

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS MUSICAL STYLE IN THE METHODIST CHURCH-GHANA (1835-PRESENT)

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ABSTRACT: *The paper defines the primary influences on the body of music used in the Methodist Church-Ghana currently. This definition traces the historical and musical developments of a number of musical styles that have become indigenous to the church. These styles include the vernacular translations of the Western hymns used by missionaries as early as 1835, the Ebibindwom (Akan Sacred lyrics), the body of music that allowed hand clapping and the use of traditional music instruments, as well as the highlife-influenced praise and worship songs. Other styles are the choir and singing band music, which have emerged from many sources. The writer draws his conclusions based on visits to various cathedrals and his own experience as a born and bred Methodist chorister. Inferences are drawn from the major influences on the music of the church and the developments that have culminated in the different musical styles that currently constitute the musical picture of the Ghanaian Methodist Church.*

KEYWORDS: Development, Indigenous, Musical Style, Methodist Church, Ghana, Ebibindwom (Akan Sacred Lyrics)

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the historical background of the establishment of the Methodist church – Ghana and the musical styles that have been employed in its worship services since its inception. It begins with the singing of Psalms and English Hymns, translation of English Hymns to vernacular, *Ebibindwom*. The other aspects of the indigenization, stemming from the efforts of

performing groups like the Singing Band, Choir, and the Praise and Worship Teams that emerged at different periods in the church's history are also examined. This is followed by a discussion of composers who contributed to the changing scenes of musical styles and the types of songs they brought to the church.

The Beginning of Ghana Methodism

Before the roots of Methodism are accounted for, an appraisal of earlier European and Church influences in Ghana will be helpful to offer coherence to the topic under discussion. In the 1880s Methodism came to Ghana, relatively late after Portuguese explorers and Catholic missionary orders preceded Protestant missionaries by at least two centuries, and Moravian and Anglican missionaries arrived in the eighteenth century, a hundred years before the arrival of the Methodist missionary.

Portuguese explorers first brought Christianity to Ghana in the latter part of the fifteenth century, establishing outposts in Shama in 1471 and in Elmina in 1482. On January 19, 1482, Diego D'Azambuja, a Portuguese Catholic sailor, met with the Fante King Kwamina Ansah (Carmansa) in Elmina and received permission to build a castle. D'Azambuja built a chapel inside the castle, naming it Sao Jorge (St. George), after the patron saint of Portugal. Because the Portuguese restricted themselves to their own people inside their enclaves, they had little missionary impact on the local populace (Sanneh, 2000, p.20).

A century later, in 1572, the Fante kings of Effutu, Komenda, and Abura, all currently located in the Southern part of Ghana, were converted to the Christian faith by the efforts of the Portuguese Augustinian missionaries. In the eighteenth century, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sponsored the commencement of pioneering missionary work in Ghana by sending Monrovia missionaries from Brandenburg, Germany and Anglican missionaries from England to Ghana. Jacobus Capitein and Philip Quaque were two of the well known people who were converted, trained, and ordained in Europe as ministers. Both were Anglican chaplains, but while Philip Quaque was a chaplain of the colonial forts for fifty years, Jacobus Capetien was part of the first Fante Bible translation team. However, as Adrian Hastings notes, "In missionary terms they were all failures gifted individuals, blossoming in Europe but tied in Africa to tiny white slaving community and only serving beyond it a rather nominally Christian fringe of mulattos in the shadow of a fort" (Hastings, 1994,p.178).

The present Methodist Church, Ghana (style) descended from the Wesleyan Mission in 1835, the year in which Andreas Riis moved from the coast to the healthy hill country of Akropong Akwapim. Joseph Dunwell of the Methodist Missionary Society in England arrived at Cape Coast as Methodist first missionary to start the mission's work in the western part of Ghana. However, it must be pointed out that it was through the efforts of a small group of African Christians, led by one William de Graft that brought the Rev. Dunwell to the country in an attempt to start Methodism in Cape Coast and other parts of Ghana. "By the early decades of the nineteenth century the work of the Protestant and the Catholic missions had begun to take hold. Consequently, when the seeds of Methodism were sowed in 1835, they did not fall on virgin soil.

Methodism came to Ghana and to Cape Coast where there were already professing Ghanaian Christians who. In fact, it was Ghanaian Christians who, in effect, invited Methodism to Ghana” (Essamuah, 2010, p.3).

