

**SOCIAL VALUES OF SACRED OBJECTS IN SELECTED
CHURCHES IN IBADAN, NIGERIA**

BY

Akinwumi Ambrose AKINDOLIE
Dip., Adult Ed., B.A, M.A. (U.I)
MATRIC NO: 132332

A Thesis in the Department of Religious Studies
Submitted to the Faculty of Arts in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
of the
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

SEPTEMBER, 2023

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mr. A.A. Akindolie in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan.

.....

Supervisor

Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo
B.A. (Ile Ife), M.A. Ph. D. (Ibadan).
Professor, Department of Religious Studies,
University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the glory of God in whom I live, I move and have my being, my late parents, Rufus and Deborah Akindolie, and my siblings, Funke, Shileola, Olanike, Akintunde, my lovely wife Temitope and to the entire Akindolie family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My acknowledgment first goes to God Almighty my creator, the Alpha and Omega, the Lord and the architect of my life who fulfilled his promise in my life in a way that no man can comprehend. You are truly my God, way maker, miracle worker and light in the darkness that is who you are in my life. May this loving father be glorified now and forever!

In the same elation, I want to appreciate my supervisor, Professor Ayantayo Jacob Kehinde, who also doubles as father and mentor. Sir, no doubt, your support, encouragement and doggedness have provided the enabling atmosphere that birthed my educational career and the successful completion of this work. I will forever be thanking you for your encouragement and contribution to my educational attainment over 20 years of my contact with you as at when I am writing this acknowledgment.

I am also indebted to my able and every relevant lecturer who taught me from my undergraduate and postgraduate levels: Professor D.O Akintunde of blessed memory, Professor Dzurgba, Akpenpuun, Professor Deji Ayegboyin, Dr. P.A Oguntoye, Chief Olajide now retired are treasured. Those who are currently in service are Professor J.K. Ayantayo, Professor S.A. Fatokun, Professor A.O. Dada, Professor H.A. Labeodan, Associate Professors O.O. Obijole, Dr. S.M. Mepaiyeda, Dr. O.O. Familusi, Dr. J.A Adekoya, Dr. S.O. Okanlawon, Dr. O.O. Berekiah, Dr. H.M. Sewapo, Dr S.K. Olaleye, Dr. O. P. Oke and Dr. O. Gbadamosi are worthy of acknowledgments.

I also appreciate my boss and my colleagues in The Redeemed Christian Bible College (RCBC), Redemption Camp. They are the Provost, Professors Babatunde Adedibu, Dr. Shitta-Bey Oluwaje, Dr. Akin Ogunsola, Dr. Oti Alaba, Dr. Dare Ajayi, Dr. Adeleke Olujobi, Mr. Osoba, Mr. Akintunde Felix, Mr. Oluseun Ajayi, Mr. Afolabi Hope, Mr. Eyinlaye Peter, Mr. Samson Apantaku, Mr. Olusola Duyilemi, Mr. Daniel Oladapo and all the non-academic staff. By extension, I appreciate Professor J. Ayodabo and Professor M. Popoola, who showed concern for me in the course of the programme.

I specially appreciate my father in the Lord Dr. Matthew Adedeji. With your encouragement right from my secondary school to the completion of this programme, I will forever be grateful. I appreciate Believers' Evangelical Mission Worldwide family for their encouragement, prayers in the course of this programme.

I am so indebted to my family members my parents Late Pa Rufus and Deborah Akindolie who through their loins I was able to fulfill my purpose. It is painful that you are not witnessing this academic achievement that you had been thirsting and longing for among your children. However, all glory be to God because I know that the seed of doggedness, perseverance, goal getting you inculcated in me while alive has started bringing up fruit for the family you left over two decades ago. My appreciation also goes to my BIG Sisters: Shileola Akinade and Olanike Ajibade for their moral, financial and motherly care in the course of this programme. Mrs. Funke Ambode and Akintunde Akindolie thank you for being there for me.

In the same vein, I thank individuals and family friends who supported me in one way or the other, particularly the likes of Brother Lekan Oni, Dr. Isaac Adedeji, Marvel Adedeji, Dotun Olanubi, Kayode Abidoye, Mr. Olatunji from South Africa, Judith Bachmann from Germany, Phillip Ohmann, Marie Luise and Gina the organizers of Potentials of Cooperation with African Initiated Churches for Sustainable Development” Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Implemented by the Faculty of Theology of Humboldt University Berlin, conducted in Nigeria under which I first had the opportunity to attend an international conference at Humboldt University Berlin, Germany.

Also, I am indebted to the entire staff and board of trustee of the Missionakademie, Hamburg University, Germany who gave me six months’ scholarship for exposure studies to enhance this successful study. I appreciate Dr. Anton Knuth, the Head of Studies, Kirsten my co-supervisor Missionakademie, Dr. Brighton, Mrs. Silvia our ever tireless secretary, Denis, Daniel, Agnes, Yifan, Maraike, Niza and Marina for their contributions and encouragement during my stay at Missionakademie, Hamburg, Germany and many others that I may not mention their names. I also thank the clergies and members of selected churches: CAC, C&S, CCC, TCLPFW and RCCG in Ibadan, Ogere and Redemption Camp, Mowe, Ogun State that granted me interviews in the course of this research. I will like to especially appreciate my wife and my Joy Temitope Kikelomo Praise Akindolie for the words of encouragement and love she demonstrated to me in the course of the study.

Before I conclude, I would like to return all Glory and adoration to God almighty for keeping me all through this programme. I will keep on loving and praising you forever!

Akindolie Akinwumi Ambrose
2023

ABSTRACT

Sacred Objects (SOs) are an important aspect of religious beliefs and practices of many churches in Nigeria, including churches in Ibadan. Previous studies on SOs explored mainly symbolic, ritual and spiritual values inherent in them, with scant attention paid to their social values. This study was, therefore, designed to examine social values of SOs used in selected churches in Ibadan, with a view to determining their usage and significance.

Robert Codrington's Mana Theory was used as the framework, while the descriptive design was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to select five churches and areas where SOs are mostly used in Ibadan: Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Ashi-Bodija; Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), Orogun; Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S), Iwo Road; The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW), Oke-Ado; and Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Challenge. In-depth interviews were conducted with 75 members (15 from each Church) because of their possession of SOs; and 10 members of the clergy (two from each Church) for consecrating the objects. Five sessions of focus group discussion were held with artisans and traders; expectant mothers and mothers-in-waiting; the sick; security personnel; and drivers. The data were content-analysed.

Five SOs were used: water, oil, candle, crucifix and perfume; and three social values were identified: economic, security and healing. The artisans and traders affirmed that selling water in CAC, oil in RCCG, and candles, crucifixes and perfume in CCC increased their finances. While some security personnel wore crucifixes, some drivers hung them in cars, and others sprayed perfume on the body and in cars for protection. However, some drivers over-rely on the SOs by engaging in overspeeding on the highways, thereby becoming a threat to other road users. The majority of the expectant mothers and mothers-in-waiting in CAC, CCC, C&S and TCLPFW affirmed that they got healed from fibroid and stillbirth as they drank and bathed with holy water. Likewise, some persons in RCCG reported that they got healed from ulcers, stroke, 30 years of haemorrhage and epilepsy through the use of anointing oil. However, some respondents claimed that non-standardisation of the use of water, oil and perfume exposed their users to the health risk of overdose. The sale of these SOs resulted in business growth, job provision and self-reliance by their dealers. While some members of the clergy in CCC reportedly sold candles at exorbitant prices during programmes, some traders in CAC, C&S and RCCG sold water and oil at exorbitant prices during special programmes. The security personnel and drivers in CCC claimed that crucifix and perfume helped to ward off evil attacks, and prevented vehicle accidents and attacks by highway armed robbers and kidnappers. The healing from the use of these SOs reportedly prevented their beneficiaries from a high medical bills in conventional hospitals.

Sacred objects are deployed by the selected churches in Ibadan to provide religious alternative measures for addressing economic, security and health challenges.

Keywords: Sacred objects, Social values, Churches in Ibadan, Religious beliefs

Word count: 483

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title page	i
Certification	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	vi
Table of contents	vii
List of plates	x
List of Abbreviations	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	2
1.3 Purpose and objectives of the study	2
1.4 Research questions	2
1.5 Scope of the study	2
1.6 Significance of the study	3
1.7 Limitations to the study	4
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1 Symbolic use of sacred objects	5
2.2 Spiritual use of sacred objects	10
2.3 Ritual use of sacred objects	13
2.4 Background study of selected churches in Ibadan	18
2.4.1 A synopsis of African initiated churches in Nigeria	18
2.4.2 Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)	19
2.4.2.1 The call	22
2.4.2.2 Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola's ministry	23
2.4.2.3 The beginning of Babalola's revival	24
2.4.3 Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C & SMC)	25
2.4.3.1 Orímoládé's ministry	29
2.4.3.2 The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship)	
Worldwide (TCLPFW)	31
2.4.5 Celestial Church of Christ (CCC)	34

2.4.5.1	The call of Bilewu Oshoffa into ministry	36
2.4.6	The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)	38
2.4.6.1	A new dawn in RCCG	41
2.5	Sacred objects used in selected churches	42
2.5.1	Meaning of sacred objects	42
2.5.2	Rationale for the use of sacred objects in selected churches	43
2.5.3	Sacred objects in Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)	45
2.5.4	Sacred objects in Celestial Church of Christ (CCC)	49
2.5.5	Sacred objects in The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW)	67
2.5.6	Sacred objects in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C & S)	73
2.5.7	Sacred objects in the Redeemed Christian Churches of God (RCCG)	85
2.6	Users of the sacred objects in the selected churches in Ibadan	95
2.7	Theoretical framework	96
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY		
3.1	Research design	98
3.2	Study area and population	98
3.3	Sampling techniques	99
3.4	Method of data collection	99
3.5	Method of data analysis	100
3.6	Ethical consideration	101
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS		
4.1	Results	102
4.2	Discussion of findings	103
4.2.1	Security value of sacred objects	103
4.2.2	Economic value of sacred objects	107
4.2.3	Healing value of sacred objects	126
4.3	Challenges associated with the use of the sacred objects for members of selected churches	135
4.3.1	Exploitation	135
4.3.2	Risk factor	136

4.3.3	Abuse in the use of sacred objects	137
4.3.4	Over reliance	137
4.4.	Sociological significance of the values	138
4.4.1	Alternative to conventional security	138
4.4.2	Economic development	139
4.4.3	Alternative to conventional medical care	139
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
5.1	Summary	141
5.2	Conclusion	141
5.3	Recommendations	142
5.4	Contributions to knowledge	143
5.5	Suggestion for further studies	143
	References	144
	Appendixes	152

LIST OF PLATES

		Page No.
Plate 2.1.	Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola 14/5/2019	21
Plate 2.2.	Saint Moses Orímọládé Túnọláşe 13/10/2019	28
Plate 2.3.	Prophet Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu 20/10/2019	32
Plate 2.4.	Rev'd Pastor Prophet, Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oshoffa. 12/3/2019	35
Plate 2.5.	Rev. Josiah Akindayomi 20/10/2019	39
Plate 2.6.	Miracle Water Station 27/1/2020	47
Plate 2.7.	Candle. 12/3/2020	52
Plate 2.8.	A member at CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Using Prepared Sacred Candle for Prayer 12/3/2020	53
Plate 2.9.	Anointed Oil preparing for Prayer at CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. 13/5/2020	55
Plate 2.10.	Spiritual Perfume. 12/3/2020	57
Plate 2.11.	Holy Water in the stoup. 17/8/2020	62
Plate 2.12.	A session of water in containers at CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. 12/3/2020.	63
Plate 2.13.	Members of TCLPFW praying with candles during Sunday service. 16/6/2019	68
Plate 2.14.	Members of TCLPFW with the researcher praying with candles during Sunday service. 23/7/2019	69
Plate 2.15.	Water Pot for Ablution (Ikoko Iwese) 17/8/2020	71
Plate 2.16.	Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship Worldwide) headquarters, during Sunday Service Ogere, 6/9/2020	79
Plate 2.17.	Procession with a cross during Sunday Service. Cherubim & Seraphim Movement Church (C & S MC) Ayò Nì O, Ìfẹ̀-Ìwó District, Headquarters. Ibadan 13/9/2020	84
Plate 2.18.	From a seller at the back of Old Auditorium, Redemption Camp RCCG, and International Headquarters. 6th March, 2019.	88

Plate 2.19.	Researcher and seller and buyer of Customised wristband at (RCCG) Redemption Camp, International Headquarters, 6th March, 2019.	90
Plate 2.20.	Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye: The General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God RCCG. Source RCGG Ibadan. 23/7/2019	92
Plate 2.21.	Researcher with Communion bread and Wine in his hands, Holy Ghost Service and anointing Service, RCCG, Ibadan. 4/9/2020	94
Plate 4.1.	The researcher interviewing Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd - in - charge of CCC, Irapada Parish, Orogun 12th March, 2020	110
Plate 4.2.	A seller of water keg at CAC Oke Agbára Ashi, Ibadan. 8/3/2019	113
Plate 4.3.	Cross section of men (attendants) at the Miracle Water Station, CAC, Oke Agbára, Ashi, Ibadan. 23/7/2019.	116
Plate 4.4.	Abiodun Ayeni is the Prophet and shop keeper, interview respondent at TCLPFW. 4/8/2020.	119
Plate 4.5.	Temitope Oyenuga, Assistant Secretary of TCLPFW, interview respondent, 18/10/2020.	121
Plate 4.6.	Adesina Grace, a seller of oil and church paraphernalia, at RCCG, Redemption Camp, 6/3/2020.	123
Plate 4.7.	Adebisi Temilola, a seller of Church Paraphernalia, with the researcher at RCCG, interview respondent, 6/3/2020.	125
Plate 4.8.	Researcher with two of his interview respondents at cross section of ‘Miracle Water Station’, CAC Oke Agbára , Ashi, Ibadan 19/6/2019.	132

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAC	Christ Apostolic Church
C&S	Cherubim and Seraphim Church
TCLPFW	The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide
CCC	Celestial Church of Christ
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
AIC	African Initiated Churches
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CMS	Church Missionary Society
SOs	Sacred Objects

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Sociologists of religion have demonstrated that there is a reciprocal interrelationship between religion and society on the ground that religion, being a unified system of beliefs and practices is interrelated to sacred and social things. This relationship is exemplified in the sacred objects in identified religious institutions. Some of the sacred objects that are commonly used in Christianity as observed in the Bible are: olive oil, candle, handkerchief/mantle, myrrh, water, Eucharistic bread and wine, among others. However, studies in 21st century Christianity have shown that there are other objects which could be sacred and become ‘anointed’ materials for signs and wonders such as: customised stickers, hair-comb, wrist-band, bathing soap and sponges, perfumes, church bell, crucifixes, writing pen and exercise books.

Sacred objects, on the other hand, are said to be sacred for certain ritual purposes. Sacred, in a common use, is a process by which an object or thing is separated from a common use to a sacred use, or by which person or something is dedicated to the service and worship of God by prayers, rites and ceremonies.

In African Independent Churches (AICs) and in some Pentecostal Churches where worshippers engage extensively in ejaculatory and extempore prayers, other items that are used could be personal photographs, building materials, cane, cooking pots, international passport, curriculum vitae (CV), baby wears and other objects, as the case may be, serve as symbolic objects of prayers to be anointed for special purposes as determined by the needs of the worshippers. All these are made sacred through prayers and rituals for various types of anthropogenic and religious activities. It is important to realise, however, that the security, economic and healing values of these objects in the lives of the users and those who make a living from them can never be overemphasised. On this note, this study therefore, sets to examine the interplay between religious beliefs and practices as regards to

sacred objects with a view to highlighting the economic, security and healing values of sacred objects in selected churches in Ibadan, Oyo State, Southwest, Nigeria.

1.2 **Statement of the problem**

Social values inherent in sacred object are important aspect of religious beliefs and practices of many churches in Nigeria, including churches in Ibadan. Previous scholarly works on sacred objects have been from the perspectives of their symbolic¹, ritual² and spiritual³ values with little or nothing said about their social values inherent in them. This is the gap this work has filled.

1.3 **Purpose and objectives of the study**

The study examined social values inherent in sacred objects in the selected churches within Ibadan metropolis. In doing this, the study identified the sacred objects in selected churches, how the objects were used by their users, challenges associated with a view to highlighting their social values inherent in them.

1.4 **Research questions**

This study responds to the following three research questions:

1. What are these objects used in the selected churches?
2. How are the objects used?
3. How is their usage translated to provide social values for members in the selected churches?

1.5 **Scope of the study**

Defining the scope, the work is conscious of the types of sacred objects which are basic ones and invented objects that are accorded sacredness via prayers and impartation in these churches. The study used both basic and invented sacred objects which are: holy water,

¹ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014, A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State, A Ph.D Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife. 30-33

² S.A. Fatokun, 2008, Water and its cultic use in African Initiated Churches in Yoruba land in South Western Nigeria: An Issue on African Development Discourse in *Swedish Missiological Themes*, Vol. 96, No 4. 349

³ D. Ayegboyin, 2012. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Spirituality+in+the+African+Spirituality+in+the+African+Independence+Churches> Retrieved 2/2/2017

candle, oil, handkerchief, Eucharistic bread and wine, wristband, photograph, church customised stickers, perfume and crucifix. The selected churches that make use of these objects are Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW) and The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). Each object identified holds a prominent place in the liturgical beliefs and practices of the selected churches. The use of water is peculiar to CAC, C&S, TCLPFW and CCC. The use of candle is common to CCC, C&S and TCLPFW while the use of handkerchief and oil is peculiar to RCCG.

Also, the justification for choosing Ibadan follows the heterogeneous nature of hosting people from different ethnic groups and religious background. Thus, the study would have wider implication for national interest. To avoid overgeneralisation in this discourse and for thoroughness and in-depth study, the researcher visited the headquarters of the selected churches to know if the practice at the local branches is the same as practiced at the headquarters. This work is restricted to five categories of people within the selected churches that use the objects these are artisans, traders, pregnant women, waiting mothers, security personnel and drivers.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study has made us to know how well members of the churches use these objects on regular basis as they boost the security, economic and healing value. This research is significant in the sense that it helps members of the selected churches to acknowledge the security, economic and healing values of sacred objects as it relates to the roles of religion in society. This study is significant because it brings to our understanding the types of sacred objects and rationale for their use. The research brings to light how these objects could be used in religious centres for religious purposes without being abused. Also, the study contributes to reduce the undesirable notion people have towards their usage. In conclusion, the research will serve as a template in the field of sociology of religion in relation to the functional and dysfunctional roles of religion for further scholars who may decide to work on religion and functionalism in the future.

1.7 **Limitations to the study**

Being an empirical study, the nature of this work requires the researcher going into the field to interview, interact and observe to obtain data from the interviewees. In the course of the study, a number of difficulties manifested in various ways were noticed. The first was the phenomenon of sacred objects which some selected churches regard with high esteem and accord respect, hence, it was difficult for some clergies and members to interact with the researcher on their usages due to the misconception people do have about them. Moreso, some clergymen refused to divulge information to the researcher on some sacred objects used in their churches due to reasons well known to them.

In the course of the study, some members and clergymen found it difficult to release information to the researcher as they believe that it will be a way of criticising doctrines of their denomination on the use of sacred objects. Some members shy away from taking photographs with the researcher while in some cases the researcher was questioned and unattended to on the ground that he was researching on other churches he is not an adherent.

Another problem encountered was none availability of publish books, though there are books on the selected churches but few on sacred objects used in this study. Consequently, pseudo names were used to describe few of the users of sacred objects that were interviewed. However, with all these challenges encountered, the researcher succeeded in gathering vital data for this work from the respondents, hence, the objectivity of the study was evident.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Symbolic use of sacred objects

Willington sees water as one of the most common sacred objects in African Indigenous Religion. He stresses that water is purely for domestic purposes, such as in drinking, cooking, bathing and for irrigation. In his thought-form of the indigenes of Ikwerre people of the North-Eastern Niger Delta, Willington makes us to understand that two things are indispensable to life and its sustenance, namely, blood and water. In other words, any living thing deprived of blood will die, hence, their indigenous ritual sacrifices. Blood is the part of the sacrificial ritual often given to the gods, in the belief that blood is the best part of the animal.

Similarly, water is believed to be vital to life and living that water is considered the first food item to be administered to a new born baby shortly after delivery. That is, immediately the new baby opens its mouth by way of crying, here, the symbolic gesture is informed by the belief of the people that apart from blood, water is the next important thing life needs for its sustenance. Therefore, the mother and child are washed with water at the birth place, before being ushered into the living room. Willington reiterates that the water used in bathing the mother and child are carefully preserved and subsequently thrown into the river. This symbolises that the new baby is now a public property. That is, it now belongs to the entire community.¹

However there are obvious similarities of the symbolic significance inherent in water as practiced in Ikwerre community with other African indigenous societies. For instance, John Mbiti informs us that among the Yansi of East Africa, the placenta and umbilical cord are symbolically thrown into the river, symbolising that the newly born child is no longer the property of one person as the symbolic throwing of the placenta and

¹ O. Willington Wotogbe-Weneka. 2009. Water symbolism in African possession cult of the Ikwerre people of North-Eastern Niger Delta. *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. XLI/II: 46.

umbilical cord into the river have destroyed such parochial attachment between the child and mother. As it is believed that the river has spread it all over the community as the river flows.²

Looking at the water in its original nature, a fundamental usage of water is for lustration purposes, apart from drinking. In other words, water is a symbol of purification and cleanliness. That is why whatever gets dirty is washed with water and most pollutions are purified with water either literally, mystically, or symbolically. It is evident that the works of Willington and Mbiti are relevant to this work because both scholars elucidate the symbolic significance of the use of water as an element of cleansing and public declaration of the new baby to the entire world. This can be symbolic in a way, but these studies show and intimate us to know the importance of the use of water in the symbolic and spiritual significance for human development as practiced among the Niger Delta people in Nigeria and the Yansi of East Africa without making any reference to its social values.

Nabofa discusses sacred objects used in African Traditional Religion (ATR) in various forms as symbolic among the devotees of African Traditional Religion. One of them he called a cultic symbol. Nabofa sees cultic symbols as a means of identity. For instance, different individuals professing the same faith, though not known to each other prior to this time on dressing in an emblem that belongs to a particular cult or sect, can simply recognise one another as brothers and sisters belonging to the same sect are easily identified and joined together by religious signs as a result of their strong belief in the divine being whose attributes the symbols they are wearing represent. On the other hand, Nabofa opines that the most embracing functions of symbols is communication.³ In this wise, cultic symbols function very prominently in what might be termed self-communication. For example, an *edan* (Ogboni Cult) image reminds an *Ògbóni* initiate of his responsibilities and obligations to his fellow members.

Moreover, Nabofa submits that symbols do not only help to communicate, but also serves as a means to preserve knowledge. He observes that symbols help in keeping old and religious expressions. As a result, ceremonial symbols are one of the most essential methods

² S. John Mbiti. 1964. *African religions and philosophy*. Heinemann Educational Book Ltd, London. 113.

³ M. Y. Nabofa. 1994. *Symbolism in African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan: Paper Pack Publishers Limited.. 13.

for a people's culture to be passed down from generation to generation. He states that these symbols typically undergo numerous changes and even a protracted process of more or less conscious growth before such images can be accepted by civilised community. Nabofa reiterates that ritualistic symbols, no matter old and modified, still retain much of their original sacredness and luminosity or spell which can still evoke a deep emotional response in some of those who have acknowledged them.

No doubt, the work is relevant to this work in many areas. However, Nabofa tailors his discussion the religious identification, communication and knowledge significance of these objects and what we could derive from the symbolic use of religious objects in African traditional religion without discussing on the social values as they relate to security, economic and healing values and its implications on the users of the cultic symbolic objects. Again, Nabofa seems to be traditional and stereotyped in his discourse on the significance and interpretation of the use of sacred objects within the African Traditional Religion but this work will in immense way examine usages of these objects in selected churches within Ibadan metropolis

Adogame who specialises on the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) discusses virtually everything about the Aladura movement not leaving out the life of the founder, his works, practices and interestingly the symbolic use of sacred objects in the church⁴. In spite of the strength of his study and relevance to our research, Adogame did not carry out the socio-economic and healing value of the use of the sacred objects in the Celestial and CCC and Seraphim (C&S) churches which is the thrust of the present study. However, Adogame's work will be of tremendous benefits from the preliminary and in detailed study on the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) even though he did not discuss such in African Pentecostal Churches.

Ogungbile discusses the relationship between the sources of the use of water and how its spiritual use as one the sacred objects use among members of African Independent churches (AICs). He affirms that the use of water in the four groups of *Aladura* churches differs in emphasis, but all the churches have the traditional conception diabolical powers that are always at work. He mentions that the spiritual use of water hinges on a Yorùbá saying that: "Omi la bùwè, omi la bùmu, enikan kíí bá omi sòtá," meaning that water is used

⁴ A. U. Adogame, 1999. *Celestial church of Christ*, Germany: Frank Furtam Main.

for bathing and drinking, therefore, no human can survive without the use of water. The explanations of the type of water to use for healing are offered based on the nature of the illness and the quality of the water..⁵

According to Ogungbile, there are seven major types of water use in *Aladura* churches which are sky water, running water, stagnant water, underground water, consecrated or holy water, mystical waters and other waters. Ogungbile succeeds in discussing the ritual use of water in *Aladura* churches, he also mentions the various sources of water used. His article is based on the symbolic and religious significance of water in Yorùbá religious tradition and interaction with and adaptation by *Aládùrà* churches in their therapeutic ritual processes.⁶ He further states that the significance of water in Afro Christian churches, otherwise known as *Aládùrà* churches, in Yorùbáland has a historical context. However, he did not mention healing value of this water as one of the sacred objects used as it affects the users of water being used in churches which this work will be investigated into.

Abimbola Ayegboyin carries out a comprehensive comparative study on the significance of the use of symbols in CCC and C&S. While speaking on the preparation of ‘green water’ also known as *Omi Agbára* in CCC, Ayegboyin affirms that it is made from a mixture of blue sulphur, alum, water, lime juice and sanctified water. It is usually prescribed for spiritual purposes. *Omi agbára* serves as a purgative medication. It is believed to have a potent force to cause evacuation or rid the bowels of all impurities, poisonous as well as harmful substances. According to her, a sick person drinks green water, any poisonous meal eaten in the dream or in reality would be vomited⁷.

Omi agbára is also believed to be capable to cure convulsion in children. Because of its efficacy and potential danger for misuse, ‘green water’ is usually kept out of reach of the general community. It is usually in the custody of the *Olùṣó* (Pastor or Shepherd). It should be noted that according to CCC leaders, green water is administered solely when the

⁵ D.O. Ogungbile, 1997. Symbolism in African culture and afro-Christian churches. *Journal of Religious Thought*. Vol. 53, No. 2 and Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 21.

⁶ D.O. Ogungbile, 1997. Symbolism in African culture and afro-Christian churches. *Journal of Religious Thought*. Vol. 53, No. 2 and Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 21.

⁷ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife.* 39-42.

Holy Spirit prescribes it through the prophet/prophetess. In other words, it is obtained and administered on the patient after a prayer ritual. It is believed that it is this prayer that makes the green water prescriptive and efficacious.

Abimbola Ayegboyin also makes it clear that the ‘green water,’ in its real sense, is not green in colour that it is rather blue. It is in all probability just labeled ‘green’ out of ignorance by those who are critical of the church. Most members of CCC agree to the statement made by the Pastor and founder that there is nothing special about the so called “green water”⁸. In fact, one of them claimed to have drunk it several times yet nothing unpleasant has happened to her. She said she took it as a result of bad dream and eating in her dream. She was asked to take some pap (*Ògi*) before taking the water and she did. She however concluded that the green water is therapeutic.

On the other hand, Abimbola Ayegboyin investigates the use of oil in CCC and confirms that oil is an important object of worship and it refers to as ‘holy oil’ because it is held as a sacred object. *Òróró*, as fondly called in Yoruba, is used for therapeutic and prophylactic purposes. She confirms that the ritual of ‘consecrating’ holy oil is specially prepared by the CCC pastors. The main purpose of using oil is to anoint people generally and ward off evil. The oil is believed to be a symbol of plenty, luxury, joy and hospitality. Its lack is evidence of God’s displeasure while its abundance is a proof of God’s blessing. CCC usually cite these passages to show the importance of oil. Exodus 30: 31; 2:7, Mark 6:13; James 5:14; Psalm 23:5; Matt. 26:15; I Samuel 10:1 and Ecc. 9:8.

Similarly, on the use of perfumes in CCC Abimbola Aiyegboyin affirms that perfume is referred to as *Lófíndà* in Yoruba. The oil and perfume are placed together because they are both used for the same purposes. They are usually prescribed by the shepherd for purification. In her findings, Abimbola Ayegboyin investigates that CCC has various kinds of perfumes which include: Saint Michael’s perfume and Oshoffa’s Spiritual Perfume mostly used by members. The perfume or *Lófíndà* is believed to be charged with potency to ward off malevolent spirit as the fragrance is offensive to them just as the

⁸ See also Jon Mark Ruth-Ven, “Prophecy Gift” of in Stanley Burgess, (ed) *Christianity and Charismatic Christianity*, New York: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2006, p. 389.

incense⁹. It is seen as a sacred object used to purify bodies of the members. These objects are available and obtained at spiritual shops close to the church premises after which they are prayed upon to gain potency.

According to her, though the sanctified perfume is important because of its sacredness, it should be noted that it is used only to ward off evil, therefore, one should not attach one's faith to it. Other types of perfumes used by the Celestials include: *Miss Paris*, 77, *Ọnà là* and *Grace Perfume*. Perfume is also held to be a symbol of the knowledge of Christ and the self-sacrifice of Christ that attracts favour in the sight of God and man. Like the use of oil, there are biblical references for its use. Matt. 26:6-13; II Cor. 2:14; Eph 5:22.¹⁰

From every indication, the relevance of the work of Abimbola Ayegboyin can never be overemphasised in this study. As a matter of fact, it gives us the understanding and the significant use of green water which is symbolic and its ritual for therapeutic purpose. She also makes us to know some of the materials used in preparing the 'green water' but fails to examine the socio-economic and healing significance of the use of these sacred objects mentioned and their socio-economic and implications on the part of the users of those materials used for the preparation of green water and other objects for therapeutic purpose. Again, Ayegboyin's work is also a comparative study of the significance use of symbols in the CCC and C&S but the thrust of this present study examines the socio-economic and healing value of the use of sacred objects in selected AICs and African Pentecostal Churches.

2.2 Spiritual use of sacred objects

According to Atuahene in his work; "Training of Prophet and Prophetesses of the African Indigenous Churches: Akhan Traditional Priest and Priestesses, states that the beliefs and practices of the AICs which include spirituality, prophetism, spiritual healing, relying on the Holy Spirit rather than human intellect.¹¹ In his argument, Atuahene says

⁹ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies*, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife. 30-33

¹⁰ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies*, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife. 30-33

¹¹ J.O. Atuahene. 2010. A comparative study of prophets of African indigenous churches and Akhan traditional priests: a critical examination of their training. *A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies*, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. 46.

