of negotiation between these intersectional identities, I will first highlight a particular phenomenon in the DCLM which foregrounds some of the themes in this chapter. The Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK) is a monumental event in the history of the DCLM. While it ushers a lot of changes in the Church, it has also stirred controversies.

New Wave: Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK)

The constancy of change holds true for DCLM as it frequently responds to both internal and external forces. Members of the DCLM can attest to the fact that the Church has really evolved over time. “The ministry of pastor Kumuyi appears to have entered a new phase with the deployment of new technologies and new strategies to disseminate the gospel to the whole world” (Ojewale et al. 2021, 79). The Church has increased its capacity to reach a broader audience through its websites and other social media platforms. This innovation alludes to the

impact of Pentecostal Charismatic Pentecostalism (PCC) which is marked by “popular forms of communication and presentation, the use of modern media, a strong global orientation, participation in transnational networks, [and] a theological emphasis on the prosperity gospel” (Van Klinken & Obadare 2018). Although the DCLM maintains its stance on holiness rather than the ‘prosperity gospel’.

The Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK) began on June 24, 2021. Olujobi (2022) examines some of the positive changes that have accompanied this new era of the Church as compared to previous years. When the Church was founded, its main concern was to uphold the highest level of spirituality. Once upon a time, owning a television set, celebrating an anniversary or venturing into politics was considered unnecessary, distracting and even sinful. In an interview, Nene, a choir member shared that she was well behaved while growing up and did not get into trouble but “the one and only time my father beat me was when I went to watch television at a neighbor’s house. He flogged me mercilessly with a cable. If you saw me then, you would think I committed a crime” (Interview, November 2022). This experience confirms that the Church is now moving with the tides of modern times. The supposed “devil’s box” is now used by Church members and the global audience of the Church.

During a Monday Bible Study in 2022, Kumuyi disabused the misconception of technology as evil. He outlined the enormous benefits and the need to advance with the innovations. Also, he admits the deficiency of one’s natural strength and ability and the need to “use the present day technology, get new strategies and methods in doing the work of the Lord.” Emphatically, he declared that “the Church has been asleep [and that] as a servant of God, [he] must not stand static.” He recalls the previous mindset of some people in the Church and urges them to make progress.

“When radio began some years ago and people didn’t understand how voice will be coming out of the radio, and so the Church at that time said ‘no, no, no, we cannot use radio’ [because they felt there was] something magical [or] demonic [about] voice coming out of gadget. Later, the television, internet and [other] social media came in, and the people said ‘that is worldliness’ but now the Church is waking up [to the realization that technology can help] to spread the Gospel. When the [airplane] came, I learned of some people [who] said they were not going to use the plane and they were riding on horses. They said ‘God has given us the land [not] the space’. They said all the people [who used airplanes were] worldly and [were] going to hell. The bicycle had come and they didn't want to use [it]. They said ‘God has given us legs and if God has given us legs, why are we going to use bicycles’. Motorcycle came, they said no. Car came, they said no. But now, [technology] has silenced them. Why are you the late comer; the last one to use all of these things. We are going to rise up and use everything at our disposal for the propagation of the gospel. Let your ‘no, no, no’ be changed to ‘yes, yes, yes!’” (HOLY FIRE Channel 2022)

Oputeh who joined the choir as a youth in 1996 testifies that the music ministry of the DCLM has evolved over the years. He shared that “There have been a lot of changes as people are advancing in their music skills, taking music seriously, enrolling for international music examinations, and even studying music at higher institutions” (Interview, August 2022) . Agboola further echoes the advancements of the music ministry. “Back then in the 80s, the music of the Church was more reserved; more of hymns, anthems, solos, and the rest of them” (Interview, 2022).

In the early 90s, there was a revolution in the music ministry as initiated by the Youth Choir from Lagos (Ibid.). I suppose this period was the apex of the “second wave of revival” as described in Ojewale et al. (2021, 224). There was also modification in the delivery of songs as evidenced in “medley of songs, rhythmic piano accompaniment, and devised styles.” (Interview, February 2023). Both respondents indicated that the tipping point of the music ministry was at the instance of the Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK).



Figure 10: Kumuyi publicizing for GCK (October 2022) in Rivers State, Port Harcourt

It is believed that Kumuyi’s attainment of his eightieth year is significant as the Church launches into a unique epoch. For the first time, members of the Church celebrated his eightieth birthday. Olujobi (2022, 23-25) projects the uniqueness of Kumuyi’s new age by reviewing “what patriarchs and past generals of the gospel were doing at 80 years.”

At this same age, Apostle John the Beloved²¹ “was at the forefront of the preaching of the gospel in and across cities in present day Asia. At 80, Abraham²² as an intercessor for nations was committed to praying for the fulfillment of God’s promise to make his seed as the dust of the earth. “At 80, Moses²³ returned to Egypt after 40 years in exile to confront Pharaoh” and deliver

²¹ As recorded in Revelation 1-21

²² Genesis 18: 16-33

²³ Exodus 3-4

Israel from Egypt. At this same age, “John Wesley²⁴ was preaching across cities, often riding on horsebacks, and had maintained a lifestyle of waking up at wee hours of the day for devotion and worship. At 80, T.L. [Osborn]²⁵ was hosting crusades and preaching events across America.” Kumuyi is not an exception as he hosts “crusade streaks across cities, ministering multiple times at an average preaching time of 75 minutes while standing.” While the crusades impacts millions of people across the continents,” he continues to minister at the Monday Bible Study (MBS), which is regarded as “the flagship event of the Church.”

A good number of dignitaries including the Governors of Lagos and Akwa Ibom States, Babajide Sanwo-Olu and Emmanuel Udom attended this remarkable event at the headquarters Church. Some young orchestra members positioned at a strategic part of the Church auditorium made a surprise musical presentation for Kumuyi. This included a comic mimicking of his preaching style. However, the excitement of these young musicians turned sour as they were “disciplined.” The leadership²⁶ of the conservative holiness Church asked them to stop playing or officiating in the music ministry and other areas of service.

On getting to know this, Kumuyi reacted to the situation in favor of these young people. It was a clear endorsement of the youth arm of the Church. Kumuyi admits that at eighty years, he is closer to a time of bowing out. Hence, emphasizing the need to collaborate with the current generation. Udodiong (2020) outlines some of the admirable characteristics of the DCLM, especially the open-mindedness and flexibility of Kumuyi; not afraid to admit and take responsibility for mistakes. In 2015, there was an upheaval when Kumuyi expressed his

²⁴ Introduced in chapter two. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wesley.)

²⁵ Tommy Lee Osborn was an American Pentecostal televangelist, singer, author, and teacher whose Christian ministry was based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He hosted the religious television program Good News Today. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/T._L._Osborn.)

²⁶ Some of the top ranking pastors in the DCLM. Meanwhile, the moderator of the service (a pastor as well) asked the youths to stop playing but they continued to the end of their performance.

intentions to dismantle some of the Church practices and institutions that had caused more harm than good before his demise.

On the strength of Kumuyi's defense, young people gained more impetus to be expressive and creative in the music ministry. At the GCK October, 2022 edition, the youth choir publicly celebrated Kumuyi's wife, Esther. More so, May 2022 marked the one-year anniversary of the GCK and was also celebrated without the fear of rebuke. Olujobi (2022) remarked that the cancellation of the high-level leadership congress for a Global Youth Convocation in 2022 was proof that Kumuyi is passionate about the youth ministry of DCLM. Kumuyi earned the title "Biggest Daddy"²⁷ due to his dynamic and impeccable leadership.

During IMPACT 2022²⁸, the DCLM invited Dunsin Oyekan, a popular Nigerian gospel artiste, Ibukun Awosika a successful entrepreneur, motivational speaker and former Chairman of First Bank of Nigeria, and Iyinoluwa Aboyeji. This convocation was phenomenal and also triggered debates. Evangelist Gideon Akande, a former youth instructor in the DLBC wrote an open letter to Kumuyi, accusing him of "engaging Philistines²⁹" because he is "obsessed with popularity." Akande insinuates that the special guests of IMPACT 2022 were "Philistines" and speculates that Kumuyi may "begin to invite Christian comedians in the coming years [since] anyone popular is invited [to the GCK]. Akande the media evangelist, while frowning at the development, advised Kumuyi to go home and take a rest instead of destroying what he had built over the years" (Duru 2022).

²⁷ Kumuyi later reacts to this title as will be discussed later in the chapter.

²⁸ A Global Youth Convocation organized by the DCLM for students, academics, and professionals.

