

**CONTEXTUALISATION OF SELECTED ISRAELITE SACRED
CULTIC ELEMENTS AND PRACTICES IN Ọ̀NÀ ÌWÀ MÍMÓ
CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM CHURCHES, IN IBADAN, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

The activities of Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Church (OIMCandSC) in Ibadan are connected with the practices and elements of the ancient Israelite religion from which the church took its root. Existing studies have examined the activities from a liturgical point of view, but have not adequately explored how they have been contextualised. This study, therefore, investigated the adoption of selected Israelite sacred cultic practices, namely, ritual cleansing, scapegoatism and sacred elements in OIMCandSC in Ibadan with a view to establishing their benefits and significance for members.

The study adopted Adamo's African cultural hermeneutics, which approaches the Bible from a premeditated Afrocentric perspective. The historical-critical method, which articulates the socio-cultural forces that shaped the biblical text, was used. Focus group discussions were held with 11 different groups, comprising ten members and two leaders from OIMCandSC branches in Ibadan. Participant observation method was also utilised. Three hundred and twenty-seven copies of a questionnaire were administered to seven founders, 30 clerics, 88 heads of groups and 202 members in 28 branches across all the local government areas in Ibadanland. Data were subjected to exegetical analysis and percentages.

Some elements and practices inherent in Israelite religion have been contextually grounded in different forms in OIMCandSC. Ritual cleansing-(Lev.12; 15), a common practice in ancient Israelite religion, provided inner-spiritual purity for women who had completed their menstrual cycle and individuals cured of diseases. In OIMCandSC, spiritual and curative baths were performed by the prophets for individuals after ailments; and women after child delivery. A total of 95.4% of the respondents believed that ritual cleansing helped in addressing problems of chronic diseases, spiritual impurities which were obstacles to success, and misfortune. Scapegoatism-Lev.16:20-34 in Israelite religion was the practice whereby communal misdemeanour was symbolically transferred to a he-goat. In OIMCandSC, a he-goat was slaughtered in order to ward off death; this was tagged *fẹ̀mírẹ̀mí* (life-for-life) because a sick person's untimely death was transferred to the scapegoat. Sacred elements-Ex.40:9-15/Lev.14:15-18 in Israelite cultic activities included the use of consecrated water, candles and oil to encounter God's power. Similarly, in

OIMCandSC, the sick and private properties were anointed with oil for healing and protection, respectively. Consecrated water was sprinkled on residential, business and worship premises for protection and purification, while candle was used to enhance access into the supersensible realms. Prevalence of Israelite cultic practices in OIMCandSC was attributed by 85.7% of the respondents to the similarities between Israelite and Yorùbá worldviews. Moreover, 82.7% believed they were useful resources for transmitting religious ideas. Likewise, 94.5% agreed that they offered psychological relief because they provided a point of contact between the physical and mental belief spaces.

Israelite cultic activities, manifesting as curative baths, symbolic death transfer and sacred elements confirming the patterning of Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Church after Old Testament, have been effectively utilised in the church to contextually ground their brand of Christian faith. These practices have helped in addressing the problems of chronic diseases; ward off untimely death, misfortune and made worship meaningful to members.

Key words: Cultic elements and practices, Israelite religion, Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Yorùbá culture.

Word count: 500

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this thesis has been read and approved by me as having fulfilled the requirement for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Old Testament. The research was carried out by Adagbada, Cornelius Oluwadare in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Ìbàdàn. Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

The work is dedicated to the LORD God Almighty and those who are enduring persecutions for the cause of reaching out, expanding the Gospel and kingdom of God on earth.

