

HERMENEUTICAL — PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE ALADURA SPIRITUALITY IN IJESA SOCIAL HISTORY

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Introductory Remarks

This paper deals primarily with the social aspect of missiology in Nigeria. Its principal concern is to present an interpretative model of the Aladura spirituality and its impact on an ethnic group in Nigeria, namely, Ijesaland. The rationale for this study stems from an increasing interest, among scholars, in the Aladura churches or what some historians call 'Independent African/Nigeria Churches'.¹ However, it has to be stressed here that although the Aladura churches are receiving much academic attention, their impact in various parts of Yorubaland in Nigeria where they thrive is yet to be given a worthwhile consideration. Given the copiousness and richness of literature on the subject and the seemingly endless metamorphosis of the Aladura communion of churches, the historian of religion cannot do without being attracted to the subject. I have chosen Ijesaland for a deep and thorough exploration and analysis, more importantly because previous studies chose larger territories as case studies to the extent of ignoring local peculiarities and developments.

The social aspect of Christian mission in Nigeria becomes vital because this is one way that the church's presence in any society can be established. When this is done, then the pervasive and enduring impact of the church in a religiously pluralistic society like Nigeria could be objectively documented.

Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Religion

Edmund Husserl, a German philosopher, was the chief proponent of phenomenology in philosophy. Dutch scholars Gerardus van der Leeuw and later, P.O. Chantepie de la Saussaye adopted this approach in the study of religion.

Today, phenomenologists have two essential principles which have been adopted, by and large, by all those who use the method. These are the principles of *epoche*, and *eidetic* vision. The *epoche* signifies suspension or bracketing of value judgement while approaching religious data whereas *eidetic* vision is the principle of identification of the essence of the religious phenomena that are being studied. For the historian of religion'

the phenomenological task is no simple enterprise. Hence, we must give a honest heed of Olof Petterson's advice that:

*The researcher's task does not end with the collection of a greater or lesser number of facts. In his interpretation, he must be aware that a religion is more or less a system of beliefs, ritual behaviour and ethical structures. The phenomenology of religion appears as an important factor when it comes to interpreting and understanding the religion.*²

It is the interpretation of *phainomenon* as a systematic approach that we stand by as a methodological procedure for mission studies. At this juncture, we would need to explicate the interpretative analysis of the *phainomenon*.

Hermeneutical-Phenomenology

Hermeneutics itself means 'the science of interpretation' which, according to Bernard Ramm, is a derivative noun from the Greek *hierneneuo*.³ Therefore, hermeneutical-phenomenology is that aspect of phenomenology which 'is essentially concerned with interpreting the meanings of these inter-subjective or intentional symbols'⁴ in a given phenomenon. It moves beyond the empirical level of discursive questions of ultimate meaning, existence and transcendental being. In the search for meaning and understanding of the religious world view, the hermeneutical-phenomenology emphasizes, 'the essential dimensions that reside within the situation or world of phenomenon'.⁵

The most notable proponent of hermeneutical-phenomenology as an academic approach to the study of religion is Mircea Eliade. He uses the term 'creative hermeneutics' to describe this science of interpretation which the phenomenologists of religion adopt as a paradigm for their study.

We shall apply this method of interpretation to the analysis of our data on the Aladura spirituality in Ijesa history. Efforts shall be made to appraise critically the elements which make up Aladura spirituality via the route of hermeneutical phenomenology. In the search for the meaning and understanding of the practice and ethos of the Aladura as a Christian church, the biblical-theological analysis shall be emphasized. The goal of that enterprise is to validate or condemn such practices as far as biblical scrutiny allows. The term 'spirituality' used in this paper refers to pentecostal or spiritual nature of the Aladura group of churches. 'Spirituality', Alyward Shorter argues, 'is Christian in origin'.⁶ It is derived

from the word, *spiritus* meaning the life-giving force which stems from God and quickens the soul of a baptized Christian. It is the spirit of transformation. The communion of the Aladura churches referred to in this study includes: the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C & S), Church of the Lord, Aladura, and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC)

Historically, the CAC began as a prayer-band known among others as the Precious Stone Society. Beginning at Ijebu-Ode (now in Ogun State, Nigeria), through a series of interconnected events and factors, the society changed in 1926 into an autonomous church, the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle (N.F.T.).