²⁹ From the very beginning, the Philistines were either allies or deadly enemies of God's people (Israel). The Israelites often referred to the Philistines as "uncircumcised" (Judges 15:18; 1 Samuel 1: 20) Today, Christians are regarded as Israelites (God's people) from a scriptural standpoint. Hence, "Philistines" is a derogatory term (<https://www.gotquestions.org/Philistines.html>).

Ojewale et al (2021, 204) pinpoints that Kumuyi “is not moved by the side comments of anyone who does not understand what he is doing.” At the opening ceremony of the convocation, Kumuyi addressed the members of the press on the issue. Kumuyi acknowledges the freedom of speech but discourages hasty judgments which were coming from an “underdeveloped mind.” His response to Akande’s criticism explains that “he invited those who were experts in their field and would be able to connect to the youngsters who were invited for the program” (mNaija 2022). Principally, the GCK is geared at “creative ways [that will] appeal to all demographics and classes of participants – Gen Z, elites, grassroots, market women [and men], academics, professionals, tech savvy” and other categories (Olujobi 2022, 34).



Figure 11: Flyer of the “Controversial Convocation,” (IMPACT 2022)

The Impact of the GCK on the Music Ministry of the DCLM

Since June 2021, the DCLM including its music ministry has been greatly impacted by the GCK. This global phenomenon has tremendously changed the music ministry and also birthed new styles of music in the DCLM. The music arm of the Church is committed to making their ministry presentable since it is alleged that young people mostly lose interest or even “leave the Church as a result of unattractive music” (Interview with Chidiebere, March 2023).

The GCK is proposed to feature music ministers from Africa, North America, Europe and beyond. So far, GCK has been a breeding ground for the creativity of young people. Chidiebere, (a former member of the youth choir) regrets that GCK did not happen in his time as he had left the Church in pursuance of other genres of music including rap which are not encouraged in the DLBC (PC January, 2023). DCLM’s choral and orchestral groups all over the world are required to render their best. Also, the repertoire has expanded to accommodate a variety of musical styles. Some continents are allowed to sing in their indigenous languages and dress in their traditional attire.



Figure 12: GCK Choir

Musical presentations are now done with more expressions like dancing, facial expression, including other hand and body gestures. Kumuyi, the convener of the GCK had also in time passed made his preaching more expressive. Using clip on microphones affords him the liberty to move around while preaching as opposed to the rigid pulpit used in the past. His gesticulations³⁰ help to sustain the attention of the congregation.

Onyekachi expressed his relief as choir members can now sing, smile and move their hands. “Previously, our choir mistress would ask us to put our hands behind so that we do not swing our arms and probably touch a sister. When we get to the stage, our hands will then be put together in front as we sing” (Interview, November 2022). While observing a GCK recording session, I spotted two choir members doing some arm exercises to enable them break the habit of folding their arms while singing. The choir director repeatedly interrupted the recording session just to ask choir members to sing expressively. One choir member defended her difficulty in adapting to the new norm; “this is not the way we were trained to sing” (Ibid.).

On one hand, these adaptations are appealing and targeted at sustaining the interest of the congregation. However, from another perspective, it may be viewed as a shift from a Western aesthetic to a more African centered performance practice which is mostly expressive. Conversely, the Western oriented posture³¹ for music performance specifies the position of the head, shoulders, chest, knees, feet, and arms since it is believed that the quality of sound produced depends on the posture of the vocalist or instrumentalist. Whatever the case, the music ministry of the DCLM has responded to a broader acceptance of localized and globalized practices.

³⁰ Olujobi (2022, 31) observes some of Kumuyi’s initiatives to engage his audience. Kumuyi’s “most popular posture [include] hands held together or hands wide open with face up”

³¹ <https://cmed.ku.edu/gummposture/posture.html>.

In order to enforce and sustain monitoring the new standards of the Church, a special committee was set up. GCK symposia are held every month for all those involved in the music ministry (choir and orchestra members, choir directors, media and technical team, including pastors and overseers). Oputeh, the regional youth choir director remarked that the music ministry has improved as a result of the GCK choir symposia. (July 17, 2022).

Another aspect of change in the music ministry of the GCK is the incorporation of more instruments, some of which were banned previously. There has been use of drum beats on the keyboard as well as the use of the guitar (although later banned). Most members and non-members of DCLM expressed their shock and disappointment when instruments like guitar were played at the GCK. Kumuyi has been accused of lowering the standard or even backsliding.

Those who were previously disciplined³² for playing guitar and drums were mostly bewildered. A former choir member in DCLM expressed his pain due to a prior guitar related incidence. “We were called backsliders and those whose love [for Christ] has waxed cold. Some of us were suspended and quite sadly, some left the faith.” Nonetheless, he further appealed to others who have been hurt thus. “My dear fellow comrades home and abroad, I know we may never get the type of apology we deserve. We may never be recognized as the ones who fought [through] when it wasn’t safe to do so. The younger generation may never know our names or what we did” (Eddy 2021).

I suspect that the controversies around the use of the guitar and drums especially led the Church to discontinue their usage. Albeit, there still exists technological simulations of drum and

³² Discipline is a corrective measure meted out to workers in the DCLM at instances of deviance, scandalous involvements. Discipline can be mild or severe, long or short termed depending on the severity of the issue and the discretion of Church leaders. In some cases, workers may be disciplined for the misconduct of their children or subordinate. Whatever the case, workers under discipline are relieved of their duties while they make amends for their wrong doings. They are restored accordingly whenever the leaders deem fit.

guitar sound in GCK choir presentations. While this portrays the ingenuity of choir members and the media crew, one may wonder if this alternative does not contradict the stance of the DCLM. It has been argued that musical instruments like drums and guitars do not compliment the genre of music that the Church uses. Hence, such incorporation cannot be without cogent reasons.

Agboola explains that “the drum beats help to stabilize the rhythm of songs when two or more musical groups are singing together” (Interview, February 2023). In this case, a key is stipulated for the music groups in the GCK. Currently, E flat Major is the selected key for congregational singing and the renditions are done in relay. The music groups in different nations are featured in turns based on the schedule provided by the GCK committee. For example, the Rivers State choir can lead one or more songs during the praise and worship session of the GCK and then hand over to the choir of any nation scheduled for that edition.

Oputeh believes that “E flat [major] appears to be a moderate or intermediate key for everyone [to sing comfortably] without shouting” (Interview, February 2023). This consideration could be the reason for the key specification and incorporation of certain musical instruments and styles in recent times. However, it may pose some limitations to singers and instrumentalists. Some choir members [especially the leads] struggle with the key. The key may be too low or too high for some people, as the natural and comfortable ranges of their voices are not taken into consideration. Also, the monotonous use of a key can stifle the creativity of musicians and may lead to reduced interest.

The appeal of the new style of music, especially the rhythmic essence, seems to overrule any other reasoning. However, Uko offers an authentic explanation that “GCK is not really a Deeper Life affair. Although it is a global program that is spearheaded by the Church [yet]

completely different from DLBC. There are many other Christian associations that are partnering with DLBC including the PFN and CAN” (Interview, February 2023). This awareness explains the disparity in the music and performance style of the music ministry in and outside GCK.

“Some of the things you see in GCK may not necessarily be the same in [DLBC] as a denomination. We have our rules, principles, and acceptance.” (Ibid.)

Similarly, Uko reconciles that those who play instruments that are not deemed fit by the Church are not in any way sinful. The allowance of diverse musical instruments during GCK is to ensure that everybody is represented in the music rendition. “If you play only African instruments, then you are going to short change others [in other continents].” Importantly, he establishes an understanding that the music of the Church is targeted at gaining access to the hearts of everyone and this entry is crucial for an effective ministry of the gospel.



Figure 13: Guest Artiste (Jeff Deyo) ministering at the GCK (August, 2022)

Along further lines of ensuring representation, the General Superintendent goes as far as getting basic knowledge of different languages in order to enhance the efficacy of his sermons. In the February edition of GCK in Togo, Kumuyi’s sermons were interspersed with French. In general, the music of the Church during the GCK reflects cross cultural influences. International guest artistes are encouraged to sing in African languages and vice versa. Jeff Deyo, the guest

artiste for August 2022 edition of GCK sang beautifully in the Yoruba language. His ministration was not only captivating but effective too. Also, it shows the extent of cross-fertilization in the music culture of the DCLM. Largely, this flexibility has been occasioned and sustained by the GCK.

