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Editorial

There is always an anxious expectation that precedes every new edition of a journal both on the part of the editor and board members on the one hand and on the part of the authors, on the other. This edition is not exempted from this general emotion. But the joy of actually seeing the Journal in print is overwhelming. It is with this sentiment that I present this particular edition of Abuja Journal of Philosophy and Religions. As would be expected, this edition is rich with a variety of exciting and yet challenging articles that will arouse your academic interest. So I invite you to read on.

Joshua Bagudu Boyi in Historical and Sociological Perspectives of the Church's ministry to the Poor: A Challenge to the Church in the 21st Century Africa, acknowledges that the Church's ministry to the poor is rooted in the teaching of the Scriptures, both New and the Old Testaments. This ministry was epitomized in the life and teaching of Jesus, who is a model to the early church, the missionaries and the Church of 21st century in Africa. In Between the Honey and the Poison": An Assessment of Sacred Sites in the Post Independent Nigeria, Akiti Glory Alamu assesses the Sacred Sites of African Traditional Religion before and after independence. He notes with disappointment that the advents of Christianity and Islam and most of all, Globalization have not only robbed the Sacred Sites of the reference of their former years, but also many Sacred Sites have witnessed total destruction. He notes with dismay, the loss of the spiritual, economic, social and environmental benefits of the Sacred Sites. It is on these grounds that he describes the Sacred Sites as Honey and the modern adventures as Poison. Nigerian Gospel Musicians are very creative. Their creativity is not merely for economic purposes. The songs are spiritually uplifting, socially refreshing, but above all, they are a rich repertoire of messages for peace. Adeola Taiye Shola and Adeola Kehinde Adebayo take up this in Creative Imagination and the Quest for Peace: Reflections on Nigerian Gospel Music Song Texts. It makes a good reading. Musa Adeyemi Olaofe ex-rays the thoughts of Abdelwahab Elmessiri on modernity in An Appraisal of

Creative Imagination and the Quest for Peace: Reflections on Nigerian Gospel Music Song Texts

By Adeola, Taiye Shola

Performing Arts Department, University of Ilorin.

Email: taiyeadeola@gmail.com Tel. 08034299352

and

Adeola Kehinde Adedayo

Department of Philosophy and Religions,

University of Abuja, P.M.B 117, Abuja, FCT

Abstract: The Nigerian gospel music presents an array of creative imaginations, some of which are directed towards the clamor for peace. Creativity being a product of imagination is given expression in the designs produced by the artist, song writer, composer, poet, playwright, and so on. The thought process is further reflected in the designs exhibited in choice of words, rhyme of words, balance of phrases, patterns of melody, use of harmony, blend of instruments, style of performance and many more. Adopting the cultural hermeneutical, musicological and discographical approaches, this paper examines the music of some Nigerian gospel musicians, analyzing them to bring out patterns of creativity in song texts; issues about their quest for peace and the principles underpinning their compositions. It is also discovered that lack of peace is not only considered in terms of outbreak of war or crisis in a community, state or nation, but also in relation to individual's well being physically, spiritually and in relation to the nation's economic, political and religious wellness. It is further discovered that gospel musicians in the context of their existence have evolved certain terminologies for peace or lack of it in Nigerian national life. It is the conclusion of this paper that the Nigerian gospel music is socially

relevant and it is a veritable tool for the attainment of the peace being clamored for through creative imagination. It has also helped to create the agenda for the perceived social reconstruction which the grassroots hope for.

Key words: creativity; gospel music; peace

Introduction.

The music scene in Nigeria is permeated by both secular and religious musical types. Current trends as evident in music performance and patronage in Nigeria reveal that religious music has become a force to reckon with. The popularity of various forms of religious music in Nigeria grows by the day. The religious affinity of individual musicians is reflected in their performance as references are made at one point or the other to their religion in form of prayer at the beginning of their renditions, expression of religious belief, admonition, invocation, and so on. Even secular musicians infuse religious themes into their songs as much as they can for religious appeal of their listeners either as Christians, Muslims or African traditional religion practitioners.

Gospel music is one of such musical types that has developed over the years in Nigeria and have become popular engaging various themes and discussing contemporary issues as they find relevance from time to time. Matthews Ojo (1998 210-231) observed that there is a continuous adaptation of Gospel music to the changing circumstances of the performers and the audience within a historical milieu.

This paper examines how the Nigerian gospel musicians through creative imagination inherent in their musical compositions give expression to the general quest for peace in the society and in individual's life. Creativity being a product of imagination is displayed in the gospel musician's use of words, style of performance, treatment of themes, melodic designs, and lots more while the quest for peace is entrenched in the content of the song texts. A careful analysis of these song texts reveals that the gospel musicians like other Nigerian citizens do clamor for peace and their desire for it is evident in their treatment of themes about peace or lack of it in their songs.

Gospel Music: A definition.

Gospel music is defined as a new type of church music brought about by the move of religious fanaticism which has resulted in the proliferation of Christian churches in Nigerian society (Ademola Adegbite 1994 83-94). Like other forms of Christian music, the creation, performance, significance, and even the definition of gospel music vary according to culture and social context. The definition of gospel music is greatly influenced by the culture in which it is being performed and the context in which it developed in that society. Gospel music as perceived in Africa may therefore not be exactly the same in North America even though there may be some points of convergence especially in the common term "gospel" portraying the spreading of the Christian message of good news. For example, Costen (2004), Spencer (1990) and Halter (1995) in their writings as Americans perceived and defined gospel music as a genre that emanated from the clandestine slave religious environment of Africans enslaved in America and later became a part of liturgy in black churches expressing hope and preaching good news in the hopelessness that the blacks were confronted with.

