Original Research Article

THE CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF AFRICAN MUSICAL ART FORM *(EBIBINDWOM)* IN THE LITURGY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

ABSTRACT

The Methodist Church Ghana has been using different kinds of musical styles in her liturgy and one notable amongst them is *ebibindwom* (Ghanaian traditional musical style). The objective of this ethnographic study was to ascertain the aesthetic and cultural significance of *ebibindwom* in the liturgy of the church. Direct observation and interviews of qualitative research method were employed to elicit primary data from respondents such as Reverend Ministers, Directors of Music and Christ Little Band members who are conversant with this musical tradition. Again, an extensive literature was drawn on the subject matter relying upon secondary data from numerous documented sources relevant to the study. Findings indicated that during worship service, the texts seen in *ebibindwom* were repeated and thus afforded those who could not read the opportunity to participate and memorise some of the words from the scripture. This research unearthed more and new information that could be added to the present scanty information available to educate and inform the society. The *ebibindwom*, since its introduction into the liturgy, was intended to allow the illiterates and the older generation to participate in the worship but the contemporary situation transcends participation to include extra-liturgical and social dimensions. It is recommended that the leadership of the church should encourage the Christ Little Band to intensify their activities and organise more singing competitions.

Keywords: Aesthetics, *Ebibindwom*, Christ Little Band, Liturgy, Musical art form

1. INTRODUCTION

When the Methodist Church Ghana was established, the indigenes made several attempts to find an everlasting solution to the problem in which African musical styles could be introduced into her liturgy Agordoh (2010). During the period, most of the African converts were illiterates and could not understand the Europeans and therefore unable to sing the hymns that were introduced in their worship service. The few Africans who were able to sing the hymns felt taken away from home because they did not understand the hymns they sang, and in any case, the English language was not their mother tongue (Sackey 2016, Agordoh, 1997, Nketia 1966; Agordoh, 2003). Conscious efforts were made by Rev Joseph Rhodes Dunwell to introduce Ghanaian vernacular and indigenous music into the worship service (Essamuah, 2010). The problem was why one has to include this musical style and not only hymns as used at the time of the establishment of the church. The objective of the study was to ascertain the aesthetic and cultural significance of *ebibindwom* in the liturgy of the Methodist Church Ghana. Evidence proves that *ebibindwom* provides and solidifies the liturgical culture and artistic practice of the Methodist Church to both members of the church and onlookers (Amuah, 2013).

The *Fante* people had their own music like *Apatampa*, *Asafo, Ɔmpe*, *Adenkum* and others which they were familiar with before the coming of the Western missionaries. The early musicians among them changed the narration of the Bible to compose music to suit their traditions using their own traditional music tunes. When the Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman arrived at Cape Coast to continue from where his predecessors ended, a centenary anniversary was held to mark the birth of Methodism in England by Rev. John Wesley. At that service in Cape Coast, several singing groups performed which included illiterate women who sang in the Fante dialect of the Akan language with words taken from the Bible (Young, 2008). Their style of singing, which was rhythmic, caught the attention of Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and other Europeans who were present (Amuah 2016, Agordoh, 2011, Williamson, 1958). When the Church introduced Camp Meetings, *ebibindwom* was used to evangelize to the people so as to enable the Church to spread Methodism.

The development of *ebibindwom* has been drawn to numerous sources of Akan beliefs. Essamuah (2010) gives three bases of *ebibindwom*:

i. The *Anansesem* (Spiderman's stories): The Akan stories are narrated and delivered, the audience exclaim, the listeners may stop the narrator and ask for clarification, pass a comment, or make a positive gesture. The stories are vital foundations of entertaining, maintaining moral standards and promoting religious beliefs.

ii. The *Asafo* (songs of the old military enterprises): The *Asafo* was performed in wars, calamities, and on joyous occasions like the installation of chiefs. The songs for invocation, provocation, or jubilation are sung to invoke the ancestral spirits to assist in a military campaign.

iii The *Adenkum* (calabash music): This involves the Akan traditional festivals to mark the beginning of a New Year, planting, harvesting, reaping and rites of passage where people give appreciation to the divinities for successful life.

