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Liturgical Dance in Nigeria: Babalola Abiodun and Victory Ashien Works in Focus

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Abstract

Liturgical dance has its roots in early Christian worship practices. It reached a high point in the medieval church, when a number of religious orders arose with a specific emphasis on prayer and meditation, and it was performed primarily by religious professionals. In many churches and in many liturgical dance groups today, the emphasis is on performance in service or in festivals. The performance groups many times feature extensive and complicated choreography that showcases the style of the choreographer and the skills of the dancers. But what is liturgical dance supposed to be? What are the specific nature and forms of liturgical performances in Nigeria? Adopting the Religion Theory of Ninian Smart and Performance Analysis, this research focuses on the process of choreographing/creating liturgical dances, the impact of other elements of performance on liturgical dance creation, spiritual impact on liturgical dance and fully on the performance aspect of liturgical dance. The performance analysis is based on the interviews conducted, and having analysed two liturgical performance videos and conducting interviews on two liturgical choreographers, namely Victory Ashien of Spirit of David, Nigeria and Babalola Abiodun of Praise Dance Academy. Based on the above, this research concludes that liturgical dance in Nigeria is on the rise and there is a significant interest from different groups and churches. Besides, these liturgical dance performances embrace theatrical dance performance elements in communicating and interpreting stories.

Keywords: Liturgical Dance, Performance, Choreography Religion, Worship

Introduction

According to Branigan (2007), dance is the oldest art form and has been used by every culture in order to express religious phenomena and to celebrate important life events such as death, birth, and healing. She states further that early Christian and Jewish faith traditions commonly used dance in worship. In fact, Branigan explained that the term “rejoice” (33) in Aramaic, the language used by Jesus and the early Christian Church, actually means to jump or dance. She described the original meaning of choir as referring to a group of dancers. Also, she stated that stanza meant the dancers were still while a soloist danced alone, and that chorus meant the dancers danced together as a group.

However, as dance became more social and secular in its uses, it was rejected as a form of worship, especially during the Protestant Reformation period. Branigan (2007) confirmed that this was true of music as well. The musical aspects eventually returned to worship, but dance has remained (remained where, in worship?) in only a few countries today. LaMothe (2005) states that throughout history Christians have danced and are still dancing their faith, but this has gone unnoticed by theologians and philosophers. She posited that nineteenth century European Christians began to look at dance as entertainment and titillation (101). In furtherance of her argument, LaMothe inferred that, although dance has been done in Christian worship, “Scholars have tended to perceive dance as offering, an indirect contribution to religion at best” (102). But the Jewish and early Christian worshippers were not the only people to use dance as worship. Johnson-Hill (2004) explored dance and worship in the Pacific Island where he discovered that dance was done in a deeply spiritual way that was not understood by early missionaries. He noted that, though dance was part of almost all aspects of Pacific life, “the relationship between dance and the Church has been, at best, a cautious one, and at worst a hostile one since the arrival of the missionaries in the nineteenth century” (362).

An historical study of liturgical dance reveals that it has its roots in early Christian worship practices



and reached a high point in the medieval church, when a number of religious orders arose with a specific emphasis on prayer and meditation which, consequently, contributed to liturgical dance being performed primarily by religious professionals. This medieval tradition of liturgical dance persisted in the church-building movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which dance was frequently used as a centrepiece of the liturgical environment, working in concert with the religious visuals and architectural designs in the space itself. Since the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, dance of all kinds has continued to integrate into worship practices, focusing primarily on broadening the cultural and social scope of liturgical expression. The global expansion of dance forms from Africa and the Caribbean, for instance, has slowly reshaped the performative landscape of what Westerners typically think of as liturgical dance.

In many churches and in several liturgical dance groups today, the emphasis is on performance during services or in festivals. The performance groups many times feature extensive and complicated choreography that showcases the choreographer's style and the dancers' skills. . But the question which is pertinent to this study is what liturgical dance is supposed to be. Is it an art form as an expression of worship prayer and praise, regardless of the person or the people dancing.