Personalities like Senior Pastor Esinsinade (Sadare of Ijebu-ode) and Pastor David Odubanjo (Ijebu Ode) a nephew of the former, Pastor Isaac Akinyele (late Olubadan of Ibadan, 1955—1964), Pastor Joseph A. Babatope (Ilesa) and Apostle Ayo Babalola (Ilesa) laid a solid foundation. The N.F.T. developed into the Apostolic Church in 1931 with the full co-operation of the Bradford Apostolic Church representatives like Pastor D.P. Williams Jones Williams and Andrew Turnbull in the first instance, and later Pastor George Perfect, C.H. Russell, J.I. Vaughan and S.G. Elton. Doctrinal controversies tore apart the Apostolic Church in Nigeria such that there are now Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and The Apostolic Church (TAC). Both the CAC and TAC were well entrenched in Ijesaland. The immediate factor that contributed greatly to the development of the CAC/TAC was the great revival of Oke-Ooye Ilesa in July 1930. The other factors such as divine healing, a doctrine inherited from the Faith Tabernacle and the pentecostalism of the Bradford Apostolic Church, were foundations in the Church's existence. In the great 1930 revival, there was a prodigious display of the power of the Holy Spirit, miracles, signs and wonders.

While the CAC and TAC functioned limitedly as a growing independent church in Nigeria, the Cherubim and Seraphim also emerged on the Nigerian religious scene. Moses Tunolase Orimolade from a ruling house in Ikare (now in Ondo State) an illiterate middle-aged man, began to preach repentance from sin and puritanism. He began from Ikare as a peripatetic prophet moving on to other places like Bendel, Kwara, Hausaland until eventually he chose to settle down in Lagos with Venerable T.A.J. Ogunbiyi, Vicar of Holy Trinity (Anglican) Church in Ebute-Ero. His association with Chief Kehinde Coker at Ita-Balogun led him to be acquainted with Miss Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon (known later as Chief Dr. Captain Abiodun Emmanuel). Both Orimolade and Abiodun

Emmanuel became the two superbrats of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society. Through their vigorous prayers and revival activities, the C & S gained sound footing. So from a tiny organisation with widely scattered pockets of adherents across the country, the C & S ballooned into limelight in 1926 in Ijesaland.⁸

At about the same time that the C & S was becoming very active in Nigeria, the Church of the Lord, Aladura was being founded. Josiah Olunowo Ositelu of Ogere, in Ijebu-Remo (now in Ogun State) had intense visionary experiences. In 1926 he broke away from the Anglican Church and went into a retreat to receive spiritual training. Later, he emerged as a prophet preaching publicly as from June, 1929 at Ogere. Ositelu preached vituperantly against idolatry and native medicine, upheld divine healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit and taught about the gifts of the Spirit especially prophecy. Probably, he broke away from the 'orthodox' church as a result of his preaching and teachings which were not in accordance with the established doctrines of the Church. It was at this point that Ositelu linked up with members of the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle but he could not stay long with them. Two major factors appeared to have created a chasm between them. The first was that Sadare the leader of the NFT had a tension over Ositelu's campaign against witchcraft. Sadare alleged that confessions were extracted under duress and he was of the opinion that such an exercise would brew malice. The second bone of contention was Ositelu's over-indulgence in the use of certain mysterious 'holy names'. Those names, he claimed, were capable of bringing about miracles.⁹ As a result of these disagreements between Ositelu and N.F.T. leaders, it was crystal clear that they could not go together. Thus, around 1932, Ositelu came out with the Church of the Lord, Aladura.

The Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) *Eglise Du Christianise Celeste* as it was first known, has its pristine history traced back to revelatory experiences of its founder, Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oschoffa. He was born to a Nigerian father who was sold into slavery in Dahomey. Oschoffa claimed that he spent three months in a lonely bush to which he was mysteriously carried. There, the angels came to minister to him and instructed him on certain esoteric teachings.¹⁰ Around 1950, Oschoffa emerged as one of the twentieth century prophets and healers. Helped by a group of fishermen in Lagos Oschoffa began to preach his own brand of Christianity in Lagos and in 1952 it was claimed that the Lord had granted a sizeable followership in Lagos. It was from Lagos that the movement began to spread to other parts of Yorubaland including Ilesa in the first place and later to Hausa and Igbo lands.