By bringing in *ebibindwom* from the background of Akan culture, the Methodist Churches in Ghana have produced basically a new kind of music from purely local resources. Through the

use of *ebibindwom*, many people considered to be officially illiterate became scripturally literate because the people came to know the content of the stories.

2.0. **Methods**

2.1. ***Research design***

The ethnographic study was imbedded in the qualitative method (Creswell, 2009) with observation and interviews (Smith & Osborn, 2008) as the main research technique for data collection. This kind of research instrument enabled the researchers to obtain first-hand information and comprehensive data without distortion of facts. Extensive engagements with the study subjects (Fraenkel et al., 2012) during each service and various rehearsal meetings of Christ Little Band were important to understand the aesthetic and cultural significance of the *ebibindwom* in the liturgy of the Methodist Church Ghana. The researchers went through video and tape recordings, interviews, and the notes put down were transcribed into written form, which made it easier to use the material for this study.

2.2. ***Sample selection procedure and sample size***

The study subjects were selected from three regions in Ghana, which are Central, Ashanti and Greater Accra regions. These regions were purposively selected because that is where the Methodist Church Ghana started, and where the researchers live as well as where the seat of the church is located respectively. The study subjects included Reverend Ministers, Laity, and Christ Little Band members. The researchers were convinced that these people have an in-depth knowledge and lived experiences on the topic under discussion (Stage & Manning, 2003). The sample size for this study was 24. Recruitment of the study subjects was based on readiness and availability to take part in the study (Etikan et al., 2016).

2.3. ***Data collection procedures***

The best suitable data collection techniques set by the study subjects were used for the interaction. The face-to-face interviews, telephone calls or interviews, and video interviews were conducted for the numerous study subjects (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Kumekpor, 2002) The structured and unstructured methods were employed to elicit information from the respondents in their offices, homes and their worship places on the set dates. Again, telephone conversations were carried out to solicit information from respondents. The moral principles in telephone and video interviews such as ensuring flexibility and openness in the behaviour and tone of the voice of the researchers as well as making the room quiet where the calls were placed from disturbances, were accordingly followed (Kumekpor, 2002). The semi-structured interview guide for the various subjects based on the research questions for the study were vetted by four skilled ethnographic researchers. The researchers used English, Twi and Fante dialects to interview respondents and also internet data and airtime charges were paid by the researchers. The process opened the gate for the researchers to meet other individuals they most likely would not have come through in life. Furthermore, it facilitated the writers to cross-check data in the documents used in the review of related literature for modifications, validation and to get additional material to the work. The responses received were recorded on tape recorders and mobile phones after permission was sought from the respondents and were played back at home. The responses were critically studied, compared and contrasted with the existing

documented information for similarities and differences. Some information, especially the responses to questions, were recorded on paper and telephone interviews with some staff were also made and recorded.

3 Findings and Discussions

3.1 The beginnings of *Ebibindwom*

It came out from the responses that when the Methodist Church Ghana was established, the indigenous people made several attempts to find an everlasting solution to the problem in which African musical types could be introduced into the liturgy of the church. The Wesleyan missionries saw the need to include local songs into its worship because they realized that the indigenes already had their music traditions which always gave them internal peace when performed. The Reverend Joseph Rhodes Dunwell also realized the importance of the local language as well as the indigenous music and encouraged the indigenes to incorporate them during worship service. Again, at the centenary service to mark the birth of Methodism in Cape Coast, several singing groups performed and they included illiterates women who sang in the Fante dialect of the Akan language with words taken from the Bible. It was mentioned by the respondents that their style of singing, which was rhythmic, caught the attention of Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman and other Europeans who were present and they were encouraged to embrace this musical type into the worship service. The *ebibindwom* is said to be a positive response received from the management of the Church to meet the requirements of some of the followers who, as indicated earlier, had challenges with the spoken English.