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ABBREVIATIONS

OIMC&S C	-	Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church
C&S	-	Cherubim and Seraphim
AIC	-	African Indigenous Church
AACC	-	African Alliance Christian Council
IITA	-	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
HRH	-	His Royal Highness
KJV	-	King James Version
O. T	-	Old Testament
TEF	-	Theological Education Fund

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Worship (Heb- worship) is giving God His rightful due, adoring Him for who He is. The essence of worship is communion with the living God. It is vital, touching the very core of our lives. Both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament words usually translate worship as indicating a type of humble submission. This is the underlying idea in man's worship of the LORD. Man humbles himself before his creator as one who serves, honours, fears and adores Him¹. Aluko, De Greeve and others see worship as something that grows out of history, a significant element of ancient Israelite religion, an expression of the response of a religious man to the Holy God as he apprehends it in devotion, respect of God for His sovereignty over the entirety of creation, and veneration and the acts prompted by this attitude are his God-ward disposition and activities.²

The religion of Israel centres basically around the worship of Yahweh Hebrew- יהוה, which is usually rendered "the LORD". Yahweh is taken to be the local God of Israel, who attained a universal character after the Babylonian exile of 586 BC. The worship of Yahweh dated back to antiquity. However, the exact time the worship of Yahweh began remains a serious contention in Old Testament scholarship. The idea that the worship of Yahweh started with the patriarchs, might be a backward projection of Israel's later faith³. Whichever position one takes, the worship of Yahweh is central in Israelite belief-system and the cult, which is a visible expression of faith, played an important role. The religious institution of ancient Israel was used by God as a vehicle of revelation. Cult has been described as a term used for the formal and ritual aspects of worship. This places the sacred cult in a strategic position because, as Dryness observes, "the *cultus* embodied the faith of Israel; it was the rehearsal of God's deeds and therefore His self-disclosure – of the past, it

¹ Don Fleming, 1990. *Bridge Bible Directory*, Brisbane, Australia: Bridge way Publications p.466.

² S.O. Owoseni, quoting F. De Greeve, 2007. *Basic Practices of the Major Faiths in the Nigerian Context* Ibadan : Immanuel College of Theology, and Christian Education. Unpublished p.8. and S. Aluko. 2005 *African Christian Worship Made Simple – The Nigerian Experience*, Lagos: CSS Bookshop. pp 1 – 13.)

³ G.H. Parker-Taylor, 1975. *Yahweh, the Divine name in the Bible* Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press.

was an appropriation of the past, also the dramatic convergence of meaning in the present and brings past and present into the immediate continuum of identity”.⁴

The stories about sacrifice and rituals in the Pentateuch offer insights into the origins of the Israelite sacred cultic practices. Like any other part of Old Testament history, the cult in Yahwistic religion is not devoid of the problem of understanding, especially its character and growth. For example, whether the cult of Yahweh was anionic from the outset or it assumed its anionic character at a stage in Israelite religion remains a debatable issue in Old Testament scholarship. This issue and others are the problems encountered in the course of studying Israelite sacred cult, because the traditions about the cult of Yahweh in the Old Testament assumed their present form in the exilic or post -exilic period. In keeping with the testimony of the Scriptures, we commonly speak of Exodus (Heb-Exodus) and Leviticus (Heb. - Leviticus) as “law”, and the contents of the books of Exodus and Leviticus are taken as divine speech more obviously than any other books of the Holy Bible, for almost every section begins with “The LORD spoke to Moses”. Although God says remarkably little about himself, by his injunctions, he institutes the sacrificial ritual for the Israelites at the Temple or Tabernacle and authorizes their proper involvement with him in worship. He establishes the tabernacle as the place where he dwells with his people and blesses them.

In order to make liturgy, worship and preaching of the gospel meaningful and relevant to any group of people, they have to be carried out within the context of the people in symbols and language they will understand. In other words, whether it be teaching, preaching, evangelizing, helping or living the life, worship/liturgy must be undertaken in ways the people concerned will be able to understand and appreciate the gospel communicated in culturally relevant forms. Hence, Africans ought to be at liberty to adopt the original contents of the Scriptures for the purpose of effective communication with a target audience. While adoption implies a faithful reproduction of the original text, adaptation involves substantial modification without distorting the basic message; this work sees adaption as the only form of modification that does not provide the appropriate solution needed⁵. Contextualisation is a new term imported into theology to express a concept deeper

⁴ W. Dryness, 1979. *Theme in Old Testament Theology* Illinois: Inter-varsity Press. p. 145.

