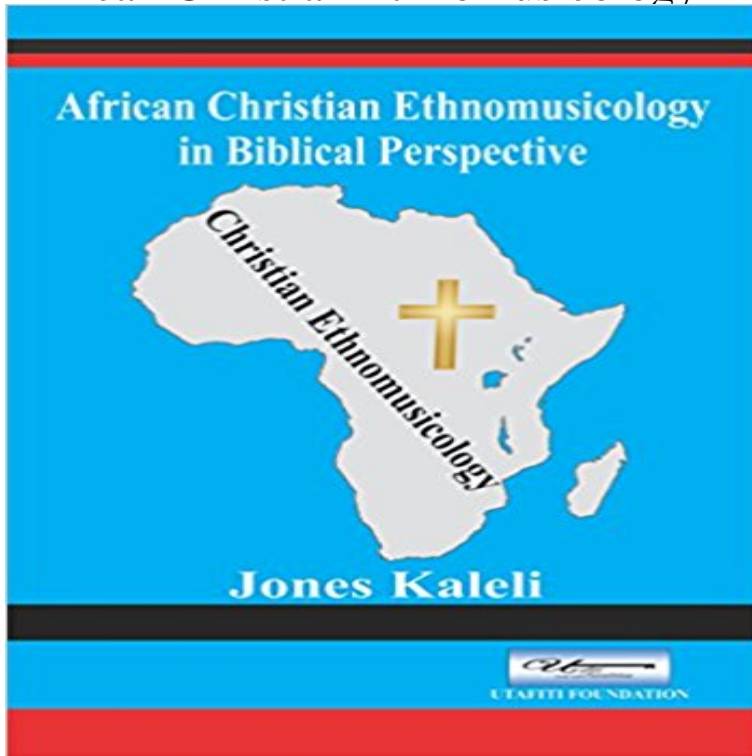


African Christian Ethnomusicology in Biblical Perspective



In this book, African Christian Ethnomusicology is defined as the disciplined and reasoned out reflection of music by the members of the African Church - the Body of Christ - in expressing her experience of Jesus Christ in song within the context of their worldview(s). Many African Christian theologians claim that it is natural for an African to express oneself in song. For example, Dr. Bolaji Idowu of Nigeria says: Africans are always singing; and in their singing and poetry, they express themselves: all the joys; and sorrows of their hearts, and their hopes about the future find outlet when the songs are connected with rituals, they convey the faith of worshippers from the heart faith in Deity, belief in and about the divinities, assurance and hopes about the present and with regard to the hereafter (1973, p. 85). Dr. Roberta King is one of the leading theological ethnomusicologists who has criss-crossed the African continent challenging the African Church to compose her own hymns and songs. She has the following to say: While in Kenya, I was told that to a Kenyan, music is in the blood (King, 1999, p. 4). Therefore, it is this music which is in the blood of the African that should be allowed to surface. A story is told of a man in Zambia who was searching for meaning in life. It is said that: After hearing the Good News, he found it in Jesus Christ. How did he show that he wanted to become a Christian? He boldly declared I want to sing. He just had to express his new-found relationship with God through a song. He had found meaning in life and it spilled over into a song (ibid., p. 2). In the past, there are African theologians like Prof. John Mbiti (1989) who have described the African as notoriously religious, but perhaps time has come to describe him as notoriously musical! The huge collection of music CDs and DVDs in most African homes and the huge music stores around the towns show

that music plays a key role in human life and experiences. An exploration of African Christian Ethnomusicology in Biblical Perspective begs answers to some questions such as: Is there a Biblical basis for the undertaking? In other words, is there any Biblical support for embarking on the ethnic dimensions of music as opposed to what some may call universal dimensions of music? Why talk about Ethnomusicologists and not just musicologists? Gods Holy Word tells us that: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). The question of Biblical Authority is very critical for the Christian hence, the need to avoid involvement in any project that is contrary to the plain teaching of the Holy Scriptures. This begs the question: Is there any support for ethnic or tribal aspirations in the Bible? Does the Bible advocate for a destruction of ethnic centred aspirations like tribal languages or ethnic differences in order to create a more cohesive society? There is therefore a need to find out if the Bible has given any guidance on ethnic matters. This discussion first looks at the Biblical basis for ethnicity or ethnological reflection. Secondly, it carries out a brief discussion on the Biblical basis for ethnomusicology. Thirdly, it looks at some of the reasons for the absence of or delay for a vibrant African ethnomusicological reflection in the African Church. Fourthly, it recommends the scope within which the African Christian ethnomusicological reflection should be focused. It finally highlights and underscores the qualities of an effective African Christian ethnomusicologist. For more information on Hard Copy Orders, Please Contact the Publisher through: UTAFITI FOUNDATION P. O. Box 884-30100 Eldoret-Kenya Tel: (+254)722313515/(+254)725885239 Email: info@utafitifoundation.com, wanyamam@yahoo.com, wanyamamellit@gmail.com

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