When the Church introduced Camp Meetings, *ebibindwom* was used to evangelize to the people to spread Methodism. The introduction of *ebibindwom* was an upright attempt to inspire the adult non-literate to join fully in singing in the church which was enjoyed and appreciated by all and sundry because of the addition of hand-clapping, drumming and dancing. The prominence of *ebibindwom* for feeding and satisfying members in the Methodist Church Ghana competes favourably with Western hymns, particularly among countryside parishioners. What makes this musical variety important is its wholly local heritage. Through the use of *ebibindwom*, many people considered to be officially illiterates became scripturally literates because the people came to know the content of the stories. The Methodist Church Ghana's practise of *ebibindwom* in her outreach assignment reflected the significant Wesleyan's belief in which Methodism was realized as a singing movement.

Ebibindwom has provided the opening of women ministry long before their formal role was acknowledged and approved. The headship in *ebibindwom* singing from the olden days has been reserved for women. It is possible that the relative simplicity with which the Methodist Church Ghana recognized the installation of women was as a result of their outstanding leadership role in *ebibindwom* singing.

3.2 The Use of Scripture in *Ebibindwom*

The singing of *Ebibindwom* is a form of Word ministration or preaching the word of God to the congregants. The Methodist Church Ghana affirms the Bible as the supreme rule of faith and practice. For this reason, *ebibindwom* composed with the word of God becomes a way of

spreading the Word of God. The singing of *ebibindwom* thus is an extremely significant and exceptionally influential form of Word ministration. The Word of God is ministered through songs as one sings *ebibindwom*. In the words of one Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church Ghana when he was interviewed on Wesleyan TV on a programme dubbed the Shepherds, indicated that:

> "*As Methodists we sing our faith because the words that are used in the Bible are used to compose the music and if you lose your Bible and have your hymn book, you still have the Bible, this is because the Bible is what we read and hymn book comes to compliment it. He continued; instead of reading it, we sing it and that, one makes it all meaningful as you walk around, as you go to bed, as you rise up, and as you listen to the sermon being preached, a hymn just comes up and it confirms what is being preached or what you are reading. He concluded that the Bible is Supreme and the rule of faith".*

Ebibindwom is said to be a visual extension of Biblical poetry adding beauty to the church's liturgy. Good music is a recipe for the soul which uplifts and blesses the inner being and is a language and food for the soul (Sackey 2016; Agordoh, 2003). *Ebibindwom* offers new ways of explaining the Word of God for a better understanding of biblical truth and one can recollect the story easily as the song is remembered. The singing of *ebibindwom* based on the preacher's sermon is one way to affirm that some members of the congregation have understood the message.

An example of text used in *ebibindwom* is recorded in Matthew 25:14-30, where Jesus is stressing the importance of a person using the God-given skills assigned to him or her. In the parable, three servants were given the talents: one had five; the second had two and the third had one. This means that everyone was treated differently and was expected to work with what had been given. In the parable, God wants every Christian to attach importance to their talents and use them for humanity. Those who put their talents to good use will be rewarded while those who allow their talents to lie unused will not enjoy any benefit.

3.3 The Cultural Relevance of *Ebibindwom* in the Liturgy of the Methodist Church Ghana

The ideas of African popular culture are used to cover African cultural activities in which relatively large numbers of people in our communities are involved in one way or another (Bame, 1991). The emphasis lies in the participatory nature of activities like dance, drama, festivals, music and funerals. *Ebibindwom*, which is cultural heritage of the Methodist Church Ghana, cannot be divorced from its cultural relevance in Christian worship (Sackey, 2016). *Ebibindwom* has contributed to shape the Christian church in order to promote the African content of worship. For example, the activities and practices are not restricted but open to any number of the people who wish to participate in them. This means that such public events are owned by the whole community. Turkson (1975) views *ebibindwom* as an art form and cultural activity whose medium is founded in the traditions of the African people. *Ebibindwom* serves as an important part to display the cultural way of life of the indigenes in the community where a church is located and to depict the people's heritage as Methodists. Songs have physical and structural shapes that help to indicate identity. Thus, the nature of a song succinctly expresses the cultural values of the people to which the musical beat originates from. *Ebibindwom*, thus reveals the church's identity of the people as Africans and as Methodists to the entire world. This is because *ebibindwom* started with the Methodist Church Ghana and all who sing are