Liturgical Dance: Theoretical Approach

The study is based on theory of Ninian Smart (1927-2001) on religion. Smart engaged himself in a descriptive understanding of religion whereby he described it in seven dimensions. These dimensions include; practical and ritual dimension, experiential and emotional dimension, the narrative dimension, doctrinal and philosophical dimension, ethical and legal dimension, social and institutional dimension and material dimension. Smart described devotional practices in the way they are conducted and practiced in religious form of worship. For instance, he described prayer as private and solitary moments of quiet reflection on God. He asserted that, within prayer there is praise and worship which involves group singing, chanting and dancing. In ethical and legal dimension, Smart asserted that ethics concerns what is right and wrong, what is good and bad and how one is ought to live. For him, ethics concerns the behaviour of an individual and to some extent, the code of ethics of dominant religion controls the community. For this reason, religions have been influential in molding the attitudes and morals of the societies where they belong. Smart distinguished ethical teachings of faith from ethical dimensions of religion.

Liturgical dance is a language of worship used through body movements to communicate with God. It is "the language of expressing spiritual experiences which is founded on religious language" (Scott, 2000:249-250). Through this spiritual experience, the dancer is interpreting an encounter with God through body movement, thus ushering in the presence of the Lord. The movement of dance can assist a person in connecting the 'self' and a higher source encouraging the person "to stand straight in the midst of confusion and to move with resiliency when surrounded by pressures" (Taylor, 1967:8).

Therefore, liturgical dance is an outward expression through the kinetics of body movements done in public. According to Pardue, liturgical dance is "a movement from the Creator through the creature in harmony with creation, containing praises to the Creator" (Pardue, 2005: 77). Liturgical dance is a form of movement that is integrated into religious worship services where the body is used to express the word of God. It exemplifies a sacred dance, which, to attempt a loose definition, is the utilisation of movement to express an individual's spiritual journey. Liturgical dance is a form of prayer, which can be done in a single manner or with a group, using the body to commune with a spirit. A sacred dance can take many forms. First, it can be ecstatic movement, which can place the dancer into a trance. Second, it can be ritualistic, where the dance is used throughout the ceremony. Third, it can be liturgical where the dance "is a part of a larger ritual structure" (Gagne, Kane, VerEecke, 1984:95). Liturgical dance is not meant to be done in private but as part of a community, structured around the liturgy. As inferred by Thomas Kane, "liturgical dance bridges the visible and invisible world of the spirit" (Gagne, Kane, VerEecke, 1984: 97). Therefore, it is the role of the liturgical dancer to usher people into the presence of the Lord.

Performing Liturgical Dance in Nigeria

Performance is the last stage of the creation of a liturgical dance piece. As earlier mentioned, liturgical dancers prefer the word *ministration* to *performance*, which does not take out the fact that liturgical dance is a performance act. In performing liturgical dance, there are a lot of elements to be considered by a liturgical dance choreographer which he or she must have conceptualised before he starts the choreography. These elements are to be added in order to enhance the message of the piece and also to create a pleasing look to the audience. These elements are not particularly peculiar to liturgical dance but also other performance acts at large. In an interview that the researcher had with Babalola Abiodun, he (Abiodun) stated different elements of performance that enhances liturgical dance; these include costumes and music. On music, Abiodun posited that the appropriate music selection can enhance the mood, atmosphere, and emotional impact of the dance.

Costumes: Simple, flowing costumes that reflect the liturgical colours or theme can add visual appeal. In the book *Force of Dance*, Oshin gave some insights on liturgical dance costumes which he called garment, by making reference to Aaron story in the Bible.

Over the years in dance ministry, I discovered that our garment is as important as the message we propagate. When the lord set aside Aaron and his sons to minister unto him and to be priest, he gave specification for their garment. The craftsmen that made the garment were skilled and filled with the spirit of wisdom. (Oshin, 2018:21)

He further stated that the first garment as liturgical dancers is that of Righteousness making reference to 1 Peter 2:5, Roman 12:1 and Ephesians. 6: 14-17. As a praise dancer, you should know that your first and the most important garment is the one described in Ephesians 6:14-17. Once this in place, you can proceed to the second garment which your audience will see and admire while you are ministering (Oshin, 2018).

Also, Oshin made submissions about the steps to take when trying to make liturgical dance clothing. According to Oshin:

In making a praise dance clothing, you must understand the spiritual significance and meaning of color, and skillful in the craft of dressmaking and most importantly to be filled with the spirit of wisdom. Exodus 28:3" (Oshin, 2018:22)

He continued by giving colour specifications, the meaning and what they represent in liturgical dance.

Red: This colour is vibrant and full of life. It has a big range of meaning from love to anger. Whenever you see red, it can excite and energise you. This colour symbolises the fire and everything that is intense and passionate. You can use it to meditate when you want to strengthen your passion or you just want to feel safer. Others: the blood action, charity and spiritual awakening.

