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Calvin Symposium on Worship: Word, Music, Vision, Action

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Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church

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How to Introduce the Music of African American Composers to your Music Ministry and Congregation

Leo H. Davis Jr. D.M.A., *Facilitator*
Calvin Symposium on Worship
January 29-30th, 2010
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Objectives

By the end of our time together it is my hope that you will

- Have a clearer and broader understanding of the history of African American Sacred music.
- Be able to select appropriate repertoire as it pertains to your worship/ congregational needs.
- Assess and apply appropriate performance practice techniques.
- Fully discern whether God has called you to leadership in music ministry.
- Identify how one's theology can influence one's musical selection.
- Ensure that you are presenting "good church music."
- Have a better understanding of how to build a healthy relationship between pastoral and music leadership.

I. The History of African American Sacred Music

According to noted scholar Dr. Melva Wilson Costen, there are three components that African Americans share in the sacred worship experience.

- First; They gather to offer thanks and praise to God in and through Jesus the Christ, and to be spiritually fed by the Word of God.
- Secondly, They share the reality of a common historical taproot, which extends deep into the nurturing center of the African soil.
- And Finally, African Americans gather for worship as a part of their history of struggle for survival as African people in America.

II. Repertoire

- It is imperative that musical leadership is able to discern what is appropriate for his/her congregation.
- Selected composers and arrangers for a variety of worship experiences.
- Text as it relates to the worship service (i.e. Thematic, blended, contemporary, and traditional worship services).

III. Performance Practice Techniques

- What is appropriate, when is it appropriate, and why?
- Congregational participation vs. non participation.
- Choir Rehearsal (i.e. Excited, Educated, and Exhausted).

IV. God's Call for Leadership in Music Ministry

- Relationship with God
- Balance
- Discernment

V. What Influences Your Musical Selection?

- Your Deepest Belief about God.
- Your Deepest Belief about Corporate Worship.
- Mentorship.

VI. Standards for "Good" Church Music

- Where do you find it?
- Is it Appropriate (i.e. Worship theme, scripture, doctrine, grammar, voice tessitura of choir and congregation)?
- Is it consistent with larger worship goals?

VII. Senior Pastor & Music Minister Relationship

- Understanding Roles.
- Building the Partnership.
- Strengthening and Affirming the Partnership.

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