In this work the four Aladura Churches are treated as one single block of Aladura communion. Holy Spirit baptism, practical pneumatic manifestations, hilarious worship, evangelism, use of physical objects like candles, incense, crucifixes, bible verses committed to memory, all constitute the hallmark of Aladura spirituality. At one level, the interpretation of the linkages and interpenetrations of these elements via the hermeneutical-phenomenological method will be undertaken. Then of course, at the second level, the impact of this spirituality on Ijesa social history as a consequence will also be treated.

Very central to the Aladura spirituality is the great emphasis on the *pneuma*. The Aladura Churches see themselves as having discovered true christianity that is relevant to their current situation. This assertion is manifested in many of the generic names they give themselves. One of such is *Ijo-Emi* (Spiritual church), that is, the church founded by spiritual and prophetic figures. And the whole ethos of these churches is a radical departure from mission Christianity. All the Aladura churches that fall within this scope of study believe totally in the teachings of the Bible on the Holy Spirit and His gifts. The Holy spirit to them is the third Person of the Triune God who constitutes the force, *ruah*, that not only rejuvenates (as in Job 33) but is also understood as the life-giver and the seat of human emotions (as in II Kings 19:7). He is the moving force behind the intellectual functions of rational and religious perceptions. The Holy Spirit is also known to be the basis for the charisma of the prophet. The prophet, as a man, is inspired through the *ruah or pneuma* of God. Therefore, according to CAC, C & S and TAC belief, the Holy Spirit is given to a Christian after conversion as the spirit of sonship, the seal of belongingness to God. Moreover, these Aladura Churches generally share the Pauline theology on *pneumatika*. The Apostle Paul, as is generally known was the most prolific on this subject. Using only the pericopae of 1 Cor 12, 13 & 14 as a case study, he enumerated the spiritual gifts as well as functions in the church. In the pericopae, Paul hinted that the multifarious gifts of the spirit are shared out among christians. They are not occasions for boasting but opportunities for *diakonai* to the whole community and through the community to the Lord. The gifts of wisdom knowledge, faith, healing and the working of miracle, prophecy, tongues and interpretation of tongues are all listed. The Aladura churches claim to adopt all the gifts enumerated above and that through them God uses them (the Aladura) to work wonders in Ijesaland.

On the second level of our interpretative model, we notice that the Aladura have made a religious impact via the spirituality explained above.

Never before the emergence of the Aladura in Ijesaland was anyone known as a christian charismatic prophet or a miracle worker, a healer or glossolalete even though christianity had existed in the land in various forms.¹² The spiritual gifts *pneumatika* were used as the measuring standard of faith by theologians and missiologists. They argue that any church devoid of them cannot claim to be living and dynamic. Thus H. Van Dusen wrote:

*A church devoid of vital and vibrant possession by the Holy spirit is a church congealed in ancient forms, or well on the way to spiritual sterility.*¹³

Karl Rahner, another eminent German theologian and missiologist, also identified with this view when he expressed the opinion that:

*Anyone who, absolutely rejects the possibility of special revelations offends against faith, and anyone who denies that this may occur ever since the apostolic age, offends against a doctrine which is theologically certain.*¹⁴

Our data reveal startlingly the current trend in the Anglican ecclesia at Ilesa. Visions, dreams, prophecies, speaking in tongues are now being experienced and tolerated in the Anglican Church. Prophets and visions are allowed to relate divine messages to members during corporate worship.

Greater religious impacts of the Aladura are made among the youths of Mission Churches. Members of the Anglican Youth Fellowship or the Scripture Union on the one hand and the Charismatic Renewal on the other, are mostly youths from the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and Roman Catholic Churches. These youths — in a way as a response to the challenge of the Aladura churches, begin to move towards pentecostalism. They emphasise christian spiritual baptism and experience rather than doctrinal variations. Therefore, the questing spirit of man to meet his deepest need is being satisfied with the gift of prophecy. The Aladura has been able to build a spiritual community with a spiritual culture around the world of Christianity in Ijesaland so much that the faith has become satisfying and relevant to the needs of its adherents. On this point, no one can raise a debate about the spiritual gifts as a logical necessity for any church to be dynamic. So, the Aladura is on the right path.