displaying what they have learnt from the Methodists. Even though, the Methodist Church has its style of performing *ebibindwom*, one cannot take the recognition away that *ebibindwom* replicates the uniqueness of the people called Methodists. Again, the *ebibindwom* sung in the church reflects African society as highlights the high moral standards and values of the people. It is sung to bring about transformation in the life of the individuals. Furthermore, while the present generation is moving away from traditional music such as *asafo, apirede, asaadua, ɔmpe, apatampa, ebibindwom* may serve as the hope to preserve the Ghanaian culture.

In history, as well as in our cultural set-up, *ebibindwom* has become part of the Methodist tradition through which one can trace distinctive features that repeatedly support and shape the church's liturgical practices in general and musical expression in particular. Out of the Ghanaian cultural background has come the natural tendency for the Methodists to make new form of singing *ebibindwom* in the worship liturgy of the church which goes, comparatively, deeper into the hearts of the people (Sackey, 2016; Amuah, 2001).

Dancing does an imperative part in the cultural expression of Africans. Dancing permeates all their social and cultural activities; apparently because dance is life, a way of thinking, living and communicating (Bame, 1991). The singing of *ebibindwom* always results in dancing and anytime it is sung in the church, the worshipers have to stand up. The lead singer generally does not stand at one position but will move from one place to the other to capture the attention of the people and eventually lead to natural body movement. *Ebibindwom* is simply a song that naturally invokes a physical response as seen in other African songs. It thus builds self-esteem since an adept dancer is admired by onlookers. Also, the gestures accompanying the singing communicate thoughts of love, geniality, goodwill, group solidarity and security. The dances are integral part of worship in the Methodist Church Ghana and have curative as well as cathartic effect on the supplicant and other participants who are revitalized through the worship service. More importantly, the dances are recreational in nature and they heighten group identity as well as social cohesiveness in the entire community. The rigorous nature of most dances promotes personal aerobic movements that culminate in healthy living.

In African culture, dancing cannot be over-emphasized as far as instrument playing, singing and handclapping are concerned. Africans dance for joy, love, hatred, and to bring prosperity (Gorer, 1962). On the important role dance plays in Christianity, Amuah (2013) posits that music covers the composer's behaviour and viewpoint of commitment, consciously rhythmical, culturally patterned sequences of nonverbal body movements and the motion of having interest and aesthetic value. With such conceptualization, the *ebibindwom* must meet each of these criteria in order to be danceable. That is to say, dancing is a dialogical activity between the dancer and the music using cultural tools of the dancer to communicate a message. Dance must communicate some kind of message which include the performer's intention to communicate and also the performer's transfer of information to the audience (Bame, 1991, Mackay 1979).

Singing in the African context is not conceivable without simultaneous dancing. As the dance is an integral part of African cultures, one may not leave unconsidered the possibility that it could form part of the liturgical gesture and actions (Sackey, 2016). It is unwise to pronounce the music and dance categorically as irrelevant in Christian culture (Nketia, 1957). Singing of *ebibindwom* is a form of "enculturation," that is interpreting the Christian declaration in a procedure suitable for specific cultures. Jenkins (2007) opines that the indication of becoming accustomed to religious exercise to indigenous state of affairs sounds at worst inoffensive and,

at best, critical for any evangelistic attempt. He argues that individuals vary in their cultural appearance, and what works in one cultural setting would not work in another. Thus, enculturation and contextualization happen as Christian sing *ebibindwom.* It has also executed the role of disseminating the principles of morals of the Church. In this regard, Ebibindwom has been capable enough to provide Christians with indigenous worship songs to promote home-grown religion.