Jon Michael Spencer citing Louis-Charles Harvey, Wyatt Walkers and Irene Jackson writes:

Black music is called gospel because it attempts to relate the good news of Jesus Christ primarily to the existence of black folk in this country. For blacks who encountered oppression and desolation upon migrating to Southern and Northern cities following reconstruction. This jubilant music has been a song of faith which rallies the hope and aspiration of the faithful in the face of devastating social conditions. Gospel songs deal with the immediate problems affecting Blacks and are specifically designed to help Black people to surmount immediate circumstances of their lives (Spencer 1990 199).

Writing as a Nigerian, Adedeji (2004) submitted that gospel music may be defined from an African perspective as a type of Christian music that preaches the "good news" of Jesus Christ made popular by public performances, the electronic media, such as radio, television, the recording world and the Internet. Gospel music is dualistic in nature; on the one hand, it is a Christian religious form, on the other hand, it is a part of urban popular culture. In the words of Costen Black, gospel songs from their inception

deliberately combined the sacred with the secular. Therefore, it would be expected that the black gospel would find a home in and outside of the liturgical space of black folks.

Gospel music is defined differently by various groups ranging from the musicians themselves, the audience or patrons and the scholars with emphasis on various aspects of it. These definitions can be summarized as gospel music defined in terms of its origin; gospel music defined in terms of its content and its function. Gospel music defined in terms of its origin is given more by people who are not practitioners but analysts and scholars. These definitions focus on the separation of the liturgical music in the strict church setting to Christian religious music that is used for entertainment. Therefore the emphasis of definitions of gospel music in this category is on the music being taken outside of the church to meet social needs of members of the church. Definitions of gospel music by Americans will also come under this category.

The definition in terms of content comes more from the musicians who do not by any means want to be regarded as entertainers in spite of the social and entertainment dimension that the Nigerian gospel music today has taken. The gospel musicians refer to themselves as ministers, evangelists, preachers, and so on and not just ordinary singers. This is in defense of the message that their music carry and their desire not to be compared with secular musicians. Evangelist Bola Are in one of her interviews in the Nigerian Tribune on the 24th of May, 2008 says "the gospel there is Jesus Christ and when you are out of the gospel, you are out of Jesus. If you are singing and Jesus is not there, then you are not singing". The definitions in this category usually rise in defense of the gospel of Christ and the stand or relationship of the musicians to the Christ that is being preached in the music; hence, emphasis is placed on the content of the music as preaching Christ and the musicians as ministers of Christ.

The definitions in the third category are premised upon the function of the music, which in the author's view are usually given by the recipients or patrons of the gospel music. According to Femi Adedeji, the Nigerian public sees gospel music as many things in terms of its functional roles. To some, it is an entertainment; to many, it is a devotional music while to others it is just like any other music (Adedeji 2008).

The definition of gospel music by Matthews Ojo as a distinct kind of music composed and rendered by men and women who call themselves Christians, and who refer to their music as "ministration of the good news in songs" is also relevant. He identifies similarity between Nigerian gospel music and Afro-American gospel music in its audience participation, in the repetitiveness of its song verses, in constant improvisation during performance, in the pattern of its calls and responses, and so on (Ojo 1998 210-231).

Gospel music in this paper refers to the Christian branch of religious music employed for the purpose of propagating the gospel of Christ to non-Christians and edifying the believers through its performance in both strict religious context in the church and social/entertainment context outside the church which has been made popular by the electronic media, technology and its performance.

In Nigeria, gospel music has grown to become a popular genre employed for both religious and entertainment purposes. An examination of the content of the music as performed by these gospel musicians also reveal the treatment of various themes, ranging from theological, social, to cultural, economic and political. The treatment of the various issues by different gospel musicians is also determined by a number of factors, such as the prevailing political, economic and social situation in the country as well as the personal experiences of the musicians. Gospel musicians in Nigeria play dual roles as spiritual awakeners and social commentators the same way that gospel music have become both religious and popular musical type in Nigeria.

The quest for peace is a feature of the thematic materials in the content of gospel music in Nigeria and this is treated as spiritual, social, economic and political issues. Reference is made to the social, political and economic disorders in the Nigerian society as threat to peace or lack of it and it is symbolically described as sickness or illness. The quest for peace is therefore expressed in the desire and call for putting in place of systems and structures to remedy the disorders so identified which are considered as processes of healing.

The religious belief of the gospel musicians which is rooted in the *Bible* is usually situated in the context of their cultural and social practices. One of the chief characteristics of African music is its association with social and

ritual ceremonies (Akpabot 1986 1). The social and ritual ceremonies of a group of people are reflectors of the cultural beliefs and traditions of such people. A strong aspect of such ceremonies is the type of music that is used which usually serves the purpose of heightening the meaning and importance of such ceremonies (Adeola 1999 69). The quest for peace by the gospel musicians is colored with religious texts appealing to the religious conscience of the listener.

The Nigerian Gospel Musician and Creativity.

