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## THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL VALUES ON ALADURA CHURCHES IN EKITILAND (SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA)

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### **ABSTRACT**

The kernel of inculturation theology in church history scholarship is that Christianity has demonstrated throughout history that it has always found expression and has the capability of being spread in other cultures. Ekiti in South-western Nigeria is not an exception. Many scholars agree that Africa's religious insights and cultural values have a lot in common with that of the Bible. This paper is therefore an attempt to assess the level of inculturation between Christianity and some cultural values in Ekiti. The emphasis in this paper is on divination and communalism (akodi system). Such dialogue is more noticeable in the African Indigenous churches which have been given the nomenclature - 'Aladura' in Ekitiland. Notable among the Aladura Churches are: Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim and Seraphim Society, The Church of the Lord (Aladura) and Christ Apostolic Church. It expounds the influence of Ekiti cultural values such as divination and communalism (akodi) on the varieties of spirituality in the Aladura Churches. It discusses how the level of inculturation in these churches is being used to solve human existential problems. It also discusses the social and ecological impacts of the Aladura Churches in Ekiti. The paper concludes that Christianity enjoys wide acceptability in Ekitiland due to its ability to adapt to the traditional values of the ethnic group.

**Keywords:** *Aladura, Churches, Cultural Values, Impact, Ekitiland.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The nomenclature "Aladura" is a composite Yoruba noun derived from "Oni" (owner of) and "adura" (prayer). These two words "oni" and "adura" are joined together to form "Aladura", which simply means: "owner of prayer" or "prayerful people" or "people committed to saying prayers". In Ekitiland, the churches that are classified as "Aladura" include the following, among others: Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C), Celestial Church of Christ (C.C.C), Church of God (Aladura), Cherubim and Seraphim Society (C & S), The Church of The Lord (Aladura) (C.L.A) and Jerusalem Church of the Lord International (J.C.L.I). Besides, there are many other schismatic groups of these major Aladura Churches which are too numerous to list here.

It is worthy of note that many other Christian denominations (Mainline and Pentecostal Churches) have challenged this exclusive claim of the Aladura Churches which seems to give the impression that "adura" (prayers) are their exclusive preserve. Nevertheless, "Aladura" as a generic name for this group of African Independent Churches has enjoyed wide acceptability among scholars. Notable among who are: Christopher Oshun<sup>1</sup>, David Olayiwola<sup>2</sup>, S. A. Ishola & Deji Ayegboyin<sup>3</sup>, E.O Babalola<sup>4</sup>, M.A Ojo<sup>5</sup>, J.D.Y Peel<sup>6</sup>, H.W. Turner<sup>7</sup>, J.W. Fernandez<sup>8</sup>, among others. It is equally worthy of note that the C & S, C.L.A,

C.A.C, and C.C.C agreed to and accept being called by the generic nomenclature - Aladura, and often refer to themselves by the name. Non-members of these churches in Ekitiland also describe this group of churches as Aladura.

The Aladura Churches in Ekitiland, like in most parts of Nigeria are broadly classified into four main groups: The Christ Apostolic (CAC) which emerged from the Faith Tabernacle and The Apostolic in 1918 and 1930 respectively<sup>9</sup>, the Cherubim and Seraphim Society (C&S) which came into historical limelight in 1925<sup>10</sup>, Church of the Lord, Aladura (CLA) the origin of which dated back to 1930<sup>11</sup> and the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) which started in Porto Novo, Benin Republic in about 1940. Besides, other Splinter groups of Aladura Churches could be found in many towns and villages in Ekitiland.

The Aladura Churches are products of the various charismatic movements in Yorubaland which started in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These charismatic churches emerged gradually out of the visionary and prophetic experiences of some notable personalities in the Mainline Churches. Prominent among these charismatic Christians were: Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola, Sophia Odunlami, J.S Shadare, Saint Moses Orimolade, Christianah Abiodun Akinsowon, Primate Josiah Oshitelu and Pastor Bilewu Oschoffa, among others.