Since the inception of *ebibindwom,* it has taken an essential role in the evolution of the church, particularly in the areas of ethical development and social functions of the church. The social functions here include the main congregational worship, naming ceremonies, marriages (both customary and Christian weddings) and funeral celebrations. The ability and the requirement to participate in these social roles constitute what makes us human, and the expressive effects of appealing in these roles includes experiences of reward, fun, joy and happiness (Koelsch, 2013). The pattern of singing is such that every member of the congregation feels part of the worship. As a result, *ebibindwom* serves as one of the major tools that create socialization in a cultural environment. As the singing goes on, the entire congregation stands making all feel part of the service (Nketia, 1957). Traditional Ghanaian marriages and outdooring are social functions that provide avenues for showcasing Ghanaian culture and so much may be used. At a customary marriage, for example, an *ebibindwom* singer may be invited to feature as a linguist in the celebration. At every stage in the course of the rite, *ebibindwom* may be sung to the admiration of the people which will feature prominently at the ceremony. For example, at every stage in the course of the rite, ebibindwom may be sung to the admiration of the people which will feature prominently at the ceremony. For example, a song entitled "*εyε sε yεretwεn"* meaning "it pays to wait" can be performed.

Funeral celebrations also differ from society to society and individual to individual depending on the social relationships and circumstances of death. The funerals of kings or the royals are different from that of the masses. During funeral celebrations, *ebibindwom* features prominently and provides messages for emotions, and to encourage people when they are bereaved. This indicates that *ebibindwom* plays an indispensable role in the totality of the way of life of a people.

3.4 The Cultural Setting of *Ebibindwom* and its Performance in the Methodist Church Ghana

The time that traditional method of making music became part of the official life of the public, the physical venue for concerts could be any part appropriate for communal activity. It could be an unrestricted place or secluded space to which only those very well familiar with the event are given admission (Nketia, 1974; Agordoh, 2003). A regular place of worship like the shrine, groove, mausoleum, courtyard of a house was where traditional music could be performed. *Ebibindwom,* as a musical style or art form, is performed in the Methodist Church Ghana during worship service. Aside the worship service, it can be performed during other important occasions in the life of the individual. The major occasions are birth, puberty, marriage and death. History has it that, puberty (for girls) and death were the occasions that called for musical performance. In the present-day environment, for example, all the four life cycle events call for the use of music. In the Methodist Church Ghana, the Church Choirs lead the flock to sing hymns, responses, either in English or Vernacular, singing of anthems as well as chanting the canticles. The *ebibindwom,* on the other hand, introduced into the sermon by the Christ Little

Band or individuals when the soloists are motivated or led by the Holy Spirit for the congregation to join in singing the responses. The Christ Little Band does not feature at puberty, but it features conspicuously in the remaining life cycle events.

i. Outdooring (Naming Ceremony)

During outdooring, musical performance is held on the day of birth of the individual because a newly born child is considered an alien and is numbered an associate of the family if it stays alive on the eighth day. On that day, outdooring and christening rite are organized deprived of music. To the Methodist blood relations, however, every single child needs to be baptized and given Christian and or native names to show his or her acceptance into the family. At the naming ceremony which is usually held in the chapel, the Western hymns are prominently used.