African people believe that whatever happens to one's health has spiritual linkage and therefore can be restored through spiritual consultation. Healing is usually effected by praying and laying of hands as well through the use of anointing oil and *nyyiransua* (blessed water). He confirms that the use of healing objects like Florida water, incense, consecrated water, and candles are integral part of the ethos of the spiritual churches in Africa.¹²

Looking at Atuahene, study shows some of the objects used by AICs. Atuahene mentions the beliefs and practices of the African Indigenous Churches which include the use of consecrated water, candle and anointed oil for spiritual purposes. In the real sense, his attention is based on the spiritual significance of the use of consecrated objects rather than socio-economic and healing value and how it affects their stakeholders, individual and the society. It is also observed that for the fact that Atuaheme mentions the use of water, anointing oil and incense, which are commonly use among the AICs, he only limited its scope to Akha in Ghana.

Alana discusses how water is used for healing miracle in Jesus' ministry and how it provides justification for the *Aládùrà* healing method. He states that the *Aládùrà* healing method reflects biblical as well as traditional Yorùbá background.¹³ *Aládùrà* employed a variety of techniques in their healing methods. The use of prayer is a particular practice for healing, through this; they derive their common name '*Aládùrà*', that is, the praying ones. Alana mentions some of the objects like anointing oil, candle and consecrated water (*omi iyè*), employed in the *Aládùrà* churches. Water becomes holy or life giving after prayer has been said upon it by prophets and Apostles resulting into it becoming sanctified and efficacious. Once water has been sanctified, it is believed to have become destroying agent against all sicknesses or evil forces. Thus, the *Aládùrà* use it to treat various kinds of diseases. He succeeds in highlighting the spiritual use of water in *Aládùrà* churches by explaining the efficacy of water in treating all forms of diseases after prayers have been said into the water. This work, without mincing word is very relevant to this work.

¹² J.O. Atuahene. 2010. A comparative study of prophets of African indigenous churches and Akhan traditional priests: a critical examination of their training. *A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.* 46.

¹³ O.E Alana, 2001. The Impact of the Healing Miracles of Jesus on the Aladura Indigenous Churches and Methods in Yorubaland. *Unilorin Book of Abstract.* University of Ilorin. 1:17

However, Alana sees the use of water in *Aládùrà* churches as an efficacious object which most times Aladura churches use for spiritual cleansing of different kinds of ‘spiritual attacks’ which the results most times believed to be spiritual but fails to showcase the socio-economic importance of the use of water. In like manner, Alana focuses attention more on the use of water in AICs without looking at Pentecostal’s beliefs and practices on the use of consecrated objects which is a germane gap this study intends to fill.

Furthermore, Ayegboyin asserts in his book “Spirituality in African Indigenous Churches” that an emphasis on divine healing is an essential component of Aladura spirituality. Prayers for healing and freedom from oppression are by far the most common. Ayegboyin notices that in many of these churches, certain days, usually Ojó àánu (the day of mercy, which is Wednesday) and Ojó iwosàn (the day of healing, which is Friday), are set apart for healing. He states that on these certain days, objects like water and olive oil are frequently regarded as sacred and used for therapeutic purposes. He continues by saying that the *Aládùrà* holds that the efficacy of prayer can be enhanced by the use of sacred objects such as holy water, olive oil, and candles.¹⁴ This work adds value to this study owing to its relevance. Although, he briefly discusses the spiritual use of sacred objects mentioned above in the AICs, but he did not mention how they work if there are any special appliance for an effective use. It is also noted that Ayegboyin did not investigate the socio-economic and healing value inherent in the adequate use of these sacred objects which is the thrust and interest of this study.

In relation to the above, Ayegboyin and Ishola’s “African Indigenous Churches: a Historical Perspective” sheds more insight on their beliefs on menstruating women. According to the authors, menstrual women are not permitted to enter the church building until they have been purified. According to the authors, on the day of purification, which is normally the eighth day, the woman is required to come to the church with a bucket of water, candle, sponge, and soap. Purification prayers are then said over these before the woman takes her ceremonial bath. Only after this is she authorised to enter the church again.¹⁵

¹⁴ D. Ayegboyin. 2012. *Spirituality in the African indigenous churches*

¹⁵ D. Ayegboyin and S.A. Ishola. 1997. *African indigenous churches: an historical perspective*. Greater Heights Publication. 107.

On the other hand, both authors investigate sacred objects which are treated in the church of the Lord *Aládùrà* with reverence. They expatiate that the staff i.e *Opá àşę* which is also known as the ‘rod of power’, the minister uses it to touch things such as fruit, oil, water and the forehead of one seeking spiritual help and this is what the prophet uses for consecration. The authors observe that the church also uses holy rosary, vestments, small and handy crosses, candles, incense¹⁶ and other symbolic that could be used for divers purposes as desired by the owner of such objects.

Ayegboyin and Ishola, attempt a general discussion on various way by which AICss significantly use sacred objects. The history, practices as well as doctrines of these churches are discussed. In spite of the comprehensiveness and other strengths of the book, some of its weaknesses include the fact that it is rather brief and also introductory. It is also important to mention that in their attempts to discuss various religious objects used by Church of the Lord *Aladura*, not much in depth or appreciable attention is paid to socio-economic and healing value inherent in the use of sacred objects in the *Aladura* movements but only the spiritual importance which manifested in symbolic and ritual cleansing are discussed. It is on this note that present research is based on the vacuum left by Ayegboyin and Ishola by investigating the security, economic and healing value of some of those objects used for religious and ritual purposes among selected AICs and African Pentecostal churches in Ibadan.

2.3 Ritual use of sacred objects

Fatokun elucidates on different ritual use of water as one of the sacred objects in AICs in Yorùbáland. He affirms that members of these churches, as well as their “in-out patient”, are often found carrying water containers of different sizes with them to the church on Sundays and week days which has more or less become part of their ‘regalia’.¹⁷

In the cultic use of water, Fatokun says water is specifically used in some ritual performances which include naming rituals, sanctification/purification rituals, dedication rituals, prosperity/success ritual, deliverance and healing rituals. He also reviews the socio-economic implication for the entire African society where he points out influence of the use

¹⁶ D. Ayegboyin and S.A. Ishola. 1997. *African indigenous churches: an historical perspective*. Greater Heights Publication. 108

¹⁷ S.A. Fatokun. 2008. Water and its cultic use in African initiated churches in Yorùbáland in South western Nigeria: an issue on African development discourse in Swedish.

of water on other religious groups in Nigeria and its impact on African development. However, as explicit as the work of Fatokun is, he did not mention the future position of the use of sacred objects in AICs and even in some African Pentecostal churches as well as Christian practice of the use of sacred objects in general with security, economic and healing values.

Atansuyi contends that while the gospel's proclamation of Christianity is acceptable, it should be indigenised. He reaffirms that "we Africans contextual that is comprehensive, biblical, vibrant, and inclusive of evangelism that responds to the present historical and cultural situation in all areas where the church is called to spread the gospel."¹⁸ He mentions the elements used among AICs: olive oil, water, incense, perfume, rosary, soap, sponge among others. He discusses how faith healing works in the AICs and how simple it is. The sick are taken to the elders in church with faith, and prayers are made into water, olive oil, for ritual purposes for healing of the sick. Atansuyi was only able to state the cultic use of these elements or consecrated object as practices of AICs with its churches with its attachment to faith healing. He did not mention in his work or state the socio-economic and healing value of the use of these objects. Again, his only emphasis is on faith healing in AICs but this work includes Pentecostal members in their use of sacred objects for differs social, economic and healing purposes.

Ngonidzashe explains the relationship between Christianity and Traditional African Religion (ATR). He mentions that Christian faith did not destroy ATR. The African did not embrace religion in a completely new way when they adopted the Christian faith. Ngonidzashe says the main function of traditional religion had been to protect to people from evil while the Christian missionaries too in the process of attacking evil, use holy water, wearing rosaries and use emblems. These practices were not new to Africans. A traditional African sees evil as a threat to life and all his religion was built around the need to eradicate evil from his life. He sees the same emphasis in Christianity¹⁹. It is evident that the work of Ngonidzashe is based on the practice of Christian faith that were also in the African Traditional Religion which the ritual use of water and other sacred objects are parts of the culture and practices. His work is again on the whole of Christian faith but not only

¹⁸ J.O Atuahene, 2010. A comparative study of Prophets of African Indigenous Churches and Akhan Traditional Priests: a Critical Examination of their Training. *A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies*, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. 46

¹⁹ M. Ngonidzashe, 1994. *Traditional Religion and Christianity in South Africa*. IB Extended Essay, 21

on the African Indigenous and African Pentecostal churches which is our present concerns. He also did not discuss into details the uses of water, rosaries and other objects and other social values to the users.

Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, on the other hand, explains the use of water as a mean of incorporating people into Christ. Adult “baptism by immersion” is widely regarded by Pentecostal Christians as the right symbolic means of welcoming the new birth in Christ into the church. This process of incorporation is additionally affirmed by Jesus’ declaration to Nicodemus: “no one is able to see the kingdom of God except he has been born of water and of the spirit” (John 3:5). Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu’s assertion is based on the vitality of water in the process of salvation in Christianity that is the ritual use of water to the process of salvation in the Christianity. However, this work did not mention the use of other sacred objects rather limited to water. Again, the author did not reference anything concerning the social values of the use of water and other objects that are believed to be ritual in Christianity especially among *Aladura* and African Pentecostal churches.

Oshitelu’s work on the history of AICs writes on the history of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) and the features of the *Aladura* churches. Because of the *Aladura*’s belief in the conquering power of God over all evil forces of witches and of the devil, they often bath with sacred water or holy water *omi`iyè*. It is very common with the *Aladura* to take both in running stream, lagoon or sea side’s as may be directed by the Holy Spirit. Apart from the use of water, other sacred objects like bathing soap, sponges and lit of candle are being used in some occasions. Except for the CAC, the *Aladura* drink the sacred or holy water (*omi`iyè*) for internal peace, for healing and for sanctification²⁰. Oshitelu explains that water is used for faith healing. Like Yoruba traditional believers, to the *Aladura*, faith is not abstract. The *Aladura* believes that faith must be assisted with concrete object like *omi`iyè*, candles, bathing soap and different symbolic objects as the case may be and as directed by the Holy Spirit.

Looking at Oshitelu’s work, it is discovered first that his work mostly concentrates on the use of sacred water than other sacred objects used in *Aladura* and Christ Apostle Church. Secondly, Oshitelu’s work seems to only x-rays and overgeneralizes the use of

²⁰ G.A. Oshitelu, 2007. *History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An interpretation*. Ibadan, Hope Publication.

water in Aladura church and states the use of water in CAC without showcasing the implications of the use of these objects. Thirdly, Oshitelu fails to mention other indigenous and African Pentecostal Churches which this present work will discuss. Lastly, Oshitelu fails to mention the social values of the use of those sacred objects he mentioned which is the main concern of this study. However, despite these flaws, it is believed that the work of Oshitelu can never be overemphasized in doing justice to a study like this on church matters.

Soetan, reveals that he was a former member of the CCC. He portrays the church as being involved in ritual practices. Though Soetan's submission helps to give a fuller understanding of the church's practices and doctrines, he appears to miss out on the significance, beliefs and practices of the use of consecrated objects like candles, incense, bathing soap, sponges, water, perfume, cross among others in CCC. Besides, he seems to exhibit a negatively biased disposition on the practices of the use of sacred symbolic objects in CCC. The present researcher is not writing towards the criticism of the CCC rather looks objectively at the socio-economic and healing values among some members of AICs and Pentecostal churches. Meanwhile, Soetan leave out in his study in the CCC and other African Pentecostal Churches in our contemporary society²¹.

Baah's article in *Prophets and Teachers Today* discusses the way the use of oil made from olives has increased the susceptibility and how it looks to have taken advantage of in recent years, particularly within the Charismatic and Neo Prophetic churches considering the ritual way of its use. He helps us realize that the church appears to be struggling to theorize and find a proper and appropriate manner to utilize olive oil as a result of this abuse, and he asks if we should still be anointed with oil today²². He claims that the practice of anointing oil has recently sparked significant controversy in Christian circles due to a number of strange practices with olive oil. Baah's study is all on the use of olive oil and whether it is in line with the Biblical text or not, as well as how the church is coping with the practice. It is agreed that Baah's exegetical studies whether the use of olive oil is in consonance with the receiving of the anointing of God as exemplified in the bible shows light on the controversies about the use of olive oil.

²¹ Y. Soetan, 1995. *The hidden secrets about Celestial Church of Christ*. Abeokuta: Life Line World Outreach,

²²K.A Baah, 2000 *Prophets and Teachers Today*. Kumasi: Design Press.

In line with Baah's opinion on how some objects have been abused in the church and whether their usage is in agreement with the Biblical text. Ayantayo, in his Inaugural Lecture titled: 'Rescuing God from His Abductors' sheds light on the unpleasant developments that are contrary to what the pulpit teaches. Some of these ugly situations are evident in the sales of sacred and cultic religious objects at high prices. According to him, this circumstance has harmed some sick, spiritually and financially deprived, frustrated, and depressed religious worshippers who see religious centers as alternatives to meet their ultimate needs, which inadvertently led them to religious centres where some religious leaders were manipulating them. He claims that examples of such objects are anointed water, a mantle, oil, a wristband, incense oil, Zemzem water, and Jerusalem water to mention but a few.²³.

On the other hand, Asamoah Gyadu²⁴ and Omenyo²⁵ elaborate on the other ritual use of olive oil within Ghana's Charismatic movement. They argue that in Ghana, religious clerics offer anointed oil to those who consult them to rub on their faces to obtain visas, to sprinkle on their construction sites and businesses to ward off evil spirits and ensure success, and to drink to neutralize the effect of every spirit of failure in them and heal them of their illnesses as if they mean that the end justifies the means. Following Baah, Ayantayo, Asamoah Gyadu and Omenyo submissions on the use of sacred objects, it is evident that their works have succeeded by stating and narrating the extent at which people in the Charismatic Movement in Ghana and Nigeria use olive oil and other sacred and cultic religious object according to Ayantayo in a ritual ways of using sacred objects with reference to their abuses manifesting in the high price of such objects. Although their works seem to be limited to Charismatic Movement in Ghana and Nigeria without making reference to the use of olive oil and other sacred objects in the AICs in Ghana and Nigeria. However, their investigations on the use of anointed objects showcase how needs of people are being met as well as its usage as solutions to people's needs while Ayantayo looks into the ethical view on the use and sales of sacred objects in some religious places. But the

²³ J.K Ayantayo, 2018. *Rescuing God from His Abductors*. An Inaugural Lecture, delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 26th April, 2018. P. 19.

²⁴ J. K Asamoah Gyadu, 2005. *African Charismatics: Current developments within independent indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Accra: African Christian Press.

²⁵ C.N Omenyo, 2005. *From the fringes to the centre: Pentecostalization of the Mainline Churches in Ghana*, Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, 39-60.

concerns of the findings in this present research are to explore the security, economic and healing value of sacred objects in some selected churches in Ibadan, Nigeria. This is the new gap this work intends to fill.

In conclusion, it is evident that the above authors have no doubt written extensively on the use of sacred objects from spiritual, symbolic, ritual and ethical points of view. Without any sentiment, their works are relevant and germane to serve as groundwork on which this work would stand in scholarship. However, for the holistic understanding of the use of sacred objects, this study stands to fill up the gap left on the social values as they relate to security, social and healing in the selected churches in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria.

2.4 Background study of selected churches in Ibadan

2.4.1 A synopsis of African initiated churches in Nigeria

African Initiated Churches (AICs) are part of the prominent actors in African Christianity. According to Ayantayo and Ayantayo, African Christianity refers to Christian practices by Africans and in African ways without necessarily deviating from the basic Christian fundamental beliefs and practices²⁶. In the same view, Ayokunle describes African Initiated Churches says:

African Initiated Churches have decided to bring the context, the cultural context of Africans, into the interpretation of the scripture without adding or removing from the scripture to make the scripture say what is saying in African language and in African culture, so that Africans can own the religion as their own, not white monk religion.²⁷

African Initiated churches in South-West Nigeria are generally known as *Aladura* churches. According to Wilson defines Aladura churches as a type of Christian development that incorporates components of Yoruba traditional religion. He goes on to explain that the Aladura churches are a set of indigenous Churches that creatively mix both biblical and

²⁶ Ayantayo J.K and G.N Ayantayo, 2019. Probing the Disposition of African Christianity to Cultural and Traditional Religious Identity. *In Nigeria A Festschrift in Honour of Rev. Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin @70*. Edited by Fatokun S.A, Ayantayo J.K, Familusi O.O., Mepaiyeda S.M. and Okanlawon S.O, 359. Religious Studies Series, Volume 7
359).

²⁷ Interview with Rev. Dr. Supo Samson Ayokunle, President, Christian Association Of Nigeria (CAN), and President of the Nigerian Baptist Convention on Wed. 4th of Oct. 2017 at 11:03:38 during a research led by Marie-Luise Frost on “Potentials of Cooperation with African Initiated Churches for Sustainable Development”

African traditions to evolve their distinct religious traditions.²⁸ Presently, there are numerous major and minor branches of Indigenous Aladura churches. Despite being claimed to as the pioneer Pentecostal churches in Nigeria, these movement chose to be termed “spiritual or praying churches”²⁹. The hydrotherapy that Sophia Odunlami described as a divine cure to the influenza crisis has become an integral part of Aladura healing practice. The Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C), Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S), Church of the Lord Aladura (CLA), and Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) are the churches that are often referred to as Aladura. In the second decade of the twentieth century, these churches started to expand due to the charismatic traits of a number of people. The well-known church leaders in Aladura churches include Pastor Ayo Babalola, St. Moses Ormládé, Pastor Josiah Oshitelu, Pastor Samuel Bilewu Oshoffa, Sofia Odunlami, and Captain Abiodun Akinsowon, to name a few.³⁰.

During a revival movement in the 1930s, the Aladura churches rapidly spread across Yorubaland, constituting an essential part of western Nigerian society. A Yoruba Anglican and government worker, Joseph Ayo Babalola (1959), had a number of visions that led him to join the Precious Stone Society. He then became a General Evangelist in the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Nigeria’s largest Aladura church. In healing rites, he emphasized “water of life” (holy water). Other notable church leaders of the time included Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu of the Church of the Lord Aladura, Moses Ormládé Tunolase of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, and Samuel Bilewu Oshoffa of the Celestial church of Christ.

2.4.2 Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)

The account of the birth of Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola according to Oshitelu, Babalola was born on the 25th April 1904, in Odo-Owa near Ilofa in Irepodun Local Government area of present Kwara State of Nigeria His father was David Rotimi and his mother was Martha Rotimi (nee Talabi). Ayodele was the fifth child of the sixth children of

²⁸ Wilson T. O. 2014. Transformation of Aladura Christianity in Nigeria. Ph.D. Thesis. International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) University of Bayreuth, Germany. 1

²⁹ Turner, H. W. 1979. *Religious Innovation in Africa: Collected Essays on New Religious Movements*. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall.

³⁰ Gabriel Gbega Jegede, 2019. Women and Church Leadership in Yorubaland: The Aladura Experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* Accessed on www.ijhssnet.com 31 May, 2019. 265.

his parents. His mother experienced some unimaginable and curious events when the baby was still in the womb. There was an apparent divine guidance about this remarkable man of God. Several stories of incredible magnitude and significance surrounded the birth and childhood of Apostle Joseph Ayodede Babalola. As a growing young man of about fourteen years old, Ayodele remained in his hometown in Odo-owa apparently without much formal education.

On the 10th January, 1918, Ayodele was taken to Lagos by his cousin, Mr. M.O Rotimi, a catechist in the Church Missionary Society (CMS) now known as Anglican Church at Ifo, Ogun State. His schooling started in Awori and Ifo but he was later transferred to the Methodist school, Ago Ijaye in Ebute Metta, Lagos. He later went to Osogbo now the capital of Osun State and attended the famous All Saints Anglican School where he completed his Standard Five education. He was later became apprentice in the black-smithing profession. He learn how to drive roller under the road construction and maintenance ministry, Public Works Department (PWD) in Osogbo³¹.

As a hardworking man, this job perfectly suited his personal characteristics and the pay of four pounds per month was not bad for someone who did not complete a standard six. As a matter of fact, that was a lot of money at that time by his admission. The public work was the colonial creation assigned with the construction and working on Akure-Ilesa road. Having known something about fabrication, it was not difficult for him to master the roller and within a short time he had his own gang and began to handle job to the satisfaction of his European supervisor, one Mr. Ferguson in the year 1928.

³¹ G.A Oshitelu, 2007. History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation. Hope publications Ltd. P 34-35



Plate 2.1. Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola

**Source: Christ Apostolic Church, Oke Agbára Oloruntedo, Ashi, Ibadan.
14th May, 2019**

2.4.2.1 The call

In October 14th when he was about 22 years of age, his vehicle suddenly stopped. He thought it was a mechanical problem. As a mechanic driver, he endeavoured to ascertain the reason for the stoppage of the vehicle but all to no avail. He then managed to push the vehicle away from the centre of the road near River Anran. This vehicle was there for some days. One day, as he tried to make the vehicle works, he heard a voice saying:

Joseph, Joseph, Joseph
The vehicle could not work
Except you do that work
I will send you.

The voice warned him that if he did not leave his work and go and preach, he would die within a year. He heard the same voice three times for three days.³² Babalola took this as a warning and obeyed the voice. He was given some signs to confirm the call. Babalola was shown three palm fronds, one fresh, one semi dry and the third completely dried. The interpretation of this sign was given to him. The dried frond is likened to those who persisted in their sinfulness and were not prepare to change for better. The half dried frond refers to those who are lukewarm as regards Christianity while the fresh palm fronds represents through Christians. These are Christians that have surrendered their lives to the Saviour Jesus Christ.

There are substantial accounts by scholars on the history and emergency of CAC. This cannot be done without making mention of the breaking away of the leaders of the Nigeria Faith Tabernacle from the Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia, United State of America which CAC had affiliated and assumed their name. The breakaway came as a result of betrayal of trust in the divine healing power of God during illness and some other reasons for separation. Apart from religious factors, there were political reasons for this too. This merger meant political recognition and consequently there were certain advantages to be derived from associating with British Apostolic Church since the British Apostolic Church ruled the country. However, the merger of the Faith Tabernacle with the Apostolic Church

³² M.O Idowu, 2012. An Instrument of Revival: the Story of Joseph Ayo Babalola, the first Apostle and General Evangelist of Christ Apostolic Church. Divine Artillery Publications, Lagos, Nigeria

was short-lived due to their similar problems insincerity on faith healing on the part of the missionary pastors of the Faith Tabernacle³³.

Prior to Joseph Babalola's call, the Nigeria Faith Tabernacle congregation had become weak with internal crisis and divisions. Additionally, members of the organization in Nigeria had come to understand the necessity of spiritual renewal and, consequently, the ability to work wonders and miracles. So they continued to pray and fast regularly and fervently to receive the spiritual gift they sorely needed. Due to the fact that the group needed new religious body to fill their spiritual vacuum created by the America Faith Tabernacle (AFT) and British Apostolic Church (BAC). It was at this time that CAC was formed under the leadership of David Odubanjo, Isaac B. Akinyele and Joseph Ayodele Babalola. On 25th September, 1925, the Lord called Joseph Ayo Babalola, a man of charismatic and spiritual qualities, to start a prophetic ministry³⁴.

2.4.2.2 Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola's ministry

After the entire encounter recorded by Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola with God, He gave him a sign of lamp with three wicks. Thereafter, he was given three symbolic gifts: a handbell, an iron staff and a bottle of water. This again reminds us of Moses Orímoládé Tunolase who was also, at his call, given three symbolic gifts namely: the crown, the tassel, and iron rod. The bell is to call people to prayer, to bring the angels of God down to his meetings and to drive evil forces away. The iron rod represented the apostolic authority to subdue evil forces while the third gift was the bottle of water which is the most symbolic gift that is still very commonly use in CAC till date. This bottle of water was given to Babalola by God for the healing of all sickness and diseases.

The Lord clearly told Ayodele Babalola to depend solely on the divine healing. He does not want his people (the church members) to use medicine, whether orthodox or unorthodox, foreign or local, but to rely and have faith in God for their healing. This was the root of divine healing in CAC. Although, this issue generated a heated argument among young apostles but they were being reminded not to be like King Saul who obeyed God

³³ G.A Oshitelu, 2007. History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation. Hope publications Ltd. P 32.

³⁴ J.A Alokun, 2010. Christ Apostolic Church @90 (1918-2008). Timade Ventures Ile-Ife. 29

deceitfully concerning Amalek by not totally destroying them as commanded by God. This is why Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola has been called the father of divine healing.

It is significant to note that Babalola came to understanding of the doctrine of divine healing by a revelation of God and not through foreign mediation or by American gospel literature. Corroborating this, C.R Myers, an early missionary and eyewitness of this early event said:

It is amazing to witness how God unveiled the ministry of healing to this man who had never heard of it before. In fact, if he had been taught anything no doubt he had been taught that God has given us the doctors and medicines. We should note how true to God's word are his revelation along this line³⁵.

2.4.2.3 The beginning of Babalola's revival

The mark of revival in the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) was the great revival that broke out on the 10th July, 1930 which redefined CAC as a modern and apostolic Pentecostalism in Nigeria. What really triggered this revival was the resuscitation of a ten year old boy named Obi Ogundipe who reportedly to have died a day before his corpse was brought to Oke-Oye at the revival ground. It was reported that efforts to revive this little boy by seven herbalists from death proved abortive. Babalola prayed on the corpse and poured water from his hand bell on the boy and called his name, Obi the little boy instantly came to life. This event was a miracle experienced which sent the whole community into an amazement and caused people to singing that:

Omi ló fi sè 'wòsàn (2x)
Òkú alé àná dà' láàyè
Omi ló fi sè 'wòsàn

He uses water to heal (2x)
The corpse of yester night
He is made alive
He uses water to heal

In the account of Idowu, Obi Ogundipe, the ten year old boy resuscitated by Babalola, celebrated his seventy year birthday in the year 2000AD and also recollected his experience at his 80th year birthday before he finally died in 2002 at the age of 82.

³⁵ M.O Idowu, 2012. An Instrument of Revival: the Story of Joseph Ayo Babalola, the first Apostle and General Evangelist of Christ Apostolic Church. Divine Artillery Publications, Lagos, Nigeria.

This news travelled far beyond Oke-Iye. This was the beginning of Babalola's revival in the South-West, Eastern and Southern and Northern Nigeria. People also came from many West African countries and even Spain. This the revival was witnessed by Africans and Europeans who visited the venue either to receive healing or to personally witness the miracles of God through the man of God, Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola³⁶.

Patients suffering from different ailments as enumerated below reportedly to have received their healing instantly: acute and persisted stomachache, acute headache, epileptic feat, blindness, protracted pregnancy, issue of blood, rheumatism, reduction in weight, eye diseases, backache, poverty, little or no reward for work, infertility and impotent, many people possessed evil spirits such as witches and wizards fell down rolling during the crusade for their deliverance³⁷.

2.4.3 Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church (C & SMC)

Saint Moses Orímóládé was born in 1880 into the royal family of Omoba Ode Sodi of Okorun Quarters, Ikere-Ekiti³⁸ now in Ekiti State, Nigeria. His father was known as Pa Tunolase while his mother was called Odijorotan, also of the same royal house. There were many traditions as to his birth. According to one tradition, there have been predictions before his birth by the Ifá Oracle that the expected child would be a great man. The mother had a strange experience when he was in the bush alone to cut some firewood while she was carrying a child. She gathered more firewood than she could carry herself. She understood she could have to reduce the amount of firewood she could carry. Just then, she heard a voice telling her how easily she could lift the firewood on her head even without her reducing it. She looked around to see if there was anyone that spoke to her, but saw no one. She was terrified. The voice came again and said to her. Do not be frightened, I am the child in your womb, follow my advice and be on your way³⁹. Obviously, Odijorotan followed the child's instruction and was able to lift the fire-wood on her head with amazement.

³⁶ M.O Idowu, 2012. An Instrument of Revival: the Story of Joseph Ayo Babalola, the first Apostle and General Evangelist of Christ Apostolic Church. Divine Artillery Publications, Lagos, Nigeria

³⁷ J.A Alokun, 2010. Christ Apostolic Church @90 (1918-2008). Timade Ventures Ile-Ife. 81

³⁸ G.A Oshitelu, 2007. History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation. Hope publications Ltd. P 32.

³⁹ J.O Alo., 2018. Cherubim and Seraphim in Her True Picture. Torn Veil Publications. 7

When she arrived home, she narrated the event to her husband, Tunolase who arranged that Ifá Oracle be consulted immediately. The couple was surprised when the Oracle predicted that the child was sent by the Almighty God to propagate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This became a surprise to the couple because they hardly heard about Christian mission in their community as at that time.

Afterwards, the prescribe rites were performed and offerings were made to ensure a safe delivery for the mother. Tunolase, himself an Ifá priest, secretly asked Ifá for more enlightenment on the miracle child about to be born into his family. He was told by Ifá Oracle which further revealed that the expected baby would grow to become a special apostle to the pagans of Yoruba land. He was therefore, to be treated as a Nazarite⁴⁰.

On the day that Orímọládé was born, there were incredible incidents. It was said that the new baby stood up in its birth-blood and made effort to walk three times. This was not only embarrassing; it was unheard of in the history of man. The midwife who assisted Madam Odijorotan in her child-labour quickly and forcibly pressed down the baby so as to prevent him from walking. It was recorded that those who witnessed the event were amazed and frightened. The shout attracted lots of people from far and near to the miracle that happened.

The perplexed and frightened father immediately began to recite incantation in order to subdue the child. Indeed, the incantation succeeded to calming the child down. It is generally believed that as a direct consequence of the pronounced incantations, the boy, Orímọládé, could neither stand nor walk until he was well over five years of age. Due to the child's birth and his childhood, the father decided to end the child's life but the family dissuaded him from going ahead with that decision. Later, for the father to have his breath in the locality owing to his 'miracle boy', Tunolase decided to banish the child and Odijorotan, the mother, from his sight.

After few days, the child spoke and sent some messages to his father to go and confess his sin to God on the top of a nearby hill. The message was so devastating that Tunolase suddenly took ill. Tunolase later sent for his wife to take care of him in his illness.

⁴⁰ J.O Alo. 2018. Cherubim and Seraphim in Her True Picture. Torn Veil Publications. 7

Before his death, Tunolase blessed his wife in the manner of a dying elderly traditional Yoruba man.