The Music Style at the Start of the Church

Divine service or worship in the castles was the practice before Dunwell arrived in Cape Coast. Beetham (1967, p 42) records that “they adopted for their guidance the following rule that, as the word of God is the best rule a Christian ought to observe, it is herein avoided framing other rules to enforce good conduct.” From twelve to eighteen “educated” Africans attended public worship in the Cape Coast Castle each Sunday, and out of this group came the Bible Band or the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K) of Cape Coast. This band provided the foundation members of the Ghana Methodist Church. It should be noted that before systematic missionary work started after January 1, 1835, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, a mulatto, and others met on Sundays in the house of one of their members at a very early hour (Bartels, 1965, p. 8). “They sang *psalms* and read some of the prayers in the liturgy of the Church of England. Some scripture was read and explained in the Fante language.” They always concluded their service by singing another *psalm* and used another prayer from the liturgy.

In the eighteenth century, when Rev. John Wesley established the Methodist Church, his brother Charles supported him by writing hymns for their worship. “So gradually, Christianity and for that matter Methodism became a singing religion. In the eighteenth century, with the evangelical revival of John Wesley and the prolific hymn writing of his brother Charles Wesley, Methodism, was born in song.” (Wesley 1779, p.3) When the Methodist Church was “transplanted,” the hymn singing accompanied its ethos; therefore, in Ghana when the Church started and gained roots, hymn singing in English was the main musical style. The Church started without a choir. The entire congregation constituted a massed choir led by the school pupils who were taught hymns in school. As Sam states: “according to oral history, one Joe Smith was the first to start singing classes at Cape Coast Castle, he formed his pupils into a band of singers who led the singing in the church.” (Sam, 1986, p.13)

Indigenization of Musical Style

Since the early missionaries did not expect the African converts to live in a cultural vacuum, they substituted the music, dance, and other activities of their native culture which they had prohibited, with elements from Euro-American culture. Hymns or Christian music familiar to each sponsoring denomination or mission were planted into the new African/Ghanaian musical scene. The music, theological, philosophical, psychological, and social phenomena related to the Christian religion reached the indigenous people of the Gold Coast (Ghana) in a foreign language: English for those denominations originating from Britain, i.e., Anglican and Methodist missions, German from the Swiss and Bremen Presbyterians, and Latin, in the case of the Catholics. Much as the chief instrument of communication in the context of religion is language,

Oosthuizen observes: “Language is not a natural function of men, and speech varies from one to another specified group. Speech is not instinctive but an acquired ‘social’ function, and it is related to a universe of its own” (Oosthuizen, 1968, p.235).

As they had done to marry their aspects of the culture of the natives, the Westerners had also attached a stigma of primitiveness to the indigenous language. But all too soon the missionaries recognized that once the foreign language had been mastered, a proper understanding of the new teachings could be gained by the converts. Efforts therefore had to be made to introduce the vernacular if any meaningful impact was to be made on the natives.

The change of attitude towards the indigenous language of the Gold Coast by the Protestant missionaries had historical precedence in the high priority given the mother tongue in the reformation spearheaded by Martin Luther. Before the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century, many a parish priest could not even afford to own a Bible. For laymen, the lack of access to the scriptures was due not only to the prohibitive cost of hand-copied Bibles, but also by the churches’ refusal to allow the Bible to be translated into the European vernacular languages (Shepherd, 1952, p. 38).

With the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg, one of the cardinal objectives of the Reformation - a literate populace with the ability to read the Bible in their mother tongues - was achievable. Empowering the mass of believers to be active participants rather than spectators in worship was yet another principle upon which the Reformers encouraged the use of the vernacular. In the cradle of the Reformation, Germany, Luther made available both the Bible and the Hymn Book in the common language, German. Many age-old Latin songs were thus replaced with vernacular hymn versions set to German folk tunes (Hustard, 1981, p. 108).

Though the missionaries were unaware of the large number of indigenous languages, they were yet willing to spend enormous amounts of their time and resources to accomplish these tasks. Missionaries, as they came into contact with peoples, naturally chose to start with major language groups, and began the painstaking process of language study. In the Gold Coast, a study of the Ga and Twi languages, for example, began in 1835. The Ga language was translated by Johann Zimmerman, while J.G. Christaller not only brought into being the Twi Bible in 1871, but also collected and published 3,600 Twi proverbs in 1879 (Warnock, 1983, p. 87).