The Christ Little Band positions themselves in a semi-circle or horse-shoe formation. The virtuoso or the soloist stands in front of them and sings from their repertory pieces that communicate messages of "welcome", "good conduct", "long life" and "wealth". During this event, relatives, friends and well-wishers of parents are asked to join a party to make merry and dine together. Even though hymns and popular musical tunes are executed, *Ebibindwom* from the Christ Little Band or some individuals is heard as well.

ii. Wedding/Marriage

In Ghana, a traditional wedding is more or less an agreement between the families of the imminent couple than a party. Oladele (2018) states that at present, marriages could be contracted under three different statutes, namely; Customary Marriage, Marriage of Mohamedans (Cap.129) and Marriage Ordinance (Cap.127). All of the above-mentioned statutes make provision for the registration of the following three types of marriage recognized by the laws of this country respectively: Marriage under Customary Law, Marriage accordingly to Islamic Law and Christian or Civil marriage. During the celebration, or at the close of any of these, some musical performances are not left out. With respect to the customary marriage, music features prominently when the lady comes from her family to set up permanently with the husband. At the event, there is an extensive meal at which traditional recreational bands are called to offer music that can be danced to.

The wedding celebrated in church is a musical event just as one finds in a worship service; hymns, danceable tunes, praises and worship songs as well as anthems are sung by the various singing groups and the congregation (Essandoh, 1990). *Ebibindwom* which is usually performed by the Christ Little Band would be heard. During the performance of *Ebibindwom*, the cantor or the soloist does the recitation as he or she stands in front or at the back for the members and the congregation to join in at the chorus. The themes that are selected from the repertoire are usually based on peace, love, understanding and happy marriage.

iii. Funeral / Death

The funeral celebrations of individuals differ greatly depending upon the social class or relationships and circumstances leading to one's death. It is believed that the funeral of kings or the royals differ from that of the masses. Premature deaths like accidents, suicide, and a host of others are distinguished from natural death through normal illness or old age. There are generally three stages of an everyday funeral that are open to the community. They include:

i. Pre-burial funeral rite which includes wake-keeping

ii. Burial rites

iii. After-burial funeral rites celebration which consists of:

- Family gathering or final funeral rites
- Memorial service or Thanksgiving

The Christ Little Bands does not to take part in some of the activities of funeral rites because the observance of wake-keeping as part of funeral services is forbidden in the Methodist Church Ghana. It is observed that, before the burial, the Christ Little Band, in a procession with wooden rod which is painted black and white stripes in their hands, visit the dead body at where it is laid.

The cantor who stands at one end of the lifeless body commences with one of their songs and other participants sing the chorus part and move around the dead body three times. They give their last respect and prayers are said to serve as farewell message to the member. The performers generally position themselves at where the dead body is laid. The members of the group step up and down, flanked by some members of the lineage, associates and supporters who are seated on benches or plastic and metallic chairs.

At the funeral service, the theme for the occasion has been on death, so the hymns, *ebibindwom*, danceable tunes and the homily, all reside on the life hereafter. As the homily progresses, the cantor stands in front of the members and walks to and fro and relate the text of the songs to the life history of the dead member. Sutherland-Addy (1998) indicates that at a funeral, the entire congregation may join the chorus part of *ebibindwom* as the lead singers may walk slowly up and down.

After the funeral service, another procession follows to the cemetery, but the singing aspect is done by the church choir to lead until the grave-side service is over. The group would go on and perform rites to the deceased in order to lead him or her into the ancestral world. These rituals play an important role in establishing the dead person as an ancestor in direction to keep decent relations with those who are still alive. The subsequent action after the burial is family gathering or the final funeral rites. The Christ Little Band plays no role because popular live bands typically provide music to entertain mourners, sympathizers, well-wishers and the general public. The memorial or thanksgiving service comes after the family gathering where the usual worship service with its hymns, praises and worship, chants and danceable tunes are offered *and ebibindwom* is sung during the homily. In order to re-assert life even in the face death, *ebibindwom*, usually performed during the funeral celebration, is lively and danceable.

3.5 Some Aesthetics of Song Texts used in the Liturgy of the Methodist Church Ghana during the performance of *Ebibindwom*

Among indigenous Africans, and for that matter Akans, passion for *ebibindwom* is based on a number of satisfying sensations, such as music appreciation and activation of distinct feelings, and aesthetic music judgements (e.g., beauty) (Duhoe and Otibua, 2020). The use of aesthetic terms such as beauty or ugliness is an element of artistic experiences in general and of *ebibindwom* in particular as it is used in the liturgy.