In order to foster a sense of belonging and also harness the creativity of young people, there has been a talent hunt from which a substantial number of gifted singers and instrumentalists have emerged. As a norm, guest music artistes are invited during each monthly episode of GCK. However, Port Harcourt is an exemption as they prefer to patronize their in-house talents. Most of the choir songs are original compositions of the choir masters including Segun Agboola and other key members of the choir.

Indigeneity of Music in the DCLM

The General Superintendent of the DCLM is making a lot of effort to [ensure] that the pastors and leaders in the Churches across the nation are indigenous. “In 2020, Kumuyi collaborated with the Bible Society of Nigeria to produce the Yoruba Bible” (Ojewale et al. 2021, 95). In a related manner, the music of the Church is now more oriented to portray the culture and belief system of the people which are consistent with Christian tenets. Oputeh confirms that no member of the Church is left out since there are language Churches all over Nigeria and beyond. Patience Michael, a reputable youth choir leader conveys the importance of singing in indigenous languages. “If they [the congregation] don’t understand us [music ministers], then the songs will just be a noise. Even if the entire song is not translated, the main theme of the song will be translated.” (Group Discussion, March 2023)

Following the scriptural injunction in Psalm 98: 4 to “make a joyful noise unto the Lord”, Uko (2023) presents a contextual analysis. “What is joyful noise in Africa may not be a joyful

noise in India or America”. Hence, the music of the Church is tailored to the taste, preference and tendencies of the people in each locality. “In Nigeria, we sing, clap our hands, and move our body a little. That’s our culture!” (Interview, February, 2023). The music ministry of the DCLM in Rivers State also portrays the cultural identity of the sub-region through their dressing, among other things. “On the last Sunday of every month, we usually dress in our native attire. The women are mandated to dress like this too during their monthly meetings. Pastors do not only wear suits and ties every Sunday. That tells that we pride ourselves in our culture” (Interview with Oputeh, August 2022).



Figure 14: The GS of the DCLM and his Spouse Dressed in Cultural Attire

A leader in the DCLM opined that the Church is moving towards cultural fusions in the musical style and delivery in the DCLM. There is a gradual adaptation and indigenization of the Church and [its] music. The position of the Church on the issue of indigenization helps to clarify misconceptions, especially the misinterpretation of culture as fetishism. Uko (2023) upholds that the DCLM “is not associated with anything that looks fetish or raises suspicion.” Similarly, Ojewale et al. (2021, 113) confirms that Kumuyi has “moved Deeper Life [Bible Church] to set itself against” idolatrous practices. “Kumuyi stormed the scene when Nigeria was experiencing religious syncretism - a blend of the African traditional practices with the full teachings and

practice of the Bible. [He] debunked the generally held notion of regarding everyone who went to Church as a Christian.” Uko (2023) therefore insists that although “the most important thing is that the people are able to make sounds that they are naturally connected to,” there is no room for compromising Biblical standards and principles.

Humility as a Unifier in the DCLM

The membership of the DCLM is largely constituted by influential people in various spheres of the society. Theophilus Ihieekaonye, a seasoned theologian, psychologist and counselor in the DLBC clarifies that although the Church appreciates and recognizes people in this category, you will not find a trace of “high and mighty in Deeper Life Bible Church.” He alludes to the lyrics of a certain choir song, *The Family of God* to situate the atmosphere that obtains in the DCLM. “You will notice we say ‘brother and sister’ round here. It’s because we’re a family...” (Interview, March 2023) Anita confessed her shock when she “realized that one of the top-ranking officials in [her] university has always been part of those who clean toilets during Church programs” (PC September 2022).

The model of humility in the DCLM is Kumuyi, the General Superintendent of the Church. Ojewale et al. (2021, 162, 268) abundantly proves that “Pastor Kumuyi is exemplary in humility. A very highly qualified person but never shows off in that regard and never refers to his Church being the largest in the continent of Africa³³. He is never ostentatious in his dressing, where he lives, what car he drives nor does he own a plane although he could afford one. For many years [the humility that Pastor Kumuyi exhibits is openly manifest in his lifestyle as] he

³³ The DCLM in Nigeria is the biggest church auditorium in Africa. It has a weekly attendance of about 65,000 people (Obiero 2022).

would never show off as others do, carrying a train of bodyguards and others carrying his Bible. Kumuyi prefers a low-profile ministry of the meek and quiet type.”

During one of the MBS in January, 2023, Kumuyi canceled the title “Biggest Daddy” as well as “Convener of GCK” as he had been addressed. His action was in a bid to eradicate any form of misconstruction and aggrandizement that may eventually result in classism. “Let’s cancel completely, ‘Biggest Daddy,’ ‘Sugar Daddy, ‘Convener of GCK’. Yes, I am the convener of GCK when we get to the crusade. When you say ‘Biggest Daddy,’ that means there is a bigger daddy, a big daddy, and a small daddy. Let’s stop all that. I’m your pastor; your father in the Lord and that is scriptural; that’s the Bible.”

This scenario as well as the preceding instance is indeed not surprising. “Typically, Dr. Kumuyi does not promote any activity or program that brings him to the spotlight.” The authors of the book *Kumuyi: Defender of the Faith* remarked that they “had taken a huge risk to approach the [General Superintendent] about the idea to author a book about him.” His consent to “the publication of a book was therefore considered an exception.” (Olujobi 2022, 20)

The music ministry as well as other arms of the DLBC follows the model exemplified by the General Superintendent of the Church. No leader or member of the music ministry is treated on the basis of perceived social or economic status. Njideka, a devout Church member affirms that “the rules, standards, requirements and costume are the same for everyone, no matter who you are” (Interview July, 2022). The Church is explicit on its stance on equity. However, there may still be some ambivalence.

Based on the financial demands of the music ministry, it can be misconstrued that the group is meant for the rich only. The Church offers substantial support to the music ministry.

However, a few members may not be able to cater for their uniforms, musical instruments and accessories, transportation to rehearsals, and other miscellaneous expenses. Music ministers usually get new uniforms for every edition of the GCK; which of course is an additional cost. Anwuri Joshua, a member of the adult choir, thinks that one has to be financially buoyant in order to participate fully in the music ministry. “Some choir members may not officiate simply because they don’t have uniforms. Most times, we wrongly assume that they are not committed to the work of God. It’s not their fault.” (PC March 2022) Although the Church and music ministry provide assistance, there is always more to be done.

The “Inner Caucus”

Findings reveal that the music ministry of the DCLM does not condone preferential treatments. However, there are few exceptions that cast doubt on the equitable stance of the music ministry. Afonime Mfon, a member of the choir, clarifies that there seems to be an “inner caucus” in the choir and that solos, duets, trios and other leading roles are mostly selected from this group. Bisola added that “there have been times when we [choir members] are taught only the chorus of songs and we wonder what will become of the verses. But on the eve of the programs, solos and duets emerge. I wonder if they [music directors and other choir leaders] have separate rehearsals for them [lead singers].” (Group Discussion January 2023)

The major complaint of this group is that such practices of appointing lead singers can impede the creativity and growth of the music ministry since only a few members are given the opportunity to exercise their talents. Besides, the numerous roles of the music ministry can be overwhelming on the few people who are selected. Also, the congregation may either be bored by the repetition or even develop a stereotypic taste, hence making the choir ministrations counterproductive.

Glory Martins, a prominent lead singer in the choir shared her experience thus: “I told my choirmaster that I will no longer solos so that other choir members can be groomed. The very first Sunday I did not sing, some Church members asked the choirmaster why that sister with the ‘organ voice’³⁴ did not sing that day. My choirmaster wanted me back but I insisted on my previous decision. In a short while, I gained admission to a university outside my state and had to move away. It was then my choirmaster realized the essence of having many hands. By this time, we had a bunch of solos. Otherwise, the choir may have been handicapped when I left” (Group Discussion January 2023).

Oputeh defends that lead singers (solos, duets, trios, quartets) and conductors are chosen based on the consensus of the choir. “Normally, the choir is taught the entire song. Then the leader calls for lead singers and conductors. Those who are interested will then take turns to sing [just like an audition]. After that, the choir will vote for the people who perform better” (Interview, January 2023). Nonetheless, in some cases, choir leaders may pick lead singers based on their discretion and under certain circumstances like impromptu performances or when there is no time for rehearsals. It can be deduced that the so-called “inner caucus” of the music ministry are highly proficient and best suited for emergency situations. Preference for the best is only a natural phenomenon but one may probe the selection. Who sets the standards? Who determines the people who should be in the spotlight? The answers to these questions may be suggestive of a political undertone but I would rather stay within the scope of my inquiry. Nevertheless, there is a need to examine and consciously regulate the appearances of the “inner caucus.” In this vein, the State Overseer during a sermon had rebuked the music ministry for using the same set of lead singers especially in the GCK.