According to Oshitelu, some have argued that the incident of Saint Oríṣṣládé attempt to walk on the same day he was born and the story of the midwife is the Cherubim and Seraphim's way of explaining Oríṣṣládé's prolonged physical frailty resulting in near paralysis. Whether this is true or not, it cannot be denied that mysteries surrounded the birth as indeed the childhood of Saint Oríṣṣládé who God destined to be one of the greatest and unassuming leaders who happen to be the pioneer of a striving Aladura organization⁴¹.

⁴¹ G.A Oshitelu, 2007. History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation. Hope Publications Ltd. 47.



Plate 2.2. Saint Moses Orimoládé Túnóláṣe

**Source: Cherubim & Seraphim Movement Church
Ife-Iwo Road District Headquarters. 13th October, 2019.**

2.4.3.1 Orímládé's ministry

Ormládé began serving as a missionary in his hometown of Ikáré-AKókó in Ondo State. On a specific day, certain people observed Ormládé while singing. It was a joyful time for all of the local Christians when they witnessed Ormládé singing and God supporting it with miracles and signs. In the process, people came out to witness the miracles performed by Orímládé while preaching. He also prayed for people who are under the control of the devil, and he did not exempt the sick. They were healed right away when he prayed for them. Many people who had been healed began to spread the gospel Ormládé's ministry outside of his hometown. Orímládé charged people that came to him for prayers to confess their sins and turn to the Lord. In his teaching, Orímládé, taught about the existence of heaven and hell. He taught them that heaven is the reward for those that do well while the wicked will go to hell.

Furthermore, As a result of his prayer, women who were barren gave birth and they all surrendered to God. Her mother Abigail, was converted through him. Others present included Mary, two of his brothers, Peter and Samuel, as well as other family members.⁴². Many people came to Ormládé to hear him preach from every nook and cranny of the surrounding towns and villages. Additionally, Jesus brought about the salvation of a large number of people in Ikare and other nearby villages. There was a significant increase in the number of Christians both inside and outside of Ikare. While the Christians applauded Orimloádé's ministry other herbalists felt unhappy and decided to persecute him because of those who had converted from African Traditional Religion Christian faith. Orímládé also encouraged Christians to reject traditional way of way of worshiping ancestors in Ìkàré. Male Christians were encouraged to marry female Christian to avoid differences in beliefs and practices between the couples.

Orímládé's preaching encouraged the young Christian to buy Bible to read and meditating in it so that they can develop themselves with the word of God. When the adherents of traditional religion discovered that many people followed Orímládé they asked Orímládé to stop converting people into Christianity for it affected their livelihood. Orímládé was warned to stop converting people into Christianity or risk his life and those

⁴² O. Famodimu, 199. Moses Orímládé Tunolase Supreme Founder Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide. Kaduna: AbiBcom Nigeria Ltd.

of his followers due to the fact that because people stopped consulting them over their problems after giving their lives to God. He educated the Christians about this while he encouraged them that the adherent of the Traditional religion will not be able to do them any harm. At a particular time, while Orímóládé was preaching at Okorun Street Ìkàré-Akoko the traditionalists came to disrupt the programme with their evil plan against the Christians. The traditional priests used charms and cutlasses to intimidate the Christians during the process, but Orimoládé confronted them by calling the name of Jesus Christ to fight against them by stretching his spiritual staff towards them, and they started attacking themselves, much to the surprise of the Christians present at the crusade grounds. With their weapons and charms, which they were supposed to use against the Christians, several of them suffered injuries. However, some of them joined the church after realizing that the might of God was greater than the power of their idols. The remaining traditionalists went to the king of Ikàré to inform him that Christians have been murdering them in the area. The king ordered police officers to apprehend them. As they were being apprehended at Kabba jail in Kogi state, Orimoládé was released.

However, when Orímóládé knew about the incident, he travelled to Kabba town. Having got to Kabba, he continued spreading the gospel in the nook and cranny of Kabba town. In addition, Orímóládé pleaded for the release of the Christian who were locked up in the prison. However, when the district officer learnt about the preaching and Christian practice of Orímóláde, he ordered the release of all Christian and asked them to go back without any charges to their various places in Ikare.

Orímóládé's ministry spread beyond every part of South-West, the Northern and Lagos of Nigeria despite the challenges he faced the traditionalists. Through his signs and wonders, prophecy, healing, praying to the water, settling of dispute, family reconciliation, bringing happiness to the sorrowful, using his sacred staff to perform miracles with the use of the word of God, he was able to convert hundreds of thousands to Christianity. Famodimu states that on the succession in the C&S, Orímóládé handed over to Onanuga after he had duly consulted the elders of the church for advice. Orímóládé then handed over to Onanuga

after he had prayed and anointed him as a leader. On the 18th October, 1933, Orímóládé died at 53 year of age.⁴³

2.4.3.2 The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW)

Prophet Josiah Olunowo is the founder of the Church of the Lord (Aladura) now The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide. He was born on Wednesday 15th May, 1900 at Ogere, Ijebu Remo, now in Ikenne Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. His father was Onakoya Asaye Oshitelu, the Dawudu, that is the first son of the Oshitelu of Illisa Chieftaincy Home.

Prophet Josiah had earlier predestined to be a great man while his parents consulted the Ifá Oracle to know his future according to the Yoruba tradition in South-West, Nigeria. He was also confirmed by the Ifá Oracle that he would become a counsellor and a leader of his people. To prove the Ifá right, it was not long before young Josiah began to predict and foretell the future to the people. It was said that as early as 1912, young Josiah on his way from playground met a stranger, an old man, and revealed some facts about the man to him. The old man quickly noticed this with surprise. From many experiences of the young Josiah's prediction and prophetic utterance that came to pass, the boy was recognized with a strange power. This was how he became a special and a gifted child with ability to tell about people's past and future.

Josiah decided to go to school rather than following his father to farm as the custom demands at that time. Although he started school late. Josiah Oshitelu first attended Church Missionary School (CMS) Ogere in 1913 and later Church Missionary School (CMS) Porogun, Ijebu-Ode when Mr. S.O Odugbesan was the headmaster. In 1920, Josiah became a pupil teacher and headmaster while in 1920 he became a pupil teacher and the master under Rev. N.O.A Morgan between 1921 and 1923.

⁴³ O. Famodimu, 199. Moses Orímóládé Tunolase Supreme Founder Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide. Kaduna: AbiBcom Nigeria Ltd.



Plate 2.3. Prophet Josiah Olunowo Oshitelu.

Source: The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW) Headquarters, Ogere, Ogun State, Nigeria. 20/10/2019

Josiah served as a catechist under late Rev. D.M. George in Abeokuta District Council (ADC). Due to his good disposition, good will, commitment to the service of God and the people, Josiah was arranged by Rev. D.M George to attend a training institution where he qualified as a trained and ordained Anglican Church priesthood which he did.

Due to difference in doctrinal, beliefs and practices as upheld by Josiah compared to those of CMS, he was excommunicated from CMS by the elders of the Mission so that he would not influence his new doctrine and vision that he claimed to have on members. Through the thin and thick period of seeing many vision concerning his ministry and what God would do through him. Josiah's first experience was 'the great Big Eye' with mysterious light that appeared to him, many times which later became the indication of God's missionary call in 1925.

Prophet Josiah officially established the Church of the Lord (Aladura) as an independent church in 1930 in Ogere, Ogun State Nigeria. Josiah preached the gospel of salvation; repentance and regeneration from town to town for instance, start from Ogere his home town, to Ile-Ife, Ibadan and other parts of the South-West Nigeria. His message and gospel was accompanied with signs and wonders using holy water jettisoning the use of traditional and orthodox medicine for healing. Through divine revelation, he established the Holy Mount Tabieorar (Pronounced Taborah) festival in 1937 which has since been celebrated on 22nd of August every year and attracts thousands of believers across border.

The tenets of the Church are as follows; Three hourly prayers day and night; meticulous use of the Book of Psalms; use of holy names and special weekly healing clinics. Worship includes a thanksgiving; revelations; Rod of Power; holy rosary; use of candles and incense. Prayer and blessing of water were used to cure ailments and diseases. In character, the church was seen to be Pentecostal in power; Biblical in pattern; Evangelical and prophetic in Ministry; and ecumenical in outlook. Today, the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide is one of the first three Pentecostal churches in Nigeria which have brought considerable revival among African Indigenous Churches and Christianity. The church is a forerunner among African churches in terms of ordination of women for ministry work, extempore prayer, and the use of local songs during worship services. The church embraces African cultural heritage and feels free to practice Christianity in accordance with African cultural norms, provided that doing so is in line with what the Bible teaches.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ R.O Oshitelu, 2020. Distinguished Church Leader Essay Aladura Theology- the Case of the Church of the Lord (prayer Fellowship) Worldwide in African Initiated Christianity and the Decolonisation of Development:

2.4.5 Celestial Church of Christ (CCC)

Late Reverend Pastor Prophet Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oshoffa established the Celestial Church of Christ CCC. His father dedicates him to God at the Methodist church after he is born. His father was a Dahomeyan citizen (today's Republic of Benin) who lived in Porto Novo, while his mother was from Imeko in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Ojo Oshofa, Joseph Oshoffa's father, had a number of children⁴⁵. Except for Bilewu, all of the male children died. His father was a Methodist member from Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Bilewu handed over to the Methodist Reverend by his father when he was young. Bilewu was assumed to have declined to mold bricks for the college building where he studied. As a result, he was returned to his father. His father subsequently forced him to learn carpentry and continued to work for him until June 5, 1939. Following his father's death, Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oshoffa focused on trade in ebony planks. He would pray and read his Bible when he was in the forest looking for planks to sell. In Abeokuta, Nigeria, Bilewu married Alake Iyabo of Imeko, Egbado.

On May 23, 1947, on the day of the solar eclipse, Oshoffa traveled to the forest to buy ebony wood, having been trained as a carpenter and timber merchant by his father. When he was meditating in the jungle of Dahomey (Republic of Benin), he heard a "voice" exclaim, "LULI," which means "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." According to Okunola, Bilewu noticed the following objects after prayer when he opened his eyes. 1. A white monkey having a pair of teeth and waving hands. Its feet were like those of a bat. 2. A bird performing in his front posed like a peacock. It came in an array of colors. 3. A short snake about a foot long that stood coiled with its lips puffed up like a cobra's. Bilewu felt awed in the sight of the aforementioned creations and his body was covered with cold.

Sustainable Development in Pentecostal and independent churches (Edit.) Philipp Ohlmann, Wilhelm Grab and Marie-Luise Frost. Routledge, New York. 177-178.

⁴⁵ H.A Labeodan and G. Adeboye 2019. The Role of Women in Church Growth: A case Study of the Celestial Church of Christ . *In Nigeria A Festschrift in Honour of Rev. Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin @70*. Edited by Fatokun S.A, Ayantayo J.K, Familusi O.O., Mepaiyeda S.M. and Okanlawon S.O, 359. Religious Studies Series, Volume 166.



Plate 2.4. Reverend Pastor Prophet, Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oshoffa.

Source: Celestial Church of Christ Orogun, Ibadan. 12/3/2019

His visions were interpreted as follows: The monkey represented the tricks or pranks that people perform on one another and the rest of creation to fulfill their own personal desires. Then, Bilewu was warned not to fall for human tricks because human tricks are what bring people to their doom. The bird he watched acting like a peacock symbolised the pride that leads to many people's death. Bilewu was warned not to imitate haughty people since arrogance ultimately brings such people to ruin. The small serpent stood for past lies and sins committed in the Garden of Eden. He was told to take instruction from the story of Eden's lesson. He should probably ignore whatever God had told him. He had been anointed to deal with all wicked things in the world if the serpent could harm him. The following scriptures from the Bible were also fulfilled:

And these signs will follow those who believe; in my name, they will cast out devils and talk with new tongues. They will take up serpents, and if they drink anything poisonous, it will not harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.. (Mark16:17-18).

The Celestial Church of Christ was founded as a result of all the incidents related to Bilewu that occurred in the bush. ⁴⁶.

2.4.5.1 The call of Bilewu Oshoffa into ministry

Around the evening of the 29th of September, 1947, Bilewu was praying in his house when an angel of the Lord came to him in an intense ray of light and told him that he had been called to carry forth a spiritual message to the entire world. The angel went on to say that many individuals die without receiving salvation. This is because individuals seek deliverance from Satan when they suffer difficulties in their lives. Furthermore, they refuse to listen to God's message as it is conveyed to them by God's anointed men. He was assured that miracles would support his ministry. Bilewu's ministry began with preaching and healing those who came to hear God's word. Mr. Yanga went into a trance for seven days and named the Bilewu Mission 'Eglise Du Christianisme Celeste' while in the trance. Bilewu then spread the Gospel to places like Agange, Kudiho, and Porto-Novo. Those who had died were brought back to life, and people were healed of their illnesses. Bilewu liked music as well. He was good on the following instruments: piano, guitar, trumpet, and violin.

⁴⁶ Okunlola, D. O. (Date of publication not indicated.) Celestial Church of Christ Last Vessel for Salvation. Lagos: Bengo Comm. Printers.

These initiatives gathered a large crowd to hear him proclaim the Gospel. Bilewu preached the Good News in the following languages: French, Egun, and Yoruba. He preached in English on occasion, although he frequently used interpreters to translate sermons into English. Bilewu propagated his gospel in various parts of Nigeria, including Abeokuta, Ketu, Lagos, Odogbolu, and Ibadan Bilewu propagated his gospel in various parts of Nigeria, including Abeokuta, Ketu, Lagos, Odogbolu, and Ibadan among others.

CCC is distinctive to other Christian denominations both in her liturgy and structure. Her mode of worship includes: the setting of altar and the seats therein. Her practice includes: the usage of candle, perfume, salt and coconut among other sacred objects that God revealed to Prophet Oshoffa to facilitate prayers and this made it African traditionally saturated. Her members, both male and female, are distinguished in appearance, wearing of white garment without shoe with a seating arrangement. CCC has her headquarters in Imeko, Abeokuta Ogun State, Nigeria⁴⁷. The church is an African initiate church.

According to CCC, everyone who believes in the Lord God worships the same Supreme Being who made both humans and the universe. Because of this, the purpose is to find salvation for all people who worship God worldwide. According to church doctrine, believers ought to regard one another as brethren serving God together. Every person who worships God is seen as a single body by the devotees. Therefore, they do not think there is an adequate cause for people to fight over religion. The church's goal is to provide illumination on the Lord Jesus Christ's earthly ministry. The mission is also on searching for souls who have perished and guide them back to Jesus Christ. The church considers the following prophets to be Oshoffa's forerunners: Ormládé, Babalola, and Oshitelu. The mission encourages Christians to show affection for their non-Christian neighbors, particularly Muslims. Christians and Muslims should be educated to coexist as brothers and sisters serving the same God. Also, white and black people should regard themselves as Children of God. They are not permitted to discriminate against themselves. The mission pays tribute to those who have preached the gospel and have been called to

⁴⁷ H.A Labeodan and G. Adebayo 2019. The role of women in church growth: a case study of the Celestial Church of Christ . *In Nigeria A Festschrift in Honour of Rev. Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin @70*. Edited by Fatokun S.A, Ayantayo J.K, Familusi O.O., Mepaiyeda S.M. and Okanlawon S.O, 359. Religious Studies Series, Volume 167

glory. It also educates people to respect established authorities and their parents. Oshoffa passed away in 1985.⁴⁸

2.4.6 The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG)

The historical antecedents of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) are related to the founder of the Church, Late Reverend Josiah Akindayomi. Akindayomi was born to the family Akindolie Eleyinmi and Madam Olakuobi in No. 12, Odo–Alaafia Street, Odojomu in Ondo city South West part of Nigeria. He was named Ogunribido Ogundolie as a reflection of the deity of iron and war that was popularly practiced at the time he was born in the Ondo.⁴⁹

Olateru and Egbo⁵⁰ recap that Ogunribido as a child different among his peers; was noted to be a devout Ògún worshipper who also like going to church. He was named “wolii” Prophet because of his devout to dancing and prayers in the church while his friends were farmers. Nevertheless, Adeboye notes that Ogunribido was later engaged in blacksmith and farming as a young adult for economic support for himself and the family⁵¹. At the age of eighteen, he was baptized, at the Church Missionary Society (CMS) (now Anglican Communion) where he grew up as a catechism.

Ogunribido’s baptismal name was Josiah.⁵² Josiah Akindayomi became a member of Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) in 1931. Josiah Akindayomi became member of C&S because of his inquisitiveness and zeal to the word of God and prayer as it was demonstrated in the church as at the time he joined the church⁵³. Peel submits that some noticeable adherents of CMS joined C&S at Ondo during this period. This is indicative of a development of intra-church migration to the newly established C&S in preference to the CMS probably due to Africanisation of the church⁵⁴.

⁴⁸ <https://nou.edu.ng/sites/default/files/2017-03/CTH%20441.pdf> West African Church History, CTH 441, National Open University 2012 retrieved 28/4/2020. 58

⁴⁹ B. Adedibu, 2011. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, A Missionary Global Player: What is Her Message Regarding Human Development? In *Encounter Beyond Routine: Cultural root, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development international consultation*, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 7th-23rd January 2011. 54

⁵⁰ Olateru and Egbo, 2007. *The seed in the ground*. Lagos, Father of Lights Publishers. 27-30

⁵¹ O. Adeboye, O. 2007. ‘Arrowhead’ of Nigerian Pentecostalism: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, 1952-2005, *Pneuma*. 29.1: 24-58. 32

⁵² Adeboye, 2007. ‘Arrowhead’ of Nigerian Pentecostalism: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, 1952-2005, *Pneuma*, Volume 29, Number 1, 24-58. 9

⁵³ O Ajayi. 1997. *Warrior of righteousness*. Abeokuta, Ordinance Publishers. 18

⁵⁴ Peel, J. 1968. *Aladura: A Religious Movement among the Yoruba*, London: International African Institute. 80-81



Plate 2.5. Rev. Josiah Akindayomi.

Source. The Redeemed Christian Bible College, Redemption Camp. 20/10/2019.

Josiah was absolutely devoted to practices and beliefs of C&S led by Prophet Orimolade where he became a prophet and served as a full time employee. Due to his commitment to the work of God, as a fulltime prophet, he stopped to work as a farmer. This no doubt had multiplier effect on the economy of the family hence, his wife's engagement in menial trading for the family's economic survival. Around 1947, the C & S Church recognized Josiah as a prophet, but the passing of Prophets Moses Ormládé and Onanuga caused a rift, which resulted in his persecution. According to Adedibu, in 1949, there seems to be a general spiritual coldness in the Cherubim and Seraphim, however, Akindayomi did not compromise his spiritual gifting of fasting and prayer accompanied with prophetic gifting which was pronounced at the time.⁵⁵

After the demise of Orimolade and Onanuga, there was a division among the leadership of C&S that led to various leadership tussles and factions but Josiah Akindayomi refused to join the new movement rather he was committed to a puritan. There are various submissions by scholars on the exist of Josiah from C&S. Bolarinwa and other scholars assert with RCCG official position published that Akindayomi voluntarily owing to doctrinal disputes left C&S. As many people knew Josiah with prayer and prophetic calling when he was in C&S, it appears that he was engaged in strategic and resourceful ministry before the start of RCCG in 1952. As a result of these efforts, a group known as "The Glory of God Group" was founded, and it started in 1952 at Oko-Baba in Ebute-Metta.. The group occupied at a swampy parcel of Land at No. 9, Willoughby Street, Ebute-Metta. The group comprised of twelve men namely: Fakunmoju, Makun, J. Adekoya, S.K. Padonu, S.A. Olonode, Fadiora, Olukwuobi, Fetuga, Adefeso, A, Adefunwa and Matiluko⁵⁶.

Bolarinwa emphasizes that the name of the church, Redeemed Christian Church of God, was given to illiterate Josiah Akindayomi in a trance in Osogbo in July 1952. This was later used as the church's name. Bolarinwa went on to say that Rev.

⁵⁵ B. Adedibu, 2011. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, A Missionary Global Player: What is Her Message Regarding Human Development? In *Encounter beyond Routine: Cultural root, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development international consultation*, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 7th-23rd January 2011. 55

⁵⁶ B. Adedibu, 2011. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, A Missionary Global Player: What is Her Message Regarding Human Development? In *Encounter Beyond Routine: Cultural root, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development international consultation*, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 7th-23rd January 2011. 55

Akindayomi not only received the church's name, but he also received certain messages about the church. Balarinwa summarises God's covenant with Akindayomi as follows:

- (a) Distinctive modus operandi of the church including being independent of any church organisation in African or from Europe.
- (b) Holy Spirit should be the pivotal in replacing in appointing people to leadership position of the church.
- (c) Sin should be arbitrated in the church regardless of the position of the individual involved.
- (d) God will always meeting the need of the church if the leadership is faithful
- (e) The church will proliferate to all the countries of the world.
- (f) The church will still be vibrant at the second coming of the Christ.

It is apposite to know that during Rev. Akindayomi's term as the General Superintendent of the church mainly grow within Western parts of Nigeria while 40 parishes were established before he died at the age of seventy-five years on the 2nd of November 1980. The demise of Akindayomi brought an end to an era which heralded a new period in the history of RCCG as Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye was appointed as the next General Superintendent (now referred to as General Overseer) of the church.⁵⁷.

2.4.6.1 A new dawn in RCCG

The selection of the current General Overseer, Pastor E. A. Adeboye, a Ph.D. holder and former instructor of Applied Mathematics from the University of Lagos, underscores the RCCG's current development into a major player in the world of missions. The young university lecturer's selection was met with a great deal of skepticism because Adeboye was picked above his other co-founders and senior pastors of the church by divine providence. The late founder's succession plan resulted in a separation and personal animosity among the leadership. Some church authorities questioned the selection of Adeboye as General Overseer, who was newly ordained and had "accelerated ordination"

⁵⁷ Bolarinwa, J. 2006. *The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Beliefs and Practices*. Lagos, Sommerset Ventures. 28-29

in 1975, just two years after joining the church, and became General Overseer six years later.

As Adeboye became the General Overseer there was distinctive phase in the structure and theology of the church as Adeboye reform the church. The obvious growth of the RCCG, which has been proven by scholars to be one of the successful Neo Pentecostal churches in Africa is not without its aggressive evangelistic outreach until the time the researcher investigating social values of sacred objects in the church⁵⁸.

It is important to know that all the selected churches have historical backgrounds and that they are well established and recognised in Ibadan. This has made the researcher to unveil the historical and doctrinal controversies some outsiders of the church have towards their founders, ministries, beliefs and practices. It is also good to know that the selected churches are categorized under African Initiated Churches and African Pentecostal churches. On the other hand, the users of these objects as mentioned are categorised into five as the artisan, job seekers, waiting mothers, expectant mothers and traders hence, the subsequent chapter would examine the use of sacred objects as they are believed to be of their beliefs and practices.

2.5 Sacred objects used in selected churches

2.5.1 Meaning of sacred objects

In general, objects play a significant part for many people both for secular and religious purposes. It is not possible in the scope of this thesis to cover the wide variety of objects in use today among African initiated churches and Pentecostal churches. According to the oxford dictionary online, sacred means to be associated with God or a god or dedicated to a religious purpose or worthy of respect or regarded with great respect and admiration by a particular religion, group or individual.⁵⁹

The word sacred is coined from the Latin *sacer*, that is consecrated, purified or dedicated to the gods or anything in their power. There are similarities between the terms

⁵⁸ Babatunde Adedibu, 2011. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, A Missionary Global Player: What is her message regarding human development? Encounter beyond routine: cultural root, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development international consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 7th-23rd January 2011. 55

⁵⁹<https://sites.google.com/site/sacredobjectsinar/what-is-a-sacred-object> accessed 24/1/2020

“sacred” and “holy” and they are sometimes used interchangeably. Sacredness is used in relation to object, places or happenings while holiness is generally the term used in relation to persons and relationship⁶⁰. By implication, any items that are used in a ritual or that one believes to have a special quality of sanctity are considered sacred things.

2.5.2 Rationale for the use of sacred objects in selected churches

It is a general belief that there is always a reason for anything and activity one does. In the course of this work, it was discovered that the rationales for the use of sacred objects in selected churches cannot be far-fetched from the predilection from the bible most especially in the Old Testament, African cultural context and as it is exemplified from the Holy Bible as well as the universal and symbolic importance attached to those objects in the African tradition.

a. Predilection from the Bible

In the Bible, there are verses that affirm objects used by God and the ministers of God that are believed to be sacred such as: the use of oil in James 5, handkerchiefs and aprons in Acts 19, people touched by Peter’s shadow in Acts 5, the use of candle in 2 Chronicles 13:11. Basically, all these objects are for different purposes for instance: healing, cleansing, warding off evil, blessing, and deliverance and for other various types of anthropogenic purposes among others after prayers and religious ritual might have been said upon them.

In the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the rationale for the use of water is the claim by the leaders of the movement that they received revelations and authority to use water for healing. The origin of this can be traced to the incident that happened in 1918 as a result of a vision which a woman named Odunlami saw that rain would fall and if the water was used as directed, would be for healing and this served as healing process during the terrible influenza pandemic in Ijebu Ode around October, 1918 (Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 29). Coupled with this is Joseph Ayo Babalola’s emphasis on the use of water from the beginning of his ministry has said to have been directed by God. In the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide and Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church likewise the Celestial

⁶⁰ Mc Cann, Catherine. 2008. New Paths towards the sacred. Thus, Panlist Press. Wikipedia accessed 24/1/2020.

Church of Christ (CCC) sacred objects are also believed to be used by the direction of the Holy Spirit through their leaders.

b. African cultural context

Every religion has always been practiced within the cultural context of its believers. For instance, Judaism, Islam, Taoism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism and Christianity among others they all came into existence in a cultural existence. African Initiated Churches (AIC)⁶¹ and African Pentecostal churches therefore, should feel free to practice Christianity within their cultural context as long as such practice agrees with the teaching of the Scripture. Like Yoruba traditional believers, to the African Christianity, faith is not abstract. The African Christians believe that faith must be supported with physical objects like *omi`iyè*, candles, bathing soap with different symbolic objects as the case may be and as directed by the Holy Spirit⁶². Therefore, the use of sacred object in promoting African Christianity is no doubt an idea from African tradition and their symbolic significance. For instance, some of the objects used among the African tradition are similarly used in some of the African initiated and Pentecostal churches. They are sometimes used in churches because of the tradition and the symbolic socio-economic and religious significance of those objects in their daily life as Africans.

Again, Africans believe that whatever happens in the physical must have effect in the spiritual realm. Conversely, whatever happens in the spiritual also has effect on the physical. For instance, the physical head that man carries is just the representation of the inner head known among the Yoruba as *Oriinu* which is the essence of being. As a result, there are spiritual interpretations to whatever happens to them in the physical. For instance, the Yoruba believes in the reality of the supernatural cum the existence of powers causing and controlling the world.⁶³ From the African religious philosophy, there are possibilities to tap the spiritual powers in the universe for their benefit. Such powers can be invoked on the physical or on an object according to the immediate need.

⁶¹ R.O Oshitelu, 2020, Distinguished church leader essay: Aladura theology-the case study of the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide in African Initiated Christianity and the Decolonisation of Development Sustainable Development in Pentecostal and Independent Churches(Edt.)Philip Ohlmann, W. Grab and M. Frost. Routledge, Uk. 178

⁶² G.A Oshitelu, 2007. History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation. Hope publications Ltd. P 32.

⁶³ J. O Awolalu. 1979. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*. Burnt Mill: Longman. 76.

Given the above conditions in African worldview, this has been introduced to the practice of Christianity in African where prayers and other spiritual warfare are embarked upon to deal with their problems. The myriad of challenges facing Africans has made them to consider the efficacious prayers on their personal effects or belongings. This invariably means that their warfare is not an exclusion of this device. In the same vein, the Yoruba Christians in particular use spiritual engagement on the physical objects for their immediate benefit. The implication of this is that, this practice is basically rooted in African religious thought distinct from western Christianity with responses from their scholars describing this practice as syncretism. None the less, the continuous involvement of this religious practice shows that it is to be desired among the African Christians and that of the Yoruba people in particular.

2.5.3 Sacred objects in Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)

Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) as discussed earlier is the first *Aladura* Pentecostal church in Nigeria. The church is one of the African initiated churches that emphasis on prayer and the power of prayer and fasting. The church also believes in praying on the mountain and the use of sacred objects to facilitate prayer and religious ritual. Some of the objects are discussed below:

a. **The use of living water (*Omi Ìyè*)**

Water is at the front burner of CAC worship. When the Lord called Joseph Babalola, He instructed him to use sacred water to invite people to Him and use it for healing multitude of people suffering from all manner of diseases and sicknesses that its use in faith would heal them and eventually lead them to salvation. Hence, the use of consecrated water for drinking and washing became a common feature of Joseph Babalola's ministry. Furthermore, Apostle Babalola described water as a means of winning souls for Christ just as maize brings fowls together. CAC believes that water consecrated through prayer of faith has become sacramental and is for healing and deliverance.

In response, people enthusiastically came in their large number to embrace the message. They gleefully sang the familiar chorus: *Omi la ó mu yè (2x) Aladura, Omi la ó ò mu yè* on regular basis. Meaning that as Aladura people drink water, they would always be well and alive. The chorus confirms the saying: 'Omi la bù wè; omi la bù mu' water is for washing and for drinking. Babalola did not only bless water in containers for people's use,

he also sanctified certain streams for healing people suffering from epilepsy, cancer, ulcer, barrenness, blindness prolong pregnancy, among others. Such streams are found at Ikeji-Arakeji (River Ariran), Ilesa (River Ayo), Efon-Alaaye (River Oni)⁶⁴.

The biblical claim of the use of water in CAC includes the following event according to Alokan. Samuel (Prophet) poured water on the Israelites for mercy and victory over the Philistines (I Samuel 7:6-9); Ezekiel (Prophet) sprinkled water on the Israelites to cleanse them from sins (Ezekiel 36: 25); Isaiah (Prophet) called on those thirsty to drink water to remove their problem (Isaiah 55; 1-2). In John 4:10; 7:37, 38 and Revelation 21:6, water sustains and cools the thirst of believers. These and many other biblical verses are evident for the use of water in CAC. In the imitation of Joseph Babalola's practice, most of CAC headquarters churches today have prepare water wells (aka miracle) water, living water (*Omi iyè*) among others⁶⁵. For example in Oke Agabara CAC, in Ibadan there is profuse use of water that is called "miracle water". We shall discuss this fully in the subsequence chapter.

⁶⁴ Interview with Pastor, A.A Oyelakin, iinterview respondent, Christ Apostolic Church, Ibadan interviewed on 27th of January, 2020.