The Nigerian gospel artists exhibit creativity in a number of ways as evident in their compositions as they employ melody, song text and in their performance styles. Composing a song is in itself creative imagination and various devices employed in the development of the compositions are arts of creativity. Composition is a process of creating that culminates into a finished work that can be interpreted by others either on paper or through recordings. The composer like an architect must plan the music with the same care as when a building is being designed. The composition must have shape, proportion, direction, balance, and an overall design that is conceivable. That the Nigerian gospel musicians are creative is evident in the fact that one can talk about forms, styles and structure in Nigerian gospel music. Four types of musical forms identified by Tunji Vidal as common to Yoruba songs are evident in Nigerian gospel songs. These are the call and response form, the strophic form, strophic responsorial and through composed form (Tunji Vidal 2004 2-17).

Excerpts from some Gospel Songs that illustrates these forms:

Call and Response form.

	'Iwolope ye' Yoruba'	Translation
<i>Solo</i>	Ìwo lopé ye	<i>You are worthy of thanksgiving</i>
<i>All</i>	Ìwo, Ìwo, Ìwo	<i>You are x3</i>
<i>Solo</i>	Ìwo niyín ye	<i>You are worthy of praise</i>
<i>All</i>	Ìwo, Ìwo, Ìwo	<i>You are x3</i>
<i>Solo</i>	Ìwo lopé ye o	<i>You are worthy of thanksgiving</i>
<i>All</i>	Iwo iwo iwo	<i>You are x3</i>
<i>Solo</i>	Ìwo lópé ye	<i>You are worthy of thanksgiving</i>
<i>All</i>	Iwo ni o	<i>It is you</i>

Solo	Olórun ayò	<i>God of joy</i>
All	Iwo lópé ye	<i>You are worthy of praise</i>
Solo	Kò mà sóba bíi re	<i>There is no king like you</i>
All	Rárá, rárá, rárá	<i>No! No! No</i>
Solo	Kò mà sóba bíi re	<i>There is no king like you</i>
All	Rárá, rárá, rárá	<i>No! No! No</i>
Solo	Kò mà sóba bíi re	<i>There is no king like you</i>
All	Láyé yìi	<i>Here on earth</i>
Solo	Olórun ayò	<i>God of joy</i>
All	Ìwo lopé ye	<i>You are worthy of thanksgiving</i>

Call and response form in gospel music presents a number of possibilities, such as the solo singer taking a line to which the chorus responds with either exact textual anmelodic phrase or exact text with a different melody or a different text with exact melody. There is also the possibility of the response by the chorus being a different text and a different melody from the call by the solo singer. In the above song, the response by the chorus carries a different text but same response to different calls by the solo singer.

Strophic form

Ará E Dìde E Bámi Jó ²

Ará e dide e bá mi jó
Èniyàn mi e bá mi yò
Olúwa mi ló gbé mi ga

Solo: Nínú ewu gbogbo ó pa mí mó
Nínú ewu gbogbo, ó mú mi yè
Kí ló tún ye mí bí kò se opé?
Opé ni tèmí lójó gbogbo

Ó wá fire gbogbo dá mi lólá
Ó tún fohun gbogbo tó tún ga jù
Kí ló tún ye mí bí kò se opé?

Opé ni tèmí lójó gbogbo
Ó tún fomo rere dá mi lólá
Ó tún fohun rere tó tún ga jù

Kí ló tún ye mí bí kò se opé?
Opé iyin ni folúwa wa
Ó fé gbogbo wa dójú ikú

Translation

*People rise up and dance with me
My brethren rejoice with me
It is my God that has promoted me*

*He kept me from all dangers
He saved me from all dangers
What else can I do but to give thanks?
Mine is thanksgiving every day*

*He blessed me with every good things
He also gives great blessings
What else can I do but to give thanks?*

*Mine is thanksgiving every day
He blessed me with good children
He also gives great blessings*

*What else can I do but to give thanks?
Mine is thanksgiving every day
He loved all of us to the point of death*

Ó mú gbogbo wa délé ayò
Kí ló tún ye wá bí kòse opé?
Opé iyin ni f'ólúwa wa

*He brought all of us to the house of joy
What else can we do but to give thanks?
Thanksgiving and praises to our God*

In the above song, the same melody with little or no variation is used for all of the stanzas, although the texts are different.