³⁴ A way to describe the sonority of her voice and her ability to conveniently sing on both low and high ranges.

Music and Gender in the DCLM

The Deeper Christian Life Ministries is made up of different arms including the Women Ministry, the Children for Christ Ministry, Teenagers and Youth Ministry and the Campus Ministry. The Church is segmented based on the different categories of people and geared to meet peculiar needs of people. The women arm of the Deeper Christian Life Bible Church is very active and dynamic. This ministry is led by the spouse of the General Superintendent of the Church. She oversees other women leaders including District Women Coordinators, Zonal Women Representatives and Women House Fellowship heads. The aim of this ministry is to equip and empower women to play their roles both at home and in the Church. Therefore, they are trained as regards housekeeping, child training, cooking tips, health matters, career, business, Church responsibilities, leadership, mentorship, and so on and so forth. A popular magazine, *The Christian Women Mirror* is credited to the Deeper Life Women Ministry.

The existing ministries in the Church also have subdivisions. However, there is a broad gender divide in the ministries, mainly in the children, youth and campus domains. Mostly, programs are held separately for boys and girls, men and women. Sometimes there is gender separation during Church services. Similarly, women are sometimes not allowed to sit in the front rows unless their skirts or dresses are long enough. Nweke, a Church usher claims that the reason why male and female sit differently may be for statistical reasons (making it easy to record attendance). Conversely, Osake, a youth pastor disclosed that the separation was “to keep the Church holy and avoid lust between opposite gender.” Could it be that Church members are acting based on the personal comportment of the General Superintendent? The President of the

Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia speaks about the impact of Kumuyi in his life; “Dr Kumuyi has taught us by example how to relate to members of the opposite sex. He would never share a seat with a woman [that is] not his wife” (Ojewale et al. 2021, 268). It is possible to misinterpret, misapply and even generalize Kumuyi’s lifestyle especially when there is little or no explanation about his actions.

The efficacy of this measure in promoting the spiritual well-being of Church members is another discourse altogether. Besides, it stirs a reassessing question as to the place of self-control among Church members? Does sitting together (male and female) detract the holiness standard of the Church? Are there no underlying factors³⁵? This circumstance comes in close conversation with a certain claim in an Islamic milieu where a woman’s voice is considered to be erotic and therefore forbidden. “The phrase, a woman’s voice is ‘awrah,’ therefore is understood to mean, a woman’s voice, just like a person’s nakedness, should be hidden or silenced. This claim is viewed by many Muslims as a way of silencing women from speaking their mind” (“Outspoken” 2015 in Eltantawy & Isaksen 2020, 857). Oftentimes, moral decadence is essentialized. However, a thorough examination reveals that it can be attributed to other factors.

There is no clear-cut ministry for men in DCLM. However, the Church is no doubt dominated by men. Stella, a district coordinator in the women ministry, laments that women are not allowed to be pastors even though some of them have the capacity to serve in that position.

³⁵ “The separation of boys from girls can be linked to the family unit. Although Nigeria is a heteronormative society, there are existing orientations which are ironic or opposing to this stance. “Don’t play with boys” is an unofficial mandate given to girls. So far, it has been institutionalized as some Churches, schools and other organizations help to enforce this unwritten law. A lot of parents and institutions shy away from sex education. Some teachers deliberately skip topics on reproduction. As a result, some girls grow up isolated and naïve to the extent of even refusing a handshake from boys. This attitude is owing to the misleading instruction given to them including the popular one; “no let any man touch you, else you go get *belle* [pregnant].” It is quite hilarious how pregnancy is treated like a communicable disease that can be transmitted through touch. Nowadays, it has become clear that the notion of becoming pregnant from a literal touch is a fallacy” (Moses 2023).

Olusola (2013, 61) notes that the “Deeper Life [Bible Church] doctrine believed that the ministry of women is purely to women and their family. Hence, no leadership position was given to them and they are not allowed to sit on the altar.” In an interview with Alan Isaacson, Kumuyi explains that “women only have an important ministry to women [and] since women have a lot of things to do at home, it would be better for them to take care of their family and the children. [To him,] it would not be a good thing for their ministry in the Church to conflict with the training of their children at home” (Alan Isaacson 1989, 101 in Olusola 2013, 63).

The gendering in the leadership structure of the DCLM is not different from the routine in everyday interaction. West & Zimmerman (1987, 125-126) critically examines the social conception of gender, “including its treatment as a role enactment in the conventional sense and as a ‘display’ in Goffman’s (1976) terminology. Gender is constructed through psychological, cultural and social means – the division of labor, the formation of gender identities [gender roles which are learned and enacted] and the social subordination of women by men.”

In the DCLM, women are not accorded leadership roles especially over men; their ministry is only to women and more importantly to their family. Although the main reason for this is in keeping with Biblical model.³⁶ Ihieekaonye supports that “men are the head of the home according to scriptures. That was exactly what Paul the Apostle was saying in 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35 and 1 Timothy 2: 10-14. There was a time when women were allowed to preach in the Church [DCLM] but they began to misuse the opportunity; [using their position] as an avenue to override the [men] and disrespect their husbands” (Interview, March 2023).

³⁶ “The main reason for this as rightly noted by Kumuyi is that ‘a closer look at the scripture shows that there is more on the side of men being into some [leadership] roles and responsibilities.’ Also, he noted that the leadership role[s] of the women in the Old Testament was mainly among the womenfolk and also in the home. Therefore, because of this, women are not given ministerial duties to perform in the Church” (Olusola 2013, 63).

The issue of gender has been criticized as a threat to family and Biblical authority while neglecting the oppressive nature of power inequality involved. I believe that the structure of leadership in the DCLM that privileges men follows the patriarchal mold of the society. Also, the interpretation of women's role and position in the Church is simply a reinvention of cultural notions of gender. In an African milieu, women are considered to be best suited for the domestic sphere. "Women have a lot of things to do at home. We still want them to take care of the family and the children. We wouldn't want their ministry in the Church to conflict with their children at home" (Isaacson 1990, 102).

Although, the music ministry of the DCLM is a crucial arm of the Church whose success is dependent on combined efforts from members, women are mostly responsible for administrative duties including welfare, food, costume, accommodation, sales and other related assignments. "This does not mean that the brothers [male choir members] cannot do it. They may not have the time to do these things. The sisters [female choir members] who do this may have spare time and we are very appreciative of what they have done so far" (Interview with Oputeh, June 2022).

Female members of the music ministry who play extra-musical roles unanimously stated that they sometimes undertake administrative duties at the expense of their musical creativity. Chioma, a youth choir member who also doubles as a welfare coordinator recounts her experience. "While cooking, I try to listen and practice the choir songs. Sometimes, I have to run from the kitchen in order to join the choir to sing. Meanwhile, as a part leader, I also make sure that alto singers are on point" (Interview, January 2023). This scenario depicts the iconography of motherhood and socially approved wifedom as dictated by cultural notions on gender (Ngoshi & Mutekwa 2013).

In any case, women in and outside the music ministry continue to impact the Church positively. Findings reveal that women constitute “more than three-quarters of the entire choir and they are doing exceptionally well” (Interview with Oputeh, July 2022). There is therefore no gainsaying that women play huge roles in the music ministry of DCLM. Olusola (2013, 61) “recommends that since women constitute the significant population of the Church, they should be given opportunities to realize their full potentials through improved involvement in ordained ministry. Also, women should be allowed a level playing ground with males in [the] leadership structure of the Church.”

The DCLM has an elaborate Women’s Ministry which is headed by the spouse of the General Superintendent who believes that “God is working through the cultural norms of Nigeria today” and that no Scripture goes against women ministering in the Church (Alanson 1990, 102). Although Kumuyi’s spouse is usually seen as “the second in command” (Olusola 2013), the Women’s Ministry is still under the auspices of the General Superintendent. Some women do not really appreciate the interference of men in the leadership of the Women Ministry. This male dominance is also reflected in the music ministry of the DCLM. Martina Dawari Brown, a committed and resourceful member of the adult choir corroborates that “the top cadre of Church leadership [pastors] are mostly men. It has even rubbed off on all the choir units. It is even mandatory that every choir unit should be headed by a pastor or someone in that capacity that is also musically inclined” (Interview, February 2023).

