

The Position of Nigerian Gospel Music in Hospice and Palliative Care

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to enumerate on Hospice which is usually a small residential institution or home where terminally ill patients are kept. The treatments involved are focused on the patients' well-being and situation management rather than a cure which includes drugs and other relevant means of pain management, where spiritual counselling is highly valued in the management procedure. It also examines the position of Nigerian Gospel music in the management procedure, and the role it plays in the relief of the pains of the critically diseased patients, most especially, terminal cases. Using discography methods and other pain reliving approaches such as chiropractic, laughter and massaging methods of pain managements, it finds out that preparing the patients for a glorious end is very possible through anointed and spiritual songs which can give them the hope of life after death even before their final exit. It rests on celestialism and transformative theories which are from the approaches and concepts of church music. This paper concludes that the rich values found in Nigerian Gospel music are functional and are helpful, like other methods in giving hope to the patients and a joyous end before the final departure.

Keywords: *Hospice, Palliative, Patient, Disease, Gospel, Celestial, Transformative, Ecclesiastical*

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Background to the Study

Nigerian Gospel music is one of the popular music genres in Nigeria that can be performed at social functions of various Christian gatherings, that is, for people that are Christians from the various Churches and not just for any social gathering as does with other Popular music styles. Although the various examples of popular music styles can serve some closely related purposes but with a clear difference in their performances. Also, Gospel music can be sung in the Church during anniversaries, harvest, thanksgiving and several other special programmes in the Church, and their practitioners can also perform outside the Church at different engagements and social functions. It is not the same for popular music. Adedeji (2001) among several definitions that have been in existence; which are sometimes controversial, contradicting or confusing; defined Gospel Music as either as a Christian music that primarily aims at preaching the 'good news' of Jesus Christ; or simply as 'gospel message' sung and played on musical instruments. However, Adegbite (1994:18) from his own point of view had earlier said that gospel music is the new type of Church music, mostly found in church's public domain.

Nigerian Gospel music hence can be a limb of the popular music style and also an offshoot of the Church music because it has an element of the Nigerian popular music in its approach to social gatherings in the performance ethics, dance styles, fusions of the different styles of popular music in the genre such as Gospel Highlife, Gospel Juju, Gospel Fuji and so on. It is yet a gospel music because of the gospel message or the gospel news of Jesus Christ that are evident in the texts or lyrics which primarily are void of vulgar languages that can be found in other several popular music styles.

Nevertheless, palliative care in its own case is an aspect of Nursing, that deals with life threatening cases of ailments, according to Merriman (2010). It also provides relief from symptoms and stress of a serious illness, regardless of prognosis or stage; it supports patients with chronic conditions such as cancer, heart failure, neurodegenerative diseases among others. it requires the services of religious professional Nurses, like Christians or Muslims, to work on the emotions of the patient and to make him have a relief off his or her pains which, is most times, are temporal. Palliative care Nurses are preferably Christians that are deep in the faith of Christ and possess the biblical standard of living, and also a practising professional Nurse. It is also the same on the Muslim counterpart. The professional Nurse must also be an Islamic faithful who believes in prophet Mohammed (SAW) and his qur'anic teachings. These Nurses play a crucial role in managing symptoms, offering emotional and spiritual support, and guiding both patients and their families through difficult decisions. They gave necessary treatments and basically counsel to the patients, whom oftentimes are on seclusion, a pain alleviation procedure and thereby preparing them systematically for death and also for the life after death according to their individual faiths. Celestialism theory and transformative musicology shall be used in the course of this work to establish the position of the Nigerian Gospel music in the Hospice and palliative nursing home care.

Celestialism Theory

Vidal (2013) propounded and defined Celestialism Theory as music performed by celestial beings in praising and worshiping of the supreme God. Hence, Celestialism also seems to

assume that despite the secularization of various human stages, celestial music will round-off this world and play its significant role in the different phases of God's kingdom after the end of this world. In this part of cosmology, gospel music, being an arm of Church music, is expected to reflect the divine or cosmological truth about the world around us. It also may be a realm in which church's worship leader transposes to, after a while when worship songs are being rendered during the praises and worship sessions in the church service. A special aura that takes place in such avenue when the spirit of God takes over, further buttress the issue on celestialism.

Transformative Musicology

This theory, according to Adedeji (2010) advances that Music could be used as a vehicle of transformative processes needed towards sanitizing the society. Hence, 'Transformative Theory', according to Adedeji (2014), is a theory in sacred music which has, as its focus, a spiritual change that would draw man to God with the effective use of music, or using music as a medium to achieve the unification. Thus, he analyzed in the theory that positive spiritual transformation should be the end result of all the functions of everything that is delivered or propounded from the Church. Gospel music being an arm of Church music is expected to be part of the wheel of transformation.