The Aladura churches not only provide their adherents with inspiring modes of worship to satisfy their spiritual proclivities, they also provide explanation, prediction and control of their worldview in accordance with what they were used to in the traditional religious system. The acute absence of explanation, prediction and control of worldview before the advent of the Aladura Churches led many Christians in Ijesaland, and indeed, Africa to religious ambivalence. They had one foot in Christianity and the other in traditional religion. With this background of abject spiritual poverty, the Aladura spirituality came as a welcome development. The three-fold structure of this spirituality had been similarly discussed by scholars of the Intellectualist Theory. It was started by Monica Wilson and John D.Y. Peel, but the real impetus to it was given by Robin Horton. This was why Ogbu Kalu described Horton as the 'major current advocate of the Intellectualist Approach'.¹⁵ The point to be noted here is the use the Aladura made of the three-fold structure of the worldview to achieve their purpose. Much as we agree with Horton's Intellectualist Approach there are areas where we differ. While Horton, as Ikenga-Metuh pointed out, saw the triumph of Christianity (and Islam) over the autochthonous religion as the collapse of the latter, we see in it a continuity of *Deus Revelatus*. Albeit, this is not the forum to cross words with Horton. What we are saying is that the Aladura Christianity has merely exchanged baton with the traditional religion.¹⁶ The phenomena of prophecy, visions and dreams, glossolalia and audition were all used to meet the increasing needs of the Ijesa society. In the Aladura Churches, prophecies, auditions and glossolalia are induced by mutual contagion through spiritual choruses, clapping of hands, beating of drums, wild dancing and rhythmical swaying of the body. With these elements present in the Aladura fold, members and non-members alike turn to Aladura prophetic figures and leaders in times of social crises in their lives.

We could say with precision that the impact that the Aladura spirituality made along this line was pervasive, continuous and enduring on the Ijesa society. By using the "Explanation — Prediction — Control" method via prophecy, visions, dreams and glossolalia, the Aladura Churches were able to offer assistance to those who went to them in times of fear, anxiety, danger, misfortune and uncertainty about the future. One important event that led to the quick spread of the C & S in Ilesa underscores the point about the prodigious use of the *pneumatika* by the Aladura. Prophetess and Captain Abiodun Akinsowon (now Emmanuel) in 1926 led an evangelical team of the C & S to Ilesa for missionary campaigns. The crusaders arrived at a crucial time in the history of Ilesa. The whole land was afflicted with drought

and smallpox epidemic which had brought about untold confusion in the town. Akinsowon's team was led to Owa Aromolaran I (The king of Ijesaland) who received them with open hands. Captain Akinsowon prayed for the Owa and the drought/epidemic afflicted land. She prophesied that rain would fall and victims of small-pox be healed before the team left for Lagos. That all these predictions came true before Akinsowon and her team departed was something that brought great calm to the Owa. Consequently, Owa Aromolaran I gave the society an unreserved toleration as far as its establishment and spread in Ilesa were concerned.¹⁷ The C & S prophetess demonstrated that the predicament of a race could be changed with the use of charisma.

Using the hermeneutical-phenomenological method, we have to say a few things about the motivating factor and the success of the C & S evangelism just discussed above. The use of prophecy coupled with environmental purification and restoration by the Aladura leave no room for adverse comment. The Old Testament precedence of prophecy and restoration of arid land to water-flowing one is a case in point. Salvation is both spiritual and physical. It is spiritual because man's soul is redeemed from eternal doom and physical because it deals with the wholesome needs of man.

We only need to add that a witnessing church is a dynamic one. In evangelism, Christians teach about Jesus and His salvific work. Rummaging through the Bible, we see that Paul was an assiduous and profound teacher about Christ. He participated actively in evangelism (Acts 20:20—21; 26:22—23). Peter did the same (Acts 9:32—35). Christ himself did preach about the kingdom (Matt. 9:35) and above all, all the apostles participated indefatigably in evangelism (Acts 5:42).

The spirituality which characterized the Aladura group of Churches bestowed it with an aura of authority and power via the Holy Spirit. The adherents believe that the authority exercised by Jesus and bequeathed to his disciples is transferable to them based on the promise of Jesus Himself.¹⁸

This explains why the Aladura hold tenaciously to healing and the working of Spirit as enumerated by Paul, particularly to healing and the working of miracles. The question one might wish to raise here has to do with the nine gifts. Is the Holy Spirit not capable of unleashing more than nine gifts? Was Paul, in mentioning nine gifts, operating within his human limited scope? Or were those nine gifts mentioned, all that the apostle actually had the opportunity to witness practically in his own days? However, there should be no diversion from the main point. Whether or not the spiritual gifts, *pneumatika* as mentioned by Paul were more than nine or not, the major point of

interest here is the Aladura's use of healing and working of miracles. Therefore, we would like to assert that the healing activities of this group of churches go well into their spirituality. And this is one important core area that the Aladura spirituality has relevance to the socio-cultural context of Ijesaland.