Orange: This colour is warm and energetic. It symbolises abundance and warmth. Orange is also a colour of affection, sensuality and warmth. You can use this colour in the meditation process. It increases the harmony and abundance in your life. Others: endurance, strength, praise, warfare, power, fire.

Yellow: This bright, happy and joyful colour reminds you of the sunny days. It symbolises optimism, hope, courage, and personal power. You can meditate with this colour when you need a courage boost or more confidence. Others: light and purity, happiness and harvest.

Green: This colour reminds us of the nature and the environment. Green is a symbol of health, youth, renewal and fertility. It also symbolises good luck and money. You can use green in your meditation when you need healing or renewal. Others: breaking of shackles, freedom from bondage, abundant life.

Blue: This colour reminds us of cool water. It symbolises peace and tranquility. Blue is soothing and stream trust, harmony and colour. You can use this color in your meditation, if you want to improve your communication skills. Others: heaven, hope, good health.

Indigo: This colour reminds us of the night sky with a full moon. It symbolises the inner mind, vast



cosmic consciousness and faith. It is used in meditation to improve the quality and clarity of your thoughts. Others: relaxation, spiritual truth, reassurance.

Violet: This colour reminds us of reaching a gateway to our spirit. It symbolises the healing of our mind, body and spirit. It is a symbol of cosmic consciousness, awareness of being, the universe and spirituality. You can use this colour anytime to meditate to open a connection to the spirit. Others: priesthood, kingship, royalty, mediator, wealth. (Oshin, 2018:22-24)

Liturgical dance costumes are mostly like priestly wears, observed Oshin (2018) in his reference to Aaron in the Bible. Liturgical dance costumes are mostly overflowing garments with different designs and colour specifications based on the message of a liturgical dance piece. Concerning the costumes and make up of liturgical dancers, Babalola Abiodun posited that

in another way, Liturgical dances are not suggestive and aren't made to create sensual pleasures to audience. The costumes aren't tight. The make ups are moderate and movements are carefully selected. Liturgical dancers have been able to differentiate their movement thereby making it distinct and peculiar though with little similarities.

Example of liturgical dance costumes can be seen in the picture below.

Lighting: Creative lighting design in liturgical dance performances are usually deployed to create a sacred atmosphere, highlight specific movements, or emphasise themes.

PROPS: Carefully chosen props such as candles, flowers, or fabric can add symbolic meaning or enhance storytelling.

Set Design: Minimal, yet effective, set design can create a sacred space or reinforce the theme.

Facial Expressions: Authentic, heartfelt facial expressions and gestures can convey emotions and deepen the audience's connection.

Storytelling: Using dance to tell a story or convey a message can engage the audience and make the performance more relatable.

Improvisation: Incorporating improvisation can allow the dancer to respond to the moment and the Spirit's leading.

Formations and Spatial Coordination: Thoughtful use of formation and spatial awareness can create a sense of community, harmony, or contrast.

Technical Skill: Strong technical skill can enhance the overall performance, allowing the dancer to focus on expression and communication.

Spiritual preparation: The dancer's spiritual preparation, prayer, and connection with God can infuse the performance with authenticity and anointing.

Audience participation: Encouraging audience participation or engagement creates a sense of community and shared experience.

These elements can enhance the impact and effectiveness of liturgical dance, making it a powerful tool for worship, expression, and communication. To further investigate the foregoing discourse, two liturgical dance performances in Nigerian will be analysed, using the various liturgical performance elements earlier discussed as guides.

Performance Analysis of *Oceans*, Performed by Spirit of David, Choreographed By Victory Ashien

The performance of *Oceans* was staged during one of the Spirit of David's concerts and the music performed to inspire its name, *Oceans: where my feet may fail* by Hillsong. The performance begins with a beautiful scenery of a ship and water on stage creating the illusion of an ocean, with dancers on stage doing different kinds of daily activities, some cooking, some farming, among other movements. Immediately after they performed these movements, heralded by the hit of a note in the instrumentals of the song, we see everyone running towards each other, scared and afraid. Metaphorically, this suggests a storm still struggling. When the lyrics of the song starts, the dancers are seen to do a joint dance that involves one of them leaving the bunch to do a solo dance while others continue the joint dance. The movement inculcates slow motion pauses. Though the lyrics of the song influences the bodily movements

of the dancers, they (the dancers) are not totally interpretive of every line in the lyrics. In some instances, some dancers continue a joint dance while others do another dance. This recurs till it ends in a point where six dancers from the group lift up one of the dancers, the dancer's body stretches and upward-faced. This follows the lyrics "in oceans still, my faith will stand and I will call upon your name and keep my eyes above the rays...." The dancer is being thrown up and caught in this part of the song leading the dancers to a horizontal line formation.