Brown details that the roles in the music ministry of the DCLM “are not gender sensitive, especially with the type of leaders we have. They don’t discriminate” (Ibid.). However, there are still exist gendered roles in the music ministry of the DCLM. Although the divide has been

blurred in recent times, the stereotypic frame still exists. Women often lead congregational hymns and songs each week at the Monday Bible Study (MBS) and at the Thursday Revival and Evangelical Training Service (TRETs). Oputeh claims that this practice is simply an imitation of the headquarters Church of the DCLM. Although he cannot substantiate the reason for this specification, he still believes in flexibility. “I don’t think that there is any rule or law that sisters [female choir members] must sing choruses [lead congregational hymns and songs]. Brothers can also lead. It all depends on who is available or who best can handle the chorus session.” (Interview, July 2022)

In addition, some female members of the music ministry are commended for their role in the publicity of the GCK and their “collaborative efforts. These individuals and groups have contributed immensely to the promotion of the GCK. While it is easier to think these female members of the choir are commissioned and sponsored by the Church to advertise the GCK monthly. A good number of them finance the project themselves. Brown considers the GCK publicity “as [her] own way of supporting [her] father in the Lord [the GS of the DCLM]. Looking at all that he has been able to [accomplish] at his age, I feel that this is the little I can do to support him. After the first GCK, I got inspiration and guidance from God and I started the publicity in the second month of the GCK [July 2021] till date” (Interview, February 2023). Brown is not the only female choir member who volitionally pioneers the GCK publicity. Others include the GVOICEZ (Bara L. Obudikianga, Miracle Ifeoma Achempong, Success Ifunaya Odozie, Maria Shedrack-Nnabuiife, Chinasa Okoroafor, Phebe Enyioha), and more.

The Dilemma

I found an ironic twist in the music ministry of the DCLM and GCK. The fact remains that women have made immense contributions to the music ministry and the Church [DCLM] at

large. However, the criticism they get usually outweighs the appreciation. Music is a vehicle through which the gospel is propagated to the world. But the women are mostly accused of bringing the world into the Church. Apparently, they have become the target of reproof even for a general misdemeanor. Sharon, a member of the youth choir posed a rhetorical question to express her grievance. “Why are girls punished for every minor thing that goes wrong? What about the boys” (Interview, November 2022).

On another hand, Amanda admits that females have their own peculiarities and may be accused of “over-doing” things but they still contribute immensely to the progress of the music ministry of the DCLM. I suppose that the possibility of Church members and workers going “overboard” is what necessitated the regiments and restrictions in the DCLM. Whatever be the case, I strongly believe that the presence or absence of moderation and equity will determine if the restrictions are control mechanisms or tyranny and oppression. (Interview with Oputeh, March 2023).

Breaking the Norm

The contributions of women cannot be overemphasized in the music ministry of DCLM. Women are increasingly breaking previous standards set for them and even reaching beyond. Previously, girls were not encouraged to play certain musical instruments, especially brass instruments and the piano. As a result of this, boys sometimes play the keyboard even during girls’ forums and conferences. This situation raises contemplation as to whether “women simply do not play musical instruments to the same degree as do men. If this is so, why? [Could this also be part of the] complicated and ever-changing interrelationships between women and men that can help to mitigate power imbalances [?]” (Koskoff 2014, 128).

While the exact reason for the previous restrictions has not been ascertained, it was commonly believed that certain musical instruments may disrupt the reproductive wellness of the girls in the future. However, Grace, a soprano adult choir member, trumpeter and mother of four is abundant proof (among many others) that debunks the myth that girls who play brass instruments are likely to have reproductive challenges. Koskoff (2014, 129) postulates a theory of gendered instrumental performance considering “the notion that musical instruments are generally linked to gender ideologies, however culturally constructed and maintained. Such ideologies underlie and prescribe who can and cannot play and under what circumstances performances will occur.” Some musical instruments are considered to be masculine. Hence, women are discouraged from playing them. On another hand, one may observe a relationship between music and power when “such instruments are used by men to limit, control, or coerce women” (Ibid.).

Ruth Godwin, a brass player in the youth choir shares her previous experience. “Producing sound from the tuba requires so much capacity as compared to other instruments like the trumpet and euphonium. When you want to make a sound [from the tuba], it affects your lower abdomen and [probably] your respiratory system.” Also, Patience Michael, another brass player recalls that “the first day she (Ruth Godwin) picked up a tuba [and attempted] to make a sound. All the veins on her face, and her eyes were [bulging]. Someone said to her ‘keep that thing [tuba]! Do you want to die?’ In fact, the males around there said to her ‘sister, we don’t want to see you with that thing [tuba] again. Due to the size of some musical instruments [mostly brass] and the difficulty in playing them, women either shy away or are asked not to play such instruments. Nonetheless, there are women who “protest their socially accepted roles and perform, especially on male-associated musical instruments, risk punishment and social

ostracism or, conversely, may be elevated to the status of a feminist icon” (Ibid.). The Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB) in the DCLM exemplifies Koskoff’s analysis of gendered instrumental performance, especially the emergence of the group against all odds.



Figure 15: The Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB)

Oputeh, commends the progress of the music ministry, “Gone are the days when girls were discouraged from playing certain musical instruments” (Interview, January 2023). He was so honored to be part of the audition for the ULBB, who thrilled the globe during the second edition of Youth IMPACT in November, 2022. Blessing Itaa, a very talented trumpeter and leader of the Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB)³⁷ affirmed the determination of her group to “stand side by side” other male instrumentalists and thereby end the “belittling and disregard of the other gender” (Interview, December 2022).

Patience remarks that the distinctive quality of this group is in their gender composition. She was “happy and surprised that females are not only playing brass [instruments] but [doing] it

³⁷ “We [the ULBB] started on October 3, 2022. Motto: Unique Ladies Unique Sound.

Vision: To Create and Equip African-First, Godly, and Zealous Brass Female Players for God and Humanity.

Mission: To raise one-of-a-kind, exceptional, and distinct brass ladies who will impact lives through musical instruments” (PC with Blessing Itaa, March 2023).

very well. This means [that] there is so much talent embedded in females. In the near future, I do not just see them recording only for the GCK but for other global events and programs; only if they are [consistent] in what they do.” Brown also expects the ULBB to be a “stronger group that is not restricted to the GCK.” She also contemplates the continuity of the group “if the Church stops financing them.”

A teeming number of persons in the DCLM music ministry have grown significantly in different facets of their lives. Young people are at liberty to pursue professional courses in music, get involved in music production and other performances outside the Church. Before now, choir members were not allowed to perform outside their district, let alone going to another Church. In the past, those who ventured into commercial music production likely faced stiff opposition and were sometimes disciplined. But these days “the heat has reduced.” (Interview with a choir member, February 2023)³⁸

Obviously, the GCK has popularized “local champions” in the music ministry of the DCLM. Female choir members have gotten the long-desired visibility and appreciation. Apart from the Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB), other individuals and groups emerged during the GCK wave. These include the GCK publicity team, Esther Oreri, Young Professional Forum (YPF) and others.

³⁸ The name of the choir member is withheld for the sake of confidentiality.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Discussion and Implications for the Music Ministry of the DCLM

In this chapter, I examine some outstanding themes that emerged from the preceding discussions. Also, I reflect on and capture some of my personal experiences that resonate with some of the research participants' lived realities. Further, I suggest the need for advocacy for partial change, which could be initiated through interrogating norms, rupturing cognitive frameworks, dismantling biases and other forms of gatekeeping.

Regiments and Mobility in the DCLM

The music ministry of the DCLM is constantly “plugging into existing technology in order to reach out to more people.” (Interview with Oputeh, August 2022) The current style of music in the DCLM is known to be more appealing to the people mostly because of its rhythmic essence. The impact of this innovation translates to the “massive influx of people to the Church because they now feel welcome” (Ibid). The General Superintendent of the DCLM is appreciative of the innovations of the music ministry especially in the promotion of the GCK. However, he recently “instructed that [the music ministry] revert to [their] old style of songs been drawn from the GHS [Gospel Hymns and Songs]. All songs are to be based on major

doctrines of the Bible with emphasis on holiness, rapture, and consecration [and others]” (Group Communication from Michael Dada, April 2023).

The General Superintendent of the DCLM is known to be highly disciplined yet open-minded. It has been argued that the regiments and restrictions in the DCLM is not a mere exercise of authority or outright tyranny but a measure of control so that Church members and workers “do not go overboard.” (Interview with Oputeh, March 2023). The DCLM is a dynamic institution that is known to set new standards when it deems fit. The modifications are meant to accommodate the latest realities while striving to achieve the main aim of the Church, which is “spreading the Gospel and winning souls” (Ibid.).