Healing in the Aladura Churches

Under this sub-heading, healing shall be fully discussed because of its socio-theological importance.

healing, when subjected to the biblical hermeneutical principle, is a spiritual matter and is borne out of the statement: 'I am the Lord who heals you' in Exodus 15:26. This means a complete repudiation of the authority and use of magic so that healing was seen, almost exclusively, as the province of Yahweh's operation in the Old Testament period. Several O.T. passages talk about spiritual healing, *rapha*, by the prophets. The therapeutic nature of the Mosaic code revealed that healing was in the province of Yahweh. The Israelite prophets had the power as Yahweh's regents to heal sickness and work wonders. For example, the cleansing of Naaman's leprosy by Elisha (II Kings 5:1—14) and Elijah's raising up of a dead child (II Kings 4:18—37) demonstrated acts of compassion through the power of Yahweh. Yahweh's healing may be instantaneous or gradual. The overriding factor should be Yahweh's grace coupled with the confidence of his worshippers. The N.T. Literature provides a wide range of examples with regard to healing. We would not bother with details, It is sufficient to say that *Diasozo*, 'to be cured'; *apoluo* and *luo*, 'to lose' or 'release' from anything that binds, including infirmity, were terms frequently used. *Therapeuo* and *iaomai* are both used for healing and curing sickness. These are general healing terms in the synoptics.

At this juncture, perhaps we have to give a vast array of data as genuine proofs of Aladura healing activities. Cases of healing by the Aladura Movement abound in Ijesaland.²⁰ In Ilesa the urban Ijesa centre, there were claims that the C & S Idassa healed the womb of a woman who had been rejected at the Wesley Guild Hospital. A lunatic was also healed by Prophet J.A.O. Omole leader of the C & S Idasa, Ilesa. Healing activities of this opportunity to witness practically in his own days? However, there should be no diversion from the main point. Whether or not the spiritual group of churches went beyond Ilesa. Several instances of faith healing were recorded at Imesi-Ile by a CAC Prophet David Ojo. The man became so famous that he was nick-named 'Second Babalola' because of his prodigious

use of *pneumatika*. In addition to the healing of bodily diseases and solving of spiritual problems, it was claimed that David Ojo raised up many dead persons at Imesi-Ile among whom were Falana Samuel who died of small-pox, Francis Kolawole, Miss Ajayi who died and was about to be buried at Onike's compound, Ijana in Imesi-Ile when David Ojo raised her up. At Ibokun, Ilase, Ijebu-jesa, Iponda and Ilowa towns in Obokun Local Government in Ijesaland, Prophet S.A. Popoola of CAC was reported to have performed tremendous healing activities. He similarly healed many people in Ikeji-Ile, Ifewara, Osu, Oje-Bode, Esa-Oke, and Esa-Odo.²¹ From the healing activities of the Aladura, we can say that healing had been removed from magic, sorcery and witchcraft into spiritual christianity. As a phenomenologist, I have to state that other means of healing —modern or herbal medicine by the Aladura did not appear in the *phenomenon* of Aladura healing activities. Here, the Aladura spiritual impact actually manifested itself. This is why for any church to thrive in Ijesaland, she must include healing in her package. The ministry of healing is what lifts the central doctrine of redemption and salvation from the realm of the abstract into the reality of men's lives. It is also one important area where Christianity could incarnate in African culture. Healing occupies a prominent position in traditional Yoruba/Ijesa culture and religion so much that it never can be doubted that the Ijesa-Yoruba are already familiar with it.

Incubation

The Aladura Churches have a unique cultural behaviour of making their clients to live under 'sacred protection' or 'incubation' known in Ijesa as *abe abo*. This phenomenon of 'incubation' is contingent on the conglomerate praxes of prayer, prophecy and vision and healing. Among the Celestial Church members, there is the provision of 'mercy ground' for those whose life's problems defied medical or herbal solution. The Cherubim and Seraphim Church, and the Church of the Lord, Aladura have 'prayer-houses or 'holy' mountains. 'Prayer-houses' or 'holy mountains' are similar in function to the 'mercy ground' of the Celestial Church. The CAC, in part, practices visits to sacred mountains and prayer-houses like the C&S. What is important to a historian of religion about this whole idea of 'incubation' is the social values attached to the praxis. Problems taken to the 'sacred sites', such as court-cases, psychological disorders, barrenness, misfortune and so on are given adequate attention by the leaders.