A dancer being raised up in performance.

The dancer thrown leads the line and a ripple effect movement starts with her, till it gets to the last dancer on the last line. After that, the dancers leave the line by going through different direction one after the other, till they end up in a circle we see them do a floor movement in the circle and coming up to a "yadah" position, with intertwined hands to each other. And as the music goes upbeat, they stomp their feet still holding themselves in the circle. Then a man is seen dancing (a solo dancer) whose costume is quite different from the rest of of the group. He comes on stage and everyone tries to reach out to him. He stops them and begins to touch them one after the other, which makes them leave him to do a floor movement dance inside the water, while he stands alone at the side of the stage. The dancer, to interpret this metaphor, suggests Jesus, the Saviour, who now comes to help them from the storm that they have been in from the beginning of the performance. He walks around them as the music goes upbeat while the other dancers continue their own movement which involves them scattering their legs in the air with their backs on the ground before standing up facing one another later, hands stretched out while moving their shoulders, head tilted to the back. After, we see the dancers jump twice before the beat of the music changes to just the instrumentals bringing the beat down. This makes all the dancers converge at one side of the stage leaving the man to the stage. He performs a solo dance which requires him to spin (*churgug*) to the floor and right back up, touching the water and marking it.

The dancers on the other side of the stage are arranged in pairs, side by side, and move two by two, as the dancer with the long regalia (the one symbolising Jesus), calls on them. At this point, the lyrics of the song had started, though soft. Each dance group performs different routines at different intervals as they are being pulled out and called upon by the lead dancer. When the beat ends, we see all dancers dancing together performing a joint dance. The movement requires a lot of hand movement and gestures before



they go down to the floor, separating themselves in twos. In another beat of the performance, one dancer out of each duet group stands up with a spin while the others are still on the floor "in a reaching out position"; the other dancers standing, then pull those on the floor, with one of their legs. Immediately, the dancers standing are seen doing "forward roll" while those seated on the floor do a "backward roll", facing each other side by side. They push each other, falling back with backs on the floor to immediately standing up to a jump by one of each duet group, to a lift by the other person. This lift is one in which the back of one dancer is resting on one side of the shoulder of the other dancer. Then they move round while the dancer who is being lifted, moves his or her legs as if he is riding a bicycle. After this, they are then seen dropping one another down and immediately some of the dancers do another jump while the other dancers catch them in their waist. And while all these were ongoing, the lead dancer is still performing a solo dance distinctly different from the other dancers.

The dancers drop their partners to the floor facing up; the other dancers walking towards their partners on the floor, and place their legs near the shoulders of their partners. The dancers on the floor lock their hands within their legs, and those standing, tilts forwards while reaching out. We see them jump forward facing their partners who are on the floor and pull them up as they do a kind of bend with one hand which support them to the floor while the others hand hold their partners and their partners climb on their legs, reaching out too.

We then see them jumping down while others stand up straight, facing their partners [not profile]. Each partner lifts up their legs as if they are trying to work on water, concurrently changing position. One at the back while the other partner is at the front. The dance partners support each other as they keep doing 'the walking on water' kind of movement.

There is a lift after which one of the partners is to touch the water, to a 'baby pose' lift; then they drop them. The formation changes as they do a joint dance. The movements then require them to do a slow motion while hitting from side to side within the turning of the song. When they see the lead dancer waving in a powerful way, the other dancers fall and some pops as he does it. These waves suggest, being under the influence of something, in this case, we can say, under the influence of Holy Ghost or the anointing.