It was observed during data collection that most of the *ebibindwom* performers in the Methodist Church Ghana make use of imagery and symbols in their music to communicate to their audience. In some of their music, the congregants are usually reminded about their responsibilities towards God, community and their fellow human beings most especially children, women, the poor as well as other dependents or wards. In some of their music, for example, emphasis is placed on how to achieve success through proper training of their children for everybody in the community to benefit. The ability to do this successful is considered to be "good", "delightful", "pleasurable", etc. as far as the "beautiful" character of those children are concerned. These are the aesthetic attributes highlighted in most *ebibindwom* sung in the liturgy.

Music, whether creating it or listening to it, is connected to their feelings and experiences. Such events include special events such as births, marriages and funerals. Listening to and reacting to *ebibindwom* can improve the aesthetic enjoyment. Listening requires either inciting a visual, verbal, emotional or mental reaction. The aesthetic standards (prettiness, ugliness) to judge music are therefore derived from both the words of the song as well as how the entire congregation reacts to the song texts.

In the *ebibindwom* song texts the performers make it clear that no good thing comes on a silver platter. It involves hard work, good planning, strategizing and a careful execution of the plans and strategies. For example, in pounding *fufu*, one needs an extra energy to pound it, and for one to succeed, one needs some amount of effort to put in to achieve what you want. In this way, some of the singers use the imagery of pounding *fufu* in their music. So, much effort is to be put into the support for the child so as to reap the expected benefit.

Aesthetics discusses what is beautiful, interesting, exciting, uplifting, and entertaining in such art-forms as music, painting, drama, sculpture, literature, and dance, among others. In a general way, depending on the nature of the art-forms, the "beautiful" is experienced through any one, two, or more of the five senses of perception (Saxena, 2009a). In *ebibindwom*, the aesthetic is experienced directly through, primarily, the sense of hearing and, at most, the sense of sight, in a disinterested contemplative manner as the singers display their skill.

This emotional state expressed through these musical artforms, according to the theory, is experienced as "beautiful." The experience of "prettiness," which can also be translated as "aesthetic consciousness," "feeling par excellence," or "sublimated emotion," is different from one's daily experiences of emotions such as anger, love, compassion, joy, and sorrow. The essence of singing *ebibindwom* is enjoyment and such enjoyment is experienced as long as its stimuli continue. Such an experience of delight, which cannot be expressed in words or grasped by the mind, comes in a flash and is akin to the delight of knowing or experiencing God (Saxena, 2009b).

Apart from using imagery and symbols, the singers use philosophical words in their music. Philosophical words or music as used in this work refer to music or songs that have been written about a certain belief or underlying principle, or critical mindedness. They are written or composed to carry a definite proverbial thought which is understood in the work. The anticipated message is not clearly open to the average mind or at first hearing; it is understood in a way that calls for certain amount of intelligence before establishing the intended message.

Conclusion

When the Methodist church was founded in Gold Coast now Ghana, hymn singing tradition was incorporated into her liturgy. In order to satisfy the musical needs of all the indigenous people especially, the illiterates and the older women, the church allowed the local people to introduce the musical style which came to be known as ebibindwom into her liturgy. Familiarity of language in music makes the worship more impressive and more effective, thus, *ebibindwom* performance bridges the gap between the illiterates and the literates. With the singing of *ebibindwom*, worship life becomes an all-inclusive rite as the people in the congregation participate in the singing. While most of the members who were illiterates could not sing the hymns written in English, both the literate and illiterate could sing *ebibindwom*. The worship then embraced everybody as all experience the same music and are familiar with the genre. There was no distinction between the young and the old and the literate and the illiterate, when *ebibindwom* was sung. *Ebibindwom* which makes good use of the scripture has seen lots of repetition of the texts. The repetition of the words afforded those who could not read the opportunity to participate and memorise some of the words from the scripture before, during and after the worship service.

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