⁶⁵ J. A. Alokan, 2010. Christ Apostolic Church at 90 (1918-2008). Published by Timade Ventures, Ile-Ife, 334



Plate 2.6. Miracle Water Station

Source. CAC Oke Agbára, Ashi Bodija, Ibadan. 27/1/2020

A hand-bell is an object made to make sound when it is used with hand⁶⁶. It is used as a sensitizer in the market place and social gathering to draw people's attention. In the religious setting, more over than not, hand-bell is one of the main spiritual devices of various Pentecostal churches. Many non-Pentecostal churches are encouraging the use of the instrument for spiritual purposes. Church historians, nevertheless, made it clear that the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the largest Pentecostal church in Africa and Nigeria, was where the use of hand bells first began. The usage of hand-bells while praying for healing is credited to Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola.⁶⁷ Additionally, according to Oyelakin, God handed the first General Evangelist (CAC) a prayer hand-bell as a sign of the assembly of people for prayers. He claims it is a supernatural tool that summons angels to answer believers' prayers and that when it is rung, devils will depart. It was believed that God used the great Apostle and the sound of the handbell to raise the dead back to life.⁶⁸

One of the occasions of Babalola's miracle was of a boy, the only son and the last born of three children of the family of Mr. and Mrs. Ogundipe in Iwara dynasty in Iwara Ijesa under the former Ijesa region, was one of Ayo Babalola's classical uses of hand-bell. The boy's name was John Obi Ogundipe, and he was born on July 20, 1920. He died on July 9, 1930, but returned to life on July 10, 1930. "Babalola called the boy's name three times, then poured water in his prayer bell, and poured it on him." Obi was brought back to life after the bell was rung over him three times.

In CAC today, there is no church that one cannot find hand-bell. It is always placed on the altar in different sizes. Apart from using hand-bell for prayer, it is also used as one of the string/percussion musical instrument in the church. In like manner, it is used to break extempore prayers and to control decorum. When it is used for prayer, on many occasions, water is poured inside the hand-bell for people to drink; washing their faces and heads as directed by the minister of God through the Holy Spirit.

⁶⁶ https://www.google.com/search?q=hand+bell&rlz=1C1AVUA_enNG772NG772&andq=hand+bell&andqs=chrome..69i57j0l7.4043j0j8&andsourceid=chrome&andie=UTF-8

⁶⁷ Olusegun Ayodeji Alokun, 2012. *The Place of Revelations and Healings in the Practices of Christ Apostolic Church, Nigeria, 1930 -1994*. Ph.D. Thesis Submitted to the Postgraduate College, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. 115.

⁶⁸ Interview with Pastor, A.A Oyelakin, interview respondent, Christ Apostolic Church, Ibadan interviewed on 27th of January, 2020.

2.5.4 Sacred objects in Celestial Church of Christ (CCC)

The Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) is one of the prominent *Aladura* churches in South-West Nigeria and part of one of the active churches in African Initiated church movement globally. Members of CCC are of the opinion that the church is a divinely established church with unlimited spiritual powers as ordained by the Almighty God for the redemption of mankind through Prophet Oshoffa⁶⁹. CCC's understanding of the African Church fits into conceptual framework of African Christianity. According to Ayantayo and G.N Ayantayo, African Christianity refers to Christian practices by Africans and in Africa ways without necessarily deviating from the basic Christian fundamental beliefs and practices.⁷⁰ Ayantayo and G.N Ayantayo define the African initiated church as one which is founded in African by Africans and has its tentacle beyond Africa. Sacred objects play major role in the beliefs and practices of the CCC. Therefore, it is worthy of note to examine types of sacred use. The scriptural underpinnings for the use of the sacred objects in the understanding of CCC will also be examined. In CCC, there are many types of objects that are used for prayer as handed over to Church by God through Prophet Oshoffa⁷¹.

a. **Candle**

Candle is an ignitable wick embedded in wax, or another flammable solid substance such as tallow, that provides light, and in some cases, a fragrance. A candle can also provide heat or a method of keeping time⁷². There are different designs, sizes and colours of candles. Candle is significant to some religious organisations because it produces illumination. Candle is one of the sacred objects that are profusely used by members for worship and for various rituals. They refer to it as *Àbélà* or *Ìmólẹ̀*⁷³ and symbolises light⁷⁴. To (CCC) members, Celestials, most of the activities in the church should be accomplished with candle. They claim that there are biblical references for this: (Rev. 1:424:4;. 4:1-5; Zech. 4:2-5, Prov. 20:27, Exodus 40:25; Num. 8:1-4; etc). CCC strictly makes use of white candle. This is because the colour white represents purity and holiness and God directly

⁶⁹ CCC Constitution 1980.

⁷⁰ Ayantayo J.K and G.N Ayantayo, 2019. Probing the Disposition of African Christianity to Cultural and Traditional Religious Identity. In *Nigeria A Festschrift in Honour of Rev. Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin @70*. Edited by Fatokun S.A, Ayantayo J.K, Familusi O.O., Mepaiyeda S.M. and Okanlawon S.O, 359. Religious Studies Series, Volume 7. 359

⁷¹ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020.

⁷² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candle> accessed 6/4/2020.

⁷³ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020.

⁷⁴ Interview respondent Prophet Emmanuel Bankole CCC Orogun, 9/10/2019

handed it over to Oshoffa the founder. According to Bamidele, there are different uses of candle⁷⁵.

God through His Spirit inspires the use of candle with some items and this can be seen in John 16:12-15.

I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

While reflecting the above bible text, Bamidele says:

It is this Spirit that would instruct that...get one or two or three candle and even seven. Bind it with palm frond. Palm frond is another sacred object that stands for great victory. When it is used to bind three candles, and three elderly men surround the person to be prayed for, there is going to be victory. Well, we only pray, but victory belongs to God because we get the directives from God and He knows how He delivers His people⁷⁶.

On the other hand, when Candle is lit during the prayers to God, as a sacred object of illumination, is believed to change the atmosphere with spiritual power; potent enough to dispel evil powers symbolized by darkness. This, in a sense, symbolizes light and holiness for members because the sacredness of light wards off evil and immorality⁷⁷. They sing this hymn during the lighting of candles.

Yah rah sarah, Yah rah samantah...
Yah rah sarah, Yah rah samantah...
E tan fitilà, Mímó lát'òrun wá...

(Kindle the light,
divine from heaven above).

This hymn is usually sung with much solemnity, as it is believed, that the heavenly 'hosts' are being invited to usher in light and dwell also in the sacred space. This is followed by a member lighting the candles on the altar one after the other while the hymn is repeated

⁷⁵ Interview Respondent, Olu Oshodi CCC Orogun, 9/10/2019

⁷⁶ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020.

⁷⁷ A.U. Adogame, 1999. *Celestial Church of Christ*. Germany: Frank Furtam Main, 200.

thrice. In some cases, candles are lit in all the four corners of the church building during the service to keep evil spirits out throughout the service⁷⁸. This act usually assures members that no evil can take place because the sacred place automatically becomes holy⁷⁹. Apart from the church building, candles are also used at the Mercy Land (*Ilè Áámú*) for special prayers to ensure victory, mercy and sanctification. There is a type of candle that is referred to as the “Image candle”. The “image candle” may be used for love affairs. For example, it is claimed that the pastor can use the ritual of image candle to bring a man and women together as husband and wife⁸⁰. The ‘image’ candle ritual can also be used to terminate relationships between two or more people which may also include a husband and wife as well. Another type is the “victory candle” ritual which they refer to as *Iṣẹ̀ Ìṣégún* (the ritual of victory). These candles are used ostensibly for special prayers for the members or clienteles to ward off problems or attract blessings⁸¹.

In response to the question whether there is something mysterious about the candles or whether the candles were made specially to serve such purposes, most respondents claimed that the candles are before the rituals ordinary candles⁸². These candles, according to them, can be purchased anywhere but they receive their potency after they were prayed upon. But in most cases, sacred objects are bought in the church premise through the help of the Shepherd-in-Charge. It is claimed to be bought from the CCC headquarter in Imeko, Ogun State.

⁷⁸ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife.*

⁷⁹ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020.

⁸⁰ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020.

⁸¹ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife.* 30-33

⁸² E. Aiyetan, Interview respondent, Brother, Member of CCC Student Parish, Orogun. Ibadan



Plate 2.7. Candle

Source: CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. 12/3/2020



Plate 2.8. A member at CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Using Prepared Sacred Candle for Prayer 12/3/2020

b. **Holy oil**

Oil was used from early times in Greece. Oil is mentioned frequently in the Bible in connection with anointing, whether of a king, a priest, or even the shield of a soldier. Oil was used as an act of consecration or as a preservative. Oil in the Old and New Testaments signifies the Holy Spirit⁸³. For example, in the Parable of the virgins, the state of unpreparedness of the five foolish virgins was in their lack of oil.

In CCC, oil is an important object of worship. It is referred to as “holy oil” *Òróró mímó* because it is held to be a sacred object⁸⁴. *Ororo*, as it is called in Yoruba, is used for therapeutic and prophylactic purposes. According to Bamidele:

In CCC, holy oil is not the same as olive oil. The ritual of “consecrating” the holy oil is specially prepared by the CCC pastors. No member is allowed to make it but it is made from the source. And we believe that when we bring it from the CCC source, whatever we use it to do we believe that there will be result⁸⁵.

The main purpose of using oil is to anoint people generally, and to ward off evil. The oil is believed to be a symbol of plenty, luxury, joy and hospitality. Its lack is evidence of God’s displeasure; but its abundance is a proof of God’s blessing. CCC members usually cite these passages to show the importance of oil. Exodus 30:31; 2:7; Mark 6:13; James 5:14; Psalm 23:5; Matt. 26:15; 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:12-13; Ecc. 9:8.

⁸³ F. B. Huey, Jr 1980. “Oil” in Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 4, Michigan: Grand Rapids. 513.

⁸⁴ Interview respondent Ojo Sunday CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 15th January, 2020.

⁸⁵ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020.

Holy Oil



Plate 2.9. Anointed Oil preparing for Prayer

Source: CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. 13/5/2020

c. **Perfume**

Perfume, means “scent or fragrance”. It was used frequently in the Old Testament⁸⁶. Perfumes were used on garments in the Old Testament, (Psalm 45:8) in houses as well as couches or beds (Prov. 7:17). Perfumes of all kinds were used in the ancient world in various ways on human bodies and belongings.

In CCC, perfumes are referred to as *Lófíndà* in Yoruba. The oil and perfume are placed together because they are both used for the same purposes. They are usually prescribed by the shepherd, and usually brought to him for purification. Members have various kinds of perfumes which include: Saint Michael’s perfume and Oshoffa’s spiritual perfume which is mostly used by members. The perfume or *Lófíndà* is believed to be charged with potency to ward off malevolent spirits as the fragrance is offensive to them just as the incense⁸⁷. It is seen as a sacred object used to purify bodies of members. These objects are available and obtained at spiritual shops close to the church premises after which they are prayed upon to gain potency.

According to a member, though the sanctified perfume is important because of its sacredness, it should be noted that it is used only to ward off evil, therefore; one should not attach one’s faith to it⁸⁸. Other types of perfumes used by CCC include: *Miss Paris, 7.7, Ona ola and Grace Perfume*. Perfume is also held to be a symbol of the knowledge of Christ and the self-sacrifice of Christ and attracts favour in the sight of God and man. Like the use of oil, there are biblical references for its usage. Matt. 26:6-13; II Cor. 2:14; Eph. 5:2.

⁸⁶ L. L. Walker; 1980. Perfume” in Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, vol. 4, Michigan: Grand Rapids. 698.

⁸⁷A.U. Adogame, 1999. *Celestial Church of Christ*. Germany: Frankfurt am Main. 203

⁸⁸ Interview respondent E. Aiyetan Orogun CCC 9/10/2019



Plate 2.10. Spiritual Perfume

Source: CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. 12/3/2020

d. **Incense**

Incense (*tùràrí*) is an aromatic biotic material which releases fragrant smoke when burned.

There are different types of incense and their origins. According to Thompson, some incense come from Saudi Arabia (especially the Frankincense, and myrrh) while some from Palestine (Saffron, and Stacte), and some from Red Sea (the Oycha); others come from Persia (Galbanum); India (Nard), and Ceylon (Cinnamon)⁸⁹. Incense has been in use right from the Old Testament days. The burning of incense on the altar is a long practice in the Old Testament. Condemned Lev. 26:30 while the ceremonial lighting of incense at altars on “high places” is frequently denounced (1Kings 22:43), whether due to these high sites being linked with idolatry or because it opposed the centralised structure of worship in Jerusalem. (1 Kings 3:2). Incense was also thought to help in the exorcism of demons. In spite of all these, incense was offered by the priests usually in the morning and evening on the gold covered altar in front of the veil⁹⁰. This was first done by Aaron other priests continued with the practice thereafter (Exodus 30:1-10).

According to Mal. 1:11, the primary purpose of incense was to honor God. It conveyed and represented prayer. To prevent the high priest from dying away from witnessing God’s glory on the Day of Atonement, incense smoke is usually made to cover the mercy seat (Lev. 16:13). In CCC, incense or *tùràrí* is a major symbolic ritual object. The *tùràrí* is usually put in a tin punched with holes or an elaborate brass vessel filled with charcoal⁹¹. The Incense or *tùràrí* serves as a complementary ritual to dispel evil powers from ritual worship. It is used either in public worship or private prayer for special request⁹². At the commencement of the ritual worship, the censer is filled with incense powder and coal. When these ingredients are lit, it emits a fragrance believed by members to be a pleasing odour to the benevolent powers while at the same time, it may be offensive and unbearable for the evil spirits and evil doers, thus chasing them or keeping them out of the

⁸⁹ J. Alexander Thomson, 1980. Incense” In Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 3, Michigan: Grand Rapids. 275.

⁹⁰ Alexander Thompson, 1980. Incense” In Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 3, Michigan: Grand Rapids. 275.

⁹¹ H. W. Turner. 1967. *African Independent Church, the Life and Faith of the Church of the Lord (Aladura)* p. 108.

⁹² Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020. See also G. A. Oshitelu, 2007 *History of the Aladura Churches 1918-1940, An Interpretation*, Ibadan: Hope Publishers, p. 105-106.

sacred space. The *tùràrí* is taken round the church and even outside to show that all evil spirits within the church and outside had been sent packing.

During the church service, this ritual is repeated intermittently to ensure that the evil spirits are kept out perpetually throughout the ritual time. The use of *tùràrí* is not limited to the devotional service; it is a common place in all the rituals and ceremonies. The use of incense is believed to invoke the presence of God⁹³. They claim that when the smoke escapes into the air, it means that “our prayers have ascended to God⁹⁴”.

A question was raised by the researcher to know whether the smoke that comes out from the incense tray had at one time or the other affected either asthmatic patients or better still, those coming to church for the first time that could be allergic to the smoke? In response to the question, members maintain that the smoke that comes out from the incense rather than cause danger to people’s health heals them of their various ailments⁹⁵. It is claimed that it has never been recorded of anybody having an attack from the inhalation. Well, there is every tendency that a person coming to the church for the first time might react to the smoke. It just depends on the level of tolerance, natural disposition and the faith the person has. The biblical references used by CCC on the use of incense are Exodus 30:8-9; 40:531:11; Leviticus 2:13; Malachi 1:11; Exodus; Revelation 5:8 and Luke 1:8-11.

e. **Water**

The use of water is very essential in the ritual practices and belief in African Initiated Churches. It is on this note that Turner referred to them as ‘*Soosi Olomi*’ (water Churches). Turner described them as ‘those water people’⁹⁶. Water is found virtually in all the places a member comes in contact with. Sanctified water can be found on the altar, outside the church premises, offices, cars, homes and everywhere water can be used for religious ritual of members.

In CCC, *Omi*, as it is called by the members can be used to serve various purposes. Corroborating this, the Shepherd of CCC Irapada, Orogun, Ibadan asserts that “*Omi labùwè, omi labùmu, kò sí ẹ̀ni tí ń bá omí ẹ̀ ọ̀tá.*” *Meaning*: water is for bathing and for drinking no

⁹³ Interview respondent Samson Egulae, CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan, 12th March, 2020 12/2/2020

⁹⁴ Interview respondent Daniel CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan, 10th, February 2019

⁹⁵ Interview, respondent Daniel CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan, 10th, February 2019

⁹⁶ H. W. Turner. 1967. *African Independent Church, the Life and Faith of the Church of the Lord (Aladura)* p. 107.

one can do without the use of water. When God first created the earth, he created water first. That same sea has been in existence since without drying. Therefore, the water has been in use in CCC right from inception by our father Prophet Oshoffa, with specification of its use by the Holy Spirit. It could be used for purification, sprinkling around, the house, church, shop, for protection, healing as well as casting out evil spirits⁹⁷.

Water in CCC is called sanctified or holy water because prayers are usually said on it. This why people come to the church with bottles, cans, jars, or in any container capable of holding water. Such water is placed on the floor of the church building during devotional services, special services or other prayer rituals. Some could buy bottled or sachet water when the whenever prayers are being said by the *Olùṣó* (shepherd),⁹⁸ prophets/prophetesses, elders among others. Members believe that such ‘ordinary’ water is transformed into ‘Holy’ water, thus, rendering it potent for healing, purification and prevention⁹⁹.

Omi can be used for *Ìṣégun* (victory). The person who desires to overcome any problem could be asked to bring water. The prophet will then pray on it. It is after this that the person may be asked to have a bath with it. The person could also be asked to throw the sponge that was used for bathing inside the river. This shows that the river had taken away the person’s problem.

If someone is poisoned, the Holy Spirit can inspire that the person should bring water from *omi* the water. This water will be mixed with *òró* (oil), *tùràrí* (incense), and seven candles with prayers. After that, the person may be asked to bath with it. If there is any mysterious power disturbing success of the fellow, God will remove it. On the other hand, one may be asked to bring bottled water with *lòfìndà* (perfume). After blessing it, the person could be asked to drink. Peradventure the fellow has been poisoned or contacted any diabolic ailment, by drinking this water; such an individual will vomit or defecate all the poisonous substance.

⁹⁷ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

⁹⁸ A shepherd is an ordained, consecrated and Anointed Clergyman. It is not a fantasy or mere sheep herdsman as it may be described by a layman but the name was instructed and directed by God through the founder S.B.J. Oshoffa. It should also be noted that CCC is the only denomination that calls its clergy shepherd.

⁹⁹ See Afeosemimo u. Adogame, *Celestial Church of Christ*, p. 194.

A pregnant woman who is being tormented by evil spirits could be asked to fetch water into which she may insert a stick of candle. During the prayer, the candle which is lit will be allowed to melt in the water. This indicates that as the candles melt and reduces in size, her problem decreases. It is after the candle might have completely melts that the problems can be said to be over completely¹⁰⁰. Apart from these people, those afflicted or are in bondage are usually advised to bath with this water after which it is hoped that they are freed from any form of evil attack.

CCC also believe in the sanctification of flowing river. This is referred to as stream baths. That is why they say, ‘*Odò kii şàn kó bojú wèyìn*’ (if a person takes a bath in a stream, the person’s problems are washed away and will never return).

The use of stream or running water depends on the order of the Holy Spirit through the Prophet and shepherd. Some could be asked to bath within the church environment while some could be asked to go to the flowing river where his or her problem would flow away by the river¹⁰¹.

Many Celestial churches usually have a stream or pool of water very close to their church building. Some claim that it is primarily to make purification and other things which may not be accomplished without the use of water easier. It should be noted that some churches do not have streams close to their sanctuary. In that case, they would be expected to move to rivers close by to conduct spiritual baths¹⁰². This verifiable assertion is made in order to correct the wrong notion that CCC cannot do without stream close to their church premises. On the other hand, it is claimed that the lands in the riverine areas are cheaper because people run away from such lands and this becomes an advantage for CCC in some cases¹⁰³.

Apart from all these uses, a well is usually dug at the mercy land (*Ile aanu*) of each parish. Water fetched from there is called ‘holy water’. Water symbolizes purity, cleanliness, peace as well as freshness. The biblical references for the use of water in the CCC are: Exodus 30:20-21; Ezekiel 36:25-27; 2 Kings 5:10-14; Hebrew 9:14; John 9:6-11.

¹⁰⁰ Interview respondent Samson Egunlae Orogun Ibadan 12/3/2020

¹⁰¹ Interview respondent Samson Egunlae Orogun Ibadan 12/3/2020

¹⁰² Interview respondent Daniel CCC member, 12/3/2020

¹⁰³ Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020



Plate 2.11. Holy Water in the stoup

Source: Holy Water in the stoup at CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan. 17/8/2020



Plate 2.12. A session of water in containers. 17/8/2020

Source: CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan.

e. **Green water and Omi Ojú Iná**

Green water and omi ojú iná are also known as *Omi Agbára*. It is a special concoction in liquid form and peculiar to CCC among the Aladura Churches. According to Daniel, this water was said to have been revealed by the Holy Spirit to Pastor Oshoffa and millions of people have benefited immensely on its use. It is made from a mixture of blue sulphur, alum, water, lime juice and sanctified water. It is usually prescribed for therapeutic purpose. Whenever it is prescribed, it is normally prescribed with some other things...according to the Shepherd. I have seen someone who was told to drink green water and vomited poisonous things like: snake, lizard, snail or even a nail after they had been asked to take the water as deliverance liquid¹⁰⁴. *Omi agbára* serves as a purgative medication. It is believed to have a potent force to cause evacuation or rid the bowels of all impurities, poisonous as well as harmful substances¹⁰⁵. According to members, when the green water is taken by a sick person, any deadly meal taken in the dream or in reality would be vomited¹⁰⁶.

Omi Agbára is also believed to be capable of curing convulsion in children. Because of its efficacy, and potential danger for misuse, green water is usually kept out of reach of the general community. It is usually in the custody of the *Olúshó* (Pastor or Shepherd). It should be noted that according to CCC leaders, green water is taken only when Holy Spirit prescribes it through the prophet/prophetess¹⁰⁷. In other words, it is obtained and given to the patient after a prayer ritual. It is believed that it is this prayer that makes the green water prescriptive and efficacious.

In the real sense, green water is not green in colour rather blue. It is in all probability just labelled 'green' out of ignorance by those who are critical of the church. Most CCC members of CCC agree to the statement made by the Pastor and Founder that there is nothing special about the so called "green water"¹⁰⁸. In fact, one of them claimed to have

¹⁰⁴ Interview respondent Daniel CCC member, 12/3/2020

¹⁰⁵ A.U. Adogame, 1999. *Celestial Church of Christ*. Germany: Frankfurt am Main.19.

¹⁰⁶ Interview respondent Daniel CCC member, 12/3/2020

¹⁰⁷ Prophets and Prophetesses play Vital Roles in the CCC. They foresee things that happen either at present or the future. See C. G. Baeta *Prophetism in Ghana: A Case Study of Some Spiritual Churches*, London: SCM Press 1962, see also Jon Mark Ruth-Ven, "Prophecy Gift of" in Stanley Burgess(ed), *Christianity and Charismatic Christianity*, New York: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2006, p. 389.

¹⁰⁸ J. Mark Ruth-Ven, 2006. "Prophecy Gift" of in Stanley Burgess, (ed) *Christianity and Charismatic Christianity*, New York: Berkshire Publishing Group, p. 389.

taken it several times yet nothing unpleasant has happened to her. She mentioned that she took it as a result of bad dream and eating in her dream. She was asked to take some pap (*Ògi*) before taking the water and she did. She however, concluded that the green water is therapeutic.

Non-members have concluded that green water is mysterious because it cannot be prepared by just anybody despite having all the needed ingredient to prepare water. According to a member, many people have tried and failed in their attempts to prepare the green water. What comes to mind immediately is, what else should be added to make it potent as it should be¹⁰⁹?

In the same vein, *omi ojú iná* (water from fire) is similar to green water. It can be prescribed by the shepherd when a user complains of stomach ache or any sickness Holy Spirit will direct that *omi ojú iná* should be ministered on them. It is important to note that green water and *omi ojú iná* cannot be taken by everybody except by the directives of the Holy Spirit. Other objects used as sacred in CCC for different religious ritual are: bathing soap of different kinds, local sponges, salt, egg from local chicken, sugar, broom, coconut, palm frond and other objects as prescribed by the shepherd through the directives of the Holy Spirit according to the need for the solution of anyone that comes for prayer of different purposes for instance, deliverance, blessing, protection, victory among others.

f. **Hand bell**

Generally, Church bells convey an inner meaning, calling worshippers to offer worship and adoration unto God. In CAC, C&S and CCC, hand bell is used to call of members to order.

In CCC, the hand bell is one of the important objects of worship. The revelation, according to the CCC constitution,¹¹⁰ came through the Pastor and Founder seven years after the birth of the church. Pastor *Oshoffa* recalls how the revelation came through to him:

¹⁰⁹ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife.* 30-33

¹¹⁰ See the *CCC Constitution* 1980, p. 26.

I was in a trance when I saw in space a house with no solid walls or roof, but it was still a house. Some were on the upper floor, while we were on the lower, both floors not solid but hung in space and still real. As a bell rang three times, both those on the upper floor and we on the lower level bowed down touching our fore head to the floor and said: Mímó, Mímó, Mímó, Mímó, Mímó, sí Olúwa Ọlórún àwọn Ọmọ Ogun (which in English means Holy, Holy, Holy, to God of Hosts, the Lord)¹¹¹

In his trance, the bell was rung three times which was followed by the response three times as well. This had ever since become a followed pattern of the service in the CCC. According to the members, bells may be used to call the attention of God or rather to invoke His presence. It is a sign to call the Father that his children are here¹¹², again. When the bell is rung three times and worshippers bow down, they are symbolically expressing that:

We are surrendering all our lives and well being to Him because He created us¹¹³. It is like paying homage to him that is why we say “Holy, Holy, Holy to the Lord of Host¹¹⁴”.

In order to show that what they are doing is scriptural, CCC cite some biblical references for the use of the bell which can be found in Exodus 28:33; 34; 39:25, Zechariah 14:20.

2.5.5 Sacred objects in The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW)

Another well-known and expanding African initiated church is the Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (CLPFW). The Aladura Churches are known as Aladura is because their followers’ only way of accomplishing their goals is through prayer. The Aladura place a comparable importance on prayer as Yoruba traditional religious adherents. According to the Aladura, faith must be supported by objects such as water (Omi yè), anointed oil (Oróró), candles (Abélà), and incense, among others.

¹¹¹ See the *CCC Constitution*

¹¹² A. Ojo, Interview respondent, brother, member of CCC Corner stone Parish, Olode, Ibadan Aged 25, Interviewed 16th September, 2019.

¹¹³ D. O. Durojaiye. Interview respondent, Superior Evangelist, member of CCC Surulere Parish, Bodija, Ibadan. Aged 68, Interviewed on 27th May, 2019

¹¹⁴ D. O. Durojaiye. Interview respondent, Superior Evangelist, member of CCC Surulere Parish, Bodija, Ibadan. Aged 68, Interviewed on 27th May, 2019

a. **Use of candle**

In CLPFW lighting of candles is symbolic. It is a symbol of pure light. It is to dispel darkness and other obstacles that may hinder prayer from being answered. It does not mean that candlelight represents prayer in the manner some people do. It does not indicate that each candle lighted stands for an angel or patron saint in the thought of a magician, but it is simply a symbol of Christ Jesus, the Light of the world. Apart from that, it consumes less oxygen, and has biblical references (Exo 25:31; Zech. 4:2; 2 Chron. 4:20 and Rev. 1:12)

Candle



**Plate 2.13. Members of TCLPFW praying with candles during Sunday service.
16/6/2019**

Source: TCLPFW, Ibadan



Plate 2.14. Members of TCLPFW with the researcher praying with candles during Sunday service. 23/7/2019

Source: TCLPFW, Ibadan

b. **Water**

In CLPFW, Omi iyè (Holy Water) or Omi tutu (cold water) and Oróró Àdùrà (anointed oil) are used for faith healing. Like Yoruba traditional believers, for the Aladura, faith is not abstract¹¹⁵. This suggests that members fill their bottles with water while some bring bottled water or sachet water with oil to ministers of God to pray on them for the purpose of physical healing. According to Oshitelu, church does not condemn the scientific medical treatment or regard those who use curative medicine as unsaved. Even St. Luke, the writer of the third Gospel and Book of Acts, was a physician. He adds that the church encourages and practices 'Faith or Gospel Healing' and enjoins this upon her members who have faith in the healing power of Christ. It is believed in CLPFW that diseases, both of the body and mind, are healed through prayers, the use of consecrated, blessed or anointed oil and water consecrated by the Holy Spirit through prayer. This does not augur another idol. The biblical justification of the use of water and oil as seen among TCLPFW members can be found in Jeremiah 32:27; James 5:13-15.

It is also believed that Jesus is the spirit and foundation of living water. That is why CLPFW agrees with the Biblical verse that says: He is no longer dead but risen. The practice of omi iyè (living water) is significant and that has to do with the belief in the living water as John 7:38 records that whoever believes in me, out of his heart shall flow the living water. It is believed that Christ has bestowed the same charismatic gift upon the Aladura churches in Old Testament times and in the New Testament as it is written in John 5:4 that 'whosoever stepped in after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever diseases he had'¹¹⁶.

Water is also used for ablution in TCLPFW. It is believed that ablution gives an outward hint that the worshippers assemble to worship a Holy and perfect God, and before Him everyone must be required to appear in pure heart and hands. This practice no doubt has Old Testament background in (Exodus 40:7; 30, 30). In this wise, ablution only indicates the practices of humble believers approaching a holy God with an attitude in purity of mind and body. Also this is to remind the believers that they are worshipping a holy and righteous God and to always ask themselves if they are walking righteously in Him¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁵ G.A Oshitelu, 2007. History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation. Hope publications Ltd. 106

¹¹⁶ Adebayo A. Interview respondent, TCLPFW 10/7/2019

¹¹⁷ Adenuga A. Interview respondent, TCLPFW 10/7/2019

c. **Water Pot**



Plate 2.15. Water Pot for Ablution (Ikoko Iwese)

Source: Church of the Lord Aladura Prayer Fellowship Worldwide (TCLPFW) Head Quarters, Ogere, Ogun State. 13/6/2019

This water pot is placed at the entrance of the church for ablution of members before they go into the church.

d. **Rod of power and handy crosses**

In the scriptures, rod was distinctively fashioned for individual use. There is no much difference between the word rod and staff, so they can be used inter-changeably. The rod or staff of David was a symbol of divine guidance and care even though it also became the symbol of authority and rule prevalent in Bible use.

Rod of power in CLPFW is made of iron and it is one of the sacred objects that is treated with reverence¹¹⁸. It is the staff of office for ministers. It is used by the minister to touch objects that include fruits, oil, water, and on the forehead of the person seeking spiritual assistance. It is the process of consecration used by the prophet. The significance of this iron rod does not portray a magic rod or a fetish wand. Rather the church means that the same God who spoke to and used Moses' Shephard rod still exists. Therefore, rod of power of the minister is believed to work wonders and performs miracles as Moses did in his time. The iron rod serves as a visible omen of victory through Christ. (Exodus 4:2-4; 20; 7:8-12; Psalm 2:9; Rev.2:27)¹¹⁹

On the other hand, small and handy crosses crucifixes are made with wood, silver, gold or brass in CLPFW. They are sacred objects made for some members of the church. They do not possess any magical power or saving grace of their own apart from the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

According to Gbogboade in an interview, who submits that:

Handy-cross and crucifixes are not for just anybody who desires it but for one who is qualified to carry the cross around. Such person must have gone through water baptism and related courses with training organised by the church. The cross allows the carrier to be eligible to carry out some spiritual exercise in the church. The cross stands for spiritual power. Not that the cross has power in itself but it is a symbol of power. There are rules concerning the maintenance of the cross. One must be holy. By implication, the cross should not be handled carelessly or be taken to any place where one can commit sin like...beer parlour and brothel among others because the cross and crucifixes are sacred. People use the cross to pray. People put it in their pocket, hang it in cars, whenever they travel and their lintel for protection. The holders believe that they have more faith in God just like the African setting where symbols are seen as the elements that strengthen faith as we also have among the Europeans where people keep and respect objects as symbol of their religion. Therefore, this practice is not limited to Africans¹²⁰.