### **REASONS FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ALADURA CHURCHES**

The reasons that can be adduced for the emergence of Aladura Christianity included the following: the desire to indigenize Christianity, nationalist feelings<sup>12</sup>, the urge and passion for what many Christians perceived as the purer form of Christianity, the thirst for unrestricted freedom to exercise gifts of spiritual leadership and the sudden interest in divine healings. In the words of Olayiwola:

The emergence of the Aladura Churches was occasioned by the complete rejection of the indigenous African values, be the culture or religion by European missionaries. The hard line position of the missionaries in respect of African cultural values marked the beginning of ecclesiastical and missiological crises that characterised the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary activities in Nigeria.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, the chasm, misunderstanding and dichotomy created within the rank and file of the mainline churches fuelled the agitation for native pastorate and its attendant spasmodic and sporadic schisms in these churches.<sup>14</sup> The religious crises which the spontaneous agitation created assisted in no small measure in the emergence and growth of Aladura Churches which quickly absorbed many belligerent members of the mainline churches.

Above all, the immediate cause of the emergence of Aladura Churches was the outbreak of plague which ravaged the Nigerian society in the first three decades of the century, coupled with serious economic depression and famine. At this critical period, most of the European

missionaries abandoned their followers, closed their missions and returned back to their countries.

The influenza epidemic was particularly severe in Ekitiland. The epidemic which was called lukuluku<sup>15</sup> in an Ekiti dialect killed hundreds of people and rendered many others physically incapacitated. A Roman Catholic priest and chronicler of Ekiti history, Oguntuyi, paint the gory picture of the epidemic thus:

In October, 1918, an epidemic influenza broke out in Ekiti. Unfortunately, the cause was attributed to witchcraft and the anger of the gods. Many domestic animals were slaughtered to satisfy the blood-thirsty witches and wizards. All over Ekiti, the remedies believed by the people to be always efficacious were applied ... but the situation grew worse. The epidemic raged fiercely for about six months and thinner down the population. The dead were not mourned. Many were not even buried.<sup>16</sup>

Elizabeth Isichei also lends credence to Oguntuyi's submissions in the following words:

. . . afflicted by influenza, smallpox and plague, famine and a world economic depression, scores of people collapsed on the roads, many chose shady trees under which to lie down and die. I visited some houses where every member was lying dead . . .<sup>17</sup>

The catastrophe which the influenza epidemic caused in Ekitiland forced many members of the mainline churches in the town to seek more efficacious spiritual antidotes outside the mainline churches. In Okemesi-Ekiti, for instance, it was this urge that prompted two prominent members of the Anglican Church, Phillip Bamigbade and Daniel to invite Prophet Joseph Ayo Babalola for Christian spiritual revival in the town in 1931.<sup>18</sup>

The origin of the Christ Apostolic Church in Ekitiland could be traced to the multiplier effects of the Oke-Oye in Ilesa<sup>19</sup>, which attracted participants from Igbomina, Ekiti, Ondo, Oyo, Ijebu-Ode, among other towns in Yorubaland (Nigeria). After the revival, Joseph Ayo Babalola made Efon-Alaaye-Ekiti his base, and from there, the Christ Apostolic Church spread to the nooks and crannies of Ekiti. The spread and growth of CAC in Ekiti's towns and villages was equally facilitated through the efforts of some Ekiti indigenes who attended the Oke-Ayo revival coupled with the activities of the "Osomaalo".<sup>20</sup> Other Aladura Churches such as the Church of the Lord (Aladura), Cherubim and Seraphim Society and Celestial Church of Christ were established in Ekiti through the efforts of some roving evangelists and itinerant traders of Ekiti origin who had travelled to Lagos, Ibadan, Akure, Ondo, Ilesha, Akoko, Abeokuta, Agbowo and Ijebu for commercial, agrarian and adventurous activities. Elsewhere<sup>21</sup>, a more detailed history of the Aladura Churches in Ekitiland has been thoroughly discussed. A repeat here will amount to sheer duplication.