⁵ Matthew M. Umukoro, 2010. Nigerian Theatre and the Multilingual Challenge, *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* (Nos. 19 &20) 2009/2010, Ibadan : Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria p.95.

than indigenisation; that it is making concepts or ideas relevant in a given situation. The word contextualisation was first coined in 1972 by the Directors of the Theological Education Fund, Shoki Coe and Aharon Sapsezian. They created the term to be used in the areas of mission, theological approach, worship, educational method and structure. Contextualisation is not simply a fad or a catchword but a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word. It is so because contextuality is the capacity to respond meaningfully to the gospel within the framework of one's own situation. In spite of efforts and achievements made by Missionaries from Europe and America to spread Christianity extensively to Africa right from the eighteenth century, it is glaring that they would have performed better if they had allowed proper integration of the gospel within the cultural matrix. The Missionaries' insensitivity to the indigenous culture which arose from an erroneous theology of mission had bad consequences on their efforts of planting relevant churches in Africa.⁶

African Indigenous Churches realized the detrimental effects of some views on the life and mission of the established Churches. The founder of Cherubim and Seraphim Church had the mind that things must not continue the same way, and decided to adopt and contextualise some of the ancient Israelite sacred cultic practices and elements because the members find fulfilment in them, and this church had consequently seen them as useful resources for transmitting religious ideas and their similarities to the Yoruba world views.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The existing studies on ancient Israelite sacred cultic practices by scholars like Miller, Wenham, Owanikin, Davies and others have examined the activities from a liturgical point of view. And the different cultic elements and practices of ancient Israel are seen as archaic and repugnant; having insignificant liturgical value in contemporary African

⁶ The Theological Education Fund (TEF) report for year 1972, based on ministry and context, suggested that contextualisation implies all that is involved in the familiar term indigenisation which relates to traditional cultural values, but goes beyond it to take into account very seriously the contemporary factors in cultural change. It deals with all factors that constitute society and the relationship between one community and another. It is presenting the 'supracultural' message of the Gospel in culturally relevant terms. It was revealed that "the TEF leaders have strongly emphasised a new slogan of contextualisation for the third mandate period, 1972-1977 to renew their theological programmes, especially for the Third World Churches". J.N.K. Mugabi "A Fresh Look at Evangelism in Africa" in Paul W. Chilcote & Lacey C. Werner (eds) *The study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missionary Practice of the Church* p.354.

Christianity.⁷ But these studies have not adequately explored how *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan contextualised some aspects of Israelite sacred cultic elements and practices and some of the common grounds between *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church and ancient Israelite religious practices. Cultic practices like spiritual cleansing and curative baths, scapegoatism/ vicarious victim and sacred elements such as the use of holy oil, holy water, and candles, in ancient Israel as adopted and reflected in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church are seen as useless and meaningless within the ambits of the contemporary church worship⁸. The adoption of these sacred cultic practices and elements in ancient Israel by Cherubim and Seraphim church have been interpreted in negative ways by some schools of thought. Hence this work investigated the benefits and significance of these practices and elements within the socio-religious milieu of the ancient Israel and its implications for *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan. What informed the emergence of the sacred cultic elements and practices in ancient Israel? What socio-religious and psychological functions do they serve? These are some of the questions that this research tried to provide answers to.

It is an undeniable fact that some practices and elements of Israelite or Jewish religion are reflected and utilised in the activities of some Nigerian indigenous churches such as Cherubim and Seraphim Churches. These Israelites' practices in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church are seen as a continuation of Judaic religion in the garb of Christianity. However, it cannot be entirely denied that African traditional elements are incorporated into the liturgy of these indigenous churches. These elements and practices include the use of special colours and types of candles, scapegoatism, sacred preparations, known as “*Ètò Síse tàbí Ìgbélé*”, ritual cleansing such as curative baths and ceremonial cleanliness, that is the position of women during menstruation, and the use of sacred space, wilderness or power house (“*ilẹ̀ àánú*”, “*ijù*” or “*Ilé Agbára*”). Indeed African culture, tradition and cosmology have precipitated an emerging solution in contemporary Christian practice.