Navigating the Dichotomy of Music Minister and Entertainer

Johansson (1992, 53) realizes that musicians are automatically assumed to be entertainers. “Secular job classifications are so arranged that musicians are routinely assigned the entertainment category. The Church musician too is commonly perceived as an entertainer, albeit a religious one.” He expresses “a grievous thought that worship music could serve such a purpose [especially] when the musician chooses music solely on the basis of [likability] by the congregation (emotionally fulfilling, devoid of reason, and in a pop style), then one can be sure that music ministry has become entertainment.”

The DCLM is not oblivious that some members of its Music ministry double as music educators and performers in other places and secular capacities. This multiplicity of function requires that they keep their roles separate as much as possible. Accordingly, there is an insistence that the Church’s music “must be guided by its function, and it must not be mixed with those styles which are easily confused with functions unrelated to worship” (Johansson 1992, 53).

Oputeh who is a music director in the DCLM as well as a performer and music educator in the secular world is determined to “abide by the rules governing” the different organizations he is involved in. He describes ways in which he handles his multiple roles as music minister, performer and educator. “When I’m in Church, I try to limit all I do within Church principles and godly standards. [But] when I get to my career, I am free to do different kinds of genres and explore other opportunities outside the Church” (Interview, August 2022). In this case, he functions as an entertainer outside the Church and a minister within the Church. However, he acknowledged the possibility of interference between the roles and emphasized the need to be careful in order to strike a balance.

Some members of the music ministry in the DCLM (mostly young people) complain that this distinction is restrictive and is capable of stifling their creativity. In a personal conversation, Idum, a vocalist, instrumentalist and conductor in the youth choir laments that “the Church [DLBC] train us [members of the music ministry] so much but do not give [them] enough opportunity to showcase [their] full potential. Music is expressive. That’s why we look for avenues to unleash our talents. Some members of the choir even leave the Church to other places where they are freer” (Interview, November 2022).

Conversely, Femi argues that “going to perform in other places may be a means of getting maximum expression of musical talents but that may not be the reason why people [members of the music ministry] leave the Church.” He further insinuates that they may be attracted by the remuneration or honorarium they get in other places; including other Churches. “Some of us [members of the music ministry] are young school leavers. So, music performance can be a source of livelihood for us in the meanwhile. Sometimes, we are caught up in the

hustle³⁹ and the Church may frown at that but that does not mean that we have forgotten our root” (pc, November, 2022).

Oputeh opines that the bone of contention “is not about expressing yourself but where you go to do that. You must know that you are first a minister and then a musician. Whether you like it or not, there are things that may be permitted outside the Church but not inside the Church.” He also warns of the danger of “infiltrating the Church with all manner of music,” when music ministers are not conscious of their roles in and outside the Church (Interview July 2022).

I believe that the concern of the DCLM is the lapses in balancing the role of music minister and performer. A youth instructor in DLBC laments that “when these members of the youth choir begin to go outside to perform, their comportment begins to change including their dressing. It becomes difficult for them to align with the standards of the Church” (Interview February 2023).

Oputeh identifies music education as another avenue of expressing and developing one’s musicality. “In the educational institutes, you are not limited to Church music. You are at liberty to explore all kinds of music. But in [DCLM], we strictly focus on Church music and we want to keep it that way” (Interview, July 2022). However, the attitude of some leaders in DCLM towards the study of music is contrary to Oputeh’s view.

Michael observes that “some leaders [in DLBC] believe that when [choir members] go into music, they may be carried away due to the vastness of music in the higher institutions [of learning]. I see so many leaders trying to pull Church choristers out of that field; trying to

³⁹ Hustle is a Nigerian buzzword for endeavors that are done for survival (making ends meet).

influence them to pick [another career] different from music just because of their fear of losing these ministers. Those who go outside the Church to perform are required to follow due process” (Interview, March 2023). As a result of this complexity, the disposition of some music ministers who venture into music education questions the liberty of musical expression as discussed earlier.

Negotiating the Boundary between Ministration and Professionalism

Some members of the music ministry who take on music as a course of study or career path are sometimes regimented in their performances. One may wonder if their decision is based on personal convictions or in keeping with their status as music ministers or even in compliance with the prescriptive and circumscriptive Church stipulations of operation. Shalom, a member of the DLBC choir and an undergraduate music major maintains that she “only performs sacred songs in her course of study even though other kinds of music are required” (pc, August 2022). It can be argued that her experience in the music institution is lopsided as it does not capture the full extent of musical knowledge. Besides, partial implementation of the curriculum is not without repercussions especially on the part of students who do not comply accordingly.

Personally, I was discouraged from pursuing my career in music on the grounds that I may lose my Christian convictions. Apart from this reason, I encountered other constraints that are based on socially constructed ideologies and circumstances. My gender further heightened the disapproval. For some members of the DCLM and the Nigerian society at large, music scholarship and performance is unpopular and may not be useful for a girl child in an African milieu. Ironically, these same people buy tickets to watch Nigerian artistes perform. How then is studying music a futile endeavor? The contestation about pursuing my dream career is now history yet I continue to negotiate the intersection of my identity as a music minister and

performer. The navigation becomes elusive as the boundary between ministration and professionalism continues to shift.

Truly speaking, there could be extremities in the process of achieving equilibrium between the persona of music minister and performer. In light of this reality, Oputeh as well as other well-meaning leaders take up the responsibility of mentoring young ministers. The Young Professionals Forum (YPF) is another avenue put in place to ensure that young people are effective in ministry and also successful in the secular and social spheres.

Structure and Agency in the Music Ministry

The DLBC plays a crucial role in moderating music ministers in and outside the Church. As ambassadors of Christ, they (music ministers) are expected to uphold godly standards everywhere, even in the secular world. The thrust of this discourse is therefore to examine the extent of influence and control the Church exerts on music ministers and performers.

According to Rousseau (1978), the social contract is a technical term for the act which creates a civil society with moral-binding laws and duties. Although this is a voluntary agreement, he practically thinks that governance is unnatural. To him, relishing one's right is illegitimate and an act of slavery. Ironically, this slavery is two-sided; on the leader and the led. Furthermore, Jean-Jacques Rousseau puts forward some principles in an attempt to explain this willful degeneration into servitude. The principle of political right for example creates a ground of obligation and makes it reasonable for one party to serve another.

John Locke's (1993) *Two Treatise of Government* corroborates Rousseau's social contract. In a nutshell, his first treatise legitimizes modern politics on the grounds of divine laws of leadership; God over creation, Adam over the entire human race, and father over children.

Locke's school of thought brings into perspective the basis on which music ministers in the DCLM are governed. But it seems the music ministers are unaware of the extent of involvement and control from the Church. Some laws may not be official yet binding.

Membership in the music ministry of the DCLM seems like a social contract to me since the musical involvements or engagements of music ministers are moderated by the Church, both directly and indirectly. Otherwise, why should music ministers "get formal permission from the State Overseer to host a concert or launch an album? [Why do they need an] approval from the Church before [they] can publish songs? (Interview with a music minister⁴⁰, February 2023). By extension and in line with the preceding dilemma I may also ask: Why should I [as a music minister in DCLM] not go to musical functions on Church days? Should an ethnomusicologist, for example, seek the pastor's approval to embark on research [music related] in another Church [or other religious places]? Why should an academically-trained singer not sing certain genres of music or accept certain opera [or theatrical] roles? Why should I be queried for wearing jeans for a music band performance? (Personal Reflection). The preceding legitimate questions should be asked and answered in a quest for sensitivity to fair and balanced reflexivity in ethnographic research.

The influence of the DCLM on its music ministers may be criticized as interference in their personal affairs and businesses. However, it can be legitimized based on Rousseau's principle of political right which creates a ground of obligation and negotiation between both parties (the DCLM and its music ministers). The Church may have a sense of entitlement towards the music ministers since they (the DCLM) play a huge role in training and supporting the music ministers. It is on the strength of this well-rounded foundation of music that most of

⁴⁰ Name of respondent withheld for confidentiality.

them (music ministers and artistes) get raised to stardom. Albeit, the place of personal development cannot be overemphasized. The Unique Ladies Brass Band (ULBB) is a typical example of this polarity. It is assumed that the ULBB is an organization of the DCLM since the first appearance of the group was in the GCK but the group was in existence before they featured in the global crusade.