¹¹⁸ D. Ayegboyin and S.A. Ishola. 1997. *African indigenous churches: an historical perspective*. Greater Heights Publication. 94

¹¹⁹ Adebayo A. Interview respondent, TCLPFW 10/7/2019

¹²⁰ Babatunde Emmanuel Gbogboade, Dioecian Bishop of Diocese of Ogere. Ogere Nigera and the Provost of the Cathedral. Interview respondent 6/9/2020.

Other sacred objects church uses are: holy rosary, vestments, incense and other symbolic objects like palm fronds are also used¹²¹.

2.5.6 Sacred objects in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S)

a. Incense

As discussed earlier on the use of incense in the Celestial Church of Christ, there are similar use of this same sacred object in Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S). In C&S Church, the incense or *Turàri* is believed to ward off dangerous spirits that cannot be seen with the naked eye.¹²² On the other hand, it may be used to usher in the presence of God. An interview respondent underscored the above when she stressed that *Turàri* is primarily used to sanctify the environment and to also call the attention of the angels¹²³. She explained further that incense helps in driving away offensive odours which is believed with be unpleasant God and the angels. These offensive odours could be as a result of sinful acts such as sexual immorality which some could have engaged in before coming to church and all other immoral acts which are not pleasing to God. Incense is believed to serve as a means of protection for members¹²⁴. This is why some members cannot do without fumigating their houses, cars, offices and environments with the incense¹²⁵.

b. Oil

The ancient Egyptians made use of at least twelve different vegetable oils which include: olive, castor, balanos, almond and so on. They were skilled in the manufacturing of ointments and perfumes which required oil bases¹²⁶. It is important to note that the ancient depended mainly on olive oil which was cultivated as early as 2500 B. C. in Crete.

¹²¹ D. Ayegboyin and S.A. Ishola. 1997. *African indigenous churches: an historical perspective*. Greater Heights Publication. 107

¹²² Duyilemi Aanu. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹²³ Aanu Duyilemi Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹²⁴ Lady Evangelism Adegbayibi, Interview Respondent, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express. 26/1/2020

¹²⁵ Lady Evangelism Adegbayibi, Interview Respondent, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express. 26/1/2020

¹²⁶ F. B. Huey, Jr, 1980. "Oil" in Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 4, Michigan: Grand Rapids, p. 513-515.

In the past, oil served various purposes such as food, illumination, medicinal, cosmetic, religious, hospitality as well as commercial values. Anointing with oil can be defined as the act of pouring oil (usually olive) on a person or object to aid in healing as an act of dedication¹²⁷. Oil is used mostly in all churches to enact God's healing power and as a public declaration of God's guidance, choice, or protection. Oil is a mark of well being, gladness, health and the Holy Spirit¹²⁸.

C&S Churches make use of olive oil. It is believed that oil protects them from unseen dangers; it also guides them in their day to day activities¹²⁹. In the past, the local oil (*àdiàgbon*) which was extracted from the palm kernel, was used before it was made from olive tree¹³⁰. Before anointing anyone with oil, Psalm 101 is recited either 3, 7, or 1000 times. This is so that for God would consecrate the substance before anointing anyone with it. It is believed that without this, the *Òróró* might not be efficacious. The anointing oil can serve as a physical symbol of God's call or purpose for their task. It is often used to bless individuals undertaking a missionary venture, special group of people or even the congregation at large¹³¹.

In the C&S Churches, oil may be used on objects and sacred places. For example oil or *òróró* may be poured round the church when the spirit instructs the prophet to do so. Oil is also used to anoint private homes, or even vehicles by members for physical protection. The anointing of cars, offices, homes, etc. is regarded purely as symbolic by many members, others view this act as a physical token of the Holy Spirit that is necessary for ensuring healing, consecration, or protection¹³². At the other times, newly born babies are anointed with olive oil to prevent them from being harmed by 'evil forces'¹³³. Also, those who are

¹²⁷ Brian R. Doak and William P. Griffin 2006. "Oil, Anointing with" in Stanley M. Burgess (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*, London: Taylor and Francis group. 339.

¹²⁸ F. B. Huey, Jr, 1980. "Oil" in Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* Vol. 4, Michigan: Grand Rapids, p. 513-515.

¹²⁹ Gbenga Osho, Interview Respondent, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express. 26/1/2020

¹³⁰ Aderibigbe Daniel, Interview Respondent, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express. 26/1/2020

¹³¹ Gbenga Osho, Interview Respondent, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o Cand S Parish, Iwo road Express. 26/1/2020

¹³² Brian R. Doak and William P. Griffin 2006. "Oil, Anointing with" in Stanley M. Burgess (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*, London: Taylor and Francis group. 339.

¹³³ A Dimeji, Interview Respondent, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o Cand S Parish, Iwo road Express. 20/1/2020

believed to be possessed of demons are usually anointed with oil for their deliverance¹³⁴. Oil to C&S members is a special symbol of the Holy Spirit because of the Spirit of God that is believed to dwell in it. The C&S cite James 5:14-15 as the biblical backup for the use and importance of oil.

c. **Perfumes**

Over 5,000 years ago, people started using perfumes. It is thought that the first people to use perfume in their culture were the ancient Egyptians. The ancient Egyptians had the view that their sun deity, Ra, was the source of perfume. At first, rich oils were combined with plant or animal products to make perfume (fragrances). From Egypt, perfume was transported to other places, such as Rome and Greece. Ancient nations such as Iran and China both had expensive perfume, while the Chinese employed the fragrance in incense. Archaeologists have discovered historical evidence of the usage of perfume, frequently in the shape of elaborate perfume receptacles or jars.¹³⁵

The Bible refers to perfume in many of its verses for example in the book of Exodus. Exodus 30:23-24 states ‘Take the finest spices. The first maker of perfume mentioned in the Bible was Bezalel (Exodus 37:1, 29) and the profession became highly developed in Israel as elsewhere. Perfumes were then used to mask the odour of the body. It was used in a lavish manner at feasts and religious services.

In the C&S Church, perfume or *lòfìndà* is not usually sprayed in the church. According to D. Adeleye, it is only used by members to smell good”. Unlike in CCC church, the use of perfumes or *lòfìndà* is not given a pride of place in C & S Church. The perfume cannot just be sprayed round C & S Church except a divine instruction is given.

d. **The holy water/ Omi iyè**

In African Initiated churches, water is an indispensable element of worship. Holy water, as it is fondly called, is also known as *Omi iyè* among C & S members. *Omi iyè* is used basically for purification, sanctification as well as healing. There are usually two wells

¹³⁴ Brian R. Doak and William P. Griffin 2006. “Oil, Anointing with” in Stanley M. Burgess (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*, London: Taylor and Francis group. 339.

¹³⁵ Brian R. Doak and William P. Griffin 2006. “Oil, Anointing with” in Stanley M. Burgess (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*, London: Taylor and Francis group. 339. https://www.academia.edu/34384367/THE_HISTORY_OF_PERFUME_1_The_History_of_Perfume_from_the_Bible_to_Present_Day retrieved 30/5/2020

in the premises of every C&S Church. One of such wells is strictly for religious purposes while the other is for non-religious purposes. The first is mainly used only when it is prescribed by the leader of the church through the Holy Spirit. Infact, a well may even be dug at the church altar.

C & S members claim that water has a form of power because of the strength of baptism and the spirit of God that dwells within it¹³⁶. Water to C & S members is believed to have special healing power. This is why special prayers are held for the sick using holy water. These special prayers are led by clergy, while the sick person, if possible, kneels in the center of a circle. During such prayers, the leader reads from the Bible certain selected Psalms and summarizes the prayer. Depending on the severity of the sickness, each prayer may be said once, three times, or even seven times. After each prayer, the leaders may request that the sick person drink from the *Omi yè*, which is thought to address the individual's problem.¹³⁷.

C & S churches engage in some of these practices because most times there may not be automatic healing. It is believed that healing may be delayed when a patient who has committed some "heinous sins" "does not repent or at times the leader's faith may not be strong enough to perform the healing. Water may also be used to protect children from small pox and other forms of diseases. Members are usually seen with different kinds of containers that are able to hold water just to take some of the *Omi iyè* to their destinations. Such water could be sprinkled around their various houses, cars, offices and shops. Students looking for breakthroughs in their studies could also make use of the water. It is not rare for members to have specific locations for keeping the *Omi iyè* because of the level of faith attached it.

At other times, the holy water could be sprinkled round the church. This is done to a effect general cleansing of the church. It is believed that the water can drive away all forces pitched against the church. This is why people who had committed adultery or fornication are expected to do a form of cleansing before coming into the church to aid the

¹³⁶ Duyilemi Aanu. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹³⁷ Apostle Olagunju Babalola. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 26/1/2020

general cleansing.¹³⁸ Water could take the form of a ritual bath, if there is need for natural flowing stream in some situations. Individuals bring water in bottles, or any other containers to be prayed upon. The leader touches the water with the staff just as Moses did in the bible. This is done after reciting some portions of the book of Psalms.

e. **The hand bell**

The hand bell or *agogo* is a symbolic worship object in the C & S Church. The hand bell serves many purposes: It is used to call the attention of people for worship; it is also believed to connect human beings and the angels; it is for this reason that everywhere is silent when it is rung. It is a way of sending a message that something important is about to start. Apart from serving the purpose of communication, it gives sound immediately it is rung. Sometimes, when it is noticed that the church is a little bit noisy, the *Agogo* controls the congregation to keep quiet or be attentive. It could also be used to consecrate water using the sound coming from the bell before it is drunk¹³⁹.

Among the C & S, it is believed that when one is going into the bush and one rings the bell, evil forces cannot come near one¹⁴⁰. This shows the extent to which members of the church believe in its efficacy. Apart from all these, the bell also serves as a musical instrument which accompanies other instruments.

The hand bell also stands for evangelism; prophecy and prayer in C&S. Evangelists use it to invite converts while prophets use it to get the attention of clients. It is also used to put an end to prayer section, ward off evil spirits and also to invite the presence of the hosts of heaven. In some cases, a person who is trusting God for a breakthrough may be asked to buy and donate a hand bell to the house of God or keep one at home¹⁴¹. The hand bell, in other words, is believed to invite victory (Rev. 5:8; 8:4).

¹³⁸ Apostle Olagunju Babalola. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 26/1/2020

¹³⁹ Apostle Olagunju Babalola. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 26/1/2020

¹⁴⁰ Brian R. Doak and William P. Griffin 2006. "Oil, Anointing with" in Stanley M. Burgess (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*, London: Taylor and Francis group. 339.

¹⁴¹ Samson Oluyode Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

f. **Palm fronds**

The use of palm fronds in Christianity signifies victorious Christian reward. In the past, palm leaves or fronds were often given, as a price or mark of distinction, to winners in contest of strength and skill¹⁴². In Latin, the saying “*palmm qui meruit ferat*” (let him bear them palm who merits it), originated from this custom¹⁴³. Palm frond is the symbol of the triumphant entry of Jesus, victory, joy, martyrdom and prosperity¹⁴⁴. The same is replicated in African use of palm frond most especially among the Yoruba.

In C&S Church, the palm frond represents victory. Palm fronds also known as *Màrìwò Òpẹ*, when put inside water, is believed to be capable of chasing evil spirit away. This may be preceded by reading a prescribed Psalm¹⁴⁵. At times, one may be asked to nail the palm frond at the lintel of one’s house. However, in recent years, the practice has stopped apparently because the church noticed that traditional worshippers also engage in the same practice¹⁴⁶. However members still make use of *Màrìwò Òpẹ* which they design as crosses, swords, crowns, and wear as hand and neck chains. This is done to commemorate Christ’s victory over death¹⁴⁷. At other times, palm fronds are believed to serve therapeutic purposes. This is why a person who is possessed could be asked to put a strand of *Màrìwò Òpẹ* in their bathing water to drive away evil spirits as well as a cure for various ailments in C&S Church¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴² T Albert S.1942, *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches*, p. 88.

¹⁴³ T. A. Stafford. 1942, *Christian Symbolism in the Evangelical Churches*, p. 88.

¹⁴⁴ Duyilemi Aanu. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁴⁵ Adesina Mayowa Ige, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 23/8/2020

¹⁴⁶ Duyilemi Aanu. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁴⁷ A. Dimeji Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁴⁸ Aderanti Seun, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020



Plate 2.16. Minister giving out palm frond for members during Prayer.

Source: Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship Worldwide) headquarters, during Sunday Service Ogere,

g. **Sword**

The sword had longed been an important part of Israel's weaponry in its march towards the conquest of many lands under various judges¹⁴⁹. In C & S, the sword or *Idà Máíkèlì* (Michael's sword) is a major symbol of Arch Angel Michael who is the patron of C & S Church. When members of the church find themselves in trouble or in need of a particular thing, Arch Angel Michael is called upon¹⁵⁰. In other to shut the powers of the evil ones away from the sacred place, the sword is usually placed at the four corners of the church¹⁵¹. The sword is usually carried by the brigadiers (*omọ ogun Kristi*)¹⁵². C & S members claim that, when a person is tormented by evil spirits, the *Ida* is raised or carried on their behalf; it would help to rid the victim of the troubles. *Idà Máíkèlì* is believed to ward off evil and is also used to seek for God's mercy¹⁵³. The sword is an important object in C & S Church that it is still kept in the homes of some members, obviously for spiritual and not for defensive purposes¹⁵⁴. The sword or *Idà Máíkèlì* symbolizes victory¹⁵⁵.

k. **Rod**

The rod was also seen as a symbol of God's anger and chastisement. Apart from these, the rod was used in counting sheep (Lev. 27:32) and symbolically in numbering God's chosen children (Ezek. 20:37).

In C & S Church, a prophet is usually given the rod or *òpá* as sacred object. The rod as described by Turner, is "in form of an iron rod about two and half feet long, looped in a handle at one end, a part of the insignia of the position of ministers¹⁵⁶". The *Òpá* is usually carried around by prophets everywhere they go. The rod is believed to be so sacred that it

¹⁴⁹ R. White, 1980. "Armor, Arms" In Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1, Michigan: Grand Rapids, p. 314, See also Judges 3.

¹⁵⁰ Ibrahim Motunrayo, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 23/8/2020

¹⁵¹ R. White, 1980 "Armor, Arms" In Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Vol. 1, Michigan: Grand Rapids, p. 314, See also Judges 3.

¹⁵² Ibrahim Motunrayo, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁵³ Aderanti Seun, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 23/8/2020

¹⁵⁴ Apostle Daniel A Oguntoye, Church Secretary, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁵⁵ Apostle Daniel A Oguntoye, Church Secretary, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁵⁶ H. W. Turner, *African Independent Church, the Life and Faith of the Church of the Lord*, P. 105

should not just be touched by anyone. The rod symbolizes leadership position or office. It is also a rod of power of the prophet¹⁵⁷.

The *Òpá* is used to touch objects which need to be consecrated by the prophet. These objects are those which are brought by people who have come for prayers and healing sessions. Members of C & S claim that non-members hold the view that the rod has some magical powers attached to it. A prophet specifically said there is nothing magical about the rod except that it portrays the spiritual quality and the power of the Prophet to perform miracles. It should be noted that the rod carried by an Apostle is different from that of a Prophet. For the *elemi* (one with the gifts of prophecy), the rod is usually a small one. In the C&S Church, one could be an *ariran* (seer) without necessarily being a prophet. The rod or *Opa* is therefore a symbol of spiritual authority which is in accordance with Revelation 2:26 – 27. Apart from these, anointed male members can carry the rods known as staff for prayer. Female members do not and are not expected to carry staffs¹⁵⁸.

h. **The use of cross/Crucifix**

The uses of crosses of different sizes are part of the African Initiated Churches' sacred objects. It is symbolic and significant and it is a reminder that Christ died on the cross of Calvary. Although, there are historical evidences that show that the cross was in use centuries before Christ¹⁵⁹. In the British Museum, there is a statue of the Assyrian King Samsi-Vul son of Shalmaneser with an almost perfect Maltese cross around his neck and a similar cross on an accompanying figure of Ashur-nasir-pal. Diana, the ancient goddess is pictured with a cross over her head, in much the same way as the Virgin Mary is represented as holding a cross on a rosary by many medieval artists. Bacchus, the Greek god of wine is often pictured wearing a headdress adorned with crosses¹⁶⁰. In the middle ages the cross was used more profusely and thus became the borne on arms and banners.

Some protestant critics claim that there is absolutely no evidence that God's true church ever used the cross symbols for any purpose¹⁶¹. Indeed, there is no place where the

¹⁵⁷ D. Ayegboyin and S. Ademola Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches: An Historical Perspective*, p. 94.

¹⁵⁸ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies*, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife. 104-107

¹⁵⁹ J. Hall, 1974, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Evanston: Harper and Row. 76

¹⁶⁰ J. Hall, 1974, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Evanston: Harper and Row. 76

¹⁶¹ G.F. Hawthorne, "Cross" In Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*

bible commands its use¹⁶². The Christian use of the cross did not begin until the time of Constantine that is over three centuries after the death of Christ. The cross became an Easter icon at the council of Nicaea, in 325 A. D., when Constantine decreed that the cross must become the symbol of the crucifixion and the official symbol of Christ.

Furthermore, Stafford mentions about twenty-one crosses which he described using pictures. These crosses include: The Tau Cross, The Anchor Cross, The Latin Cross, The Calvary Cross, The Greek Cross, S. T. Andrew's Cross, Jerusalem Cross, The Maltese Cross, The Cross of Suffering, The Cross Fleury, The Cross Patee, The Celtic Cross, The Budded Cross, The Easter Cross, The Cross Patonce, The Cross Fleur-De-Lis, The Trinity Cross, The Cross Crosslet, Cross And Crown, Cross of Triumph, The Eastern Orthodox Cross, The Patriarchal Cross, The Cross of Lorraine and The Papal Cross¹⁶³. The most popular form of all crosses is the Latin cross, the form on which it is said that the Lord Jesus was crucified¹⁶⁴.

In C & S Church, the cross represents God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit¹⁶⁵. The cross is revered a lot because Jesus Christ was nailed on it. It is for this reason that the cross leads during the procession¹⁶⁶. It simply means that God is being called upon to join the service¹⁶⁷. Apart from these, a big cross is usually placed at the entrance into avoid distraction and intrusion of people during services. The big cross is used mainly by two groups of people. Firstly, the leader of the church as well as the brigadiers.¹⁶⁸ The cross symbolizes the trial, the passion as well as the temptations of Jesus. It serves as a reminder

¹⁶² G.F. Hawthorne, "Cross" In Merrill C. Tenney (ed), *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*

¹⁶³ Friedrich Rest, *Our Christian Symbols*, pp, 19-26. See also Thomas, Albert Stafford, *Christian Symbolism in Evangelical Churches*, p. 64.

¹⁶⁴ T. Albert Stafford, 1942. *Christian Symbolism in Evangelical Churches*. 64.

¹⁶⁵ Ibrahim Motunrayo, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁶⁶ I. Motunrayo, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁶⁷ T. Stafford, 1942. *Christian Symbolism in Evangelical Churches*. 64.

¹⁶⁸ A.C. Ayegboyin, 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. *A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo, University, Ile-Ife*. 104-107

of the death and resurrection of Christ¹⁶⁹. It is believed by C & S members that prayers said at the foot of the cross attract answers spontaneously¹⁷⁰.

The cross is an important object of worship in C & S church. This is why it is used for protection because it is believed to ward off evil from befalling members. The cross can be found on the altar as well as entrances of homes of members. Because it is believed that the cross can protect new born babies, it is placed under pillows before sleeping at night. It is believed that when crosses are placed inside the holy water, the sanctified water can be used for therapeutic purposes¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁹ Adesina Mayowa Ige, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁷⁰ I. Motunrayo, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

¹⁷¹ I. Motunrayo, Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 11/2/2020

Cross



Plate 2.17. Procession with a cross during Sunday Service.

Source: Cherubim & Seraphim Movement Church (C & S MC) Ayò Ni O, Ifẹ̀-Ìwó District, Headquarters. Ibadan 13/9/2020

2.5.5 Sacred objects in the Redeemed Christian Churches of God (RCCG)

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is one of the fastest growing African Pentecostal churches in the world at present. It is perhaps one of the most successful Neo-Pentecostal churches in Africa. Its evangelistic theology has made the church spread to almost 200 countries of the world. This can be buttressed by Adedibu's submission that RCCG growth has been articulated through its church planting mandate. RCCG church planting policy is the catalyst for the multiplication of parishes globally facilitated by renewed dynamism of social mobility of its members. The change in the leadership of the church after the demise of the founder and first General Superintendent, Rev. Josiah Akindayomi, heralded a distinctive phase in the structure and theology of the church as his successor and General Overseer, Pastor Enoch Adejare Adebayo initiated policies and restructuring programmes for the church¹⁷². For instance, the introduction of sacred objects has given the church a new face.

In RCCG, there are many sacred objects use by members. These objects play significant roles in the spiritual, socio-economic and healing life of members of the church as the study would discuss in subsequent chapters. This can be seen how members understand themselves and in how they make sense of their daily lives as African Christians. On many occasions, members have been asked to bring different symbolic objects as directed by the General Overseer through the leading of the Holy Spirit. According to one of the pastors, members most time bring these objects by themselves for prayer¹⁷³ as indicator for their awaiting signs and wonders in most cases. These sacred/symbolic objects include: hair-comb, international passport, baby wears, photograph, writing materials, numerous church magazines, tambourines and devotional books which are thought to be vehicles of leader's anointing, material carriers of immaterial power.

Other church paraphernalia are believed to be anointed and become sacred for the use of the people depending on the different needs. In many occasions, dresses wore to the programme, most especially 'Monthly Holy Ghost Service' (a programme organize that

¹⁷² B. Adedibu, 2011. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, A Missionary Global Player: What is Her Message Regarding Human Development? In *Encounter Beyond Routine: Cultural root, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development international consultation*, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 7th-23rd January 2011. 55

¹⁷³ O. Daniel Damilare Redeemed Christian Church of God RCBC, Redemption Camp. Interview 20/4/2020

holds on first Friday of every month at the church International Headquarters at Redemption Camp, Nigeria) has been declared sacred which by implication, members should take cognizance of such dresses not to be wore anyhow except for special outing such as: job interview, contract interview, Visa appointment and for other socio-economic and religious purposes among others for favour attractions and many other supernatural experiences.

However, to avoid overgeneralisation, this work has selected some sacred objects that are commonly used in RCCG. These are:

- i) Handkerchief/Prayer cloth
- ii) Olive oil
- iii) Customized Wrist-band
- iv) Adeboye's Photograph
- v) Holy Communion bread and wine

a. **Handkerchief**

Handkerchief is a small piece of linen, silk, or other fabric, usually square, and used especially for personal hygiene purposes such as wiping one's nose, face, hands or blowing one's nose. A handkerchief is sometimes used as a purely decorative accessory in a suit pocket¹⁷⁴. Handkerchiefs are made with different designs, colours and materials these days for different purposes as intended by the users.

In RCCG, the type of handkerchief used are mainly white colour. The handkerchiefs are prayed over by Adeboye through which they become sacred with divine grace and power. The prayers are usually said over handkerchiefs and later handed over to their owners. Sometimes, the congregation is asked to raise their handkerchiefs and oil during programmes like Convention, Congress and March Special Holy Ghost Service, an event to commemorate Adeboye's birthday. This appears to be the only time ritual objects are publicly prayed over or sacralised. However, only Adeboye has the spiritual power or anointing that could endow these objects with sacred power and significance¹⁷⁵ at the Redemption Camp. In the course of the study, one of the members testified that Adeboye

¹⁷⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handkerchief> accessed 4/6/2020.

¹⁷⁵ Interview Respondent Olusola Duyilemi 4/3/2020

gave out millions of blessed white handkerchiefs at the 2017 Holy Ghost Congress¹⁷⁶.

The theological justification for the use of handkerchiefs in RCCG can be seen in the biblical text:

¹¹And God did extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, ¹²such that handkerchiefs or aprons were taken from his body and given to the sick, who thereupon recovered from their illnesses and the evil spirits departed them. Acts 19: 11-12. Adeboye cites this text to backup the practice, commenting further that: “It is possible for a man’s anointing to be so saturated that people carry part of it about in pieces of clothes (*sic*) to place it on someone who is sick in some other place and the sickness will go”.¹⁷⁷

Another biblical text that Adeboye commonly uses is the text that says:

Then he grasped Elijah’s fallen garment and beat the water, saying, “Where is the LORD, the God of Eli’jah?” And when he struck the water, it split to one side and to the other, and Eli’sha went over. 2 Kings 2:4.

Members and attendees of RCCG programmes in Nigeria and across the globe have testified to the immense ways the blessed handkerchiefs have performed signs and wonders like healing, raising of dead, protection from road accidents, supernatural breakthrough, promotion, among others.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Interview respondent Ademola Odunayo 4/2019

¹⁷⁷ Adeboye, Interview, *News watch* (Lagos), vol. 30, no 24, 22 December 1999, p. 12.

¹⁷⁸ A. Kolajo *Redemption Testimonies*, no. 68, October 2000, p. 9.

Handkerchief



Plate 2.18. From a seller at the back of Old Auditorium.

Source: Redemption Camp RCCG, and International Headquarters. 6th March, 2019.

b. **Olive oil (anointing oil)**

In RCCG, Olive oil represents “anointing oil.” Members of RCCG bring this object for prayer whether pastor asks them to do so or not most especially for deliverance and during Holy Ghost Anointing Services. Anointing Service usually holds on the Saturday of every Special Holy Ghost Service. There is an elaborate teaching on “anointing” in Adeboye’s sermons. The popular justification for the use of olive oil is according to one of the senior Pastors whose quote from the bible makes us to understand that RCCG believes in the laying on of hands and anointing the sick on the head in the name of the Lord and that prayer of faith shall save the person.¹⁷⁹ Adeboye calls anointing “Heaven’s electricity” which flows through a material channel.¹⁸⁰ However, these objects are prayed over by Adeboye and other senior pastors. Sometimes, however, the congregation is asked to raise their oil during the Holy Ghost Service. Some members from different parts of the country who cannot make their ways to the Redemption Camp for any of the National programmes do submit their bottles of oil to their local pastors who will help them take these for prayer during the programmes. These members do label their bottle for easy identification and delivery at pastors’ return from Redemption Camp.

Customised Wristband

Wristbands are encircling strips worn on the wrist or lower forearm. There are different types of wristbands some are made of rubber, metal or cloth. In RCCG, members use customized wristbands which are believed to have been consecrated after praying on it for many reasons known to the users. For instance, some use it for identity, fashion and signs and wonders. There is a RCCG Convention customized wristbands that was officially introduced to members during the programme. Different designs of wristband are branded with RCCG logo and inscriptions. People have testified about the sacredness of RCCG wristband when it comes to its socio-religious significance.

¹⁷⁹ O. Fakanlu RCCG Age 39. Clergy 27/6/2018

¹⁸⁰ A. F. Ukah, 2003. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria: Local identities and global processes in African Pentecostalism. A. Ph. D Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Studies, at the University of Bayreuth 212.

c. Customised wristband



Plate 2.19. Researcher and seller and buyer of Customised wristband.

Source: RCCG, Redemption Camp, International Headquarters, 6th March, 2019.

d. **Adeboye's photograph**

Adeboye's colored portrait is important in the spiritual and social sensibilities of the RCCG. These photos can be found on the walls of Redemption Camp stores and shops, and even in the cars of pastors and members. Almost each edition of the church's various publications features these images as cover photos. Furthermore, calendars and manuals issued by various parishes or parachurch bodies invariably include these photos. These photos are viewed with wonder, devotion, veneration, and inspiration. Such a heavy concentration of specific images of the RCCG's leaders, who are mostly men, and their wives throughout the organization's public and spiritual spaces shows the importance of images in the "communication between human and divine realms in an economy of ritualized exchange."¹⁸¹

However, on many occasion, Adeboye warned attendees and Christians not to buy or sell items branded with his image or that of his wife. He said those caught selling such should be handed over to the police¹⁸². This was as a result of the way and manner some people use his image for economic advantage and misrepresent his personality. But devotees see Adeboye's photograph branded with church paraphernalia as sacred that can be used for prayer whenever occasion demands. Therefore, it is believed that any object branded with Adeboye's image in RCCG is sacred as members perceive that Adeboye is a holy man of God who is a channel of grace, a healer, and a miracle worker. Whatever he touches or what carries his voice, images, stories is also considered media of divine intervention¹⁸³.

¹⁸¹S.M Morgan, David Promey. Eds. 2001. *"The Visual Culture of American Religion"* Berkeley: University of California Press.

¹⁸² <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/299935-rccg-congress-pastor-adeboye-warns-against-buying-selling-items-branded-with-his-image.html> accessed 6/4/2020.

¹⁸³ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/299935-rccg-congress-pastor-adeboye-warns-against-buying-selling-items-branded-with-his-image.html> accessed 6/4/2020.



Plate 2.20. Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye: The General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God RCCG.

Source RCCG Ibadan. 23/7/2019

e. **Holy communion bread and wine**

Holy Communion is also known as the Lord's Supper. In the early Church it was called "eucharist," or giving of thanks (Matthew 26:27), and generally known as "mass" in the Latin Church. It is a Christian ritual that is regarded as an ordinance in some churches and as a sacrament in most. The rite was said to have been instituted by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, when He gave His disciples bread and wine during a Passover meal, instructing them to "do this in memory of me" and referring to the bread and the wine, respectively, as "my body" and "the new covenant in my blood." Christians remember both Christ's death on the cross and His commissioning of the apostles at the Last Supper through the eucharistic ritual.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist> accessed 6/4/2020.

Holy Communion bread and wine



Plate 2.21. Researcher with Communion bread and Wine in his hands, 2020 Holy Ghost Service and anointing Service,

Source: RCCG, Ibadan. 4/9/2020

To RCCG, Holy Communion is instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ shortly before His crucifixion on the cross. He commanded all Christians to gather together regularly to share the bread and wine till He returns – Luke 22:17-20; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; I Cor. 10:18, 21; Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-30. Holy Communion is administered in the night of the Thursday preceding the monthly Holy Ghost Service. In RCCG, as it is exemplified in the Bible, the bread and the wine is believed to be sacred as Christ's body and blood respectively.