### **CULTURAL VALUES: A DEFINITION**

One of the doyens in the field of church history, Ogbu Kalu, defines cultural values as the "dominant traits" in any given society.<sup>22</sup> He enumerates these traits as: people's perception of the world, the social system, especially, the kingship, marriage and affinity, social sanctions, economic and property relations, political organisations, arts and crafts, among others. Etuk agrees with him and contends that a value considered worthy becomes a "regularity" or a "recurrent pattern" in the thought of a given society.<sup>23</sup> That is the more reason today in most parts of Africa, in spite of the rapid infiltration of western technology and encroachment of alien ways, there are still serious yearnings and longing for the pre-colonial and pre-Christian eras.

Ekitiland which is a culturally homogenous group in Yoruba nation of South-Western Nigeria is noted for its unique cultural values. The basic cultural values among the Ekiti people include: divination, kinship (which emphasizes communal life), music, maximum respect for elders, good human relations, emphasis on the existential aspects of man's relationship with the sacred, the use of symbolic colours, proverbs, hospitality, the sacredness of life, among others. The focus of this paper is on two aspects of these cultural values and how the Aladura Churches in Ekiti have adapted them to enrich Christianity, they are: divination and kinship or communalism.

### **ALADURA CHURCHES VIS-À-VIS CULTURAL VALUES**

During the first encounter between Christianity and African culture, the major belief of the Western missionaries was that Africans were primitive. Thus, their aim was to convert them to Christianity, and by so doing, indoctrinated them to abandon their traditional practices. In fact, many foreign missionaries even believed that Africans had no idea of God.<sup>24</sup> They considered God as a "philosophical concept" which the "primitive" and "untutored" Africans could not conceive.

The second stage of this encounter was the period of adaptation. The term "adaptation" is from the mission theology in which Christianity is seen as a cultural tradition. The process of adaptation is one in which Christianity in one cultural dress encounters a non-Christian culture and then tries to incarnate itself in the new culture.<sup>25</sup> During this process, the new cultural values challenged and transformed Christianity. In this phase, the Christian missionaries grudgingly accepted in all candour that since it was not possible to remake Africans into westerners, some of the cultural values in Africa could be modified and used for the growth of Christianity.

The contemporary trend of contextualization with regards to Christianity vis-à-vis African traditional values implies that Christianity ought to express itself in the various cultures that play hosts to it in order to remain permanently relevant. In fact, it is widely acknowledged that the independent churches grew up in many parts of Africa in response to the desire for a Church where Africans can feel at home.<sup>26</sup> This desire also shaped the worship, beliefs and practices of the traditional churches to make these churches distinctly African. Since Christianity was not bound to a single cultural and religious expression, converts to

Christianity assumed cultural religious habits marked by local indigenous patterns of behaviour, language, worship and symbols. Bowden lends credence to this position:

If culture is a set of meanings and values that inform a way of life, then, Christianity not only had many different cultural expressions, it also claimed that there was a normative dimension within those cultures to think through, let alone live this dual claim to pluralism and normativity.<sup>27</sup>

The kernel of Bowden's postulation above is that the mutuality of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in the encounter between Christianity and cultures acknowledges the diversity of people's culture and social arrangements. Bowden is not alone in respect of the view that Christianity as a universal religion must be prepared to accept cultural pluralism. His views have been supported by article 14 of the Documents of Vatican II, which reads *inter alia*:

The church views with great respect the moral and religious values of the African tradition, not only because of their meaning but also because she sees them as providential and as the basis for spreading the gospel message and the beginning of the establishment of the new society in Christ.<sup>28</sup>

In line with Bowden's thesis and the 1966 Documents of Vatican II, many Christians in Ekiti have imposed their traditional or cultural values on the Church through Aladura Christianity. Adherents of Independent Churches in Ekiti have subjected Christianity to their native historical experience and immersed the church in their cultural and religious traditions. Among the Ekiti people of South-Western Nigeria, the Aladura Christianity has spread along familiar religious channels as it acquires a strong dose of local religious materials such as divination and kinship or communalism and uses them to enrich Christianity.

### **DIVINATION IN ALADURA CHURCHES: THE CASE OF EKITILAND**

In Ekiti traditional society, divination as a cultural practice, is an attempt to foretell the future, to have knowledge of the inexplicable and sometimes to know the wishes of divinities, gods, goddesses and spirits which they worship. Such consultations are considered necessary in order to assist barren women, to reveal the cause of strange illnesses, to ascertain the meaning of strange dreams, to know the destinies of new born babies, to determine the appropriate choice of wife or husband, to unravel the cause of sudden or untimely death and to get solutions to myriads of other existential problems of life.