Adedeji's ideology about this theory has a lot to do with the texts of the various compositions either of 'art music' or other contemporary songs. Different challenges bothering on economical issues, global problems, societal menaces, epidemics, wars, health challenges among others, can be combated through the weapon of music that is transforming to curtail and condemn bad habits, crime, bad governance, oppression and terrorism, and also healing of the sick.

Nigerian Gospel Music

Specifically, Nigerian gospel music is a derivative from church music and it is ecclesiastical. It is primarily meant for soul winning. Adedeji (2007) defines that Gospel Music is a type of Christian music that principally aims at winning souls which is made popular by Radio and Television media, albums and public performances. While Church music is of two types, which are the liturgy and the non-liturgy. Vidal (1986) and Adedeji (2001) both agreed that liturgy is an aspect of the Church which has forms used for the sacred worship of God. The non-liturgy is such that also possess Christian texts or elements but are not, sometimes, used for worship. One of the forms in the non-liturgy is the Gospel style. Among several others like prayer, praises and worship, dedication and so on. The various kinds of Gospel music have the capacity of driving the listeners or congregations' emotions; and turning the hearts of the people to their creator through the rich and inspiring quality of the texts or the lyrics, whereby the rhythms also has an important role to play.

Hospice and Palliative Nursing

According to Merriman (2010), the term 'Hospice' is that care given to patients in the place that is most suitable for that patient and their families who are also part of the caring process. It is not actually a venue as supposed by some people but just a suitable, reasonable and

comfortable place and it is specifically for patients with a terminal illness who have a prognosis of six months or less and it focuses entirely on comfort rather than curative treatments. However, palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of those patients that are facing the scourge of such life-threatening ailments that may claim the patient's life eventually within the process. Hospice and palliative care nursing is a specialized field focused on providing comfort, dignity, and quality of life to patients facing serious, chronic, or life-limiting illnesses.

The Roles of the Nurses

The roles of the hospice and palliative care Nurses are enumerated as follows in these four areas:

- i. Pain and symptom management: In hospice and palliative care, it focuses on relieving suffering and improving quality of life for patients with serious or life-limiting illnesses. It addresses not only physical pain, but also emotional, psychological, and spiritual distress. Its managements ranges from pharmacological to non-pharmacological, that is, from the use of drugs or medications to massage and relaxation techniques.
- ii. Emotional and psychological support is a core component in the care of the patients which aimed at improving the quality of life of patients and their families as they face serious illness, dying, and bereavement. It addresses feelings, thoughts, fears, and coping abilities associated with illness and end-of-life care.
- iii. Coordination of Care refers to the deliberate organization of patient care activities and sharing of information among all participants involved in a patient's care to achieve safe, effective, and seamless care.

Methods Employed

There is other several ways or methods of distracting the patients from their pains. Among several others, are the massaging therapy, chiropractic therapy, laughter therapy, Music therapy among others, which are such that distract the pains of the patients for a temporary period.

1. Massaging Therapy: According to the American Massage Therapy Association, massage stimulates your brain to produce endorphins (natural pain-relieving chemicals). Endorphin is found in the brain and has neurotransmitters to suppress pain in the body. It abolishes or suppresses sensational pains in the body just for a certain period of time. (www.google/AmericanMassageAssociation,2003).
2. Chiropractic Therapy: It helps the spine majorly as it is manipulated, and other body parts, for the purpose of alleviating neuromusculoskeletal dysfunction which helps to relief pains (www.google/NationalCenterforComplementaryandAlternativeMedicine).
3. Laughter Therapy: When someone laughs, the body releases endorphins, which are natural pain killers that also contribute to a sense of well-being. This can help to reduce pain directly, while also distracting the patient from the pain (www.google/CancerTreatmentCentersofAmerica,laughtertherapy)
4. Music Therapy: Hignet (1996), said that patients with terrible or serious pains in their

body enjoy averagely, at a reasonable rate of 20 percent, when music is listened to for about one hour and repeatedly done for seven days.

Music therapy furthermore, can be described according to Mereni (2004), as the controlled and reasoned use of music in the treatment and rehabilitation of affected persons who are infected by different ailments, such as physical, mental and psychic. However, Adedeji (2008) therefore posits that there has not been due attention paid to music therapy as scholarship in Nigeria.

The Role of Nigerian Gospel music in Palliative Nursing Care

This work observes and points attention to Nigerian gospel music as a viable method in the care of the patients dying of one critical illness or the other. There are several methods and approaches as discussed earlier of which music therapy is also recognized, but the aspect of Nigerian gospel music as a method and its role and are going to be emphasized in this respect in line with music therapy. It will serve as a method in motivation and encouragement thereby giving strength and hope to them, even if the sickness is still terminal. However, the place of the miraculous cannot be overemphasized in this method because of the ecclesiastical nature of it which has a connection with the church and the gospel of Christ.