Strophic responsorial form

Jésù O Seun Tó O Fomo Rere Dé Wa Ládé ³

lèsù o se é tó o fomo rere dé wa ládé

I kún, òsé padà léyin wa e bá wa dupe

Awon àgàn tó ní wómo o bàbá dá won lóhùn

Ió kí wón ríre gbà baba, dákún dá won lólá

Awá fé Olúwa Olódùmarè

Nitorí o gbó ohùn èbè wa látòrun

O lún wa lómo ayò Jésù àwá dúpé

I wà bá wa yò lónií o tomotomo

Awon tó ní wojú olúwa e fokàn balè

Itaba onilé ayò á fi rere bá yín gbé

Olódùmarè á ségun òtá, e tújú ká

Aiá, má mikàn rárá o ire ti dé

I ti wón mojú olúwa won yó sì wúlò

Translation

*Thank you Jesus for blessing us
with a good child*

*Crying and easing is no longer
ours, join us to give thanks*

*answer the barren that are
looking for children*

*let them receive favor father
please bless them*

*We love the Lord the owner of
the universe*

*because he hearkened to our cry
from heaven*

*he gave us a child that brings joy,
we give thanks*

*come and rejoice with us with
your children*

*Those looking up to God, don't be
troubled*

*Father (God) whose house is full
of joy will do you good*

*the owner of the universe will
overcome the enemy so be
cheerful*

*Brethren do not doubt, good has
come*

*let your children know the Lord
and they will do well*

E fi èkó Jèsù sáyà won láti èwe won

Ayé á rorùn láti èwe dojó ogbó

E jé ká tójú omo wa ará e gbó

Èyin ará té e bá wa pé o té e wa bá wa yò

E fomo yín lé Jèsù oba olúwa lówó

A múnú won dùn a sì tún fún won lógbón

Ire yó bá yín délé o takotabo

*instill the teaching of Christ in
their heart from infancy*

*life will be easy from childhood to
old age*

*let us take care of our children,
people listen*

*people who gather to rejoice with
us*

*we commit your children to Jesus
Christ the Lord*

*he will make them glad and give
them wisdom*

*Good will follow you home male
and female*

The strophic responsorial form is similar to the strophic form except for the response that is given by the chorus after each stanza. The response is the same throughout for all the stanzas.

Through composed form

Ìdáríjì Kò Sí Lórùn⁴

Ìdáríjì kò sí lórùn o ará

Jòwó gba jèsù kí ó tó fayé sílè

Bíkú bá mú o lo o, àtúnse kò ní sí mó

dákun dákun o, kò mà sí lorun

Ó pé tí a ti ní figbàlà yíi hàn ó o

Wipe ki o gba Jesu ki o ma ba segbe

Amo bi o ba ko ti o ko ronun piwada

Bíkú bá mú o lo o, àtúnse kò ní sí mó

dákun dákun o, kò mà sí lorun

Translation

There is no forgiveness in heaven

*Please accept Jesus before
departing this world*

*When death takes you there will be
no remedy*

There will be no begging in heaven

*we have talked to you about
salvation for so long*

*that you should accept Jesus so you
will not perish*

But if you refuse to repent

*when death takes you there will be
no remedy*

There will be no begging in heaven

Ó ti tákòókò láti sàtúnse

Ba Olórùn làjà ó ti tákòókò

Oro èsè ló ní pa ni o ará mi

Òun ló ní ti ni sórun ègbé

Oró ese ló ní pani o ará mi

Tètè wá gba Jèsù tó le gbà ó

Torí ikú lè dé lójíjì

Kíwo má báa sègbé bóo bá dórun

Ó pé tí a ti ní figbàlà yíi hàn ó o

Akéwì ní so tirè, Olórùn kò dáké

Awon alóre pèlú ní sèwón tí wón lè se

Amó bí o bá kò tí o kò ronú piwàdà

Bíkú bá mú o lo o, àtúnse kò ní sí mó

dákun dákun o, kò mà sí lorun

A ti fi hàn ó o iwo omo èniyàn

ohun tó dára

Ó wá kù sówó re

Íl'íwo kò bá gba Jèsù lólùgbàlà

Òrè, ó wá kù sówó re

Ó wá kù sówó re

Íl'íwo kò bá ronú piwàdà

Òrè, ó wá kù sówó re

Òpín gbogbo òrò nàà tí a gbó ni pé

It is time to mend your way

reconcile with God, it is time

The sting of sin kills my brethren

it sends people to destruction

The sting of sin kills my brethren

*Quickly come and accept Jesus who
can save you*

because death can come suddenly

*so that you will not perish when
you get to heaven*

*We have talked to you about
salvation for long*

*Poets tell you and singers have not
kept quiet*

the watchmen have tried their best

But if you refuse to repent

*when death takes you there will be
no remedy*

*There will be no begging in heaven
it has been shown unto you son of
man*

what is good

It is left to you,

*if you refuse to accept Jesus as
saviour*

friend, it is left to you

It is left to you,

if you refuse to repent

friend, it is left to you

*the end of all you have heard is
that you*

Bèrù olúwa o kí o pa òfin rè mó *fear the Lord and keep his commandments*
 Kí o baà lè jogún iyè àinípèkun *so that you will inherit eternal life*

This form which is a common feature in gospel music sets different music to different texts from the beginning of a song to the end with occasional repetition of some lines, verses or without repetition at all. The issues addressed in terms of content may also vary as the song progresses from the beginning to the end.

Styles of performance

The performance styles employed by the gospel musicians vary from one artist to another as each carves out individual identities for themselves in terms of performance. However, one can draw a conclusion that gospel music in Nigeria is generally characterized by the following creative styles.

Use of words

Words are used in Nigerian gospel songs for various reasons especially to convey the message to the listener. Words are used for special effects to heighten the power of the impact of the message that the song carry and to set patterns of performance for the artist. Words are also selected for aesthetic purposes to create beauty in terms of rhyme, repetition, and balance of ideas. The use of words by musicians gives them identity. Gospel artists in Nigeria, like late Bayo Adegboyega, Niyi Adedokun, Bola Are and Tope Alabi, just to mention a few have come to be known and identified with their choice and use of words in their compositions. While both late Bayo Adegboyega and Niyi Adedokun are popular for their use of satire in their compositions and can be confrontational, Bola Are is persuasive in her use of words to present her message. An examination of Tope Alabi's songs reveals the use of very philosophical words that reflects in-depth reasoning. Her use of Yoruba language in her song texts often does not have just surface meanings but thought provoking statements that demonstrate her ability to play with words showing her creativity.