On another hand, music ministers may feel indebted to the Church and therefore obliged to Church dictates; no matter how adverse they may be perceived by some to be. One may question if the Church has “monopolized” the group. Itaa informs that the ULBB functions in other events and places outside the DCLM. However, a few of my respondents expressed their fear of uncertainty for the ULBB. “I was expecting a stronger group [that is] not restricted to the GCK. I expect them to do various covers and make themselves worthy of invitation outside the Church. Does it mean the group will die when the Church stops financing them since most of them are [students who are] financially unstable” (Interview with a music minister, February 2022).

No doubt, the DCLM exerts a huge influence on music ministers in and outside the Church. Oftentimes, music ministers who are also artistes outside the DCLM are expected to seek the approval of Church leadership before embarking on external musical endeavors. Those who do not follow the “due process” may face opposition and lack of support⁴¹ from Church members. Some music ministers who find such policies unfavorable may decide to “drop from the workforce” (Interview with a music minister, February 2022). Leaving the music ministry does not dismiss religious authority, especially for those who continue in the choral and orchestral groups of the Church. In this case, it is important that music ministers and artistes

⁴¹ Some Church members and workers may decide or are instructed not to attend such events especially if the host [music minister] does not follow the “due process” of the Church (Interview, February 2023).

navigate the gatekeeping of music production and engagements since their careers should ideally, not be regimented by the Church.

In recent times, there seems to be a relaxed atmosphere for music ministers following the endorsement of the General Superintendent [GS] of the Church. A music minister and artiste in DCLM confirms that “the heat reduced [because the GS is] happy for the talents emerging in the ministry and [commends the music ministry] for keeping to [the] standards of the Church. The GS talked to me, encouraged me and prayed for me.” (Interview with Brown, February 2023).

Addressing the Turban and Pleat Monotony

Distinguishing factors of the music ministry of the DCLM include their repertoire, musical style and their dressing. The males wear conventional shirts, pants (trousers), ties and sometimes suits. On the other hand, females wear blouses, pleated skirts and turbans. From the inception of the Church, pleated skirts and turbans have been the usual attire of female choir members.



Figure 16: Typical Dressing Style of Female in the DLBC Music Ministry

The pleated skirts and turbans have been criticized for being unattractive and sometimes uncomfortable. Some members of the DCLM shy away from the workforce and the music ministry because of the prescribed style of dressing especially for females. Xphanti, a participant in Nairaland Forum, a social media platform argues that dressing is part of the reasons why youths run away from Deeper Life Bible Church.

“The men really do not have anything to lose. Men dress alike [conventional pants and shirts. Hence,] they can be fashionable and still blend into the Church. It’s the young girls I feel sorry for. They are not allowed to be fashionable. They have to cover their heads, arms, knees and every part of the body. Why are women not allowed to wear earrings and rings? I agree [that] as a Christian girl, lady or woman, one should look decent but I think these people take the dressing to the extreme. I know people will say they are not forced to do all these things. [But] imagine a [female] Deeper Life worker with her hair relaxed, not wearing the usual hat or scarf on her head and wearing stud earrings. I can bet that she would be asked not to work that day” (2006).

Over time, the dressing of the music ministry has evolved to accommodate the taste and preferences of members especially the youths. In the choral and orchestral groups of the DCLM, females especially youths and campus students are at liberty to use scarfs instead of the turbans. However, when there is a joint performance involving adults, the turban is mostly used.

In any case, one can still observe that the dressing of the music ministry has been modified. This adjustment does not nullify the standards and regulations of the Church. Rather, the leadership of the Church and members of the music ministry continue to be

flexible. Most music ministers in the DCLM now use the box pleated shirts instead of the plain pleated ones⁴² provided the length is acceptable. Also, the GCK has popularized the use of stylish turbans instead of the plain ones. Generally, the GCK choir uniforms are more appealing and appreciated. Also, “it was widely noted that [Pastor Kumuyi’s] improved sense of fashion (though previously impressive) was much more appealing due to the influence of Mummy Esther Kumuyi [his spouse]” (Olujobi 2022, 39).



Figure 17: Contemporary GCK Attire

⁴² The box pleated skirts are considered to be more fitting and fashionable whereas the plain pleated skirts usually add volume. It can be argued that box pleated skirts accentuate the shape of females and may be distracting to worshippers. On the other hand, should females be “shapeless” because of their membership in the music ministry? These different positions bring to fore the need for moderation. In addition, the box pleated skirts are usually sewn with thicker fabrics whereas the other is mostly sewn with chiffon fabrics that are usually lightweight and transparent. In this case, the box pleated skirts will better conform to the moral standards of the holiness Church.

Summary of Findings

The aim of this study was to delineate the historical trajectory of the DCLM as well as their music culture in Nigeria. Also, the research explored the continuity, change, and meaning in the worship music tradition of the DCLM. Furthermore, the survey examined the juncture of sound events and the social structures of the specified Church. Thus, exploring intersections of gender, ethnicity, and other identities in the musical practice of the DCLM. Importantly, this study not only constitutes an addition to knowledge. But it is also informed by a deliberate attempt to bridge an existing gap, since not so much has been written on the music of the DCLM.

The study was moderated by five research questions as follows: (a) What is the history of the music of the Deeper Christian Life Ministries? (b) What is the scope of the music of the Church? (c) What are the functionalities of the music in the Church? (d) How does the music portray the identity of the people in the Church? (e) How does the music relate to class, ethnicity and gender in the Church?

Findings reveal that the DCLM (also known as the Holiness Church) was founded by the acclaimed *Defender of the Faith*, Pst. Dr. William Folorunso Kumuyi. The Church started as a small Bible Study group in 1973 with fifteen young people at Kumuyi's residence and later metaphorsed into the DCLM in 1977. The DCLM consists of different arms including the Women Ministry, The Children for Christ Ministry, Teenagers and Youths Ministry, Campus Ministry, Life Press and Life Tapes as well as the Online Church. Till date, the DCLM has a phenomenal membership in Nigeria and other continents including America, Asia, Australia and Europe. Also, it is evident that the music traditions of the DCLM continue to evolve in response to new dictates and influences in culture, technology, international contacts (GCK), and other internal and external factors.

The music ministry of the DCLM comprises the Children Choir, Youth Choir, Adult Choir, and Young Professionals Choir. The musical style of each unit is unique but there are overarching similarities. Their repertoires are vast and dynamic and include genres like classical, country, spirituals, jazz and other contemporary styles. The music ministry of the DCLM features in all Church activities and programs. Hence, song selections are done to suit the contextual needs of events and the theme of the sermon. Criteria for joining the music ministry include the salvation experience and a basic knowledge on music. Music ministers are trained further and based on their level of musical proficiency; they can be admitted into the Central Choir. The dressing and general comportment of the Church are regulated by godly and moral standards.

Furthermore, findings reveal that the music ministry of the DCLM is highly functional. First, their songs encapsulate the doctrinal foundation of the Church, thereby contributing to the liturgical efficacy of the Church and education of Church members. Choir ministrations are usually in tandem with the theme of the sermon, thereby facilitating the reception of the message. Second, the music of the DCLM contributes to the growth of Church members, spiritually, morally, and numerically. Through their music, “a lot of people are beginning to turn away from vices” (pc, February 2023). Third, the music ministry of the DCLM is economically valuable to the Church and the society at large. The Church is currently enjoying the ingenuity of talented music ministers, some of which were discovered and harnessed by the Church. Agboola believes that the Church can “benefit from its own products instead of hiring guest artistes” (Interview, February 2023). Fourth, the music ministry of the DCLM functions as an agent of socialization and networking. The Global Crusade with Kumuyi (GCK) has been crucial in cross-cultural interactions between various musical groups and guest artistes around the globe.

More so, the music ministry of the DCLM functions as ambassadors of the Church and are committed to upholding the reputation of the Church both locally and internationally.

The DCLM is committed to meeting the needs of its multi-ethnic community. Hence, the adoption of its indigenization policy since May 1994. The music of the DCLM is targeted at portraying the culture and belief system of the people which are consistent with Christian tenets. Preaching and singing in indigenous languages is a norm in the DCLM. This is a practical approach to ensure that the sermon and music of the Church appeals to the taste and preference of people in each locality. The music ministry of the DLBC in Rivers State also projects their cultural identity by dressing in their indigenous attire.

The music ministry of the DCLM exists as a unified community. Also, their music and performances do not show or mark any social differences in the Church. The model of humility exemplified by the General Superintendent has become the standard of the Church. Hence, no leader or member of the music ministry is treated on the basis of perceived social or economic status. Nonetheless, the music ministry privileges members of the music ministry that are highly proficient and experienced.