Types of Nigerian Gospel music

There are various gospel songs that can be characterized into this idea. Some are in Reggae style, Country style, Rhythm and blues, Highlife, Juju, Fuji, Native Airs and so on. However, among the several styles, such that has been the interest of the patient, even before his or her challenges, shall be the one to be used in the process. These shall be thought provoking, soul inspiring, and heart touching songs, which address precisely, or are closely related to, the situation of the particular patient, and specifically preparing the mind of the patient for the life beyond. The texts of the various songs are of utmost importance, that is, it should be principally considered. Thereafter, the rhythm, dynamics, meter, scale and so on are secondary, though important as well.

'Is your name in this book of life' is an album track composed by Nathaniel Bassey. This song addresses a true-life experience of a man who slept and woke up in another world. He was requesting that he wanted to see whether his name was written in the Book of life in that land called 'forevermore'. There is life forevermore, that is 'Heaven', there is also death forevermore, which is 'Hell fire'. Though, the approach in this musical piece was satirical, yet the message was direct and straightforward.

The Lyrics:

*This is the story of a brother
Who slept and woke up in 'Foreverland'.
He looked around, nothing's familiar.
He wondered how he got to be there.
He took a walk around the city
And saw this brick house with a small door.*

*He walked into the room and saw a man in white
Must be an angel so he said:
"Mr. Angel I'm a stranger, don't know what's going on,
The last thing I remember was I slept last night".*

*This is a border town that takes you where you get a crown.
Must have heard of Heaven where you came from.
Only those whose name I find
Written in this book of life,
Will forever be in Paradise.*

*Is your name in this Book of life?
Is your name in this Book of life here?
Is your name in this Book of life?
Is your name in this Book of life here?*

*Flipping the pages of this great book,
This brother gave a cursory gaze.
He saw the names of prophets, saints and martyrs
Who kept the faith and won the race.
But he said "Mr. Angel, where is my name?"
"Can you tell me what is going wrong?
"I'm a pillar in my local church,
Give the offerings and the tithes
Feed the poor and have myself a good name"*

*Is my name in this Book of life?
Is my name in this Book of life here?
Tell me is my name in this Book of life?
Is my name in this Book of life here?*

*Unforgiveness lurks within your heart.
Some folks that you will never let go.
Little foxes and secret faults
Will spring surprises on that final day.*

Oh oh oh...

*So much for this wonder brother.
What about you? What about me?
Let him who thinks that he stands,
Let him take heed lest he falls.
Only the pure in heart will see Jesus.
Those whose garment glow with purity.*

*Is your name in that book of life?
Is your name in that book of life there?
Is your name in that book of life?
Tell me is your name in that book of life there?
Think about it.*

Discussion

The integration of Nigerian Gospel music into hospice and palliative care demonstrates the importance of culturally grounded interventions. Its therapeutic value lies not only in its musical elements but also in its spiritual texts and communal significances. Also, it is evident that when a sacred or liturgical service is being conducted, people do feel the effect of such songs in their hearts as it touches and minister to their soul, which in turn have effect on their bodies. Especially, a portion of the lyrics points out unforgiveness in the hearts of Men.

*Unforgiveness lurks within your heart.
Some folks that you will never let go.
Little foxes and secret faults
Will spring surprises on that final day.*

Oh oh oh...

*So much for this wonder brother.
What about you? What about me?
Let him who thinks that he stands,
Let him take heed lest he falls.
Only the pure in heart will see Jesus.
Those whose garment glow with purity.*

This portion of the song directly describes the assumed assignment of a palliative care Nurse to prepare the patient for the world beyond. He/she asks the patient of the different cases and challenges from his immediate family, church members, community members in which he (the Nurse) try to resolve any conflict that is involved in the matter and even every other unresolved case shall be dealt with. Having in mind, on the interim, that the patient might likely pass on.

The patient would have seen himself or herself in the text of the song rendered and would have employed a rethinking. The work of reconciliation would have begun in the heart of the patient 'Little folks', as used by the composer would have given way.

Conclusion

Hospice and palliative care focus on improving the quality of life for patients with life-limiting illnesses. In the context of this work, Nigerian Gospel music serves as a bridge between clinical care and spiritual support, addressing emotional, psychological, and existential needs. The position of Nigerian Gospel music in hospice and palliative care is both therapeutic and

spiritually significant, especially within the Nigerian sociocultural and religious context where faith plays a central role in coping with illness, suffering, death and possibly, life after death. It therefore concludes that Nigerian Gospel music can also help, like other methods, when used within the context of music therapy as a procedure, in preparing the mind of these patients for the world beyond before their final exit.

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