The use of words and the creativity of the Nigerian gospel artists are seen in the titles given to albums and songs. For example, Niyi Adedokun titled

some of his albums "Mr Awaiye ma lo" (One who thinks he will not die), "Church wa nmemu" (Our Church drinks palm wine), while Tope Alabi have titles like "Awa alarojinle la m'ope wa" (We who can think deeply come to give thanks), "Angeli mi" (My angel); titles like "Ilu le koko" (The country is hard) and "B'aye ba nyeni" (When things are good with one) by late Bayo Adegboyega and Adedokun respectively are other examples.

Use of Mono Language

The use of mono language which involves the use of a specific language for a song is a feature. The language which is often one of the local languages especially the 3 dominant languages in Nigeria, namely, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are usually used. Some factors that determine the choice of language include the languages spoken by the musician, the target audience and the desire to convey the meaning of the songs to people of other tongues. The use of English language or Pidgin English is also a feature.

Use of Dual/Multiple Languages

The use of dual or multiple languages is also a feature of the performance in Nigerian gospel music that reflects creativity. A blend of 2 or more languages in a single song or different languages for different songs in the same recording is a common practice in Nigerian gospel music. It is common to find the same phrase or lines sang in different languages to convey the meaning to various possible listeners.

Use of popular styles and cross-religious culture

An examination of the performance of gospel music in Nigeria also reveals the use of popular or secular styles, like highlife, reggae, fuji, waka, senwele, and so on. Some musical types regarded as either having some religious influence in their origin or have come to be associated with adherents of some religious faiths are used. Popular musical genres, like Dadakuada, Senwele, Fuji, Balu, Waka are known to be performed by Muslims, for example, the origin of Fuji can be traced back to "were" a popular Moslem festival music (Ajirire & Alabi, 1992, pp.65-72), but the trends in recent times in the gospel music scene is that Christians began to have their own versions of these music types and name them accordingly, such as "Senwele Jesu",

"Gospel Fuji", "Gospel Waka" and others. For example, Rachel Olubukola Akinade popularly called "Senwele Jesu" is known for her style of presenting gospel songs, using the popular "Waka" style. Other artists in this category of cross-religious currents in music are Dekunle Fuji who has "Fuji" as an acronym to his name because he sings gospel Fuji. The midnight crew and Infinity bands also employed the use Fuji style in their albums.

Use of Instruments

The employment of musical instruments in Nigerian gospel music displays ability to create and generate musical ideas through the blend of purely African traditional musical instruments with western instruments. The employed instruments can be a reflection of the ethnic affiliation of the musician, the genre of the music, or the desired effect on the audience. The musicians make use of a blend of instrumental ensembles common in their immediate environment. For example, the use of Yoruba dundun ensemble with bata and agogo is a feature. These are also blended in some cases with some western instruments, like drum set, trumpet, saxophone, keyboard and guitar.

The Nigerian Gospel Musician and the Quest for Peace

The quest of the Nigerian gospel musician for peace is evident in the treatment of themes about peace in their songs and this is done directly or indirectly as it is implied in their use of words, description of situations, use of symbols, satires, and so on. Issues of social concern feature prominently in the Nigerian gospel music. The musicians, being members of the society, express their views and run commentaries on happenings in the society and as such one is able to have insights into the prevailing situations in the society. Peter Martins puts it more succinctly when he wrote that music is a social product, social resources and social practice. As such, it is not autonomous, but it is created and performed by real people in particular times and places. In doing so, they reveal much about themselves and their societies. He further states that the form and character of music somehow reflect or echo the nature of the society in which it is produced. (Peter Martins 1995 14)

Social concerns expressed in Nigerian gospel music address various societal issues, such as the effect of the economic situation on the citizens; moral decadence in the society, lack of basic amenities, like water, light, good roads and shelter, religious crisis and political instability. The society is said to be suffering from illnesses when things are not going on well and this is indicative of the absence of the desired peace for which gospel musicians raise prayers in their songs. Some examples of songs in this category include "Ilu le koko" (Bayo, 1987) (the country is hard), "Oro aiye nfe adura" (Bayo, 1987) (the situation in the world requires prayers), "Ranti Nigeria si rere Oluwa" (Bayo, 1987) (God, remember Nigeria for good) and "Agbara atunse nbe lowo olorun" (Bayo, 1987) (the power of restoration is in God's hand) by late Bayo Adegboyega and Evangist Adelakun's "Amona tete mabo" (Joseph & his Ayewa International Singers, 1984) (Come quickly, the one that knows the way)

Commentaries on Economic and Political Situations

Economic hardship is essentially what makes gospel musicians to compose songs with economic themes. The songs usually reflect the sufferings of the masses under a repressed economy. Prayer for God to turn around the economy of the nation, prayer for financial blessings or individuals and a call to the leaders to do what they can to turn around the situation forms the content of the songs with economic themes. Economic hardship is regarded as a form of illness in its description by the gospel musicians in their songs and this is believed to lead to other forms of illnesses, such as physical illness because people fall sick when they are unable to eat good food and take proper care of themselves. It ultimately leads to death, because in a repressed economy the government is unable to provide adequate health facilities and even when such facilities are provided, people are unable to afford the much money required for the treatment of their illnesses.