While he does this, they all move to the other side of the stage, as he follows them. He then later continues to move forward at the front of other dancers, still under the influence of "the anointing"; they move with him but they are on a lower level than he is while standing up he moves from right till they get to the other side of the stage. Immediately they get to the other side of the stage, they all connect to the lead dancer with their hands in a profile position, jumping one after the other as the beat progression increases. After this, four dancers with the lead dancer break out of the formation to do a joint dance, which involves the lead dancer controlling them. Another three dancers then join them, and, not long after the remaining dancers also join, facilitating all of them to perform freestyle solos as the beat of the song is still upbeat. When the beat of the song goes down, five dancers create a kind of a "canoe like formation". We see the lead dancer climbs onto them while those in the formation roll to the other side of the stage while the lead dancer squats on them. He jumps off them and we then see all the dancers sit on the floor raising one leg up. The lead dancer then makes a move to stand them up, he then makes another move to sit them down. The light goes off for a moment and, when it comes back, we see the dancers lying on the floor slowly after the lead dancer makes a move for them to fall. The piece ends.

The dance piece "Oceans" is one of the best liturgical dance performances in recent times as it is a piece that is high on visual aesthetics and also communicates its message the way it is meant to.

Oceans: Where My Feet May Fail is a song written and performed by Hillsong United. The song is about faith with the biblical analog of when Jesus called Peter to walk on water with him, but when he begins to look around, seeing the raging storms and seas, he began to drown after taking multiple steps on water. The song encourages total trust in God. The song has high lyrical prowess which gave gap for the choreographer to be able to express it thoroughly. The movement of the piece were very technical and swift and in my own opinion would require dance professionals to execute. The style of dance used was the contemporary dance style with various lifts and jumps. The piece was performed by eleven dancers in all with one lead dancer who represents Jesus. The style of choreography can be said to be lyrical and



interpretative. They were a lot of movements that suggested the biblical analogy mentioned earlier and also movements that had to do with water and sea, for example swimming. The lyrical part of the choreography was not so much, but it was seen that at some particular point in time the choreographer followed the lyrics of the song.

Another important element of the piece was the costumes. The dancers were in an all-white costume of different patterns. Speaking on the colour choice, white is said to symbolize purity and also for us to understand that water purifies and cleanses. If we therefore put these two symbolism together, we will find out that the costumes were properly thought of before going on stage. The main dancer costumes were the only one which was different from other costumes in the piece. He wore a long overall White costume which was suggestive of the character he was known to be in the piece.

The analysis of this piece will be incomplete without mentioning the set used. The set was visually pleasing to begin with. It was a simple set which involved having water on stage and a ship placed at one side of the stage, upstage. The dancers literally dance on water throughout the piece, given an illusion of the ocean. When the lead dancer came in, the movements done after then brought out the interpretation of the dance with the help of the set.

The lighting used in the piece was not that elaborate. It was a mixture of white and blue light in order to give that ocean effect and also the lighting suggested to me that the Time setting for the piece was in the night. The lighting was plain as there was no special effect of any kind. It was just at the beginning that we saw the light go off and comes on, making the dancers change their movement and formation before the dance finally ended.

The piece made use of a lot of formations, pictures and patterns in the piece. The lifts and turns in the piece were done precisely, although the dancers dancing on water also caused some uncoordinated movements on stage, by them slipping and not been able to find their balance.

The message of the play was clear and I found myself speaking in tongues while watching the video for this analysis. The piece didn't really have a narrative, but I felt that a lot of spiritual preparation would have gone to it to have turned out the way it did amongst dancers and even the choreography itself.

Performance Analysis of *I Speak Life*, Performed by Praise Dance Academy, Choreographed by Babalola Abiodun

"I speak life" is a Liturgical dance piece performed by Praise dance academy during their Annual Liturgical dance concert "Gospel of dance" in 2022, at Akure, Ondo state, Nigeria. The piece opens with a dancer who walks to the middle of the stage, he bends down, stands up and lift his hand up then he spins round the stage. A hospital enactment can be seen on the stage also where a woman backing her child rush in and drop the child on a chair on the stage, she sits down beside the child and starts explaining to the doctor and nurses on stage the condition of the child. The dancer keeps spinning on one side of the stage while the hospital scene is still going on the other side of the stage, the doctor explains to the woman the condition of the child then the woman break in tears and we can see the nurse consoling her. The woman keeps begging and weeping while the scene is going on two dancers joined the lead dancer on stage, they raised their hands up, take two steps forward and swaying up and down then they face the audience and sway to each side of the stage, they jump up and lift their right up.