⁷ Patrick D. Miller, June 2003. Religion of Ancient Israel, *the Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000, p 335., G. J. Wenham, January 1985. *The New International commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Leviticus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company p p.3- 10, and D.J. Davies, 1977. “An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus” *Zaw* 89, pp.387-399.

⁸ To some people, *Yahweh* can be worshipped without these elements, after all the patriarchs worshipped *Yahweh* without these sacred elements such as candle, oil and water.

These elements and practices are also seen as an indication of syncretism in the garb of Christianity. For example, Owanikin⁹ observes that the phenomenal proliferation of indigenous churches in Nigeria has had concomitant effects of doctrinal differences, arising often times from syncretism. Therefore, the liturgical or ritual elements found in Israelite religion, appropriated in Nigeria indigenous churches portend syncretism¹⁰. What further reinforces Owanikin's submission is that, in classical Christian theology, revelation is said to be progressive. The implication of this claim in relation to the Bible is that some practices and thoughts revealed in the Old Testament have become obsolete with the coming of the New Testament. To the average Christian, therefore, some of the aspects of Old Testament or Israelite's life and cultic practices have been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ.¹¹

Christianity and Westernism are not synonymous in evangelistic vocabulary. But can we say what exists in mission-established churches in Ibadanland is Christianity that is relevant to the culture of the people or transplantations from European cult, the various ramifications of which are designated as Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Salvation Army, Assemblies of God Church, and so on?¹² Christianity among the mission - established churches in Yorùba land seems to be a European institution which has not much beneficial relevance for her members, but looks like imposition of a specific value system, what has been imposed as an engine of colonial policy by their European overlords. This researcher thinks that the aim of the religious educators or European missionaries then and now was to westernise the Yoruba, especially the Ibadan people, and not to make them Christians. A majority of the missionaries believed that Western theology had eternal validity and that the Christian faith was based on eternal, unalterable truth, which had been stated in its final form. Their ecclesiastical confessions and policies reveal and confirm this opinion.¹³

⁹ R. Owanikin, Colossians 2:18: A Challenge to some doctrines of certain Aladura Churches in Nigeria *African Journal of Biblical Studies* 1:2 April & October 1987 pp. 89 – 96.

¹⁰ R. Owanikin "Colossians 2:18: A Challenge to some doctrines of certain Aladura Churches in Nigeria" *African Journal of Biblical Studies* 1:2 (April & October 1987 pp 89 – 96.

¹¹ A.O. Dada, 2002. "Vestige of Israelites cultic practices in the activities of some Nigerian Indigenous churches" in *Papers in Honour of Takene N. Tamuno @ 70 E. Ife* (ed) (Badani: Oputuru Books. p. 55.

¹² E. Bolaji Idowu, 1965. *Towards an Indigenous Church*, Oxford University Press, London. p. 1.

¹³ Paul Hiebert, 1987. "Critical Contextualisation", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol.11, pp 104-112.

In the light of the observation above, it is pertinent to ask: do the Africans, especially Yorùbá Christians in Ibadanland, need to continue to accommodate the imposition of the white man's cult at this time that most Nigerians are wide awake to their rights? Why does Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Church contextualise some aspects of Israelite sacred cultic elements and practices in her liturgy? What are the benefits of these practices and elements in the liturgy, social and psychological lives of members of Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ìbàdàn? How does the appropriation of ancient Israelite cultic elements rituals and practices enhance the socio-religious relevance of this church? These questions were subjected to a critical and thorough assessment in the study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study attempts at putting the ancient Israelite sacred cultic practices and elements in their proper historical and cultural context, with the view to facilitating a better understanding of their adoption and application in Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Church using African context. This work investigated the characteristics of Israelite cultic practices, manifesting in Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim liturgical practices, with a view to establishing the factors responsible for the contextualisation of some Israelite sacred cultic elements and practices in her liturgy. This is to validate the need for re-contextualisation in this church and its significance in the religious life of her members. Apart from this, the work explored the existence of Israelite sacred cultic elements and practices as an attempt to worship and proclaim the Gospel in a way that is appropriate, relevant and meaningful in the context of African Indigenous Churches, especially in Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadanland. Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadan land make use of specific Israelite cultic elements and practices in order to contextualise and legitimise Christianity and to win more converts.