2.6 Users of sacred objects in the selected churches in Ibadan

Users of the sacred objects are categorised into five groups in this study namely: the artisan, traders, pregnant women, waiting mothers, security personnel and drivers. The study identified these categories of people as users due to their common use of sacred objects in the selected churches. There are special programmes dedicated for each of these groups by these selected churches for prayers. For example, in RCCG, Shiloh hour slated for first Monday of every month. It is a special prayer programme dedicated for women that are looking up to God for children and pregnant women respectively. In this meeting, anointing oil is mostly used for prayer. In CAC, every Tuesday of the week is for special prayer for all. Some of these categories of the people that is artisan, traders, pregnant women and waiting mothers, where 'miracle water' is mostly used. The same applies in C & S, TCLPFW and CCC where every Wednesday and Thursday of the week is a special prayer day for artisan, traders, pregnant women, waiting mothers, security personnel and drivers with various categories of people who come for special prayer, deliverance prayers, counseling where some of the sacred objects like candle, oil, water and perfume, crucifixes are used for various ritual purposes.

It is important to note that all the selected churches have historical backgrounds and that they are well established and recognized in Ibadan. This has made the researcher to unveil the historical and doctrinal controversies some non-members of the church have towards their founders, ministries and beliefs and practices. It is also good to note that the selected churches are categorised under African Initiated Churches and African Pentecostal Church. This has shown that in their beliefs and practices, various objects are significant and believed that they are becoming sacred due to prayers and religious rituals placed on

them. This can be corroborated by Oshitelu who says that to African Christianity, faith is not abstract. By implication, African Christians believe that faith must be assisted with concrete objects.

On the other hand, users of these objects as mentioned are categorised into five as the artisan, traders, pregnant women, waiting mothers, security personnel and drivers hence, the subsequent chapter would examine the use of sacred objects as they are believed to be of their beliefs and practices. Apart from the use of these objects our concern in the next chapter is to discuss security, economic and healing value of these objects, as they are prominently used by members of the selected churches.

2.7 Theoretical framework

Having known the aim of this study, which is about social values inherent in sacred objects, Robert Henry Codrington's Mana theory is chosen as theoretical framework. It is a religious theory that emerged among Melanesian and Polynesian and developed by several scholars. Mana was first recorded by the explorer Captain James Cook in a 1777. Early suggestions of the term were political and linked to chieftainship. However, a century later Robert Henry Codrington (1830-1922), a missionary and anthropologist, provided an influential definition for religious studies. The term was first used in the 19th century in the West during debates concerning the origin of religion¹⁸⁵.

Mana, according to Codrington, is a universal, supernatural force or power that can be concentrated in objects or people. Mana is a spiritual quality with a supernatural origin and a sacred, impersonal power that serves as the cornerstone of the Polynesian worldview. Mana, according to him, is not restricted to humans; peoples, governments, locations, and inanimate objects can all possess it, and those who do are respected.¹⁸⁶

Historically, the theory was mainly designed to provide the fact that anything whether animate or inanimate can be consecrated from being ordinary to become sacred. By implication, things can be turned from their ordinary use to becoming sacred for other

¹⁸⁵ R.H Codrington., 1957 . *The Melanesians: Studies in Their Anthropology and Folk-Lore*. New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Press.

¹⁸⁶ N. Meylan 2017. *Polynesian and Melanesian religion* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/mana-Polynesian-and-Melanesian-religion>

purposes for instance, religious purpose. Mana theory was formulated by Codrington to provide that there are religious values inherent in objects as Émile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* popularly linked to totemism and 'sacred' things¹⁸⁷. Mana was first used to describe what apparently was interpreted to be an impersonal, unethically, supernatural power that manifested itself in extraordinary phenomena and abilities. Therefore, it is now concluded that anything distinguished from the ordinary is so because of the mana it possesses.

The relevance of this theory to this is immense. The theory makes it clear that objects are not limited to ordinary use. However, any objects can be consecrated from ordinary to become extraordinary. Objects are separated from a common and profane use to a sacred use, or a person or thing dedicated to God's service and worship through prayers, rites, and ceremonies. It can be justified that any person or thing can have mana. Rather than being a source of power, it is the cultivation or possession of energy and power. It is an intentional force. Therefore, this implies that there is a force that makes objects sacred. Object cannot make itself sacred until it is consecrated by a force. Therefore, this theory serves as basis for this study because the theory establishes the value inherent in the sacred objects which can be applied to various ways that members of selected churches in Ibadan use sacred objects as an avenue for addressing security, economic and healing challenges.

¹⁸⁷ Emile Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*
<https://durkheim.uchicago.edu/Summaries/forms.html> retrieved 22/9/2020

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. It deals essentially with social values inherent in sacred objects in the selected churches in Ibadan observing the users of sacred objects in selected churches, their social values, social challenges and social implications. Our observations were described and discussed objectively.

3.2 Study area and population

This study made use of Ibadan, the city capital of Oyo State is located in Nigeria and is primarily populated by Yoruba speakers. With a total area of 3,080 square kilometers, it is Nigeria's largest indigenous city. It is not a secluded antique city, but rather a highly metropolitan and urbanised city. Its size obviously distinguishes it from other Yoruba cities.¹ . As of 2021, Ibadan city is considered to have a total population of 3,649,000². The population is justified by several metropolitan features the city possesses. For instance, history has it that Ibadan came into existence in 1829, a period of warfare in Yoruba community. Ibadan is a city of numerous hills (Oke) after which some of the political wards are named like Oke-Ado, Oke-Foko, Oke-Sapati, Oke-Are, Oke-Oluokun, Oke-Bola, etc. The early cosmopolitan culture of the city was emphasized by colonial control. Ibadan now serves as the administrative hub for the Oyo State Secretariat and serves as the state's capital. It is a hub for various ideologies and a community of countless ethnically diverse individuals, with the majority of the population being indigenous and still maintaining its identity. What is important to this work about Ibadan city is the location of the city being the Southwest of Nigeria which is also a cosmopolitan that houses many churches, most especially Yoruba indigenous churches also known as *Aladura* churches as well as

¹ O. A Adeboye. 2003. The City of Ibadan. G.O. Oguntomisin (ed.), Yoruba Towns and Cities. (Ibadan: Bookshelf Resources Ltd.) 1: 7-19.

² <https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/> Accessed June 17, 2021

Pentecostal churches. Many of the selected churches have their members in Ibadan as a result of businesses, workplaces and families. The history tells us that Ibadan in the early nineteenth century attracted some founders of the selected churches; they planted their branches across the four corners of Ibadan.

Looking at the immensity of Ibadan city, research respondents were sampled from the Eleven Local Governments Areas within Ibadan Metropolis. In doing this, the study obtained information from respondents purposely sampled from selected churches, Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S), Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). Ashi-Bodija, Orogun, Iwo-Road, Oke-Ado, Akobo, Ajibode and Challenge areas were seven major areas of the churches where sacred objects are consecrated for use. The total populations of members of the selected churches are not less than 400 in terms of population going by enumeration carried out at the selected churches which were confirmed through observation method.

3.3 Sampling techniques

The sampling technique adopted in this study was purposive sampling techniques; it involves deliberate selection of a few churches out of many churches that are located in the study area. Ashi-Bodija, Orogun, Iwo-Road, Oke-Ado, Akobo, Ajibode and Challenge were purposively selected being seven major areas of the churches where sacred objects are consecrated for use by church members. In-depth interviews were conducted with respondents purposively selected in Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S), Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide (TCLPFW) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG).

3.4 Method of data collection

Various methods employed in this study include: structured oral interview, participant observation method and Mini Focus Group Discussion (Mini-FGD). Interviews were conducted in both English and Yoruba languages. In-depth interview were conducted with seventy-five (75) members comprising fifteen (15) members from each selected churches and 10 members of the clergy (two from each Church) for consecrating the objects.

Participant observation method was used during the researcher's visit to the programmes organised by the churches for the categorised groups. Also, the researcher attended other church services such as: Sunday worship, weekly programmes, special programmes for instance, revival hour (àkókò Ìsojì), deliverance hour, (Àkókò Ìdàndè), Special Holy Ghost Service and special programme for special categories of members, among others. All the observations were recorded and photographs were taken after consent of those involved had been obtained for empirical analysis.

Five sessions of focus group discussion were held with artisans and traders; expectant mothers and mothers-in-waiting; the sick; security personnel; and drivers. (75) members were purposively selected with a population of 400 people in the selected churches³. Information was also generated from church report, bulletin and documents that established cases in which sacred objects were used for security, economic and healing purposes.

3.5 Methods of data analysis

Data generated through interview with the key informants, observation and Mini focus group discussion, church report, bulletin and documents were content, descriptively, and sociological analysed. The researcher had some justifications for the choice. Descriptive analysis was adopted being an important sociological tool useful in explaining or narrating information that borders among other things on sociological matters such as group, societal, shared value, empiricist collectively, association, community, relationship, contact and interaction among others. In addition, the information gathered through the methods cannot be easily expressed in percentages. They are better explained and narrated.

Church report, bulletin and document records among other things were contently analysed⁴. Data, regarding the social values of sacred objects as they relate to security, economic and healing, were sociologically analysed, which revealed their sociological implications of sacred objects on how it serves as Religious Avenue for addressing economic, security and medical challenges facing the general public.

³ See J.K Ayantayo 2015, *Rudiments of Research and Research in Religious Studies*. Jay Kay Ayan Publications. 93-94

⁴E. R. Babbie, 2010. *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Wadsworth: Cengage Learning. 530 Quoted in J.K Ayantayo, 2015 *Rudiments of Research and Research in Religious Studies*, 113

3.6 Ethical consideration

For any research involving human subjects, ethical consideration must be highly undertaken. It zeroes on principles of harm and benefits, confidentiality/ anonymity, and informed consent. On this account, the researcher sought the consent of the users of sacred objects; clergies and other respondents in this study before the researcher interviewed them, and took their photographs. Consent was also gotten before the use of some photograph of the respondents and some sacred objects used in some churches. This notwithstanding, the researcher still covered faces of some respondents for the sake of anonymity. Likewise, for the sake of confidentiality, some names were anonymously used for some respondents in the course of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Results

The research method used to elicit information from respondents for this research indicates that social values of these objects were expressed in three forms: economic, security and healing. Economic values of sacred object by majority of artisans and traders attested that holy water and oil were sprinkled while candles were lightened in their homes and shops as means of making sales, attracting to customers and protection against financial devourers and business expansion. Security values of sacred object are affirmed by some security personnel like police officers, body guards and drivers who made use of crucifixes and perfume as crucifixes were hung in cars, lintel, work places, placed in pockets, wore on hand and neck and sprayed perfume on body, in cars, place of work to ward off evil and armed robber attacks while majority of drivers confirmed that sacred object protected them against motor accident, high way armed robbers and kidnappers. Healing value of sacred object was expressed by some pregnant women and waiting mothers who drank and bath with holy water and oil consequently got healed from fibroid and still-birth while majority of the users got healed from ulcer, severe stomach pain, stroke, protracted stiff neck, 30 years hemorrhage and epilepsy.

However, challenges noted in the use of sacred object include exploitation of the users as some clergies take advantages of the users' situations by charging exorbitant prices on objects. Contaminated objects like water and oil pose health high risk to users, fatalities were noted when users of sacred object refused to seek medical attention in some situations when sacred object proved ineffective, overconfidence and reckless driving were noted on the part of security personnel and drivers. Nevertheless, the usage of sacred objects has provided alternative economic, medical and security supports for users of sacred in the selected churches in Ibadan.

4.2 Discussion of findings

Sacred objects in selected churches in Ibadan exhibited a more value than its general religious beliefs. It is a multilayered avenue for members to be secured and benefit economically with the proof of their healing process through the use of sacred objects in accordance to their various needs. Therefore, this chapter discusses and investigates the usage and social function of the usage of sacred objects with a view to underscore their security, economic and healing values inherent in the sacred objects.

4.2.1 Security value of sacred objects

Security in this study is a means by which individuals, group of people and society recourse to provide protection for themselves and their households in order to ensure freedom from any social constrain or anti-social elements in their daily engagements. Every individual desire needs to be secured either from the spiritual, physical, economic and social ills among others. Therefore, in a bid for members to secure themselves from what they consider to be the evil forces in the society and every misfortune, ill-luck, barrenness, failure, poverty, sickness and social issues and other social assaults among others, there is recourse to the use of sacred objects to curb these misfortunes. No wonder, the sale of some sacred objects does not matter to some members when it comes to security. According to Aluko Sola:

Borrowing money to get the crucifix, perfume or any sacred object is what an average member of the church can do because of the consciousness that the society is full of evil and one has to be secured through the use of holy water to ward off any impending danger¹.

Therefore, the use of sacred objects in selected churches is reputed as an effective means of frustrating activities of witches and wizards and of liberating people from oppression, protection against evil occurrence whether spiritual or physical attacks. Activities of witches and wizards and other evil occurrence are believed to have rendered a number of church members, who could have contributed positively to the socio-economic development of the society, useless to themselves and the community. Thus, a number of church members are believed to be in constant fear of what they consider to be demonic

¹ Aluko Sola, Interview Respondent, CAC Oke Agbara Ashi Ibadan 12/4/2019

powers and physical attacks from the so called wicked people but through the use of crucifixes, holy or sanctified water, candle, oil, wrist-band and perfume, among others. Members of the churches claim to have disarmed many of these evil influences or workers. On this note, respondents across CAC², C&S³, TCLPFW⁴, CCC⁵ and RCCG agreed on the security value inherent in these objects.

In an interview, Gbogboade, submits that there are certain conditions prior to the use of these objects: handy-cross and crucifixes are not for just anybody who desires it but for one that has been qualified to carry the cross around. Such person must have gone through water baptism and related courses with training organized by the church. The cross allows the carrier to be eligible to carry out some spiritual exercise in the church. The cross stands for spiritual power. Not that the cross has power in itself but it is a symbol of divine power. There are rules concerning maintenance of the cross. One must be holy, whatever that means. By implication, the cross should not be handled carelessly or to be taken to any place where one can commit sin like...beer parlour and brothel or similar unethical places because the cross and crucifixes are considered to be sacred. People use the cross to pray, put it in their pockets, hang in their cars, and on their lintel for protection. The holders believe that this will strengthen their faith in God just like the praxis of the old African traditional religion where symbols were seen as elements that strengthen the faith but also as we know from religious practice in Europe even today where people keep and respect objects as symbol of their religion. Therefore, this practice is not limited to Africans⁶.

Other sacred objects the church uses include: holy rosary, vestments, incense and other symbolic objects like palm frond.⁷ In CCC, Egunlae⁸ confirmed that

² Adebambo Ademola Interview Respondent CAC 12/4/2021

³ Olagunju Babalola. Interview Respondent. Ayo Ni o C and S Parish, Iwo road Express interview respondent, 26/1/2020

⁴ Prophet Olanuga Abiodun interview respondent, The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Worldwide

⁵ Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

⁶ Babatunde Emmanuel Gbogboade, Dioecian Bishop of Diocese of Ogere. Ogere Nigera and the Provost of the Cathedral. Interview respondent 6/9/2020.

⁷ D. Ayegboyin and S.A. Ishola. 1997. *African indigenous churches: an historical perspective*. Greater Heights Publication. 107

⁸ Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

Some members who were workers in corporate security outfits as police officers and corporate body-guards do come for protection and objects like crucifix and perfumes were used for *ise* (ritual) for their protections from every work place hazard.

For instance, the users are asked to hang crucifixes in their cars, drivers wearing it on the neck and hand to prevent accident, while some users are asked to place crucifixes on the lintel of their houses, shops and work place. On the other hand, perfume can be sprayed on body and cars for personal security against physical attacks.

In addition, the use of wrist-band, customised handkerchiefs, stickers of different kinds, anointed oil, photograph of the General Overseers, prophets, prophetesses and leaders of some churches for example, Pastor Enoch Adeboye of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and souvenirs of different kinds are used as sacred objects by RCCG members. This serves as a sense of belonging and for security purposes. For instance, members with wristbands and handkerchiefs with the church labels are easily identified in the larger community as members or an affiliate of the church, popularly called 'Redeemites'. According to Olajumoke from Redemption Testimonies:

I boarded a bus from Shagamu to Ijebu-Ode and shared it with five other people. I didn't realize what had occurred until I awoke and found myself and the other passengers in a dense jungle where people were being butchered. Two of the six of us who had just arrived were killed. When the gang leader spotted my wristband, he said to them the others, "I have told you not to bring Adeboye's children here again." Take her back to the place where you took her." That was how I got back to the crossroads. Olufunke Ojo, Sis.⁹

This extreme example shows how belonging and security can be interconnected. Another incidence happened to Adewumi from RCCG Ibadan

We were attacked by kidnappers when we were coming from Benin to Redemption Camp. They stopped us and saw the church wrist-band in my hand and asked me to leave because I am Adeboye's¹⁰ child and I must not be touched. It was a surprise that day that God could rescue me because of the use of wrist-band¹¹.

⁹ Olufunke Ojo, Redemption Light Magazine 15th March 2019

¹⁰ Adeboye is the Head Pastor and the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God Worldwide

¹¹ Adewumi Ojo interview respondent, Redemption Camp 22/8/2019

In addition, Oyetunji in Redemption Testimonies said:

Armed robbers attacked us when we were coming from Enugu for the Holy Ghost Congress on 2nd December 2017, I began to pray in the spirit with a book wrapped with Pastor Adeboye meaning Pastor picture in my hand. When the robbers saw it in my hand as a point of contact, they could not do anything and suddenly from nowhere, some soldiers came and surrounded our vehicle and killed all the four-armed robbers¹².

On the other hand, some churches have been tagged with certain objects because such objects are commonly used in their beliefs and liturgical practices. For instance: CAC has been tagged to be a Water church (Ijo Olomi iyè) because Ayodele Babalola, CAC first Evangelist, used water for various healing and wondrous things¹³. Likewise, CCC, C&S and TCLPFW are also known to be ‘water churches’. Fatokun rightly submits that members of these African Initiated Churches AICs are often found carrying water containers of different sizes with them to church on Sundays as well as week days and this has more or less become part of their ‘regalia’.¹⁴

According to Adebisi:

A group of armed robbers stormed my street in 2013 at Challenge Ibadan. When they came to my house, they asked all my neighbour to please corporates by opening their doors. At that time I was ready to corporate too while stayed at my door and began to hear their communication. After they left a flat before my door and my door was the next. As they pull my curtain on the door I believed they saw crucifixes that I hung on the door and some church stickers with different captions as “I am covered by the blood of Jesus” and “this house belong to Jesus” pasted on my doors...I believed that the Lord had used these sacred objects to let them leave my apartment that very day.¹⁵...

It should be noted that because the robbers are religious themselves it works to chase them off with religious symbols otherwise the robbers may have considered the respondent’s apartment the next flat to rob.

In summary, on the security that sacred objects have created for adherents of these churches, it is of note that members of these churches have different social identities and

¹² Lizzy Oyetunji, Redemption Testimonies. January, 2018 pg. 17

¹³ Oyelakin Interview respondent, CAC Oke Agbara Ashi Ibadan

¹⁴ S.A. Fatokun. 2008. Water and its cultic use in African initiated churches in Yorùbáland in South western Nigeria: an issue on African development discourse in Swedish.

¹⁵ Adebisi Kehinde, Interview respondent, CCC, Orogun Ibadan. Interviewed 7th of January, 2021

labelling as related to security. The social identities and labelling appear in their customised church paraphernalia such as stickers and church logo. On such items are writings like: *Ayo ni o*¹⁶ for members of C&S, *Redeemites*¹⁷ for members of RCCG, *Taborah*¹⁸ for members of TCLPFW and *Halleluyah*¹⁹ for members of CCC while members of CAC are always with Apostle Ayodele Babalola's picture on their stickers.

4.2.2 Economic value of sacred objects

Economy is often overlooked as an element that is essential to the use of sacred objects. The use of sacred objects in selected churches has not only been for security purpose, but also contributed to the economic value of members that use those objects as well as non-members who sell the objects around the church premises. Users of these objects and sellers of these objects are both beneficiaries of the economic values of the sacred objects. These values can be described on how members and some business men and women use sacred object as means of making sales by attracting customers and how sacred objects are used for protection against financial devourers, and by extension providing jobs and business opportunities for people as source of living and economic development.

a. Sales making on the part of the users and church members

On economic value inherent in the use of sacred objects, according to Adebayo, one of the users and the members of TCLPFW who attested to the use of sacred object which are holy water and anointed oil, he said:

I remember, about two years ago, when I discovered that my business was going down and there are lots of debts I need to settle. With prayer I was able to know that there are spiritual devourers eating up my business. After serious spiritual investigation, I was given Holy water and anointed oil in the church and I sprinkled them around my houses, shops and bedrooms with some prayers, that was the end of the attack. After some months I discovered that some of my customers that I have seen for long time started coming to buy goods from me. That same year I was able to expand my business to the size now. Therefore, I believe in God who actually proved himself in the sacred objects consecrated for me by his servant.²⁰

¹⁶ Adeleye, D.A. Interview Respondents Cherubim and Seraphim (C and S) Ayo Ni o, Ibadan, June 6, 2019.

¹⁷ Ademola Ogunayo Interview Respondent, RCCG Oyo Province 9 Akobo, Ibadan Interviewed 12th of October, 2020

¹⁸ Adebayo Anthony Kehinde, Interview Respondent, Ecumenical Officer, The Church of the Lord Aladura, Ogere Ogun State, interviewed, June 17, 2019.

¹⁹ Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

²⁰ Adebayo Anthony Kehinde, Interview Respondent, Ecumenical Officer, The Church of the Lord Aladura, Ogere Ogun State, interviewed, June 17, 2019.

Also, Adeleye, a member of TCLPFW, confirmed that:

Water could take the form of a ritual bath, in a natural flowing stream in some situations. Individuals bring water in bottles, or in any other containers to be prayed upon. The leader touches the water with the staff just as Moses did in the Bible. This is done after reciting some portions of the book of Psalm. I used this water when I was disturbed by the evil ones who distanced me and my customers in my shop. I used it and God brought all my customers back to me and I was able to sell, making more profit ²¹.

In many cases, religious leaders and members of churches directly or indirectly benefit economically from the use of sacred objects in the church. In the selected churches, water, candle, oil, handkerchiefs and other items are sold within the church premises. For example, in the church where water is sold, bottled water goes for ₦200 of which the retail price is ₦80 while sachet water goes for ₦50 as against ₦10 outside the church.²² In some cases, some churches customised bottled water, candle and oil that are sold to people for different prices from the general prices. Also, the use of these objects in the church has added to the economic value of the company producing the objects as they are frequently bought or ordered for.

In CCC, water, candle, oil and perfume are sold out to people around the church. Water (sachet water commonly called 'pure water' and bottled water) are sold during Sunday services, special programmes like prayer and deliverance days, special occasions like harvest time and anniversary celebration and the prices vary depending on demand. However, during harvest time and anniversary, the price ranges between ₦1,000 and ₦40,000 more depending on the direction of the Prophet²³. The water and candle as well as some other objects like: incense, coconut, perfume and oil among others are said to have been prepared with special prayer for days as the case may be.

²¹ Adeleye, D.A. Interview Respondent Cherubim and Seraphim (C and S) Ayo Ni o, Ibadan, June 6, 2019.

²² Pastor Akinlabi reported during Celestial Church of Christ's annual anniversary Iwo Road, Ibadan that pure water sold for a 22 year old girl who was bedwetting and the following year she gave a testimony that she has stopped bedwetting. 2/6/2019

²³ Akinlabi Adeolu, reported during Celestial Church of Christ's annual anniversary Iwo Road, Ibadan that pure water sold for a 22 year old girl who was bedwetting and the following year she gave a testimony that she has stopped bedwetting. 2/6/2019

According to Bamidele Egunlae an interviewee:

There was a time in my church; a stick of candle was sold at the rate of 1,000,000 naira during one of our church anniversaries. The candle had been prayed upon with spiritual work for several days by the men of God. The man (user) who bought the candle actually came back to testify to the glory of God how God lifted his business in double folds²⁴.

²⁴ Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

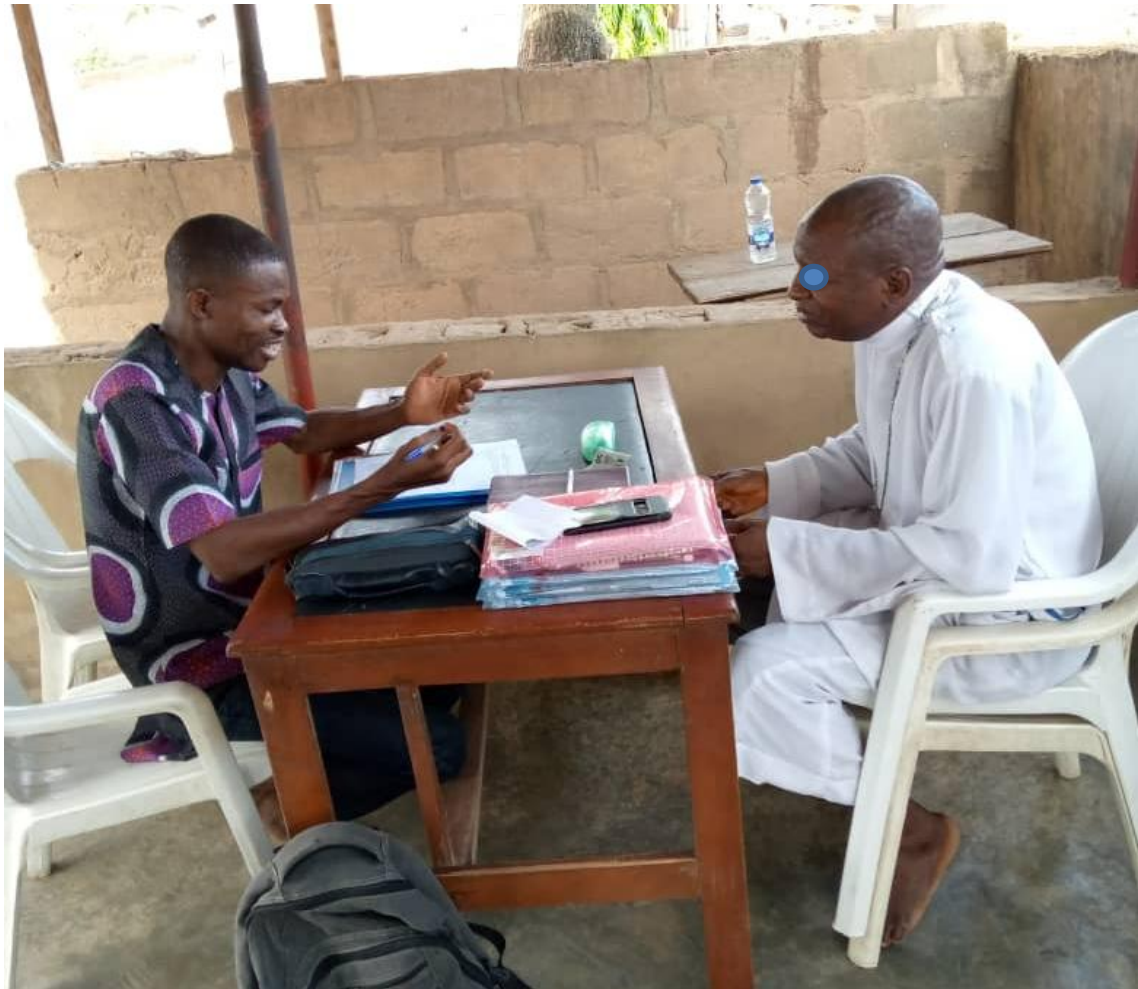


Plate 4.1. The researcher interviewing Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd-in-charge. 12th March, 2020

Source: CCC, Irapada Parish, Orogun.

In CCC, Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan, we discovered that objects like candle, oil, sponge, water, incense, soap, egg, sugar and perfume are among objects used and are sold in a shop close to the church.

According to Egunlae, the Shepherd is in charge of the church. Only the Shepherd is allowed to sell such items in the church due to their sacredness and availability of such items to members who might need them for spiritual help. In this wise, a sales man who is equally a member of this church is the one in-charge of all sales. At the end of the month, he gives account depending on the demand of the people who need them²⁵

Furthermore, in TCLPFW, we observed that the church owns a shop where people buy their items such as candle, water, perfume of various types, hand bell, oil and other church paraphernalia while in C & S, there are shops where items like water of various sizes and packages, candle, perfume and incense are sold in located shops by the individual.

b. Job provision

In CAC, for instance, Oke Agbára , Ibadan, it was noted that the church draws out water to worshippers from a ‘sanctified well’ which has been metamorphosed into a pipe borne water due to the large number of people trooping into the church on Tuesday of every week in search of miracles irrespective of their religious affiliations.

It was observed that business men and women around the church environs who are also members of the church make sales from this practice. The church environ is always crowded with people especially women folks. This is because of their belief in the efficacy of using sacred objects for miracles. As a result of this, business men and women sell things like water containers for those who want to take water to their destinations. They also sell church paraphernalia like: customized calendar, olive oil, bottled and sachet water of different packages and stationery. As a result of this, these business men and women reported that they make a lot of sales every Tuesday from people coming for ‘miracle water’. To corroborate this fact, one of the keg sellers said:

²⁵ Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

I have been in this business for many years. This is what I do for living, to take care of myself and my family. My finance has improved through the sales of church paraphernalia like oil, water keg, due to the use of water in this church most especially on the Miracle water day...every Tuesday.²⁶

²⁶ Motunrayo Ojo, water keg seller, CAC Oke Agabara, Ashi Ibadan, interview respondent 7/5 2019.



Plate 4.2. A seller of water keg. 8/7/2019

Source: CAC Oke Agbára Ashi, Ibadan.

Furthermore, the use of water by CAC, CCC, C&S and TCLPFW has provided business opportunities for people in the plastic industries. According to Ogunsola,

These churches make use of water kegs of various sizes than any other users and, thus, has led to a greater demand for plastic kegs from the industry thereby providing a good market for plastic industries in the nation which in turn provides job opportunities. Ogunsola mentioned further that the provision of job is not limited to the members alone, but it has also provided job opportunity for people working in the industries²⁷.

As earlier said in the literature by Fatokun that people tactically locate their shops very close to the “water churches” while some sellers go to the churches located in the remote areas like *Ori-òkè* (Prayer Mountain), some use the opportunity for economic exploitation by selling at exorbitant prices.

More so, it was discovered that there are some men at the ‘Miracle Water Station’ who manage the activities at the water point who are also members of the church. During interview, it was noted that some of them are employees of the church. Some of the activities these men do at the water station include fetching of the water for the people, maintaining orderliness and making the environment free from any sorts of dirt as well as arranging of water keg at the miracle water station. They also gave report on the repairs and buying of water reservoir, water container popularly called (storex). According to Sunday one of the men that oversees activities at the miracle water station:

I have been managing this miracle water for more than seven year now. This is what I do for living. I earn my salary and I use it to take care of myself and my family. Apart from salaries paid by the church, members also compensate our effort by giving us money apart from offering they give which are not compulsory. We use to have hundreds of people here every Tuesday of the week trooping in with various sizes of water kegs. Some come with two, four and more water kegs.