The most common method of divination in Ekiti involves the use of a four-value kolanut. Dopamu and Awolalu give a vivid picture of this method of divination:

The values are thrown or cast on the ground and the way in which they fall give the answer to the diviner's questions ..., the falling of the convex side and the concave side is read as in Ifa

divinatory system. The values may be thrown several times before the right message is given.<sup>29</sup>

It should be noted that the traditional religion in Ekitiland has no written scriptures to which both priests and adherents could go to decipher the wishes of Olodumare (Supreme Being), divinities, god and goddesses. Before the advent of Christianity, there was nothing among the Ekiti that could be equated to the Bible or the sermon in Christianity. It was therefore from Ifa<sup>30</sup> divination that adherents of traditional religion obtain guidance for their day-to-day living, discover future events and how to deal with them, learn the history of their race, the heroes and heroines of their different communities, the norms and unique social values of each community.<sup>31</sup> Thus, Ifa divination poems or corpus can be regarded as the storehouse of the people's traditional body of knowledge. These verses constitute the people's unwritten scripture. The verses embody myths that recount the activities of the deities and also give justifications for details of rituals. Bascom opines that Ifa verses are often cited to settle disputed points of theology or ritual.<sup>32</sup>

In Ekitiland, there are many *Osanyin*, *babalawo* or *babaawo* and *Olokun* diviners who seek to interpret or explain the mysteries of life. These diviners convey the message of Olodumare the ancestors and spirits to the devotees. They also give guidance on daily affairs and settle disputes. They uncover or reveal the past, hidden facts and also look into the future. A *babalawo* or *babaawo* (diviner) is not in all cases a priest who serves the shrine of a god or divinity. Nevertheless, we have *babalawo* is usually an expert in medicine and herbs, in addition to his work as a seer. The diviners are consulted by the people for solutions to all existential problems, such as marriage, evil machinations of witches, before and at the birth of children, at the appointments of chiefs and kings, before embarking on a journey, during sickness, for guidance, when an item is missing or stolen and before the commencement of a major business venture.

Mission Christianity in Ekitiland at the earliest stage ignored the cultural values of the people which have been discussed in this sub-topic. In fact, this lack of respect for the traditional values of the people was one of the mistakes made by early missionaries in Africa. John Mbiti attests to this:

Mission Christianity has come to mean for many Africans simply a set of rules to be observed, promises to be expected in the next world, rhythmless hymns to be sung, rituals to be followed and a few other outward things. It is a Christianity which is locked up six days a week ... It is a Christianity which is active in a church building.<sup>33</sup>

Thus Mission Christianity at the initial stage was to the people of Ekitiland an abstract religion which did not take care of their immediate practical needs in life. In the belief of an average Ekiti, any religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them is no religion.

Traditionally, the Ekiti people worship Olodumare (Supreme Being) and the avalanche of Orisa (gods) and imale (divinities) not merely for the sake and formality of doing so. They do basically for the expected pre-anticipated material, spiritual, social and psychological benefits. Ndiokwere agrees with this position:

Every form of religiosity answers problems of life or loses relevance. An African liturgical form admonishes the deity that if he does not perform, the path to his grove would be overgrown and votaries will ignore him for inefficiency.<sup>34</sup>

In Ekiti, it is common for people to make requests on issues such as the fertility of the womb (gift of children), prosperity, fame, electoral success, protection and long life, among others. When they feel that such requests have been granted, they usually pay *eje* (votive offering) to the relevant Orisa (divinity) in their local communities.

Therefore, for people who were brought up under the religious milieu earlier discussed, the 'provisions' for their worldly affairs in the Mainline Churches can be regarded as grossly inadequate. The resultant frustrations have made many of the members of these Mission Churches to join the Aladura Churches which blend the cultural elements earlier expounded with the practice of Christianity.