An aspect of Luther’s emphasis on a meaningful participation of the laity in the worship was the restoration of congregational singing. The solution found for the European situation was the replacement of Latin songs with vernacular hymn versions set to folk song melodies, or the creation of new music and hymns befitting the European church. Because African styles of music were considered inappropriate for church use, attaining a singing African congregation meant that the European hymn and songs introduced had to be translated into the vernacular.

The approach by which the missionaries created hymns for the African church was rather crude, to say the least. Once they had a working knowledge of the vernacular, they chose an European hymn, counted the number of syllables in each line and neglecting the rhymes at the end of the lines, wrote vernacular verses containing the same number of syllables and fitted them to the

tune associated with the given hymn (Jones, 1976, p.7). The outcome of such an endeavor was that when read, the vernacular translation made sense; the same text on the other hand often meant next to nothing when sung to the intended tune.

A large number of these same languages also relied on speech rhythms; the duration of syllables in the text affected meaning (Warnock, 1983, p. 69-70). As could be expected, a number of enthusiastic local composers nurtured on this type of Christian music, i.e., European hymns set to vernacular text fashioned new hymns on these models. Among such hymn writers were Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquah, Rev. Samuel B. Essamuah, Herbert B. Sam, Rev. Otto A. Boateng and A. B. Dickson. Examples of such vernacular hymns are found in the *Christian Asɔr Ndwom*, (the Fante version of the Methodist Hymn Book, which was adopted in the Methodist Church) (Essandoh, 1998).

The lack of emotional appeal of these hymns to the Ghanaian Christians notwithstanding, such hymns continue to be the mainstay of the musical component of the services of the orthodox or European-established churches such as the Methodist. Having accepted the language and to place indigenes in some key position in the church, it did not take long for voices both European and African to be raised for local devolution as a part of missionary policy. Christianity had become synonymous with European culture, but reformers such as James “Holy” Johnson of Sierra Leone and Mojola Agbebi of Nigeria were agitating for a truly African church. Agbebi’s philosophy of the ideal African is summed up by Ayandele thus:

The church should be a symbol and an expression of the African personality acquiring characteristics of the African environment without sacrificing the eternal principles of the Christian faith... those parts of the African cultural heritage that were not incompatible with the essential of Christianity should be preserved (Ayandele, 1971, p. 12).

Other trappings of Western civilization that had been carried into the church, such as the use of prayer books, hymns, and the organ or choir robe dedications, pew construction, surpliced choir, Christian names, European dress. Agbebi saw as “crutches affecting the religious manhood of the Christian African” (African Church, 1910, p. 91).

The two agitators, Johnson and Agbebi, were definitely not the only Africans advocating the indigenization of the church, since this wave was also being felt in Ghana, then the Gold Coast around the same time. Further indigenization came about in two ways. There was the introduction of more African elements into the orthodox churches, especially the emergence of new musical forms, and the onset of separatism or the founding churches outside of the missionary jurisdiction.

Emergence of Ebibindwom

Since the coming of Christianity to Ghana, people have shown interest in the use of traditional songs for worship. This is because these songs are more familiar to the people and easier to sing. The church that pioneered the incorporation of indigenous music in church worship in Ghana

was the Methodist church. Since the early days of the Methodist church, attempts have been made to find a solution to the problem in African musical type which has come to be described variously as Akan Sacred Lyrics/Fante Lyrics or *Ebibindwom* or (African Songs) (Agordoh, 2010, p. 34).

The first authentically indigenous musical style to emerge in the course of the evolution of Ghanaian church music was the *Ebibindwom* (Akan sacred lyrics). This took place in the Methodist church. Though several factors have contributed to the development of new musical types including *Ebibindwom*, the lyric really owes its development principally to European evangelism in Ghana. Turkson states that “the lyric as a musical type was developed during the office of Rev. Thomas B. Freeman, by non-literate, mostly adult female members of the Methodist Church in Cape Coast in 1838. Freeman realized that the non-literate members of the church did not participate in singing of the English hymns. He therefore encouraged members to sing biblical texts to traditional tunes” (Turkson, 1975, p.4). Atta Annan Mensah states that “the use of *Ebibindwom* in Christian worship originated during the ministry of Thomas Birch Freeman” (Mensah, 1960, p.183). The *Ebibindwom* is an indigenous musical form that the Methodists have bequeathed to the Christian traditions in Ghana. It is a well known fact that singing and dancing play an important role in African life. These two activities mark both joyful and sorrowful times. If the church and the Christian faith are to encompass all in life, then it cannot fail but engage these two activities in its worship and liturgy. “In Ghana Methodist church life, the role of singing and dancing is evident in the emphasis on *Ebibindwom* (Akan sacred Lyrics). In fact, it can be said that the singing of *Ebibindwom* is Ghana Methodist Church’s most definitive characteristic as a popular movement.” (Essamuah, 2010, p. 133) This initiation and indigenization of the musical practices in the Methodist Church was an effort in the right direction.