But what will our hermeneutical-phenomenological method say about the Aladura use of 'incubation'? In order words, can the Aladura practice of

incubation bow to biblical scrutiny? The response to this query determines the legality or otherwise of incubation (abe abo). Generally speaking, Christians have been enjoined by the Bible to seek God's protection in prayer, observance of His word and total dependence on Him. Looking at the practice of incubation as found in the Aladura Churches there are certain difficulties. Cases of sexual misdemeanor, elopement of clients' wives, abortion and other vices are common. Subjecting this practice of incubation to the centrality of the Bible, can the Aladura biblically justify such a practice? The semitic tradition of people observing a retreat is permitted in the old testament. For example, during David's rough encounter with Saul before the latter faced a debacle on Mount Gilboa, a man called Doeg was observing incubation when Ahimelek was priest. (1 Sam 21:7). Moses was for forty days and nights before God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24). The Old testament prophets were often asked by Yahweh to tarry before Him. Juxtaposing this practice in the Old Testament with the New Testament, there was an apparent change. Jesus with His disciples was noted for strenuous teaching on the Kingdom of God. He called them for two basic reasons: First that they should be His companions. Second, that the disciples preach and perform miracles, show wonders and signs as proof that the eschatological kingdom is present in Christ (Matt. 28:18—20; mark 3:14—19). The assurance of God's protection from the powers of Satan and the principalities of the world had become more or less a built-in-mechanism such that they did not have to bother about incubation. As a matter of fact they were to fight sin and the mortal world and, also, to resist Satan. They were not to fear! This background explains the conspicuous absence of the practice of incubation in the New testament. Christians are to put on the armour of God (Ephesians 6:10—18).

From this biblical disquisition, the Aladura practice of incubation has no full biblical support. Defiance of the bible breeds vices such as are associated with incubation.

Physical objects are used like candles, incense fumigating in case of C & S, Celestial Church and Church of the Lord, and consecrated water, citation of passages of the Bible in the CAC. It was claimed that any pressing existential problems, were solved this way. For instance, the leader claimed that court cases could be foiled; bareness could be removed; one's business could thrive; psychotic patients were healed via the use of incubation. What is really interesting to us is that the Aladura boast of their ability to fulfil similar functions even in diverse cultural and historical contexts.²² Salvation from predicament is essential to all living human beings. Thus the Aladura

spirituality and influence encourage social optimism amongst their members and clients alike. The social impact of this spirituality in Ijesaland is located principally in offering healing for mental and physical distress.

Conclusion

From our disquisition, certain pertinent remarks have to be made. First, that the spirituality of the Aladura places the Holy Spirit and His functions in the church in proper position. The Holy Spirit is the author and source of the Aladura spirituality.

Christianity, when it came in 1859 to Ijesaland, met the traditional religion and Islam firmly established, so, it had to struggle along with the older religions for survival. The new faith actually needed the Aladura kind of spirituality for it to overtake the older religions. The spiritual expression of the Aladura was so pervasive and captivating that it was difficult to resist, and could not be easily copied. The whole experience of joyful singing, dancing, clapping, miracle events and sermons relevant to man's life, all form the gamut which made the Aladura Christianity so unparalleled. Their type of faith characterised by pentecostalism attracted many. The way the Holy Spirit came upon the people led to their ecstatic nature and through their rhythmic swaying of the body, one could decipher the movement of the Spirit. A poem is apposite in this connection:

*Who has seen the wind,
Neither you nor I,
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.*²³

The Johannine Gospel also likens the out-pouring and movement of the spirit to the blowing of wind.²⁴

Our second remark has to do with some excesses that the Aladura type of spirituality has taken. The practice of burning candles, fumigating incense and sexual misdemeanour of male leaders and prophets with female clientele during incubation, among others, are typical examples of mis-use of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Our major quarrel with this group of churches is the absence of theological training for their leaders and the hybridization of 'new' and 'old' elements in religion.