Songs with economic themes by the gospel musicians come in form of prayer for divine intervention to turn around the economic situation of the nation, call to leaders to create jobs, and encouragement for citizens to hope in God who is able to change the situation for the better. A good example is Bayo Adegboyega's song titled "Airina, airilo oluwa je ko dopin", meaning God let poverty come to an end. Excerpts of the song are given below:

Àìríná, Àìrílò Olúwa Jé Kó Dópín⁵

Chorus: Ipá èsù gbobo kó dópín x 2

Àìríná, àìrílò tó wà nígboro

Àìrise, àìrije tó gbayé kan

Èmí òkùnkùn tí ń gbéra ga níwájú ìmólè

isé èsù ni, a fé kó dópín

Látojó òní lo

Ipá èsù gbogbo kò dópín

Nílè gbogbo wa

Ipá èsù bogbo kó dópín

Àìríná, àìrílò tó wà nígboro

Àìrise, àìrije tó gbayé kan

Èmí òkùnkùn tí ń gbéra ga níwájú ìmólè

Isé Èsù ni, a fé kó dópín

Repeat Chorus

Gbogbo agbára láyé àtòrun ń be lówó Jèsù

Kí Jèsù yára wá o, bá wa tayé se

Ilè tó ń sànn fún wàrà àti fún oyin ni Nàìjíríà

Sùgbón àwon jegúdújerá

won ti so'le yi dahoro

Ilè tó ń sànn fún wàrà àti fún oyin ni Nàìjíríà

Sùgbón àwon jegúdújerá

Translation

*All of Satan's power should cease
poverty, lack that is prevalent in
the town*

*joblessness, hunger that has
overtaken the world*

*the spirit of darkness that brags
before the light*

*it is the work of the Satan, we
want it to cease*

As from today

*all Satan's power should cease
In our homes*

*all Satan's power should cease
poverty, lack that is prevalent in
the town*

*joblessness, hunger that has
overtaken the world*

*the spirit of darkness that brags
before the light*

*it is the work of the Satan, we
want it to Cease*

*all power on earth and in heaven
is in the hand of Jesus*

*Let Jesus come quickly and
restore the world*

*Nigeria is a country flowing with
milk and honey*

but the destroyers

*have made the rich house to be
desolate*

*Nigeria is a country flowing with
milk and honey*

but the destroyers

won ti solé olá dahoro

Bóba ayé kò mú won,

Won ò lè bó lówó oba òrun

Orí aláisè tó ń jiyà lówólówó á dá won léjò

Kí gbogbo Nàìjíríà, ká tera mósé àgbè

Ní àsikò yíí tí owó epo ń se ségesège

Kí joba Nàìjíríà kó mú ìwúrí bá isé àgbè o

Ká gbóhun ti wa láruge,

Kagbé'sé owó láruge

Ká yéé fojú tembélú, tembélú,

I ní tó lè fogbón orí sisé

Sùgbón tí kò níwèé èrí dání

Bí òfin ilè yíí tí wí, ká jo fàyè gba ara wa

I àti sèsìn tó bá pé wa o

Olórí tí yòò fòtító inú

Àtìbèrùn Olórun sàkóso wa

Ni k'Olórun máa fún wa

Níwòn bí òòrùn ati òsùpa yóo ti pé tó ará mi

Nàìjíríà yó máa gbèrú sí i ní nínú ohun tó dára.

Repeat chorus

*have made the rich house to be
desolate*

*If the earthly king does not catch
them*

*they cannot escape the king of
heaven*

*the head of the sinless who is
suffering will Judge them*

*Let all Nigerians work hard in
farming*

*This time that crude oil price is
unstable*

*Nigerian government should
encourage farming*

*we should patronize our own
thing*

*we should encourage
craftsmanship*

*we should stop looking down
on those who have skill*

but do not have certificates

*according to our constitution we
should allow*

*ourselves to practice the religion
we like*

*a leader who will administer with
truth*

and the fear of God

*is who God should always give to
us*

*my people for as long as the sun
and moon shall last*

Nigeria will excel in good things

Nigerian gospel musicians serve as the mouth of the citizens and the conscience of the society during political eras. Political songs are presented in the forms of satires, commentaries and outright expressions of the minds of the citizens. A peculiarity is the declaration by some of the musicians that God has given them the message they are proclaiming to the nation through their music. Gospel musicians, like evangelist Niyi Adedokun and Evangelist Ojo Ade are known for their use of satire in passing their messages across to the people while musicians like late Bayo Adegboyega and pastor Adelakun stand out in the use of commentaries and expression of the citizen's mind presented in form of appeal, complain, warning or criticism. Ojo (1998) opines that most of Adedokun's records have been satires or criticisms of the socio-economic and political milieu. Adedokun who became popular in 1988 with his release titled *Mr Awaye malo* (the man who imagines that he will not die), which was targeted at the corruption in the police force in Nigeria has remained popular on the Nigerian gospel music scene with his style of storytelling in a manner that his audience can relate the characters in his story to the Nigerian situation. Pastor Adelakun's song "B'aye ba yeni" (When life is good for one) is a good example of gospel song in this category. In this song, Adelakun (2007) emphasizes the transience of power and authority with particular reference to the political situation of Nigeria. He challenges the holders of political office to be careful of what they do and how they do it when they are in power, because a time will come when they will no longer be in power. With the use of figurative expressions, Yoruba proverbs, images and biblical examples, Adelakun warns the politicians against sycophants and political opportunists and to be careful of extravagant living because "no one knows tomorrow". He also challenges all citizens to work very hard to make Nigeria a great country. Some excerpts from the song are given below:

Báyé Bá Yeni

Solo Báyé bá ye ni ká rora jayé

Òní lá rí, kò sédàá tó mòlǎ

Tó bá rí dara tó rí dùn yùngbà

E jé ká máa wèyìn wò

Alágbára òní, ó tún lè dì aláilágbára

Translation

when life is good for one, care must be taken

we only see today, no one knows tomorrow

when things are good and rosy

let us always look back

the powerful today may lose the power

All—Repeat

Solo—Oba tó joyè tilùú fì dàrú o

Ó dá mi lójú, orúko rẹ̀ ò ní paré

Èyí tó wá gori oyè tilùú fì tòrò

Ó dá mi lójú, orúko rẹ̀ ò ní paré

Ìpòkípò tí a wà, olúwa má jé n siwà hù

È mí Jùdàsì má jé kó wonú m

Mo ní báyé bá rí ye ni o, ká rora jayé

Òní lá rí, kò sédàá tó mòlǎ

Ìó bá rí dara tó rí dùn yùngbà

È jé ká máa wèyìn wò

òní, ó tún lè dì aláilágbára

Repeat chorus

È jé ká rántí Nebukadinésàrí nínú ìwé mímó

Oba rí-lá ló jé, oba alágbára ni

Ò dori oye tan o gberaga s'oluwa

Ò deni ile, o b'eranko gbenu igbo

Ìèsúrúmi nínú ìwé mímó

Ò jẹun yó tán, ó gbàgbé olúwa

Ò gbàgbé ibi tó ti bèrè, ó gbàgbé àtíjò

Ò deni òlá tán ó ní kò séni tó rí bí òun

Ìpòrere tí mo bá wà olúwa má jé n siwà hù

È mí Jùdàsì má jé kó wonu mi

the king that reigns and brings instability in the town

I am sure his name will not be forgotten the one that is enthroned and brings peace

I am sure his name will not be forgotten Whatever position I am in, God help me not to misbehave

do not let the spirit of Judas enter into me

I say when life is good for one, care must be taken

we see today, no one knows tomorrow

when things are good and rosy

let us always look back

the powerful today may lose the power

let us remember Nebuchadnezzar in the holy book

he was a big king, a powerful king

when he came to power he was proud to God

he was abased, he lived in the bush with animals

Jesurum in the holy book

when he became satisfied, he forgot God

he forgot where he started from, he forgot the past

he became a big person, he said there was none like him

in the good position that I am, God let me not misbehave

the spirit of Judas, let it not enter into me

Call for Peace and Unity

Calls for peace and unity in the country constitute the content of the Nigerian gospel music. The unfortunate occurrences of religious and ethnic crisis in the country are usually addressed in the songs as the musicians appeal for understanding and living together in unity. The infighting among churches and the tendency to condemn one another on the basis of doctrinal and denominational differences, power tussle and other divisive tendencies among the Christians also form part of issues addressed in gospel songs as they call for peace.

It is observed that the Nigerian gospel musicians call for justice, fairness, good governance and provision of basic amenities for the citizens as necessary conditions for peace in the nation. Hence, there are calls to the leadership to do what is right and prayers to God for divine intervention. Excerpts from late Evangelist Bola Are's song are cited below to illustrate this point.

Nàìjíríà Padà Wálé⁶

Nàìjíríà padà wálé o ojú ní lo
Nàìjíríà padà wálé o baba re ní retí re...

Mèkúnnù ní ké lójoojúmó
Pé olúwa gbèsan mi
Ara ní terú-tomo gbogbo
Olówo ló wá ní je ráisì,
Mèkúnnù kò lè reran lójà

Essential commoditie
Kò kan mèkúnnù mó o baba
Olówó ló ní Kólé ní Nàìjíríà,

Olowo lo nra moto ni Nigeria,
Nílè baba wa, ìgbà wo la ó serú dà?

Kólúwa gbà wá lówó àwon ajunilo

Translation

Nigeria return home, time is going
Nigeria, return home your father is
expecting you

the poor are crying everyday
that God should avenge for them
the bond and free are uncomfortable
it is the rich that eats rice
the poor cannot buy meat in the
market

essential commodities
do not get to the poor any more
It is the rich that build houses in
Nigeria

The rich buy cars in Nigeria
In our father's land, for how long shall
we be slaves?
may God save us from those who are
bigger than us

Tí ní fowó olá gbá ní lójú

Kí mèkúnnù rí bá tí se é ní Nàìjíríà
Ká rónà gbé e gbà ní Nàìjíríà
Igbe wa rè é o baba, gbó Olú-òrun

È yin ijoba wa, e sàtúnse

Torí oba tó je tí ilú tóká

A kò ní gbàgbé orúko rè
Bé è ni oba tó je tí ilú tòrò

Orúko rè kò ní paré títí
Ì po tí tán, kò sisé nígboro

Omo yunifásití ní wa takísí
Kò sówó, kò sóúnje,
Gbogbo rè le koko bí ojú eja
Ìgbà yíí le tún wá gbógun èsìn kalè

Ì rántí pógun èsìn kíí parí bòrò

Ì kíyè sára, e má dà Nàìjíríà rú o
Sùgbón eni a bá pàgbon lórí rè

Kò ní bá won je níbè...
È yin onígba gbó, e kíyè sára
Ì òmò sòkan títí dójú ikú
Ì mí ní Póólù, tèmì ní Àpóllò
Kò mà ye yín rará lásìkò yíí o
Ì para pò ké e fímò sòkan
Kò kè pé Jésù Olórúko-ní-lá

who oppress and maltreat us with their
position
let the poor make head way in Nigeria
Let us make it through in Nigeria
This is our cry father, hear us king of
heaven
Oh you leaders in government make
amends
because the king that reigns and the
town is scattered
we shall not forget his name
and the king that gets to power and
brings peace
his name will not be wiped out forever
Crude oil is exhausted; there are no jobs
in town
University students drive taxi
there's no money, there's no food
everything is hard as the eyes of a fish
and it is this time you started religious
war
remember that religious war does not
end quickly
be careful do not destabilize Nigeria
but the one on whose head the coconut
is broken
will not eat in it
You Christians be watchful
Be united even to the point of death
I belong to Paul, mine is Apollo
is not fit for you at this time
come together and be united
let us call on Jesus the one with a mighty
name