The *Ebibindwom* genre is similar to African-American gospel music in that there is significant audience participation, repetition of song verses, and constant improvisation during the performance in the pattern of its calls and responses. Kwesi Dickson emphasizes that the cantor must not only be familiar with the biblical passage being preached on but must also be

Theologically aware so as to fit that spontaneous music piece in the whole counsel of God... The language is concrete and expresses the thought of God who cares for the person in all life’s situations both spiritual and physical; he saves not only from sin but also from dangers of childbirth (Dickson, 1984, p. 109).

Williamson observes, “A competent singer can fasten upon an aspect of Christian truth or experience which is immediately relevant [to the preacher’s words]... and express and expound this in the recitative with great skill. The congregation, apparently with equal facility, joins in the required chorus” (Williamson, 1958, p. 126) *Ebibindwom* is a musical type in which those who found Western music inadequate for expressing their religious emotions could find solace” (Agordoh, 2010, p. 35).

Formation of the Singing Band and Indigenization of the Methodist Hymn Book

The roots of the Methodist Singing Band can be traced to the Temperance Society formed by one R. J. Gharthey of Anomabo during the tenure of office of Rev. William West, who succeeded Rev. Freeman as Chairman of the Gold Coast District. R. J. Gharthey was a prominent leader of the Church at Anomabo and accompanied Rev. West to Kumasi, in April 1862, to persuade King Kweku Dua of Ashanti to allow Methodist Church agents to preach to his subjects to become members of the Church if they wished.

The Rev. Jacob B. Anaman, who had a strong belief in the wisdom of translating portions of the Bible into Fante, thought that it would be better to give the Gospel to the people in their own vernacular. He wasted no time in translating the English Hymns into Fante. Then Rev. Terry Coppin also brought in the idea that a Sunday school should be made as interesting as possible in order to attract the young to serve as a nursery of the Church.

Many women, grandmothers and mothers, started attending the Sunday school where most of them learned how to read and write the vernacular. Invariably, a Singing Band grew out of the Sunday school and this group not only led the singing in the vernacular in the Church, but also accompanied preachers on their visits to surrounding villages.

The Band thrived on a collection of hymns translated from English into Fante by Rev. J. B. Anaman and published in 1893 under the title *Nkwagye Ho Ndwom* (Hymns about Salvation). With these Hymns and through the Model Singing Band, which Rev. Anaman himself organized in 1889 at Cape Coast, the Sunday schools harnessed the Ghanaian's love of singing and thereby brought the Ghana Methodist Church in step with World Methodism, which is known to have been born in songs.

Rev. J. B. Anaman translated into the Fante language nearly three-quarters of the songs and solos in Ira. D. Sankey's book, "The Choral Praise, White Robes, Heart and Voice", in addition to songs he himself wrote and sang. Sunday school songs heard almost daily from the lips of girls, whether in factories or when selling in the market and on streets, or when going on a journey, showed the extent of the influence of the Sunday school in the community.

It will be of great interest for members of the Church to know that the music listed below are some of the songs translated and taught by Rev. Anaman: "Lend A Hand" (Sankey No. 764), "Wait And Murmur Not" (Sankey No. 710), "When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder" (Sankey No. 783), "Precious Blood Of My Saviour" (White Robes), "Wonderful Words Of Life" (Sankey No. 357), "That Old Story Is True" (Sankey No. 856), "All To Jesus I Surrender" (Sankey No. 601), "Count Your Blessings" (Sankey No. 745), "Behold Me Standing At The Door" (Sankey No. 378), "Yes For Me" (Sankey No. 664), "The City Of Jasper Wall, Happy Day" (Heart and Voice).