In Ekitiland, the Aladura Churches and their prophets fill the lacuna left in the Mainline Churches, as they (Aladura) compensate pragmatically and realistically for the loss of the diviners, the traditional healers, seers and welfare consultants.<sup>35</sup> Apart from the adherents of Aladura Churches, non-members also seek 'protection' and 'assistance' in the Aladura Churches when faced with difficulties.

The practices associated with finding solutions to human existential problems in the Aladura Churches are similar to those obtainable in Ekiti cultural world-view. For instance, mediumship in the Aladura Churches is practised through charismatic modes such as: prophesy, vision, audition, speaking in tongues and dreaming. All these are achieved through spirit possession. This is a situation or process in which spirit inhabits a person. Having been seized by the spirit, the person foretells and brings into knowledge past or secret events of which he or she never knew before hand. Such spiritually gifted person is known as Woli (Prophet) or Alasotele (one who prophesies). A person who for a period of time possessed by the spirit to relate to ordinary people the words of the spirit is called elemi. The elemis in the Aladura Churches are imbued with special power which enables them to perform healing and solve myriads of human existential problems.

A phenomenological study of Aladura Christianity in Ekiti reveals an avalanche of problems which 'clients' and members claimed have been solved for them by the ritual power of the elemi. Such serious problems include: sickness, afflictions by witches and sorcerers, unemployment, ill-lick, barrenness, complicated pregnancy, exorcism for people with born-to-die spirits (abiku), delayed promotion, electoral failure, examination failure, madness etc.

Also, in the Aladura Churches, various rituals are performed for people who are to be ransomed. This kind of ransom power ritual is for those who have been targeted for untimely death. Besides, there are rituals for victory, mercy, blessing and for those seeking promotion.

It is important to note that many of the materials or items used in carrying out the services enumerated above have symbolic and cultural significance. They are: palm fronds, red and white candles, perfume, the cross, egg, coconut, sponge, soap, white or red garments and consecrated water. The use of any of these items depends largely on the favour being sought by the 'clients'. Spiritual services in the Aladura Churches include prayers at holy mountains usually called: *Ori Oke adura* (holy hills dedicated for prayers). In all intents and purposes, these practices are analogous to those obtainable in the traditional milieu. For this reason, many have considered such practises in the Aladura Churches as syncretic.

However, it is important to note that cultural adaptation does not necessarily amount to syncretism. The absorption of cultural ideas and practices in a local Christian community need not be regarded as syncretic. According to Gehman<sup>36</sup>, the Gospel must be contextualized in order to make it very homely and meaningful to the receptors.

In Ekitiland, it is not only the adherents of the traditional religion that consult the traditional diviners for divine guidance. Christians still count the favours of the traditional diviners (babalawo) when confronted with some social and economic problems. Such Christians do so under the cover of darkness.<sup>37</sup> One can therefore submit that the divinatory aspect of the traditional religion in Ekiti has influenced the leaders of the Aladura Churches who have incorporated some elements of the traditional system of divination into their own brand of Christianity.

### **COMMUNALISM OR KINSHIP IN EKITILAND VIS-À-VIS THE ALADURA CHURCHES**

The BBC English Dictionary defines kinship as the relationship between members of the same family. In Ekitiland, the family is regarded as the core or nucleus of the society. Since members of the same family are bound together by blood, their close relationship is reflected in their common aspirations and shared values. Thus, the principles of communalism are well-entrenched, even in the extended family circle.

In Ekiti tradition, common aspirations are reflected more in religious affiliations, because all members have common ancestral root. Therefore, they are naturally devotees of the same divinity or divinities, gods or goddesses. However, one of the missiological problems of early missionaries in Ekiti was the emphasis on individual acceptance of the Christian faith. This led to a situation in which members of the same family were dispersed into many Christian denominations. This scenario broke the bond of kinship which was hitherto the hallmark of corporate existence among the highly homogenous Ekiti people.

It is important to note that communalism in Ekitiland is an institutionalized system that is both supra-sensible and material in its ramifications. The community is regarded as the

custodian of every member. Therefore, each person is expected to toe the popular line of the majority. The centre of the town called the village square is the nucleus of social, judicial, political and religious affairs. The village square is commonly regarded as the centre of communal religious activities because it plays host to each community's tutelary deity.