²⁷ Ogunsola Olaitan, interview respondent in Aladura Church during water day 25th of June, 2019

Similarly, Makinwa, another attendant, said that:

I secured this job about ten years ago. It was water well that we were using then but because of the population of members and non-members that come here to get miracle water, the church decided to turn it to pipe borne water. As you can see... the church has invested so much in the purchase of reservoir, digging of the bore hole and other materials needed for the free flow of water. All of us here are on salary (five men in attendance) apart from our Bible school students who sometimes assist us when they are needed.



Plate 4.3. Cross section of men (attendants) at the Miracle Water Station. 23/7/2019

Source: CAC, Oke Agbára, Ashi, Ibadan.

It was also discovered in the above interview that apart from job provision, the use of miracle water has also led to the engagement of some experts who monitor the level of hygiene of the water. Also, it has also engaged the sellers of reservoirs and pipes and provided jobs for welder who designed carriages for the reservoir. It is evident that the use of ‘miracle water’ has added value to the economic life of members and members of the society at large, because those who sell things are not necessarily members of the church, some are not even Christians, yet, they benefit economically from the practice of using ‘miracle water’ in the church.

On the other hand, in TCLPFW, in an interview with the shop keeper, Prophet Abiodun Ayeni, a church member at TCLPFW Divine Grace Spiritual/Book Shop, revealed that the shop belongs to the church and all profits made from the sale of materials, books and sacred objects in the shop go to the church account while he receives his salary from the church. Some of the objects sold in the shop, according to Abiodun:²⁸ handbell, oil, candle, 99cent and various types of perfume like: Taborah incense, Grace Perfume, Holy Michael Perfume, Onaola Perfume, Miss Paris, Jah Michael Perfume, Miracle, Perfume, etc.

It was noted from the oral interview with the shop keeper, Prophet Abiodun as follows:

Researcher: From where do you buy all these objects?

Abiodun: We use to buy some of these items outside where they sell spiritual materials in Lagos and even in Ibadan. However,...the church produces candle, oil and incense. We have our factory at the back of the church building. Members buy them here and bring them to church whenever they are needed for prayer.

Researcher: Is it the same way it is operated in all your branches?

Abiodun: Yes...whenever they bring them to church the pastors and prophets would pray on them and they will work according to the requests of the users.

Researcher: Like how much do you trade per day, weekly or monthly?

Abiodun: Uhnn...we cannot estimate how much we sell per day. It depends on how the buyers purchase our goods.

Researcher: Do you have sales book?

²⁸ Abiodun Ayeni is the Prophet and shop keeper at TCLPFW Head Quarters, Ogere, Ogun State.

- Abiodun:** Yes...since it is the money that we are generating but I cannot tell you exactly how much we generate on our account.
- Researcher:** Yes...hunn I know sir. When do people normally demand for these objects?
- Abiodun:** People demand for these objects when they need them, mostly when there is special programme like Taborah anniversary and special programme as inspired by the Primate like deliverance programme. People do come from within and outside the church to buy them.
- Researcher:** How do you generate your income?
- Abidun:** We generate our income through the profits from the goods we buy depending on the market price.
- Researcher:** What has this business procured for you?
- Abiodun:** Yes...I collect salary and through that I am able to take care of myself and my family
- Researcher:** What do you contribute to the church and society economically?
- Abiodun:** I do pay my tithes, offering and any financial commitment raised by the church and my community at large.



Plate 4.4. Researcher with Abiodun Ayeni is the Prophet and shop keeper. 17/8/2019
Source: Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship Worldwide)

In addition, Temitope Oyenuga who sells white garment popularly called ‘Sutanna’ and other sacred objects, revealed that there are different colours of cloth for ecclesiastical offices such as prophets, bishop, among others. She argued that the white garment is also a sacred object because the church sees white material as sacred which means holiness. She said;

I am a seller of sacred objects like white garment and different ecclesiastical clothes of different colours for prophet, prophetess, members, pastors and Bishops’ as regalia. This has actually created job for me when I graduated from Olabisi Onabanjo University where I studied Environmental Health but due to lack of job in Nigeria, I got myself involved in selling white garment cloth popularly called Sutanna among white garment churches. Through the sale of white garment, I was able to take care of my family and even build house for the family with the assistance of my husband. I was also able to contribute my quota to the development of my society²⁹.

²⁹ Temitope Oyenuga, Assistant Secretary of TCLPFW Ogere, Interview Respondent, 18/10/2020



Plate 4.5. Researcher with Temitope Oyenuga, Assistant Secretary. 18/10/2020
Source: Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship Worldwide)

In addition, it was observed that some churches have factories where they produce some of the objects, for instance: TCLPFW has Divine Grace factory where the church produces oil, incense and candle headed by Prophetess Seun Lawal³⁰. According to Gbogboade:

The church is producing candle...Taborah candle, oil, incense and perfumes for people and members to use and buy but it is not compulsory. The church has a factory...it is at the back of this church. The workers do not come every day, they come when they have production...we sell to people, we sell to outsiders at wholesales so they can also sell and have their profits. Likewise, the church has immensely benefitted from the income generated from these productions. We also have water factory where the church produces sachet and bottled water at Ogere Church 3. There are lots of employees there who earn salaries³¹.

In RCCG, interviews were conducted with some identified sellers in their shop located closed to the church. In order for the researcher to get more information, the researcher visited RCCG Headquarters at Redemption Camp. Objects like customized white handkerchiefs and wrist-band are on sale. Others items on sale include bottled oil popularly called 'anointing oil' of various sizes, Eucharistic bread and wine, calendar with Photographs of the General Overseer, Pastor E.A Adeboye, and his wife as well as various church paraphernalia.

³⁰ Seun Lawal is a Prophetess and the head of Divine Grace Factory TCLPFW

³¹ Babatunde Emmanuel Gbogboade, Diocesan Bishop of Diocese of Ogere. Ogere Nigeria and the Provost of the Cathedral. Interview respondent 6/9/2020.



Plate 4.6. Adesina Grace, a seller of oil and church paraphernalia.

Source: RCCG, Redemption Camp, 6/3/2020

According to Ogundeko Adenike:

We sell all sorts of objects that we use to pray and God use to answer our prayer through their use.

Researcher: Like what and what ma...

Adenike: Anointing oil, Special Holy Ghost white handkerchiefs, calendars, customised keyholders, car stickers, wrist-bands...they are many as you can see

Researcher: Where do you buy all these objects?

Adenike: We use to buy some of these items from members and non-members who use to supply us. Like handkerchiefs and wrist-bands are being supplied by those that use to print on the materials. We do not print on it by ourselves...they use to supply us in wholesale while we sell as retails.

Researcher: When do people demand for all these items?

Adenike: Every time. Mostly, whenever there is programme like Monthly Holy Ghost Service, Special Holy Ghost Service, Convention and Congress...depending

Researcher: Like how much do you trade per day, weekly or monthly?

Adenike: It depends ooo...but we do sell anyway as you can see...

Researcher: Who owns this shop?

Adenike: Church... but we rented it from church.

Researcher: Like how much per annum or monthly...how do you pay your rent?

Adenike: We pay 8,000 naira per months while some pay 16,000 naira. Shop rents are varied any way.

Researcher: How do you generate your income?

Adenike: From this business of course... We generate our income through the profits from the goods we buy depending on the market price.

Researcher: What has this business procured for you?

Adenike: So many things by the grace of God. I use it to take care of my family, my children's education and we are living a comfortable life by the grace of God

Researcher: What do you contribute to the church and society economically?

Adenike: I pay my shop rent to the church, I do pay my tithes, offering and any financial commitments.



**Plate 4.7. Adebisi Temilola, a seller of Church Paraphernalia with the researcher.
6/3/2020**

Source: RCCG, Redemption Camp, 6/3/2020

In addition, In the course of the interview, Evangelist Bamidele reiterates the economic value sacred objects have provided to sellers in CCC: He said

We have members that have water, candle and perfume factories in our church here. They have employed a lot of people working with them in the production, sale and distribution of these goods. There is a candle company in Ketu Lagos called Lully Candle, the company is owned by one of our church members. Likewise in Imeko, Ogun state where we use to buy all manners of sacred objects that we are using in CCC. All these facilitate have improved the financial status of workers, members and church and all stakeholders as a whole. I know of a man who sells perfumes and candles that have built houses and all his children are abroad³².

From the interview conducted with the identified sellers of various objects in the selected churches, the study infers that sellers have benefitted economically from the sales of sacred objects. More so, this has also led to the involvement of other individuals or artisans like graphic artists, sign writers and screen printers who print on handkerchiefs and wrist-band, distributors, transporters, shop owners among others who are involved in the production of sacred objects. All these are said to have generated income for stakeholders in various capacity.

In an interview with Sola Oyewole, he stated that:

I am a graphic artist, sign writer and screen printer likewise a member of RCCG. I do supply stickers of various types and sizes, I also print on white handkerchief, wrist-band, key holders. I use to supply retailers in their various shops. This is what I do for a living for over ten years now. I have apprentices and I also pay for some casual workers in case there are much works to do. This business has fetched me a lot. As a matter of fact, I got married and I bought my first car in this business and I also take care of my children school and feed my family³³.

4.2.3 Healing value of sacred objects

The study observed that healing has two dimensions. The first is faith only through the spoken word in prayer, and the second is an objectified faith-induced, but both are scriptural. In this work, our focus is on the objectified faith-induced healing. It has been

³² Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

³³ Sola Oyewole, interview respondent, a sign writer and graphist, 10/2/2021

observed that these two dimensions of divine healing is also known as '*iṣé iwòsàn*' *cura divina* or divine healing which is an integral part of CAC, C&S, TCLPFW and CCC. These churches are also known as *Aladura* churches among the Yorubas. According to Ayegboyin, in most of these churches, some days, usually *Ojò àánú* (the day of mercy, that is, Wednesdays), and *ojó iwòsàn* (the day of healing, that is, Friday) are set aside for healing purposes. On these days, objects such as water, oil, candle and are often consecrated for healing purposes. Like the Yoruba traditional believers, for the *Aladura*, faith is not abstract. The *Aladura* believe that faith may be assisted, with concrete objects like holy water, anointing oil and the use of candles for prayer to be efficacious³⁴.

This same practice has also infiltrated some African Pentecostal churches whereby objects like white handkerchiefs, water, oil and other church paraphernalia are consecrated for healing purposes. For example in RCCG, white handkerchiefs, 'anointing oil' and Holy Communion bread and wine are used for healing and for diverse religious purposes. Testimonies of healing and miracles are usually given by those who claimed to have received them. In quite a number of cases, those cured had gone through gruesome experiences or had illnesses that had defied medical solution.³⁵

In the course of the study, information was gathered from interview as well as members' testimonies from church booklets. The following respondents claimed that sacred objects have actually been assisted in their healing.

Healing of six years Epilepsy with Miracle Water

I have been battling with epilepsy for the past 6 years. I have gone to the hospital for medical examination with several tests but all efforts proved abortive. I have gone to many places for deliverance with taking of different drugs but I could not see any change. However, in the course of 'automatic prayer' and drinking of miracle water epilepsy vanished completely³⁶.
Oyelakin, Oloyede, Ibadan.

³⁴ D. Ayegboyin, 2012 . <https://www.google.com/search?q=Spirituality+in+the+African+Independent+Churches> Retrieved 2/2/2017

³⁵G. A. Oshitelu, *History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation*, Ibadan: Hope publication 2007, p. 106.

³⁶ The Automatic News, Oke Agbara Oluwatedo, Ashi, Ibadn, Vol 2. No12, December, 2013. Pg 18

Healing of stiff Neck through Anointed Oil

I was having pain on the left collar bone. The pain was so severe that I went to hospital and the report said that the straightening of the normal cervical lordotic curvature is seen and also anterior osteophytes are noted on the inferior border of C3 to C6 and that I would undergo surgical operation because it will cause stiff arm but when I got home, I took the anointing oil that Pastor Adeboye prayed on for us about three years ago and rubbed it on my neck and within fifteen minutes, the pain disappeared. **Mrs Ajibola Shodimu**³⁷

Miracle Water heals Waiting Mother

For the past 6 years after marriage I have been seeking God's face for the fruit of the womb. I have been to several hospitals for medical tests and examination but my efforts could not bring anything out. I came to this church and through prevailing power and drinking of miracle water I conceived and I gave birth safely.³⁸ Mrs Bukola Olorungunnebi

God Heals Still Birth of Seven years with Miracle Water

She had been having still birth for 7 years. When she came to this church, she started attending waiting mothers prayer meeting also on Tuesday she use to drinking miracle water. In the process she conceived and give birth to a baby bouncing baby boy.³⁹ (As narrated by Adeton Oluwaseun)

More so, Olawumi Tejumola the interview respondent says

CCC also believes very much in stream bath, in compliant to a Yoruba adage that says *Odó kì ò sà̀n kó bojú wẹ̀yìn*, (water does not flow backward). It is believed that if a person takes a bath in a stream, the person's problems are washed away and will never return. Many Celestial churches usually have a stream or pool of water very close to their church building. Some claim that it is primarily to make purification and other things which may not be accomplished without the use of water easily.

³⁷ Redemption Testimonies, January, 2017, No. 257 pg. 15

³⁸ The Automatic News, Oke Agbara Oluwatedo, Ashi, Ibadn, Vol 4. No11, November, 2014. Pg 18

³⁹ Adetoun Oluwaseun, Interview respondent, CAC Oke Agbara, Ashi, Ibadan

To buttress the above statement, Bamidele Egunlae confirmed thus:

When I was in Iwo, Osun State, Nigeria, some *Eleha*⁴⁰ came to meet me for *isona*⁴¹. They came with their covering while entering the church. One of them came with 18 months pregnancy after she had gone to hospital for several tests but was unable to deliver the baby. She said that one of her neighbour where she trades in the market confirmed that she was the one who was responsible and she cannot deliver the baby here on earth. But the Holy Spirit asked me to take the pregnant woman to the wilderness for spiritual cleansing for stream bathing along with some oil, candles, palm frond and other sacred objects. After the cleansing, on our way coming we saw that amniotic fluid had already started coming out from the pregnant woman. When we got to church after prayer, the woman delivered a bouncing baby boy with the assistance of our midwives. People from all around when they heard that the woman had delivered rushed down to our church to see the miracle that happened.⁴²

Miracle water heals four months asthma

I have been battling with asthma for the past four months. I tried hospital with the prescription of many drugs but the asthma persists without positive change. However, when I was brought to this church through prayer and drinking of miracle water, God healed me completely⁴³.

God heals insanity through anointed handkerchief

My mother took ill with various kinds of sicknesses ranging from hemorrhage to insanity in 2004. This actually caused a lot of setback for me because I could not continue with my education. Since that time I have been praying and trusting God for healing for my mother. In 2013, my Pastor went to Pastor Adeboye who prayed on a handkerchief. I took the handkerchief and I laid it on my mother and she slept from morning till evening. By the time she woke up, the insanity had disappeared. Glory be to God. **Sis Rebecca Bassey**⁴⁴

⁴⁰ A woman in purdah Muslim woman who covers her face and body to avoid being seen by men who are not related to them.

⁴¹ Isona in Yoruba means spiritual help that people come for in CCC

⁴² Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

⁴² Evangelist Francis Bamidele Egunlae, Interview respondent, Assistant, Venerable Superior and Shepherd in charge of CCC Irapada Parish, Orogun, Ibadan Aged 60. Interview on 12th March, 2020

⁴³ Interview Respondent Olawumi Imoleayo CAC, Oke Agbara Ashi, Ibadan, 18/6/2019

⁴⁴ Redemption Testimonies, September, 2017, No265 pg. 6

God heals stroke through anointed handkerchief

My son came and brought three handkerchief and said this is the handkerchief Pastor Adeboye prayed on at the Holy Ghost Congress and said if you are facing any challenges, wave one and if one did not work, wave the two, if it did not work, wave the three and he said, mummy let your faith work for you now and I said I have faith. Lo and behold! I was able to raise my leg before the night of that day, and here I am today, I can walk. **Sis Shade Fayoyiwo**⁴⁵

30 years hemorrhage ceases through eating of Holy Communion

I thank God for the salvation of my soul. I have been suffering from the issue of blood for thirty years. The situation became worse in December 2016. I attended the Holy Ghost in January 2017 and ate the Holy Communion on Thursday and the issue of blood of thirty years stopped immediately and permanently. **Elder Mabel Emmanuel**⁴⁶

There are also some instances where members affirmed that they had spent large sum of money on medical treatment for a particular health challenge without any positive solution, but when the miracle water, handkerchiefs, candles and oil among other sacred objects were used, there have been records of healings. For instance, in the word of Akanbi, there are some critical health challenges like cancer, fibroid and protracted diseases that require surgical operation, he got his healing after administering sacred objects believed to be efficacious and capable of performing healings. He was of the opinion that the huge sum of money that would have gone for the hospital bill was saved thereby reducing the expenses that would have been spent in the hospital. Also, in the case of a pregnant woman who was having difficulty in the delivery of her baby. On her way to the theatre for surgical operation, her husband gave her 'miracle water' to drink and within a twinkling of an eye she was delivered of the baby before the surgery could be performed.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Redemption Testimonies, September, 2018, No. 277, Pg. 10

⁴⁶ Redemption Testimonies, June, 2017 No 262. Pg 8

⁴⁷ Interview respondent, Akanbi .o o CAC Oke Agbara Ashi, Ibadan18/6/2019

In addition, Dimeji from C&S says that:

God heals severe ulcer with drinking of holy water

I have severe ulcer for five years. I have visited hospital many times with prescription of many drugs by the doctors but the ulcer persists. One day my Daddy brought Omi iyè from the church and asked me to drink it since that time I did not experience any ulcer again. Then the money I should have spent on drugs and medical care was used for other purposes⁴⁸

Below are some of the interviews with respondents and testimonies gathered from respondents in relation to the users' healing on the use of miracle water at CAC Oke Agbára, Ibadan.

Ogunsola Olaitan adds:

Healing of miscarriages and severe pain through drinking of miracle water

About four years ago, my sister was suffering from fibroid and this made her suffer from miscarriages and severe pains. But when she started drinking this 'miracle water' without visiting hospital for surgical operation, the fibroid disappeared and today she has two kids. This has in a way economically benefitted my sister and family because a large amount of money which could have been spent on surgical operation was saved for other purposes.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ A. Dimeji A. student interview respondent at C and S Church Ayo Ni O, Iwo Road, Ibadan. 26/1/2020

⁴⁹



Plate 4.8. Researcher with two of his interview respondents who testified that miracle water healed them. 19/6/2019.

Source: CAC Oke Agbára, Ashi, Ibadan.

According to Mayowa Ayanfe From Kajola Ibadan:

Healing of three months' pregnancy of An expectant Mother through Drinking of Miracle Water

I came to this church through a friend. I discovered that when my pregnancy was 3 months old, I started experiencing issue of blood and I have gone to hospital many times for medical attention which result showed that there was no foetus in my womb. All my effort to deliver my baby proved abortive after 2 years pregnancy with series of tests and scans at the hospital. It was when I came to this church and started drinking Miracle water with rigorous prayer that made me to give birth safely without any surgery.⁵⁰

Similarly, Abosede Awolola said that:

God restored five months foetus to a waiting mother through miracle water

The wicked one took away the foetus from my womb for five months. I confirmed this after several scan and test by the doctors. I came to this church and through prayer and drinking of miracle water, the power of God brought back my baby and I was able to put to bed without undergoing caesarian section.⁵¹

Hannah Adepoju from Ologun Eru, Ibadan added that:

Nine years waiting mother conceived and gave birth through drinking of miracle water

I have been battling with barrenness for 9 years. I have visited hospitals time without number with series of test and administration of drug but no positive result. However, in this church through the prevailing prayer and drinking of miracle water, God answered. I conceived; I gave birth to a bouncing baby boy. Glory be to God⁵². Adeola From Apete, Ibadan

Three months pregnancy of expectant mother restored through drinking of miracle water

I discovered that when I became pregnant for 3 months, blood started coming out of my vagina. I visited hospital for medical examination, result came out that I have fibroid. This was what brought me to this church. With prevailing prayer and drinking and bathing with the miracle water I was able to give birth to my baby⁵³.

⁵⁰ Mayowa Ayanfe , A waiting mother, Interview respondent of at TCLPFW

⁵¹ Yemisi Adedeji A waiting mother, Interview respondent of at CAC Oke Agbara Olorunredo, Ashi, Ibadan 20/9/2019

⁵² The Automatic News, Oke Agbara Oluwatedo, Ashi, Ibadn, Vol 4. No11, November, 2014. Pg 18

⁵³ The Automatic News, Oke Agbara Oluwatedo, Ashi, Ibadn, Vol 4. No11, November, 2014. Pg 18

Interview with Yetunde reveals that:

God healed breast cancer through drinking of miracle water

I used to have severe pain in my breast that led me to visit hospital and it was diagnosed that I have cancer of the breast. With all medical examinations and tests upon tests with administration of drugs the pain persisted but when I came to this church and started drinking miracle water, some week later the cancer of the breast disappeared.⁵⁴
Oluwole Babalola.

God healed appendicitis through anointed oil

In April 2017, I went to the Federal Medical Centre in Ado- Ekiti and they said there was stone in my stomach and I would be operated upon. I left that hospital and went to another hospital as my case got worse. I gave up one day and my wife called my Pastor-in-charge of Parish to notify him of my condition. The PICP and his wife put the anointed oil on me and prayed for me. I thank God because I was on oxygen and was already gone but God brought me back⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ Yetunde O. Interview respondent, a member of TCLPFW 18/2/2020

⁵⁵ Redemption testimonies 2017 No. 265 pg.12

4.3 Challenges associated with the use of sacred objects for members of selected churches

4.3.1 Exploitation

In some selected churches like Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), the market strategy used by some vendors is another way that is often abuse is bazaar which holds during their harvest which comes up once in a year where different spiritual objects are sold out such as water, oil, perfume, candle oil and the likes. These objects are sold at different prices for those interested in them as confirmed by Akinlabi⁵⁶ For instance, water (sachet water commonly known as ‘pure water’ and bottled water) is sold on special occasions like harvest time and anniversary celebration varying prices. It ranges from N1, 000, to N40, 000 even more depending on the direction of the Prophet⁵⁷. The water is said to have been prepared with some items like coconut, incense, and perfume among others with the claim that special prayers have been said on it for days as the case may be. By this strategy, members tend to make much sales of the objects that are being exhibited.

Although, this act in the church can be criticised using the teaching and reaction of Jesus when the Pharisees and Sadducees were selling in the temple. Jesus’ reaction in the temple stands against the practice of buying and selling in the church during harvest or in any church programme. Again, this practice also contradicted the command of God in Matthew 10:8 that healing should be done freely because the prophet/prophetesses of God has received freely from God the grace in sanctifying these objects for various use of people.

It was also observed that in a bid to get money from those who come for some of these objects that some churches have turned these objects to money making ventures. From our interviews and observations, we discovered that at some prayer sessions, anchor of the programmes would devise a means of collecting offerings, tithes, donations at times through cash, pledges and the use of technological like Point of Sales (POS). However, giving offering is a welcome idea, but playing on people’s intelligence through the sale of sacred objects like candles, water, oil and others to get the highest ‘bidder’ to get the blessing of God should be discouraged.

⁵⁶ Akinbolu Muyiwa, Interview respondent CCC March, 2020

⁵⁷ Pastor Akinlabi reported during Celestial Church of Christ’s annual anniversary in Ibadan that pure water sold for a 22 years old girl who was bedwetting and the following year she gave a testimony that she has stopped bedwetting on 2/6/2019

4.3.2 Risk factors

It is a known fact that when the purpose of a thing is not known, abuse is inevitable. Drinking unpurified or contaminated water can cause typhoid fever and other related diseases. In the course of the study, the researcher visited one of the C&S churches where the leader of the church showed him a water well that its water can only be fetched once in a year mostly during Christmas as it was claimed to be directed by God. Looking at it, there would be possibility that the water in the well would have been contaminated. Despite this, people still fetch it as stipulated time because of the sacredness of the water not minding the hygienic state of the water part.

On the other hand, there are some people that despite their quest answer for their prayers who refuse to adhere to the instruction issued by the religious leaders on how some of these objects should be used. It was recalled that, some members who were desperately in need of miracle ignorantly used unsterilised handkerchief as sanitary pad by female folks, mostly barren women who are desperately in need of pregnancy. This no doubt can cause urinary tract infection⁵⁸.

In addition, there are cases of some members who used to apply contaminated anointing oil on open wounds refusing to go to the hospital which has complicated their healing process. Furthermore, many people were said to have drunk olive oil in excess leading to dysentery and constipation. By implication, there have been many occasions whereby members have used sacred objects at the expense of medical intervention that have in most times caused health damage to such members and many people have lost their lives out of ignorance⁵⁹.

According to Olagunju, careless use of candle for prayer has resulted into series of fire outbreaks by some members of the church. More so, the use of sacred sugar or sugar cane a diabetic patient for healing will further increase the glucose level and complicate the person's condition. Therefore, there is a need to also consider the health implications while using sacred objects because there have been records of risk factors they caused⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Bello Adeyemi. Interview respondent, RCCG, 20/6/2019

⁵⁹ Bright Peter a Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God 12/3/2021

⁶⁰ Bright Peter, a Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God, 12/3/2021

4.3.3 Abuse in the use of sacred objects

There are many questions raised on the abuses associated with the use of sacred objects. From the respondents, some believe that the practice is diabolical while some do not believe in the use because they see it as idolatry. Others argued that some members of these selected churches pay more attention to the objects than God. Members tend to depend totally on using objects to effect healing; believing that without using these objects there is no miracle.

There are alleged cases of promiscuity arising from ritual baths at the river bank where in some cases male prophets conducting spiritual cleansing for another man's wife or a single lady all in the name of deliverance or healing miracle. The scenario created by this 'water ritual' in these churches at the bank of a river often put off other users who come around at that particular time. On the other hand, the form of ritual carried out at the river bank most time causes contamination and health risk to other water users who use the water for other anthropogenic uses.

4.3.4 Over reliance

In the course of the study, it was recalled that some clergies work on member's emotion in the name of consecrating objects for their use due to the immediate needs of members thereby creating over confidence on the part of users. For instance, it was noted that some drivers over rely on the sacred objects by engaging over speeding on the highway, thereby becoming threat to other road users. Furthermore, many have been emotionally deceived because they see their clergies as someone who occupies an exalted position and one they can trust. According to one of the respondents who shared her ordeal to the researcher on how she was emotionally manipulated while seeking for solution to her health challenge, a pastor in one of the understudy churches once told her that she should buy sixty copies of Holy Bible as sacred objects to be consecrated for her health challenge. The copies of the bible must be bought at the church's bookshop and that she has to pay for the bible before they could be consecrated for use. She did what the pastor asked her to do but nothing happened afterward⁶¹. On another occasion, at one of the churches visited, writing materials like pen and pencil were sold for 200 naira each to students preparing for examination. The

⁶¹ Esther Ilesanmi, Interview Respondent, Aged 45, RCCG, Ibadan, 10th July 2019

clergies confirmed that the materials are all sacred because certain rituals have been performed on them. Therefore, the clergy implored the students to them and that the sacred writing materials will assist them to pass their forthcoming, examination excellently. The question is that can a student pass their examinations only with the use of sacred writing materials without reading? That very day, parents came out in their hundreds to buy for their children preparing for examination. It was also noted that sacred objects were sold to members with the aim of manipulating them. This is evident in some of the sacred objects bought from the hand of the clergies who claim that these objects have been consecrated while they are not⁶².

4.4 Sociological significance of the value

The study found out three notable sociological implications which manifested through the security, economic and healing values. (i) Security value serves as alternative to conventional security by church members (ii) economic value serves as economic development and (iii) healing value as alternative to conventional medical care for members of the church.

4.4.1 Alternative to conventional security.

The study discovered that the use of sacred objects in selected churches is reputed as an effective means of frustrating activities of witches and wizards, preventing insecurity and liberating people from their oppression and social constraints. In the course of this research, majority of the respondents contacted affirmed that activities of witches and wizards are believed to have rendered a number of church members who could have contributed positively to the socio-economic development of the society useless to themselves and the community. Thus, these church members are believed to be in constant fear of demonic power, but through the use of holy or sanctified water, candle, oil, wrist-band, perfume, among others, they now have an alternative to conventional security to disarm many of these physical and evil powers.

⁶² Adeola Ojo, Interview respondent, Aged 42, CCC Orogun Ibadan 22nd September, 2019

4.4.2 Economic development

It is evident that the use of sacred objects has added to the economic development of members who engage in selling and production of these objects, and by implication serve as their means of livelihood. On the other hand, some churches and members have business units that are profit-making enterprises producing and selling these objects. They pay appropriate taxes, advertisement fees for advertising on billboards and signposts. All these contribute to revenue generation of the state. Also, we discovered that traders do pay local government levies, street trading permit fees, tenement rates for those who have shops and indirect taxes are charged as a result of sales of sacred objects in some shops located close to the selected churches.

By extension, the use of sacred objects, both basic and invented ones, have provided a good business opportunity to stakeholders in the production of sacred objects who are not necessarily members of the church, some are not even Christians, yet the equally benefit economically from the practice. For example, people in plastic industries, candle, handkerchief, olive oil, perfume, wrist band, sachet and bottled water factories to a great extent, have contributed immensely to the economic development of their employees, communities and the country at large.

4.4.3 Alternative to conventional medical care

In the course of the study, we discovered that all the selected churches have conventional medical care or clinic at their national and/or state headquarters which members and non-members visit for various medical challenges. For example: RCCG Oyo Province One Headquarters situated, at Bolumole, Challenge, Ibadan and Oyo Province Two Headquarters situate at Basorun, Ibadan likewise, CCC, CAC, C&S and TCLPFW have their conventional clinics where the sick receive proper medical care. However, objectified faith-induced healing dimension serve as alternative to conventional medical care in some cases that seem to defy medical solutions. Testimonies of healing and miracles are usually said by those who claimed to have received them. In quite a number of cases, those healed had gone through gruesome experiences or had illnesses which had defied

surgery, traditional or orthodox treatment and medication.⁶³ In this case, sacred objects like handkerchief, candle and miracle water are used as directed by the religious leaders after praying on them.

⁶³G. A. Oshitelu, *History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: An Interpretation*, Ibadan: Hope publication 2007, p. 106.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study brings to the fore the social value of sacred objects in the selected churches in Ibadan, Nigeria. The work generated types of sacred objects that are commonly used in the selected churches and discussed social values of these objects which manifested in economic, security and healing. However, the study captured some challenges associated with the use of sacred objects in the selected churches. The social implications of sacred object is that it serves as religious avenue for addressing economic, security and medical challenges facing the general public. The study concluded that beyond religious undercurrent, the sacred objects are of economic, medical and security value to members of the selected churches in Ibadan.