Kí Nàìjíríà má se le dójú ogun

Anglican, Methodist,
Cèlé, C.A.C. ìkan ni wón
Séráfù, Baptist,
Redeem, àti bé è bé è lo
Òkan náà ni Jésù wa,
Jésù nikan lolùgbàlà
Kò lè yí padà títi ayé
E gbàdùrà fún Nàìjíríà
Àwon tó fé e yóò se rere

so that Nigeria will not become a
battleground

Anglican, Methodist,
Celestial, C.A.C we are one
Seraph, Baptist,
Redeem and so on
Jesus is one,
He alone is the saviour
He cannot change for ever
Pray for Nigeria,
those who love her will prosper

From the above song, the quest for peace is evident in the musician's call and prayer for prosperity of the country, unity among the Christians and warning against religious crisis. As at 1986 when the song was released, Nigeria was going through economic recession. It was a time when natural resources failed to sustain its economy. In Nigeria, this song is likened to the biblical "prodigal son" recorded in the *Bible* in Luke chapter 15, verses 11-32; who got his inheritance from his father and spent it lavishly in riotous living and this rendered him destitute to a point of serving as a slave in another man's farm. The song writers' call can be summarized in the words of Ijiomah, when he said there is an inner voice speaking to humanity of this age as it has been in every succeeding age, something is fundamentally wrong with mankind. Man, the crown of God's creation, needs to rethink, retract his steps, and take careful inventory of his whole life—how he has fared living in the world created by God without the creator - God! (Ijiomah, 2005 50-56).

Conclusion. Attempt has been made from the foregoing discussion to reflect on the song texts of some Nigerian gospel songs to bring out their patterns of creativity as well as their quest for peace evident in their musical compositions. It is observed that Nigerian gospel musicians are creative in their use of forms, words and performance styles and the use of musical instruments. The quest for peace is clearly evident in their treatment of themes, directly addressing peace or related issues that have implications for the presence or absence of peace.

The gospel musicians' perception of peace or the lack of it is considered in

relation to individual and national wellbeing as it relates to all spheres of life. When the political, economic, religious and physical human wellness is threatened, peace is said to be lacking. Terminologies have therefore been evolved by these gospel musicians to describe peace or lack of it in the national life.

The Nigerian gospel music as a creative and imaginative enterprise is socially relevant and it is a veritable tool for the attainment of the desired peace, not only in the national life but also in individual citizen's lives. The social reconstruction which is clamored for especially by the grass root is equally being pursued through the creativity of the Nigerian gospel musicians.

Notes

¹ Interview with Bola Are by Gbenga Olumide in *Saturday Tribune* of May 24, 2008. Evangelist Bola Are is a frontline gospel singer and current national president of Gospel Musicians Association of Nigeria (GOMAN)

² Dupe Olulana in her album "Jesu mbo" Lagos, Hosannah Records. HR 001. 1986

³ Dupe Olulana "Jesu mbo" 1986

⁴ Sola Rotimi and the Triple 'S' "Idariji kosi l'orun, Lagos: Ibukun Orisun Iye Records. NRLP 021. 1985

⁵ Bayo Adegboyega "Airina Airilo Oluwa je ko Dopin" in *Oro Aiye n'fe Adura* SAACO/LP/001 1986

⁶ Evangelist Bola Are, 1986. *Nigeria Pada wa'le. Nigeria Pada wa'le* (Lagos: Polygram Records, OJLP 22).

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An Appraisal of Abdelwahab Elmessiri's Views on Modernity

By Musa Adeyemi Olaofe, PhD

Department of Philosophy & Religions,
Faculty of Arts, University of Abuja, P. M. B. 117,
FCT, Abuja. email: olaofemusa@yahoo.com

Abstract: As the West becomes the reference point in virtually all facets of human endeavours, enslaving all and sundry with its ideology, rendering objective thinkers impotent in their thinking, distracting religious scholars from their primary assignment, luring everyone to board the vessel of modernity and sailing towards destructive direction in an unprecedented speed. The contemporary Muslim intellectuals tried their best to awaken the Muslim Ummah to square up with the challenge and save humanity from the looming dangers. Professor Abdel Wahab Elmessiri one of the prolific writers and thinkers in the Muslim world added his contribution to the call of reawakening of Ijtihad efforts to suit the contemporary challenges, so that Muslims will not go out of the realm of Islam in search of answers to the challenges posed by modernity. This paper examines the views and understanding of Professor Elmessiri on modernity. It starts by brief introduction and short biography of the man in question, Elmessiri, after which it looks at the concept of modernity as explained by different Western scholars, followed by Elmessiri's definition of the subject matter. It also elucidates on the response of the Muslim intellectuals to the phenomenon, the lapses of modernity and the way forward.

Keywords: Elmessiri, Modernity, Post-Modernity, Islam.

Introduction

As the wave of another flux in human existence rampages every nook and cranny of the universe, forcing scholars of different inclinations out of their