In fact, living together in the sense of brothers and sisters are the basis of the expression of the extended family system in Ekitiland. Put tersely, kinship is regarded as the architectural skeleton of corporate existence among the people. This is what Jemiriye refers to as the "akodi" system in his study of the culture of Yoruba in South-West Nigeria. Ekiti is a uniquely homogenous race in Yorubaland where "akodi" system is strongly entrenched.

According to Jemiriye, *akodi* "depicts the people's practical living of total acceptance."<sup>38</sup> The traditional housing pattern called *akodi* in Ekiti is usually designed to accommodate various family members such as father, mother, children, uncles, cousins and grandchildren, among others. Jemiriye also explains further the value of the akodi system in the following words:

The western consciousness that every individual can live alone, thereby struggling to possess the whole world until he dies in egocentric futility is not with the akodi concept. The dehumanising economic mirage that one should buy television for every room rather than make the children accept themselves and share a television is full negation of the akodi concept.<sup>39</sup>

An akodi is usually a single compound house, which is rectangular in shape and consists of many rooms. All the rooms face a single and large parlour called apete.<sup>40</sup> The outlet of apete leads to a large compound called akodi. It is here that the only entrance into the compound usually stands. In a large family, two compounds house - akodi - meji are commonly in use in many communities in Ekiti. It is also very important to note that members of the same extended family and others who live in the same akodi share things in common. For instance, all members of the akodi work on the large expanse of farmland. Their farm products are usually kept in a common store-house where each member can reasonably take in accordance with his/her needs. In many akodi, members have joint cooking pots for food and soup. There are however exceptions.

The Aladura Churches in Ekiti have adapted and promoted the akodi socio-cultural philosophy of communalism, which is akin to socialism in the western world. Visits to most of the Aladura Churches in Ekiti towns and villages in the course of this research have confirmed to the researcher that many of their members and "clients" reside either permanently or temporarily within the usually large compounds of the churches.

To ease the communal lifestyle, there are usually residential apartments in most of the Aladura Churches. The inmates or "Christian family" share many things in common like the residents of a typical "akodi" in the traditional Ekiti setting. This practice provides succour for the poor and needy members of the Aladura Churches.

Furthermore, in line with the "akodi" paradigm, the adherents of the Aladura Churches desired to be saved together as a community of believers. The practice of communal spirituality in the Aladura Churches seems to find support and encouragement in the Bible. This could be seen from the communal spirituality characteristic of the early church (see Acts 4:32-37). These verses in the "Acts of the Apostles" give clear indications that the early Christians lived communally, sharing in common their property, personal possessions, responsibilities and finances. Also, there was the example of the Montanist Movement which established a communal community in Pepuza where members awaited the second coming of Christ (Parousia). Monasticism in the early church also exemplified a kind of communal spirituality by the Christians of that era.

The Aladura Churches in Ekitiland use the injunctions in the above verses of Acts as blueprint and justification for their almost mandatory policy of communal living. Given this background, members of the Aladura Churches are encouraged to live with each other just like the cultural "akodi" philosophy earlier expounded. It is however important to note that within this practice, individuals retain their rights to private property. The point here is that a common fund is established from which the needy among them are helped. According to Shorter<sup>41</sup> and Mbon<sup>42</sup>, while the spirituality of the Pentecostal and Mainline Churches in Africa remain largely individualistic, that of the Aladura Churches in Ekiti, following the paradigm of the people's cultural extended family pattern, is highly communalistic.

### **THE SPIRITUAL ASPECT OF COMMUNALISM IN ALADURA CHURCHES**

A notable spiritual practice that is commonly associated with communal living in the Aladura Churches is "incubation". It is called "abe aabo" in Ekiti dialect. It means "under protection". It is a practice whereby members of the Aladura Churches and others seeking solution to certain problems are made to live under a form of "sacred protection" within the premises of the church. According to Olayiwola, this phenomenon of incubation was "contingent on the conglomerate praxes of prayer, prophecy, vision and healing."<sup>43</sup>