Africans ought to be at liberty to adopt the original contents of the Scriptures for the purpose of effective communication with a target audience. While adoption implies a faithful reproduction of the original text, adaptation involves substantial modification without distorting the basic message.¹⁴ This work sees adaption as a form of modification that does not provide the appropriate and needed solution for people of Ibadanland. Contextualisation

¹⁴ Matthew M. Umukoro, 2010. 'Nigerian Theatre and the Multilingual Challenge', *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* (Nos. 19 &20) 2009/2010, Ibadan : Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria p.95.

helps to show a particular form of culture through which God revealed His truth through Christ to different specific cultures in a particular time and place. It is not only in Christianity; both the Old Testament and the New Testament derived many of their customs and festivals from pre-Israelite or pre-Christian religions¹⁵. We must not underestimate the degree to which the Old Testament also took important elements from its religious environment, especially the Canaanite environment. Clearly, the Old Testament abolishes some of these elements and raises some of them to a higher level.¹⁶ During the post-colonial period, and under the pressure of nationalism, Africans Christians were urged to indigenise Christianity, which began with adaptation.¹⁷ This work argues that there is a need to understand the cultural plurality of the community and present the Gospel in a way that can be understood according to the forms and symbols of Africans and in every culture.

The goal of contextualisation is to integrate the Gospel message with the local culture in such a way that it is faithful to God's revelation. Hence, it provides the process and avenue by which a local Christian community integrates the Gospel message with the real-life context, blending text and context into that single, God-intended reality called Christian living.¹⁸ Therefore, critical and comprehensive contextualisation will make the communicator of the Gospel in Ibadanland to proclaim it in such a way as to set the proclamation free from the traditional Western form in which it seems repulsive to the hearers, and to present it, clothed afresh in African form, so as to appear intelligible and relevant to both Christian and non Christian hearers.¹⁹

1.4 Scope of the Study

This work did not cover the whole spectrum of the sacred cult in the ancient Israel. The thesis focused on key cultic elements and practices in ancient Israel, like the use of sacred elements such as holy water, holy oil, candles, and practices like ritual baths, ritual cleansing, and scapegoatism/ vicarious victim. Although this research is historical in

¹⁵ M. Le Roux, 2006. "Using Old Testament to Interpret Africa": *The Malagasy Religious Context* 19:2 (2006) p.451.

¹⁶ A. Wessels, 1994. *Europe: Was it ever really Christian? The interaction between Gospel and culture*, London: SCM Press, pp.

¹⁷ K. P. Hao, 1990. Inter-Contextualisation: Releasing the "Theological" frog from underneath the coconut shell. *Asia Journal of Theology* 4:33-44.

¹⁸ L. Luzbetak, 1988. *The Church and Culture*, Maryknoll: Orbis p. 134.

¹⁹ S. B. Bevans, 1992. *Model of Contextual Theology*, Maryknoll: Orbis p.112.

character, it is textually grounded in areas that deal with the elements and practices listed above. To facilitate easy coverage and thorough study, Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadanland were selected.

We are aware that there are variants of the Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadan. For a thorough and meaningful result, the work focused basically on a prominent one among these churches in Ibadan, which is *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Branch of Cherubim and Seraphim Church. This is because she ranks among the older indigenous churches or what some scholars referred to as African Instituted Churches²⁰. Also, this church offers a viable example of appropriation and contextualisation of Israelite sacred cultic elements and practices.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Africans are naturally and incurably religious; their lifestyle has shown that their belief system is centres on worship. Even before the advent of Christianity, the idea of worship is not alien to the Yorùbá, because they had an organised way of worship. Although they did not document this, they expressed the worship of God or gods in rituals, dancing, singing, dressing, shrines, drumming, idioms and philosophy²¹. Any attempt to neglect the socio-cultural context of ancient Israelite cultic practices and elements will lead to a faulty conclusion about their meaning and significance. This research helped to dispel the misconceptions some people have about ancient Israelite cultic rituals, elements and practices.