My research reveals that DCLM is a male-dominated denomination which is also situated in a patriarchal society. Hence, gendering exists in the music ministry in terms of leadership and assignment of roles. Although, the gendered roles and divides have been blurred in recent times, the stereotypic frame still exists. Findings reveal that females contribute immensely to the music ministry. They mostly undertake administrative duties in addition to their musical roles. A good number of them are commended for their collaborative efforts in the publicity of the GCK. Also, females are increasingly reinventing the traditional norms of the music ministry. The Unique

Ladies Brass Band (ULBB) for example is the first of its kind in Rivers State. Their emergence debunks previously held myths and ideologies on gendered musical performances.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study supports extant works on the role of music in worship. Also, it indicates that music is a social structure which reflects and maintains the culture of the people, even within the Church. The music of the DCLM projects the convictions of the General Superintendents and the doctrines of the Church. It is also shaped by cultural tendencies that are consistent with the godly and moral standards of the Church.

Considering the importance of the music ministry in the DCLM, I recommend that music ministers be given all the support and opportunity they need to minister effectively. Moreover, membership in the music ministry should not be a hindrance to their career and creative endeavors outside the Church. It is ideal for music ministers to be fully informed of all the restrictions of the Church before they join. In this case, they will be fully aware of their commitment as music ministers and be placed in a better position to navigate their roles in the Church and the secular world.

This introductory study can serve as a springboard for further research on the music culture of the DCLM in other states in Nigeria and beyond. Future studies should examine the debate on remunerations for music ministers in Rivers State and other places. Gone are the days when Church workers were not adequately rewarded for their services. The need for periodic re-examination of the place of voluntary service in the Church cannot be overemphasized.

However, I do not subscribe to the “popular consoling slogan in Igbo language [that] *eluwegaakwuugwo* (heaven will pay)” (Onah and Agbo 2021, 3). In addition, more inquiry can be made into the recent mandate that the music ministry of the DCLM should revert to their routine repertoire and former style of singing.

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INTERVIEWS

Agboola, Segun (February 2023).

Brown, Martina Dawari (February 2023).

Chima, Nene (February 2023).

Delight, Chisom (March 2023).

Ihiekaonye, Theophilus (March 2023).

Michael, Patience and Ruth Godwin (February 2023).

Moses, Stella (February 2023).

Oputeh, Chidi (August 2022).

Uko, Robson Udeme (February 2023).

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Emeka, Henry, Amina Ephraim and Others (January 2023).

Solomon, Idum, Onyekachi Stephen, Femi David, and Sharon Onyintarila (November 2022).

VITA

IF-NOT-GOD MOSES

EDUCATION

May, 2023	M. M. (Ethnomusicology)	University of Mississippi
February, 2020	B. A. (Music Education)	University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

OTHERS

April 2023	Certificate of Youth Mental Health First Aid USA
December, 2014	Graded Theory of Music Certificate, Victoria College of Music and Drama, London.

AREA OF RESEARCH INTEREST

Music Education
Ethnomusicology

WORK AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Assistant

The University of Mississippi, Oxford (2021 - 2023)

- Graduate Teaching Assistant for Introduction to *World Music Culture* (MUS 104), *Introduction to Music* (MUS 103), and *Topics in Gender and Culture* (G ST 301).
- Assistant for Ole Miss African Drum and Dance Ensemble (OMADDE), Black History Month (BHM) concerts and other diversity related projects.
- Research assistant for short term ethnographic projects.

LEADERSHIP POSITION

- Music Director - Deeper Christian Life Ministries, Mississippi State

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- Community Leader for High School Credit Programs, University of Mississippi
- Secretary - The Redeemed Campus Fellowship, University of Mississippi

HONORS AND AWARDS

- 2023 College of Liberal Art Scholar Award (University of Mississippi)
- 2023 Outstanding Achievement in Ethnomusicology Award (University of Mississippi)
- 2022 Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi
- 2022 Cohort, artist-in-residence (Sarah Isom Centre for Women and Gender Studies)
- 2021 Scholarship and Graduate Assistantship (University of Mississippi)
- 2018 Florence O. Ajayi Department of Music Scholarship (University of Port Harcourt)

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL AND LEARNED ASSOCIATIONS

- 2022 to Date International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM)
- 2015 to Date Music Students' Association of Nigeria (MUSAN)

PRESENTATIONS

- Moses, I. 2023. "Negotiating the Intersectional Identities in the Music Culture of the Deeper Christian Life Ministries (DCLM) in Nigeria." *47th International Conference for Traditional Music (ICTM) World Conference*. University of Ghana, July 14, 2023.
- Moses, If-not-God. 2023. "Echoes of Reality: An Inquiry into Sex and Gender Issues in a Nigerian Milieu." Paper and Spoken Word Poetry presented at the 23rd Annual Isom Student Gender Conference. University of Mississippi, March 24, 2023.
- Moses, If-not-God. 2023. "Echoes of Reality: An Inquiry into Sex and Gender Issues in a Nigerian Milieu." Artistic Video Presentation at the Sarahfest: Artiste-in-Residence hosted by the Sarah Isom Centre for Women and Gender Studies, University of Mississippi.
- Moses, If-not-God. 2022. "Factors that Influence Band Membership in Snowden Elementary School." Department of Music, University of Mississippi. Unpublished.
- Moses, If-not-God. 2019. "The State of Music Education in Selected Nigerian Secondary Schools in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State." B. A. Thesis Defense, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. Unpublished.
- Moses, If-not-God. 2017. "The Learner, Teacher and Pedagogy: Towards Achieving an Effective African Music Education." Faculty Seminar; Department of Music, University of Port Harcourt.

CREATIVE/ MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS

- 2022 Spoken Word Poetry and Video titled “*Echoes of Reality*” based on sex and gender Issues in a Nigerian milieu.
- 2021 Co-composed and performed a hymn titled “*Extol*”
- 2018 Composed and performed an anthem for the Faculty of Law, University of Port Harcourt.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

TYPE OF TEACHING	CLASSES TAUGHT	LEVELS	INSTITUTION
General Classes	Mathematics, English Language, Fine Arts, Music, Computer Studies etc.	Grade 4 (2013 to 2015)	Obed International School, Port Harcourt.
Practical Classes	Rudiments of music. Training on violin, saxophone, piano and recorder.	Grade 5 to 8 (2015 - 2016)	Rubies Academy, Port Harcourt.
Theory and Practical Classes	Rudiments of music. Advanced theory of Music. Training on violin, piano and recorder.	Grade 3 to 8 and Music Instructors (2019 till date)	KaaCeeClef Music, Nigeria
Theory and Practical Classes	Rudiments of Music. Sight singing and playing. Performance guide. violin, piano, flute and voice lessons.	Choir and orchestra (2018 to 2021)	Excellentia Chorale, Choba.
Church Music Classes	Rudiments of Music. Hymnody (Performance Composition). Ensemble Management etc.	Young music ministers (2020 till date)	Online Forum
Practical Classes	Applied Music. Instrumental lessons on the violin, piano, saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, recorder and trombone.	Children and youth orchestra (2021)	Royal Priesthood Ensemble, Mgbuakara.
Special Education Internship	Music Therapy interventions. Music aided lessons for specific learning disabilities.	Specific learning Disability (SLD) ADHD	The Child Special School, Port Harcourt.

	Singing and playing classes. Childcare/ Caregiving	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Orthopedic Impairments Multiple Disability (2018-2019)	
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COMMUNITY SERVICES

- 2023 Black History Month Concert in honor of James Meredith – OMADDE Graduate Assistant, Dancer and Lead vocalist
- 2022 Lead vocalist, dancer at African Caribbean Students’ Association event, Oxford.
- 2021 OMADDE Spring and Fall Concerts - Graduate Assistant, Lead vocalist and Dancer

- 2019 Performed at the 15th National Conference of Music Educators in Nigeria (COMEN)

- 2019 Performed at the launching of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Secretariat, Uniport.

- 2018 Provided music and social services to Owhipa community, Choba.

- 2017 Performed at the Campus Music Festival, Lagos.

- 2016 Performed at the 50th Anniversary of Rivers State, Nigeria.

- 2015 Performed with the University of Port Harcourt Concert Chorus and Wind Band at the Music Campaign for Nigerian Universities.

- 2013 Performed at the Deeper Life Students’ Outreaches at Bonny, Degema and Bori Respectively.

REFEREES

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