On the hospital enactment side on the stage the doctor, nurse, mother and son freeze then we can see the three dancers kneel on their right leg, they then stand and sway immediately to right side of the stage, the character at the hospital enactment unfreeze and the mother keeps begging the doctor and nurse, crying and weeping while they console her and on the centre stage a dancer fall and the other dancer catches her and the first dancer can be seen dancing in front of the two dancers then four dancers joined the three dancers on stage. There is another enactment at the Orchestra where a lady walks to the centre of the stage tries to poison herself and a lady runs on stage to stop her by dragging the bottle she is holding with her while the lady that wants to take poison keeps crying and expressing her pain then they freeze. We can see the dancer still dancing on the stage, they kneel down, facing their head to the ground and there hand also on the ground, then lay down with their backs they raise their backs, legs and hands up and lay back, the doctor and nurse are still on freeze. The dancers spin round the stage with their right

hand still on the ground and left hand up, they stand up and sway their hands up, do a joint dance and they sway round forming a circle then they did a formation, four dancers lift a dancer up and a dancer stands in front of the other dancers, they drop the dancer, bunch together and sway to their right and left then they sway round the stage.



A scene from the dance piece

The dancers' dance a joint dance and then they summersault on the stage, they stand up and continue dancing, the dancers sway to the left side of the stage, lift their right hands, sway up and down and then sway to their right and left, they stamped their left feet and jump up and sway their right hand up. The dancers squat while holding their head with their two hands and put their hands back on their laps. The character on the hospital side of the stage is still on freeze the dancers are still doing a joint dance on the centre stage. The ladies down the orchestra pit are still on freeze when the lead dancer breaks them of from their oppressor and hug each other then leave the stage. The lead dancer walks up into the hospital scene and also breaks them, the mother can be seen thanking him and hugging her son. The lead dancer runs back on stage and starts spinning round the stage, a dancer does a stunt on stage she sits down and summersaults to the right side of the stage, she stands up and spin round the stage, summersaults again then she leaves the stage. Two dancers dance to the right side of the stage and they dance energetically, the lead dancer can be seen spinning round the stage and performing stunts. The other dancers joined the lead dancer on stage, they did a joint dance, the audience shows appreciation and the dancers did a formation at the end of the performance.

I speak life is a liturgical dance that speaks about hope and faith in God. It was a piece on reassurance that everything will be alright based on what happened during the covid- 19 pandemic in 2021 to 2022. The piece is a Narrative Liturgical piece based on the song "I speak life" by Donald Lawrence ft Donnie McClurkin. It is a prophetic type of Liturgical dance based on the declaration made by the song. The piece doesn't really have much of liturgical performance elements stated earlier. There was no set, no light use, props.

The costumes of the dancers were one of the performance elements a that was rightly worked on in the piece. The costumes had a colour of Gold and white, symbolizing Royalty and heaven. It's fits well into the piece because the dancers are the one with the message of hope during the piece. They were five dancers in all while others were actors who did some enactment in the piece. The costumes used in those enactments were based on real life situations and the culture of Nigeria. For example, the woman who



brought in her child, wore an *Iro* and *buba* typical to the Yorubas in Nigeria. This informs us on how culture influences Liturgical dance as earlier stated.

The message of the piece was what was really focused on and also the movements, therefore there was no need for so much technical ensemble. Although I feel, like the use of the proper lighting than just the "disco-like" lighting would have enhanced message of the piece more than it did. If the light comes on and goes off on different part of the stage in which the drama part of the piece was used, it would have made the message clearer and also create a more pleasing impression on the audience.

The movements were simple and fluid in nature. We saw the different dance postures and gestures as earlier mentioned inculcated into the dance piece. The movements however were repeated several times, therefore not creating so much for variety in the piece. Although not really of a great performance in the part of visual aesthetics, the message which is the main goal of a liturgical dance performance was well passed across to the audience, in turn as a form of worship.

Conclusion

Liturgical dance in Nigeria is a fast-growing aspect of liturgy; although it has not been accepted fully by a lot of churches and spiritual organisations. When people begin to see the effectiveness of liturgical dance and how it can be used as a form of worship in the Nigeria Christian community, there will be a change. But first, liturgical dance choreographers must be very careful with their art because it is fragile and also very sacred. Understanding the sacredness is what will bring out the effectiveness of liturgical dance while ministering to audience everywhere. A liturgical dancer and choreographer must first have a firm personality in the liturgy before it can be passed to the audience.

Body movements in worship are biblical and have substantial theological grounds. The problem is not only in the aspect of theological values but also with the decisions and attitudes of churches: whether to accept or reject this theology as a part of the liturgy.

It is essential to provide the congregation with education about the spiritual significance of body movements in worship and also accept liturgical dance companies that worship God as a source of living.

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