Contextualisation has enlightened the Africans that Christians can worship God through Jesus Christ within African culture. This study is unique in different ways. First, dynamic influence models are called for, this will allow the church in Yorubaland, especially in Ibadan, to develop along culturally sensitive lines, and no longer be an outreach or a colony of Rome, Canterbury, or Westminster or the vested interest of some European or American missionary boards. Second, contextualisation of Israelite sacred cultic practices by *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim church is meant to make the church in Ibadanland to worship God in a way which is compatible with their own spiritual

²⁰ D. Ayegboyin & F.K.U. Azonzeh, Taxonomy of churches in Nigeria: A Historical perspectives” in *Orita* XXXIV 1 – 2 (June: December 2002) pp 68 – 86.

²¹ John McManners, 1990. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, Oxford : Oxford University Press.p.647

temperament, that is to sing in her own way, praying to God and hearing His living Words in idioms and a language clearly intelligible to them in their context. Third, the study also investigated and stressed the need to critically and comprehensively contextualise the Christian faith in Ibadan. This was to make the liturgy, pattern, practice, missionary work and lifestyle relevant, meaningful; ensure dynamic interaction between the Holy Scripture and Yorùbá culture; and make the worshippers obedient to the commandments of Jesus Christ.

The various attempts made at contextualising the Christian faith are basically focused on issues concerning liturgy, doctrine and interpretation of biblical texts. Some churches introduced what could be described as indigenisation (not detached from foreign or Western liturgy, authority and control). But churches variously referred to as the African Indigenous Churches or African Independent or Instituted Churches introduced African elements into the liturgy of the church in Africa. *Ònà Iwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim church in Ìbàdàn is one of the churches known as African Indigenous Churches. It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that African Indigenous Churches were established by African leaders who sought to reflect African culture and ways of life in Christian worship. They sought to adapt Christianity to African culture rather than accept the foreign structures as brought to Africa by Western Missionaries.²² The church, particularly in Ibadanland, must be relevant and be contextualised and not a prefabricated structure designed specially from overseas under the lordship of the Western people, what is describes as a 'kingdom of God industry'. The European structure of the church has, to a large extent, made for spiritual sterility in her life because the church is not speaking to Nigerians in their spiritual needs; rather she speaks in strange idioms which seem unintelligible to the Yoruba, especially those in Ibadan land.²³ Some missionaries in mainline mission churches, instead of teaching true and relevant Christianity, promoted and taught white civilization and 'White Christianity' that suppresses.

Western manners that control people in daily life and even before God are presented as Christianity. For example, in mainline mission churches, at a time in history, at their baptism, they were given European or biblical names. Also, in their dressing and manners,

²² D. Ayegboyin, & U.F. K. Asonzeh, 2002. Taxonomy of Churches in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective in *Orita: Ibadan Journal of religious Studies xxxiv/1-2*, pp.68-86.

²³ E. Bolaji Idowu, 1965. *Towards an Indigenous Church*. London University press p. 15.

their models were their European benefactors; you must dress in a Western mode to be recognized as a Christian or an acceptable priest. The blacks were stripped of their customs and, in exchange, were forced into a culture they could never embrace. Makhubu says when the blacks read the Bible; they did adapt to the Western culture, and later found out that they had nothing of their own culture left.²⁴