As the Singing Band grew and spread to almost all societies in the country, they found it imperative to constitute an association. The Union of Methodist Singing Bands was born. All

activities including the usual singing role were streamlined to help the church indigenize her way of singing. Several meetings and music workshops were held to formalize their way of singing.

Currently in the churches' liturgy, it is the responsibility of the Singing Band to sing for the collection of offertory. Varied compositions by composers in the Singing Band with danceable rhythms have been written specifically for such purposes. The translated tunes from the Sankey have also been accompanied with musical instruments, both local and Western, to aid in indigenizing the singing in the church. During the period of collection of offertory, members of congregation dance their hearts out and feel worship in the Methodist church is presented as if it originated from their village. Some of the songs composed by singing Band Masters which have been incorporated into the service are: *How ntow ay[yi* (Sing Praise) and *D[w soronko* (Exceptional Love) by Kingsford Yaw Mensah, *Y[nam ko ba nyina* (In all our Endeavours) by J.W. Sey, *Hom nsunsuan hom komam' na nny[hom ntar* (Tear your Hearts and Not Your Garments) by Kweku Adjei. *Anuonyam nka Nyankopon* (Praise be to the Lord) and *Enny[obi na mehw[no* (I Don't Rely on Any One) by Oppong Kyei, *Menyew' nam munnsuro hwee* (I am Fearless When I Walk with You) by George Osei Tutu *Sanka wi ma me* (Restrain the Sun for Me) by Fiifi Salvo, *Ka kyer[Jesus* (Tell Jesus) and *Ye dwiri nea }bonsam ahyehy[no* (We Destroy the Plans of the Devil) by Pet Sackey.

The Efforts of the Church Choir

It is not recorded when the Methodist church choir was established but is believed that the first choirmaster was Joe Smith, earlier mentioned, who started singing classes at the Cape Coast castle.

In similar fashion as the Singing Band, the choirs that had sprung up in most churches in Ghana, championed by J.H. Mills Robertson, created an association in 1972 and named it The Association of Methodist Church Choirs-Ghana. Among the Association's numerous relevant objectives was to help improve the standards of music and singing amongst member choirs; the choirs consented to meet periodically to streamline their techniques so as to sing in uniformity throughout the nation. The church choir is proud to be led by very good organists/choirmasters who taught high standards of music to the choir.

The Methodist Church, apart from pioneering the acceptance of traditional music, *Ebibindwom* in Christian churches in Ghana, also produced many church musicians. In fact, the best organists in Ghana today can be found in the Methodist Church. Methodist Church choirs perform high standard church music. The Winneba Youth Choir, which has its roots in the Methodist Church for sometime was the best performing choral group in the country. Many of the earlier musicians in the church wrote many hymns, though in the Western style. These include the addition to Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquaaah and Rev. J. E. Allotey Pappoe, A. E Amankwaah, Kwesi Baiden, W. Bessa Simons, the E. C Bilsons, the Blanksons, A. Entsuah Mensah, G.

Koomson, E. V. Kwofie, I.D. Riverson, S. M. H. B Yarney, and many others.
(Agordoh, 2010, p. 45).

New tunes for songs on the churches' liturgy were indigenized, and music workshops and clinics were organized to direct how these indigenized songs could be sung in the same way. Some of the songs composed by E.C Bilson Jr. were The Lord's Prayer, Précis and Responses, and the Apostles' Creed. Other rigid Western tunes for benediction were all replaced with locally composed songs. George Mensah Essilfie's *Shalom* (Peace) was adopted for use during the benediction. Many of the composers wrote to satisfy other singing styles in the church (Agordoh, 2010). Ghan Blankson published 24 of his compositions in the Robertsville Hymnal in 1949. Some of these hymns are alternative tunes to the Methodist hymns, but have been indigenized. Joshua Amuah in 2002 compiled songs for Christmas, compositions suitable for rendition during Christmas festivities from various composers in the country. Agordoh adds to this:

The National Music Directorate of the Association of Methodist Church Choirs (GHAMECC) in 2008 produced a book, Methodist Praise I, which is a collection of supplementary tunes to the Methodist Hymn Book, under the leadership of Yaw Sekyi Baidoo and Joshua A. Amuah. The association has over the years produced some fine church music composers, choirmasters and organists among whom are; Henry. K Prah, Ebenezer. H. Eshun, Kweku Acquaaah Harrison, Yaw Sekyi Baidoo, Joshua A. Amuah, Kras Arthur, Godwin Adjei, Tsemafo Arthur, Willis K.M. Ampiauw, Myles Abaidoo and Comfort Akosa" (Agordoh, 2010, p. 44).