The Celestial Church of Christ (C.C.C), one of the notable Aladura Churches in Ekiti has mercy grounds within the residential areas of its various branches. In these sacred places, those who have existential problems which defy orthodox and modern medical practices are taken care of. Other Aladura Churches such as: Cherubim and Seraphim Society (C & S), Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C) and the Church of the Lord (Aladura) (C.L.A) have parallels of the incubation practice in "ile adura" (prayer houses) and "ori oke mimo" (holy mountains). Examples of such "holy mountains" could be found at Erio-Ekiti, Efon-Alaaye-Ekiti, Emure-Ekiti, Ijero-Ekiti, Ado-Ekiti, Omuo-Ekiti and Ilawe-Ekiti. On the whole, the concern of church historians is that problems of any magnitude taken to these sacred places such as litigations, psychological problems, barrenness and myriads of other misfortunes, as many people claim, are usually attended to by the spiritual leaders.

### **CONCLUSION**

From our discussion thus far, we can infer that given the various spiritual activities of the Aladura prophets in Ekiti, what we seem to have with regard to their healing activities is

almost a replacement of traditional religious structure with Christian forms. Another typical example is the belief in the power of the Orisa (divinity) in the traditional parlance which in the operations of the Aladura prophets has been replaced by Jesus' corresponding mediatory roles. Besides, the role of dreams and visions in Ekiti traditional belief system is retained but Christianized by the Aladura Churches. One can also draw some parallels in the roles of angels and their invocation in the Aladura Churches vis-à-vis the invocation and function of the orisa in the traditional religious activities of the Babalawo (traditional diviners) in Ekiti.

This paper also reveals that the concept of church as a single family which is expounded in Acts 10:1-48 has been given more emphasis by the Aladura Churches. Group solidarity, the concern for others, dialogue, trust, cordiality and total acceptance as postulated by Jemiriye in his akodi theory constitute the mainstay of African family fabric and this ought to be encouraged within the church in the larger 'ecumene'. In fact, church-as-family will give room for the emergence of ecclesiology that will consider Christian authority as call for service to humanity.

Finally, the use of indigenous musical instruments couples with the pattern of singing which are in line with Ekiti cultural values often buoy up the entertainment value of the songs render during church services in many of the Aladura Churches. In respect of religious adventures and spiritual proclivities, the Aladura Churches have availed themselves of the avalanche of ecological resources in Ekiti. The holding of regular prayer sessions on tops of hills, rocks, mountains and fasting in the forests (wilderness) in the various communities in Ekiti have been taken as routine adventurous activities by adherents and 'clients' of the Aladura Churches.

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8. J.W. Fernandez, "African Religious Movements", in R. Robertson (ed.), *Sociology of Religion*, New York, Penguin Books Limited, 1984, pp. 384-403.
9. C.O. Oshun, "Pentecostal Perspectives of ...", p. 23.
10. J.A. Omoyajowo, *Cherubim and Seraphim: The History of an Independent Church*, New York, NOK Publishers, 1982, pp. 1-22.
11. E. Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa from Antiquity to the Present*, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 279-283; E. Isichei, *A History of Nigeria*, Lagos, Longman Group Limited, 1983, pp. 462-463.
12. The concept of Ethiopianism, a symbol of African identity and self-actualization was already in vogue by the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
13. D.O. Olayiwola, *Aladura Christianity ...*, p. 351.
14. J.F. Ade-Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria, 1841-1861*, London, Longmans Group Limited, 1965, pp. 255ff; E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria*, London, Longmans Group Limited, 1966, pp. 5-41.
15. The nomenclature "lukuluku" was given to the influenza epidemic of the second and third decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in most towns in Ekitiland (Nigeria) due to its attendant killing en-masse and by sudden strokes. It is an Ekiti onomatopoeia which denotes high mortality.
16. A. Ogunbiyi, *History of Ekiti from the Beginning to 1939*, Ibadan, Bisi Books Company Limited, 1979, p. 23.
17. E. Isichei, *A History of Christianity ...*, p. 280.