5.2 Conclusion

This research demonstrated sacred objects that are commonly used and their social values which manifested in security, economic and healing among members of Christ Apostolic Church, Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Celestial Church of Christ, The Church of the Lord (Prayer Fellowship) Word wide and the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Ibadan. From the sociological point of view, the study discovered that the use of sacred objects are deployed by the selected churches in Ibadan to provide religious alternative measures for addressing economic, security and health challenges. However, the study discovered some challenges being encountered by the users. Such problems include: the grey areas on the use of sacred objects by the users. The study also captured that African Christians believe that faith must be assisted with concrete objects and to remove sacred objects from the ritual life of African churches would therefore mean starving them to physical and spiritual death. Significantly, the work concluded that beyond religious value of sacred objects, their social value cannot also be overemphasized in selected churches in Ibadan and in Nigeria at large.

5.3 Recommendations

No doubt, sacred objects have contributed immensely to human and community development among members of the selected churches in Ibadan. To a large extent, the social value of sacred objects has served as a means of job provision, sales making, alternative to security and medical care to both members and non-members of the selected churches. However, towards a better use of these objects, the following are recommended:

The study recommends that playing on people's intelligence through the sales of sacred objects like/or selling to the highest 'bidder' for the blessings of God by some churches should be discouraged because this is against the teachings of Jesus. For example, the occasional sale of sacred objects in Celestial Church of Christ the at bazaar during harvest time seems exploitive. The sacred objects are said to have been prayed upon for some days by prophets and prophetesses and mixed with some materials after which it is believed to have the power of God in it. These objects are sold in the church for as high as ₦50,000, ₦1,000,000 (One million Naira) at a bazaar. Akinbola, a stick of candle was sold for ₦1,000,000. This practice contradicts, the word of God in Matthew 10:8 that healing should be free because the prophet/prophetess has received the anointing freely. Also, this act is a form of financial exploitation by religious leaders, and for this, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) should look into this and check this act in order to help members who are being exploited. This study also recommends that there is a need to maintain thorough biblical bases for the use of sacred objects in churches.

Therefore, over-emphasizing on Afrocentric theology of the use of sacred objects like: water, handkerchiefs, emblem, oil and candle among others should be re-visited in our church beliefs and practices because members tend to depend totally on sacred objects while some believe that without these objects, miracles cannot happen. This, has created an avenue to exploit people in some of these churches. Hence, there should be less dependency on sacred objects as there are other ways through which God performs miracles. This belief also leads to proliferation of miracle centres and creating people who only run around looking for miracles rather than loving God (Mark 19:29-30).

On the risk factor, the church should teach members on how and when to use sacred objects appropriately in order to avoid abuse. They should also teach members of the church by using proper medication instead of their total dependency on the use of sacred objects in cases that require urgent medical attention.

The work recommends that ritual bath should be re-visited because of alleged cases of promiscuity and human abuse arising from ritual baths at river banks where prophets are seen bathing another man's wife or a single lady all in the name of deliverance or divine healing. This should be totally discouraged by the church leaders.

5.4 Contribution to knowledge

This study establishes that the religious value of the use of sacred objects beyond the sacred objects are of social values as they manifest and address economic, security and health challenges facing the members of the selected churches in Ibadan and Nigerians at large. By implication, the study has shown that religion is not only about spirituality, it is also a social phenomenon.

5.5 Suggestion for further studies

Having worked on the social values inherent in sacred objects that manifested in security, economic and healing, the researcher suggested that further studies in psychology, philosophy of religion and other related fields of study should be encouraged to carry out further study on values of sacred objects.

REFERENCES

- Adeboye, O. 1999. Interview. *News watch*. 22 December, 12. Lagos. 30. 24: 12.
- Adeboye, O. 2007. 'Arrowhead' of Nigerian Pentecostalism: The Redeemed Christian Church of God, 1952-2005. *Pneum.* 29. 1: 24-58. 32
- Adedibu, B 2011. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, a missionary global player: what is her message regarding human development? In encounter beyond routine: cultural root, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development international consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 7th-23rd January 2011.
- Adewale, S.A. 1986. The cultic use of water among the Yoruba in Ibadan. *Journal of Religious Studies*. June. XVIII.I: 28.
- Adogame, A. 2000. Aiyé lojà, òrun ni ilé: the appropriation of ritual spacetime in the cosmology of the Celestial Church of Christ. *Journal of Religions in Africa*. XXX: 1.
- Adogame, U. A. 1998. Home away from home, the proliferation of CCC in diaspora – Europe. *Exchange*. 27: 21.
- Adu, A. E. 2004. Deliverance in Ghanaian neo-Pentecostal ministries: a critical assessment from an evangelical perspective. M.TH Thesis, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.
- Ajayi, O. 1997. *Warrior of righteousness*. Abeokuta, Ordinance Publishers.
- Ajibade, E.A., 2008. Anointing the sick with oil: an exegetical study of James 5: 14-15. Ogbomoso. *Journal of Theology*. Retrieved July 20th, 2017. XIII.2: 166-177.
- Ayegboyin, D. 2012. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Spirituality+in+the+African+Spirituality+in+the+African+Independence+Churches+Retrieved+2/2/2017>
- Alana, O.E. 2001. The impact of the healing miracles of Jesus on the Aládùrà healing methods in Yorùbáland. *Unilorin Book of Abstract*. University of Ilorin. 1:17.
- Alexander, T.J. 1980. Incense. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Alo, J.O. 2018. *Cherubim and Seraphim in Her true picture*. Torn Veil Publications. Ibadan.
- Alokan, J.A. 2010. Christ Apostolic Church @90 (1918-2008). Timade Ventures Ile-Ife.

- Alokan, J.O. 2012. The place of revelations and healings in the practices of Christ Apostolic Church, Nigeria, 1930 -1994. Ph.D. Thesis Submitted to the Postgraduate College, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.
- Asante, L. 2001. The phenomenon of anointing in the mainline and charismatic churches: a case study of the Roman Catholic Church and some charismatic churches in Ghana. M.Phil Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra. Retrieved 20th July, 2017.
- Atansuyi, H.O. 2006. Gospel and culture from the perspective of African instituted churches. *Cyber Journal for Pentecostal Charismatic Research*. 2.
- Atiemo, A.O. 1995. *Mmusuyi and deliverance: a study of conflict and consensus in the encounter between African*.
- Atuahene, J.O. 2010. A comparative study of prophets of African indigenous churches and akhan traditional priests: a critical examination of their training. A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.
- Awolalu, J. O. 1979. *Yoruba beliefs and sacrificial rites*. Burnt Mill: Longman.
- Ayantayo, J.K and Ayantayo, G.N 2019. Probing the disposition of African Christianity to cultural and traditional religious identity in Nigeria. *A Festschrift in Honour of Rev. Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin @70*. Edited by Fatokun S.A, Ayantayo J.K, Familusi O.O., Mepaiyeda S.M. & Okanlawon S.O, 359
- Ayantayo, J.K. 2018. Rescuing God from his abductors. An Inaugural Lecture, delivered at the University of Ibadan on Thursday, 26th April, 2018.
- Ayegboyin, D. and S.A. Ishola. 1997. *African indigenous churches: an historical perspective*. Greater Heights Publication.
- Ayegboyin, A.C. 2014. A comparative study of symbols in the Celestial Church of Christ and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, Oyo State. A Thesis Submitted to Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.
- Bhatnagar, A. Pooja Devi, and M. P. George, Kurukshetra, 2016. *India 2 Delhi Pollution Control Committee, ISBT Building, Delhi*, India. Received 29 July, 2017; Revised 27 January 2016; Accepted 11 February Academic Editor: L. M. Chu Copyright © 2016 Anita Bhatnagar et al.
- Bolarinwa, J. 2006. *The Redeemed Christian Church of God, beliefs and practices*. Lagos, Sommerset Ventures.
- Bolle, K.W. 1967. Symbolism, religious. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. John P. Whalen and Patrick O. A. Boyle. Eds. Washington: Library of Congress. Xiii.

- Brian, R. Doak and William P. Griffin 2006. Oil, anointing with. *The Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*. Stanley M. Burgess. Ed. London: Taylor & Francis group. 339.
- Burgess, R, 2008. Nigerian Pentecostal theology in global perspective. *Penteco Studies*. 7. 2: 29-63.
- Burgess, S. 2006. Ed. *Christianity and charismatic Christianity*. New York: Berkshire Publishing Group.
- Carrasco, L.D, 1999. Symbolism and iconography. *Encyclopedia of World Religions*. Wendy Doniger. Ed. Philippines: Merriam-Weber Incorporated.
- Changa, I, 2009. Incense. *Encyclopedia of African religion*. Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama. Eds. New Delhi: Sage Publication. 2.
- Circlot, E. 1971. *A dictionary of symbolism*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co.
- Diamond J. 2014. *Tourism's role in economic development in economic development and cultural change*. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press.
- Doak, B.R. and Griffin William P. 2006. Oil, anointing with. *The encyclopedia of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*. Stanley M. Burges Ed. Rutledge: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Dzurgba, A.1991. *An introduction of sociology of religion*. Second Edition, Published by Centre for External Studies University of Ibadan.
- Ejizu, 1990. The meaning and significance of festivals in traditional African Life. *Philosophical perspective of African traditional religions*. Ekpunobi, E. and Ezekiel I. Eds. Enugun, New Age Publisher.
- Elhanon, Mc A. Kenneth, 2000. Symbols and symbolism. *The evangelical dictionary of world missions*. Scott Moreau. Ed. Glasglow: Baker Books.
- Famodimu, O. 1999. *Moses Orímoládé Tunolase supreme founder, Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide*. Kaduna: AbiBcom Nigeria Ltd.
- Fatokun, S.A. 2008. Water and its cultic use in African initiated churches in Yorubaland in South Western Nigeria: an issue on African development discourse. *Swedish Missiological Themes*. 96.4: 349.
- Fay, M.A 1983. An object relations analysis at the conscious symbolic and memory content levels of the maternal and paternal components of the representation of god in five Christian women. Doctoral Dissertation, Boston University, 1983. *Dissertation Abstracts International*. Retrieved, 31st July, 2017. 43: 4125–4126.

- Funderburk, G.B. 1980. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney and Rod. Eds. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Gabriel, Gbega Jegede. 2019. Women and church leadership in Yorubaland: the aladura Experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Accessed on www.ijhssnet.com 31 May, 2019. 265.
- Gaebelein, F.G. 1980. Symbolism. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids,
- Goldsworthy, G. 1980. Sanctification. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Hadlock, M.N. 1988. *Construction and initial validation of the religious status inventory*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. Retrieved, 31 July, 2017.
- Hall James, 1974. *The dictionary of subjects and symbols in art*. Evanston: Harper and Row.
- Hawthorne, G. F. 1980. Cross. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Hennessy, T.C. 2010. *The role of religion in character development*. Birmingham, Al: Religious Education Press.
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Candle> accessed 6/4/2020.
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eucharist> accessed 6/4/2020.
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handkerchief> accessed 4/6/2020.
- <https://nou.edu.ng/sites/default/files/2017-03/CTH%20441.pdf> West African Church History, CTH 441, National Open University 2012 retrieved 28/4/2020. 58
- <https://sites.google.com/site/sacredobjectsinar/what-is-a-sacred-object> accessed 24/1/2020
- https://www.academia.edu/The_History_Of_Perfume_1_The_History_of_Perfume_from_the_Bible_to_Present_Day retrieved 30/5/2020
- <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-identity-theory> retrieved 14/1/2021.
- <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/299935-rccg-congress-pastor-adeboye-warns-against-buying-selling-items-branded-with-his-image.html> accessed 6/4/2020.

- Huey, F. B. Jr 1980. Oil. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids. 4: 513-515.
- Idowu, M.O 2012. *An instrument of revival: the story of Joseph Ayo Babalola, the first Apostle and General Evangelist of Christ Apostolic Church*. Divine Artillery Publications, Lagos, Nigeria
- James, Hall, 1974. *Dictionary of subjects and symbols in art*. Evanston: Harper & Row.
- John, Mbiti. S. 1964. *African religions and philosophy*. Heinemann Educational Book Ltd, London.
- Johnstone, R.L 2001. *Religion in society: a sociology of religion*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, U.S.A.
- Jones, A. A. 1980. *The illustrated Bible dictionary*. Wheaton: Ibadan and Stoughton.
- Kirby, G. W. 1980. Church. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Kolajo, A. 2000. *Redemption testimonies*. October.
- Labeodan, H.A and G. Adeboye. 2019. The role of women in church growth: a case study of the Celestial Church of Christ In Nigeria. *A Festschrift in Honour of Rev. Professor Isaac Deji Ayegboyin @70*. Edited by Fatokun S.A, Ayantayo J.K, Familusi O.O., Mepaiyeda S.M. and Okanlawon S.O, 359. Religious Studies Series. 166.
- Lake, D. M. 1980. Women. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Lambert, G., 1980. Church worship. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Lande, H. Inglehart and Barker. 2000. Modernization Cultural Hange Value. *American Social Sociological Review*. February.
- Levitt, S. B. 1990. A case study: spiritual churches in Cape Coast, Ghana. *The rise of independent churches in Ghana*. Accra: Asempa Publishers.
- Lundmark, M. 2015. Religious objects and the coping process. *Archive for the psychology of religion-Archiv Fur Religion Spsychologie*. 37.1: 54-83.
- Mark, Jon Ruth-Ven. 2006. Prophecy gift of. *Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*. Stanley M. Burgess. Ed. New York: Berkshire Publishing Group.

- Mc Cann, C. 2008. *New paths towards the sacred*. Thus, Panlist Press. Wikipedia accessed 24/1/2020.
- McCleary, M. 2007. Salvation, damnation, and economic incentives. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. 1.2: 15
- Mixer, R.L. 1980. Women. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids.
- Morgan, S. M. David Promey. Eds. 2001. *The visual culture of American religion*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Murphy, F. X. 1967. Symbolism. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. John P. Whalen and Patrick A.O. Boyle. Eds. Washington: Library of Congress.
- Nabofa, M. Y. 1994. *Symbolism in African traditional religion*. Ibadan: Paperpack Publishers Limited.
- Nwite and Wilson, 2010. Church in Nigeria and investment strategies: problems and prospect. *Book of Astwilt*. Second World Congress on Research and development, University of Ibadan.
- Ogundipe, O. E. Interview respondent, Sister, member of CCC Cornerstone Parish, Olode, Ibadan. Aged 28. Interviewed 16th September, 2012.
- Ogungbile, D.O. 1997. Water symbolism in African culture and afro-Christian church. *Journal of Religious Thought*. 53:2 and 54.1:23.
- Okunlola, D. O. (Date of publication not indicated.) *Celestial Church of Christ Last Vessel for Salvation*. Lagos: Bengo Comm. Printers.
- Olaleru and Egbo. 2007. *The seed in the ground*. Lagos: Father of Lights Publishers.
- Olurode. 2008. Religion and health. <http://jakomodebiravonyainternational.blogspot.com>.
- Omotehinse, R. S. O. 1989. Religion and economic development in Ibadan City, 1900-89. M.A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Religious studies University of Ibadan.
- Oshitelu G.A. 2007. *History of the Aladura (Independent) Churches 1918-1940: an Interpretation*. Hope publications Ltd.
- Oshitelu, R.O 2020. Distinguished Church leader essay aladura theology- the case of the Church of the Lord (prayer Fellowship) Worldwide in African initiated Christianity and the Decolonisation of development: sustainable development in pentecostal and independent churches (Edit.) Philipp Ohlmann, Wilhelm Grab and Marie-Luise Frost. Routledge, New York. 177-178.

- Peel, J. 1968. *Aladura: a religious movement among the Yorùbá*. London: International African Institute. 80-81
- Redemption Testimonies. 2017. 265:12.
- Redemption Testimonies. January, 2017. 257: 15.
- Redemption Testimonies. June, 2017. 262: 8.
- Redemption Testimonies. June, 2017. 262: 8.
- Redemption Testimonies. September, 2018. 277: 10.
- Rizzuto, A.M. 1974. Object relations and the formation of the image of God. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*. Retrieved, 31 July, 2017. 47: 83–99.
- Rudhardt, J. 1987. Water. *The Encyclopedia of the religion*. Mircea Eliade. Ed. New York: Macmillan Publishers Company.
- Sagovsky, N. 2002. Symbols. *The new dictionary of pastoral studies*. Wesley Carr. Ed. et. al. New York: W. Eerdmans.
- Scharf, B.R. 1970. *The sociological study of religion*. London: Hutchinson Co. Publishers Limited.
- Schulte, A.J. 1908. Consecration in The Catholic Encyclopedia. Retrieved May 14, 2017 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04276a.htm>. New York. Robert Appleton Company.
- Serson, E, 2006. Preaching. *Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity*. Stanley M. Burgess. Ed. Rutledge: Taylor and Francis.
- Spilka, B., and Werme, P.H. 1971. Religion and mental disorder a research perspective. *Research on religious development: a comprehensive handbook*. M. Strommen. Ed. New York: Hawthorne. 461–481.
- The Automatic News*. 2013. Oke Agbara Oluwatedo, Ashi, Ibadan. December. 2:12.
- The Automatic News*. 2014. Oke Agabra Oluwatedo, Ashi, Ibadan. November. 4:11.
- Thomas, Albert S. 1942. *Christian symbolism in the evangelical churches*.
- Todd, W. Hall. 1994. The relationship of spiritual maturity to level of object relations development and God image. This paper was presented at the 1994 American Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA.

- Turner, H. W. 1979. *Religious innovation in Africa: collected essays on new religious movements*. Boston, Massachusetts: G. K. Hall.
- Turner, H. W. 1967. *African independent church, the life and faith of the Church of the Lord (Aladura)*.
- Ukah, A. F. 2003. The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria: local identities and global processes in African Pentecostalism. A. Ph.D Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Studies, at the University of Bayreuth 212.
- Walker, L. L. 1980. Perfume. *The Zondervan pictorial encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids. 4: 698.
- Weber, M. 1958. *The protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism*. New York: Charles Scribners Sons.
- Wellington, O. Wotogbe-Weneka. 2009. Water symbolism in African possession cult of the Ikwerre people of North-Eastern Niger Delta. *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. XLI.II: 46.
- White, R. 1980. Armor, Arms. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney. Ed. Michigan: Grand Rapids. See also Judges 3. 1: 314.
- Wilson, T.O. 2014. Transformation of Aladura Christianity in Nigeria. Ph.D. Thesis. International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) University of Bayreuth, Germany.
- Yemi, S. 1995. *The hidden secrets about Celestial Church of Christ*. Abeokuta: Life Line World Outreach.

APPENDIX 1

List and Profiles of Interviewees

No	Name	Church	Position	Profile	Age	Date
1	Oyelakin A.A	CAC	Pastor	Clergy	-	27/1 2020
2	Mayowa A	CAC	Member	Expectant Mother	-	20/1/2017
3	Abosedo A	CAC	Member	Waiting Mother	-	12/1/2017
4	Yemisi A	CAC	Member	Trader	-	21/2/2019
5	Adepoju H	CAC	Member	Waiting Mother	37	21/2/2019
6	Adeola O.	CAC	Member	Expectant Mother	36	3/2/2019
7	Yetunde B	CAC	Member	Trader	-	3/2/2019
8	Mayowa A	CAC	Member	Expectant Mother	-	20/1/2017
10	Sunday O	CAC	Member	Artisan	40	7/5 2019
11	Alabi A	CAC	Deacon	Clergy	43	7/5 2019 7/5 2019
12	Makinwa D	CAC	Member	Artisan	45	7/5 2019
13	Adeola O.	CAC	Member	Expectant Mother	36	3/2/2019
14	Ogunsola Olaitan	CAC	Pastor	Clergy	-	19/6 2019
15	Afolabi, P. O	CAC	Member	Waiting Mother	38	6/5/ 2019.
16	Motunrayo Ojo	CAC	Member	Trader	45	7/5 2019.
17	Olumide Kolawole	CAC	Member	Artisan	-	25/6/ 2019
18	Olawumi Imoleayo	CAC	Member	Artisan	-	18/6/2019
19	Akanbi O.O	CAC	Pastor	Clergy	-	18/6/2019
20	Ogunsola Olaitan	CAC	Member	Waiting Mother	-	19/6/ 2019
21	Ojo Kehinde	CAC	Member	Artisan	45	18/6/2019
22	Modupe Owolabi	CAC	Memeber	Trader	30	10/6/2018
23	Salami I. A	C&S	Women Leader	Clergy	-	2/2/9/2020

24	Olufade Seyi	C&S	Pastor	Clergy		11/6/2019
25	Alabi E	C&S	Choir Coordinator	Artisan	-	26/1/2020
26	Olagunju B	C&S	Apostle	Artisan	50	26/1/2020
27	Aderibigbe R	C&S	Clergy	Trader	57	26/1/2020
28	Gbenga O	C&S	Member	Artisan	42	26/1/2020
29	Demeji A	C&S	Member	Artisan	-	26/1/2020
30	Oguntoye	C&S	Church Secretary	Clergy	-	26/1/2020
31	Salami I. A	C&S	Women Leader	Clergy	-	2/2/2020
32	Olufade Seyi	C&S	Pastor	Clergy		2/2/2020
33	Alabi E	C&S	Choir Coordinator	Artisan	-	26/1/2020
34	Aderibigbe D	C&S	Member	-	-	15/8/2020
35	Ibrahim M	C&S	Member	Artisan	-	23/7/2020
36	Olaoye S.	C&S	Member	Trader	-	15/8/2020
37	Samson O	C&S	Prophet	Clergy	-	23/8/2020
38	Adesina M. I	C&S	Pastor	Clergy	-	23/8/2020
39	Aderinto S	C&S	Member	Artisan	-	22/8/2020
40	Aderibigbe D	C&S	Member	-	-	15/8/2020
41	Ibrahim M	C&S	Member	Artisan	-	23/7/2020
42	Olaoye S.	C&S	Member	Trader	-	15/8/2020
43	Samson O	C&S	Prophet	Clergy	-	23/8/2020
44	Adesina M. I	C&S	Pastor	Clergy	-	23/8/2020
45	Olusegun Ade	C&S	Member	Trader	35	22/9/2020
46	Israel Adeola	C&S	Member	Trader	38	10/6/2019
47	Oyenuga F	TCLPFW	Clergy	Artisan	55	20/2/2020
48	Abiodun Adeleke	TCLPFW	Prophet	Clergy	-	12/2/2020
49	Olajide O.	TCLPFW	Member	Artisan	-	12/2/2020
50	Adebayo A. K.	TCLPFW	Deacon	Clergy	38	17/6/ 2019
51	Abiodun Ayeni	TCLPFW	Member	Trader	47	18/10/2020
52	Temitope Oyenuga	TCLPFW	Member	Trader	38	18/10/2020
53	Mayowa Ayanfe	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother		20/9/2019
54	Yetunde O.	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother		18/2/2020
55	Mayowa Ayanfe	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother		20/9/2019
56	Yetunde O.	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother		18/2/2020
57	Mayowa Ayanfe	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother		20/9/2019
58	Oyepero (Nee) Oshintelu	TCLPFW	Reverend	Clergy	-	9/6/2020

59	Babalo Adeleye S.	TCLPFW	Elder	Trader	77	9/6/2020
60	Oshitelu S.	TCLPFW	Reverend	Clergy	55	9/6/2020
61	Oyepero (Nee) Oshitelu	TCLPFW	Reverend	Clergy	-	9/6/2020
62	Joseph Ojo	TCLPFW	Member	Student Pastor	35	18/4/2019
63	Adewale Temitope	TCLPFW	Member	Student Pastor	40	18/4/2019
64	Adebayo Adebisi	TCLPFW	Deacon	Clergy	38	17/6/ 2019
65	Adeleke Adeola	TCLPFW	Member	Student Pastor	33	17/6/2019
66	Ajayi Eniola	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother	35	17/6/2019
67	Afolabi Temilope	C&S	Member	Waiting Mother	38	6/5/ 2019.
68	Tewogbola Seun	C&S	Member	Expectant Mother	36	6/6 2019
69	Adeleye, Dada	C&S	Member	Trader	38	6/6 2019
70	Adeleke Idowu	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	2/6/2019
71	Eniitan Oluwaseun	CCC	Member	Trader		2/6/2019
72	Akinlabi Adetoun	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	2/6/2019
73	Adesina Grace	RCCG	Member	Trader	-	6/3/2020
74	Adebisi Temilola	RCCG	Member	Trader	-	6/3/2020
75	Ogundeko A.	RCCG	Member	Trader		6/3/2020
76	Egunlae,Bamidele,	CCC	Evangelist	Clergy	60	12/ 3 2020
77	Akinlabi Adebisi	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	2/6/2019
78	Anonymous	CCC	Member	Trader		2/6/2019
79	Emmanuel B.	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	9/10/2019
80	Olu Oshodi	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	9/10/2020
81	Aiyetan Tobiloba	CCC	Member	Trader	-	12/6/2019
82	Ojo, Adeleke.	CCC	Member	Trader	25	16/9/2019
83	Durojaiye Dada	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	68	27/5/ 2019
84	Ogundipe Joseph	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	37	16/9/2019
85	Emmanuel Boluwatife	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	9/10/2019
86	Olu Oshodi	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	9/10/2020
87	Aiyetan Ayo	CCC	Member	Trader	-	12/6/2019
88	Ojo, Titilope	CCC	Member	Trader	25	16/9/2019
89	Oluwasegun Eniola	CCC	Member	Waiting Mother	33	16/9/2019

90	Oladapo Imole	CCC	Member	Trader	30	10/6/2019
91	Ikperi Lucky	RCCG	Reverend	Clergy	55	9/6/2020
92	Felix Imagbedion	RCCG	Pastor	Clergy	34	3/3/2020
94	Ekpo Helen	RCCG	Deaconess	Clergy	-	3/3/2020
95	Oluwaseun Akintayo	RCCG	Member	Artisan	30	25/3/2021
96	Ikejimba Christiana	RCCG	Deaconess	Artisan	42	19/2/2021
97	Ogunneye Mojisola	RCCG	Member	Artisan	30	28/2/2021
98	Sola Oyewole	RCCG	Member	Artisan	35	10/2/2021
90	Oluwole Seun	RCCG	Member	Artisan	40	2/3/2020
100	Sola Duyilem	RCCG	Pastor	Clergy	-	2/6/2020
101	Ademola Odunayo	RCCG	Pastor	Clergy	32	4/3/2019
102	Olajide D. D	RCCG	Pastor	Clergy	-	20/4/2020
103	Isaac Adejumo	RCCG	Member	Artisan		19/5/2018
104	Precious Ipeba	RCCG	Member	Trader	38	19/5/ 2018
105	Blessing Adeigbe	RCCG	Member	Trader	23	21/5/2018
106	Tope Adeleke	RCCG	Member	Trader	24	26/5/2018
108	Olalekan Fakanlu	RCCG	Pastor	Clergy	39	27/6/2018
109	Kemi Ekundayo	RCCG	Member	Trader	24	26/5/2018
110	Olalekan Fakanlu	RCCG	Pastor	Clergy	39	27/6/2018
111	Olu Oshodi	CCC	Shepherd	Clergy	-	9/10/2020
112	Aiyetan Ayo	CCC	Member	Trader	-	12/6/2019
113	Ojo, Titilope	CCC	Member	Trader	25	16/9/2019
114	Oluwasegun Eniola	CCC	Member	Waiting Mother	33	16/9/2019
115	Oluwasegun Eniola	CCC	Member	Waiting Mother	33	16/9/2019
116	Mayowa Ayanfe	TCLPFW	Member	Waiting Mother		20/9/2019
117	Oyepero (Nee) Oshintelu	TCLPFW	Reverend	Clergy	-	9/6/2020
118	Babalo Adeleye S	TCLPFW	Elder	Trader	77	9/6/2020
119	Oshitelu S	TCLPFW	Reverend	Clergy	55	9/6/2020
120	Oyepero (Nee) Oshitelu	TCLPFW	Reverend	Clergy	-	9/6/2020
121	Aderinto S	C&S	Member	Artisan	-	22/8/2020
122	Aderibigbe D	C&S	Member	-	-	15/8/2020
123	Ibrahim M	C&S	Member	Artisan	-	23/7/2020

124	Olaoye S.	C&S	Member	Trader	-	15/8/2020
125	Oluwaseun Akintayo	RCCG	Member	Artisan	30	25/3/2021
126	Ikejimba Christiana	RCCG	Deaconess	Artisan	42	19/2/2021
127	Ogunneye Mojisola	RCCG	Member	Artisan	30	28/2/2021
128	Sola Oyewole	RCCG	Member	Artisan	35	10/2/2021
129	Oluwole Seun	RCCG	Member	Artisan	40	2/3/2020
130	Motunrayo Ojo	CAC	Member	Trader	45	7/5 2019.
131	Olumide Kolawole	CAC	Member	Artisan	-	25/6/ 2019
132	Olawumi Imoleayo	CAC	Member	Artisan	-	18/6/2019
133	Akanbi O.O	CAC	Pastor	Clergy	-	18/6/2019
134	Motunrayo Ojo	CAC	Member	Trader	45	7/5 2019.
135	Onaolapo Adeola	CAC	Member	Artisan	-	25/6/ 2019

APPENDIX 2
ORAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction

The researcher will formally introduce himself to the interviewees and seeks the latter's permission before commencing the interview. The purpose of the research would be made known to the respondent(s), while confidentiality would be guaranteed by the researcher

A. Socio-demographic details

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:
4. Occupation:
5. Marital status
6. Church/denomination
7. Date of interview

B. Questions for the clergy

1. Name: (Optional)
2. Church/Denomination
3. Position in Church
4. What do you understand by sacred objects?
5. Mention types of sacred objects commonly used in your church
6. What are the religious purposes for which these sacred objects are used in the church?
7. Can you mention some of the socio-economic and health value people derived after the use of sacred objects that you know?
8. What are the risks associated to the use of these objects when it is wrongly used members?
9. What are the abuse associated with the use of sacred objects by the members?
10. Mention possible misconceptions on the use of sacred objects

C Questions for the users

1. Name: (Optional)
2. Church/Denomination
3. What do you understand by sacred objects?
4. Can you list the types your church normally use for religious purpose
5. Which object did you use and what benefit did you derive from it?
6. Can you mention some of the socio-economic and health value you derived after the use of sacred objects that you know?
7. Can you mention some of the risks you encounter when these objects were wrongly used by you?
8. Can you give examples of the way sacred objects have been abused by you?
9. Mention possible misconception you have on the use of sacred objects

D Questions for the sellers

1. For how long have you been selling these consecrated objects/items?
2. What types of the objects do you sell?
3. Where do you normally buy or get/ them?
4. Like how much do you trade per day, week, monthly?
5. When do people normally demand for these objects
6. How do you generate your income/gain?
7. What has this business fetched/procured for you economically?
8. Can you mention some of your achievements through this business?
9. How and what do you contribute to the economic development of your community through this business?