Besides this collection of supplementary tunes to the Methodist Hymn Book, new danceable hymn tunes intended to make church services lively have been composed. Some of these songs are "Hark My Soul It Is The Lord" (MHB 432), and "Take My Life And Let It Be" (MHB 400) both composed by E.C Bilson Jr. Relatively younger composers, Kras Arthur, Tsemafo Arthur, Kweku Gyapong, and Kow Arthur have also composed original danceable tunes for the use of the church. In this repertoire of songs are *Nyame ye Jsahen* (God is a Warrior King), by Kras Arthur, Tsemafo Arthur's *Idzin A Jye nwanwa*, (That Wonderful Name), Samuel K. Gyapong's *Menya ngyirama apem m'atow ndwom* (O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing

Western anthems for all events on the Christian calendar were substituted with indigenized ones written by these same composers, for example, Charles Graves' and J. O Bedu Addo's *Hosanna* for Palm Sunday, Kras Arthur's *Egya Faky[H]n* (Father Forgive Them) for Good Friday, *Jhen Papa Christ Etu N'ahenky[w ato h]* (The Good King Christ, Has Relinquished His Throne) for Easter Sunday, Tachie Menson's "O Come Let Us Adore Him", Mensah Essilfie's *Jawo Jhen* (The King is born), Tsemafo Arthur's *Woana Na Nguanhw[fon'* (Who are the Shepherds Looking For) and many others such as *Afrenhyiapa* (Happy New Year) meant for Christmas and New Year celebrations.

“The Dead March in Saul” by G.F. Handel played by the organist as the last item on a burial service programme has been provided with Fante text by Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquaaah and had been sung by the choir. Other anthems in the local languages like “Heaven” by G.R.A. Butler, *Ahenky[wn]* (The Crown) by Bright Amankwaah, and Samuel Kweku Gyapong’s *ɔman papa bi* (The Best City) replaced the classical anthems which did not offer understanding to or appreciation by the members of the congregation, all in a bid to indigenize the musical style in the Methodist church.

The Use of Musical Instruments and the Praise and Worship Team

Between 1979 and 1984 the late Most Reverend Samuel Benyarko Essamuah, an accomplished musician was the President of Conference, Methodist Church, Ghana. Prior to assuming the office he had had an extensive interest in the development of *Ebibindwom*. In fact, he had organized conferences to promote and train the singers. During the early years of his presidency, he conducted healing “crusades” throughout the nation. These crusades were very much appreciated. As part of the training, he encouraged the introduction and use of traditional musical instruments such as the *tomtom* (conga), *mfrikyiwa* (castanet) and *dondo* (hour glass drum) in *Ebibindwom* performances. When the realization came that members of mainline churches (Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists) were drifting to the Pentecostal and the Charismatic churches because of the use of local choruses or Pentecostal songs in the churches, as if there were a policy or directive for the adoption of the use of these instruments in the entire service, most societies realizing that the head was open to such additions, joined the “train.”

Local hymns or Ghanaian Spirituals variously described as “shouts,” “African Hymns,” or “local choruses” started with the African independent and old Pentecostal churches. These songs of mostly anonymous authorship were adopted by these churches as their liturgical music. This stemmed from the fact that most of the converts at the onset of these churches were illiterate or semi-literate and definitely found the performance of this type of music more comfortable than Western translated hymns (Agordoh, 2010).

The youth in the church has been responsible for the use of instruments to accompany these songs. This has further developed into what we call “Praise and Worship Team,” which has been responsible for the performance of “African Hymns” or “local choruses” with the aim of reinforcing retention of membership in the church. Prior to the rise of Pentecostals and the Charismatic, the independent (sometimes known as African initiated) churches, such as the MDCC, Aladura, and the Twelve Apostles church were the main attractions for the members of mainline churches. The Praise and Worship Team performs songs derived from the Pentecostal, Charismatic, and the African initiated church as well as gospel songs composed by popular/gospel musicians. Items from their repertoire include *Onyame s[ɔ] Ayeyi*, (God Deserves Praise), *ɔdasanyi* (Mankind), and *Da N’ase* (Offer Thanks To Him).