18. Oral Interview with Elder David Akintunde, 68 years, retired Civil Servant and prominent member of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Okemesi-Ekiti, 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2004.
19. Ilesha (a town in present day Osun State, Nigeria) is a contiguous town to Efon-Alaaye Ekiti, which is regarded as the cradle of the Christ Apostolic Church in Ekitiland.
20. "Osomaalo" was a name used in Ekiti to refer the Ilesa and Ijesha textile traders in general. It came into being in the usual attempt to describe the characteristic mannerism and insistence of the textile traders from Ilesha when collecting debst - oso-ni-maalo-gbowo mi (I will stoop, rather than sit down to collect my money). In the course of time, it soon became a generic name for all Ijesha traders (in Nigeria) dealing in textile materials.
21. G.G. Jegede, "The History of the Aladura Churches in Ekitiland, 1925-2005", a Ph.D Thesis submitted to the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, 2008, pp. 144-399.
22. O.U. Kalu, *African Cultural Development*, Enugu, Fourth Dimensions Publishers, 1978, p. 6.
23. U. Etuk, *Religion and Cultural Identity*, Ibadan, Hope Publications, 2000, p. 22.
24. E. Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*, London, SCM Press Limited, 1973, p. 88. At best early Missionaries and Explorers considered African "God" as a "withdrawn one".
25. A. Shorter, *African Christian Theology: Adaptation or Incarnation?*, New York, Orbis Books, 1977, p. 145.
26. C. Rieber, "Traditional Christianity as an African Religion", in N.S. Booth (ed.), *African Religions: A Symposium*, London, NOK Publishers Limited, 1984, p. 269.
27. J. Bowden (ed.), *Christianity: The Complete Guide*, London, British Library Publication, 2005, p. 317.
28. W.M. Abbot, "The Documents of Vatican II", London, At ad Gentes, no. 22, 1966, p. 612.
29. P.A. Dopamu & J.O. Awolalu, *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan, Onibonoj Press & Book Industries (Nig.) Limited, 1979, p. 147.

30. Ifa refers to the god of wisdom among the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria. It also refers to the word of divination from the mouth of Orunmila. Orunmila refers to the deity and the nomenclature - "Ifa" means the divination system.
31. W. Abimbola, *Ifa: An Exposition of Ifa Literary Corpus*, Ibadan, Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. v - 12.
32. W. Bascom, *Ifa Divination*, London, Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 8.
33. J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1982, pp. 233-234.
34. N.I. Ndiokwere, *Prophecy and Revelation: The Roles of Prophets in the Independent African Churches in Biblical Tradition*, London, SPECK Publishers, 1981, p. 279.
35. D.O. Olayiwola, "Aladura Christianity in Dialogue with African Traditional Religion (the Yoruba Example)", in *Studia Missionalia*, Vol. 43, Roma, 1994, pp. 256-357.
36. R.J. Gehman, *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, Kijabe (Kenya), Kesho Publications, 1990, p. 271.
37. O. Ojambati (Chief), aged 78, a popular traditional diviner in Eastern Ekitiland, revealed that he enjoyed more patronage from Christians than traditional religionists. Interviewed on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2010.
38. T.F. Jemiriye, "Religion: The Complex Equation of Acceptance Between Man, God-gods and Materials". University of Ado-Ekiti 21<sup>st</sup> Inaugural Lecture, Ado-Ekiti, The University of Ado-Ekiti Press, 2009, p. 51.
39. T.F. Jemiriye & S.O. Eniola, *Religion: An Introductory Study*, Ado-Ekiti, Petoa Educational Publishers, 2005, p. 82.
40. J.A. Omoyeni (Chief), Oral interview, farmer, 91 years old, Omuo-Ekiti, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2010.
41. A. Shorter, "Recent Development in African Christian Spirituality", in E. Fashole-Luke et al (eds.), *Christianity in Independent Africa*, Bloomington & London, Indiana University Press, 1978, pp. 531-532.
42. F.M. Mbon, "The Contemporary Spirituality of African Initiatives in Christianity: An Assessment of their Emphasis on Signs and Wonders, Miracles, Healings and Prosperity", in *Insight: Journal of Religious Studies, Volume 1, 2 & 3*, pp. 5-9.
43. D.O. Olayiwola, "Hermeneutical-Phenomenological Study of the Aladura Spirituality in Ijesa-Social History", in *Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 5, no. 2, October, 1991, p. 270.