Syncretism is as sinful as witchcraft. The Aladura Churches need vigorous bible teaching on the management of the *pneumatika*.

Notes and References

1. Among the Yoruba of Nigeria, the Aladura group of churches that is, the 'praying churches' are known generally as the Independent African Churches. I have adopted the name Aladura as the label for these churches, for prayer is the basis of their existence. See of instance, H.W. Turner, *A History of an African Independent Church: Church of the Lord, Aladura*. (2 Vols). (London: Clarendon press, 1967); J.D.Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba* (London O.U.P. 1968); G.C. Oosthuizen, *Post 'Christianity in Africa* (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968) and J.A. Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of An African Independent church* (N.Y. NOK Publishers, 1982).
2. Olof Petterson and Akerberg, *Interpreting Religious Phenomena: Studies with References to the Phenomenology of Religion* (Stockholm: Algrint and Wiskell International, 1981), p. 25.
3. B. Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1970).
4. K. Wiber, *A Sociable God: A Brief Introduction to Transcendental Sociology* (New York: New Press, 1983), p. 13 and Brenneman, *The Seeing Eye: Hermeneutical in the Study of Religion* (Pennsylvania: State University Press, 1982), p.14.
5. Brenneman, *The Seeing Eye*, Ibid.
6. A Shorter, (ed.) *African Christian Spirituality* (London: macmillan, 1978), p. 4.
7. For details, see C.O. Oshun, 'Christ Apostolic Church of Nigeria: A suggested Pentecostal Consideration of its Historical, organizational and Theological Developments. 1918—1978' Ph.D. Thesis submitted to the University of Exeter, 1981 and D.O. Olayiwola, 'The Aladura Movement in Ijesaland, 1930 — 1980' Ph.D. Thesis submitted at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), 1986, pp. 100—108.
8. Detailed history of the C & S can be found in J.D.Y. Peel, *Aladura: A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba*, op. cit., and J.A. Omoyajowo *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of An African Independent Church*, op. cit.
9. See H.W. Turner, *A History of An African Independent Church: Church of the Lord, Aladura*, VOL. 1, op. cit.
10. Personal interview with S.B.J. Oschoffa and S.O. Ajanlekoko, Celestial Church Premises, Ikosi Ketu, Lagos, 19—9—84.

11. Celestial Church Constitution, p. 7.
12. D.O. Olayiwola, 'The Aladura Movement in Ijesaland' op. cit., pp. 196—201. Here I argued that justifiably the Holy spirit was recognized in mission christianity but had never before manifested in such a way as He did in the Aladura Churches.
13. H. Van Dusem, *Spirit, Son and Father*, (N.Y.: 1958), p. 28.
14. Fr K. Rahner, *Visions and Prophecies* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1963), p. 6 cited in J.A. Omoyajowo *Cherubim and Seraphim* op. cit., p. 104.
15. O.U. Kalu, 'Gods in Retreat: Models of Religious Change in Africa' in *Nigeria Journal of the Humanities*, Univ. of Benin, 1977, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 44.
16. Emefie Ikenga Metuh, *The Gods in Retreat* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1986), pp. 257—264.
17. Personal Interview with Samuel Omoniyi, one of the leaders of C & S H. 110 Iroye Street, Ilesa 7—5—85. And also with His Royal Highness, Owa Obokun of Ijesaland, Oba Adekunle Aromolaran II, Palace premises, Ilesa, 8—2—85.
18. See John 14:12—14, 16.
19. See 2 Cor. 12:12.
20. D.O. Olayiwola, 'The Aladura Movement in Ijesaland' op. cit., pp. 226—240.
21. Ibid.
22. The spirituality of this group of churches is made manifest in their work-ethics. Constraint of space forces me to over look this aspect. However, I have discussed the Aladura work ethics in my 'Man Shall Not Live By Bread Alone, Luke 4:4. The Attitude of the Aladura to Work Ethics', chapter 14 of *Work Ethics, Values and Science in Nigeria* (Essays in Honour of Prof. O.S. Adegoke) edited by Femi Akindele, University Press Ltd., forthcoming).
23. C. Rosetti in *Singsong, The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations*, (1960) 360 cited from C.O. Oshun, *Aladura Spirituality: A New Understanding of God*. A chapter in antonio de Nicholas et al (eds) *God: Experience or Origin* (N.Y.: Paragon House, 1985), pp. 48—62.
24. See John 3:8.

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