The first converts (ex-slaves) were, to a large extent, instrumental in promoting among Nigerians the aspiration to be like Europeans in all things (liturgy, worship, speech, and so on). They and their offspring were the nuclei of the sophisticated communities that set the fashion which the generality of impressionable and admiring Nigerians sought to ape. Nigerians saw themselves as a grasshopper in their own eyes and everything, including 'usable vehicles', in their culture is bad to the white missionaries. Thus, when the missionaries came to Nigeria to teach and preach, they found ready in their hands communities of people who could be educated in every way. Bolaji avers that, "By a certain miscarriage of purpose, however, their effort succeeded not only in enlightening, but also in enslaving the mind, inasmuch as it inculcated that the only way to human dignity and full-grown personality was to be in everything like Europeans and to despise their own culture".²⁵ This action shows that Christianity arrived in Nigeria dressed up in European toga, with a corresponding disdain for African culture, a disdain which crystallized into the inability to worship in the African (Yorùbá) language and ways. In spite of the political independence of Nigeria, the way things are done in Europe and America still forms the norm and standard by which the life of the mainline churches are ordered. The church remains foreign in its own land and does not have a sense of belonging in the environment in which she lives.²⁶ Therefore, contextualising of worship, liturgy and practices appropriately by indigenous churches will be an eye opener for mainline mission churches in Ìbàdàn to re-examine their liturgy, pattern and practices in order to make them more relevant and meaningful to their members in Ìbàdàn, not just indigenisation adopted to reduce and fill the gap.

²⁴ Paul Makhubu, 1988. *Who Are the Independent Churches?*, Bramfontein: Skotaville Publishers pp. 19- 24.

²⁵ E. Bolaji Idowu, 1965. *Towards an Indigenous church* ; London University press p. 5.

²⁶ E. S. Isaiah, 2007. *Course Outline and Notes on Contextualisation of Theology Part 1 and 2 (Gospel and Culture or Doing Theology)*, Bethany International University, Singapore, Unpublished.

1.6 Research Methodology

This research employed historical- critical method, evaluative studies method, which relates the biblical text to the African context. All these fall within the ambits of qualitative method. The Old Testament text, which is the fulcrum of the study, is a text with a long history of transmission. Consequently, historical-critical methods, which take into account the different socio-cultural forces that, shaped the text until it assumed its final fixed form were used in examining the texts that have bearing on area of study. Evaluative study method, as Upkpong observes, involves “the study of the local situation in the light of Biblical witness, and the historical method is used in analysing the biblical text”²⁷. The qualitative research method was applied as the basis of the work. Qualitative research refers to research that focuses on qualities of human behaviour as well as the holistic nature of social behaviour. It looks at settings and people holistically. One of the advantages of qualitative research is that the method seeks understanding through participant observation and in-depth interviewing.²⁸

Data were gathered through in-depth interview and questionnaire administration. In-depth interview were conducted for sixty-two (62) selected leaders and members. The informal structured face-to-face interview method, referred to as micro-approach method was also employed. Interviews were tape- recorded and the tapes were later transcribed. The researcher visited selected churches of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan land, and other branches of Cherubim and Seraphim like Eternal Sacred C & S, C & S Movement *Ayò Ni O*, C & S *Òkè Ìgbàlà Agbó Jèsù*, C & S, Shiloh. This made it possible to observe and gain first-hand experience of adoption, contextualisation and appropriation of Israelite cultic elements and practices in their liturgy and practices in all eleven local governments in *Ìbàdàn*. Participant observation and in-depth interviewing go hand in hand. The main differences between them reside in the setting and situation; participant observation entails natural field study, a first-hand experience of a social world. Participant

²⁷ J.S. Upkpong, 1999:”Can African Old Testament scholarship escape the historical critical approach”? *Newsletter on African Old Testament Scholarship*” Vol. 7 .p.13

²⁸ S.J. Taylor & R. Bogdan, 1984. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings* New York: John Wiley. p.53.

observation provides a yardstick against which to measure data collected through interviewing and vice versa.²⁹

Four hundred (400) copies of a questionnaire were administered purposively to selected founders, ministers- in- charge, church leaders of various groups and members in selected Cherubim and Seraphim churches. Three hundred and twenty seven (327) copies were retrieved. This questionnaire was given out to the selected headquarters and branch churches of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim and other branches of Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadanland; administered to seven founders, 30 clerics, 88 heads of groups and 202 members in 28 branches across all the local government areas in Ibadanland.