CONTRIBUTION OF COMPOSERS

The younger generation composers of the church have contributed immensely in indigenizing the musical style. Starting from the use of *Ebibindwom* and the translation of the Methodist Hymn Book and Sacred Solos of Sankey to Fante, setting of the Lord's prayer, Précis And Response, as well as the Apostles Creed to music using Fante text, rewriting hymn tunes to danceable ones, and composing original danceable tunes, composition of anthems for various events on the church calendar for the use of church choir and the Singing Band, these younger composers have resorted to rearranging from existing hymn tunes and popular/gospel tunes, a practice they term "remix." With this arrangement, the composers create musical works exhibiting an **A: B: C** form. From their section **A**, they precede the original tune with their own creation; a re-harmonization of the existing tune using conventional harmonic principles constitutes the section **B**, while a descant part for the original melody becomes the section **C**. There are varied forms of this format, but the entire remix centers on the structure explained above. Examples of these songs are: *Aseda y[Onyame Ne Dea* (All Gratitude Belongs To The Lord) an existing Pentecostal song arranged by Joshua Amuah Ayeyi Wura (The Lord Of Praise) an existing Pentecostal song arranged by James Armaah, *Gye Me Taa Taa* (Lead Me On) a popular gospel song by Stella Dugan arranged by Newlove Annan, *When I remember*, another gospel song arranged by Ohene Adu Nti, *Ad[n nti?* (For what Reason), a Pentecostal song arranged by George Mensah Essilfie, and *Momma yenyina yenyi Nyame ay[* (Let's All Jointly Praise The Lord), a Pentecostal song arranged by Kwame Nkrumah.

CONCLUSION

By deliberately engaging issues of worship and church polity, the Methodist Church - Ghana entered a process of contextualization that has marked it significantly as a Ghanaian church. Methodist Church - Ghana's attempts at intentional contextualization utilizing Methodist theology, Ghanaian identity, and Akan culture have had a far-reaching impact on Ghanaian Christianity beyond the boundaries of the denomination (Essamuah, 2010).

The Methodist Church has continued its beliefs by inspiring the use of a number of Ghanaian musical elements. From the use of a translated version of the Methodist Hymn Book, the *Christian As]r Ndwom*, the process of indigenization progressed into the use of traditional musical tunes for which biblical texts were substituted, resulting in the emergence of the *Ebibindwom*, which was owned, participated in, and became very much appreciated by the congregation.

The main singing groups in the church, namely the Singing Band and the Church Choir, contributed their quota to this process with the formation of associations with one of their main objectives being the formalization of their way of singing and the introduction of a number of indigenous hymns and other songs into the liturgy.

The role of composers in the church, in their effort at remodeling existing tunes as well as composing original tunes cannot go unacknowledged; they have offered a positive contribution towards achieving an indigenous singing practice in the church.

The Praise and Worship Teams, which emerged initially to bring a halt to the membership of the church drifting to the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, have also contributed their portion, to a large extent by blending the singing behaviours of the orthodox, Pentecostal and the Charismatic denominations by their performance of Pentecostal/Charismatic songs and the use of all kinds of musical instruments.

The introduction of *Ebibindwom* was a step forward to encourage the adult illiterate to participate in the singing in the church. The efforts of the Singing Band and the Choir were to present the church as a local church and to enforce the retention of membership in the church. The complement from the Praise and Worship Team was a further underpinning to retain membership in the church and present livelier singing and dancing.

These developments have contributed to the enhancement and presentation of the musical practices of the Methodist Church - Ghana as a true and well-defined Ghanaian church.

This paper has brought to bare, how indigenous musical styles have metamorphosed in the Christian setting, specifically in the Methodist church, Ghana, commencing from the Western hymns till the current highlife styles with the church choir and the Singing Band as well as the recent emergence of the Praise and Worship Teams that continue to perpetuate a real African style of singing in the church. Readers of this paper and Methodists in Ghana in general may continue to think of several ways of introducing varied ways and styles of incorporating other indigenous singing styles in the church' worship system that will that will attract members to the church, and sustaining the interest of worshippers as well.

Simply put, this paper has basically demarcated the inspirations on the body of music used in the Methodist Church-Ghana currently. This delineation traced the historical and musical developments of a number of musical styles that have become indigenous to the church.

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