The data collected were descriptively and exegetically analysed, while quantitative data were subjected to percentages and rating was used for calculation and interpretation, following the formula below:

$$N/TN \times 100/1$$

N stands for number of respondents

TN represents total number of respondents per statement

Theoretical Framework

In this research, evaluative studies, an offshoot of Adamo's African cultural hermeneutics, served as the theoretical framework. African cultural hermeneutics is rereading the scripture from a premeditatedly Africentric perspective.³⁰

This has a place in the history of contextualisation in Christian faith among indigenous churches, looking at the mode, methods and benefits derived from it. The purpose is not only to understand the Bible and God in African experience and culture, but also to break the hermeneutical hegemony and ideological stranglehold that Eurocentric Biblical scholars have long enjoyed³¹.

²⁹ S.J. Taylor & R. Bogdan, 1984. *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for Meanings* New York: John Wiley. p.83.

³⁰ David T. Adamo, 2005. *Explorations in African Biblical Studies*. Benin: Justice Jeco Press & Publishers Ltd. PP 7-11.

³¹ J. Mouton & H.C. Marais 1988, "The Philosophy of qualitative Research" in *Introduction to qualitative Research Methods* Pretoria: H 5RC. pp. 31-44.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITRATURE

This chapter focuses on review of some books and articles that contain information about Israelite cultic elements and practices in ancient Israel. This will be related to contextualisation in Cherubim and Seraphim Church, in particular *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ìbàdàn.

2.1 The cult in Israelite Religion

The word sacred cult means the act of worshipping the LORD, and it does not have any negative connotation, unlike the way it is understood in our society today. *Cultus* has been described as a term used for the format and ritual aspects of worship, while the cult is the visible expression of faith. This places the cult in an important position in Israelite religion because the *cultus* embodied the faith of Israel. Dryness terms cultus as “the rehearsal of God’s mighty deeds; therefore, it is God’s self-disclosure of the past, which was “an appropriation of the past, and the dramatic conveyance of meaning in the present, and brought past and present into the immediate continuum of identity which it appropriated in anticipation the future of the people of God and the history of God”.¹

The Grolier International Dictionary (Volume one) defines cultic as” a system or community of religious worship and ritual, especially one focusing upon a single deity or spirit, observing devotion or veneration for a person, principle or ideal”.² *New Webster’s Dictionary* defines cultic as, “a system of religious worship, especially with reference to its rites and ceremonies; a sect adhering to a common ideology, or doctrine or leader especially when such adherence or devotion is based on fanatical beliefs or dogma, wherein an instance of fixed, almost religious veneration for a person or thing especially by a body of admirers”.³

These two definitions capture what the worship life of ancient and present orthodox Israelite Jews look like. Their act of worship is a type of worship that focuses on rites and ceremonies, adhering strictly to a common fanatical belief that admire Moses, with

¹ Dryness William, 1979. *Themes In Old Testament Theology* Illinois: Intervarsity Press, p. 145.

² William Morris, Neil Hardy & Co, 1987. *The Grolier International Dictionary Vol.1*; Houghton: Muffling Company, Danbury, p. 321.

³ F. K. Dana, 1974. *New Webster’s Dictionary of the English language, Consolidated Book Publishers*, Chicago, Illinois, p 385.

eneration for Yahweh through the ceremonial laws that defined how Israel was to worship God. Eichrodt says *cultus* is not only the inwardly necessary expression of spiritual realities by means of the physical, but also the medium by which divine power is presented to men for their participation. It is glaring; therefore, that *cultus* implies a social and material integration of religious feeling as the manifestation of the divine activity.⁴

Dada opines that the worship of Yahweh dates back to antiquity and the exact time the worship of Yahweh began remains a serious contention in Old Testament scholarship.⁵ In the opinion of some scholars like Taylor, the worship of Yahweh started with the patriarchs. Others claim that it started with Moses. A school of thought claims that the worship of Yahweh by the patriarchs might be a backward projection of Israel's later faith.⁶ Some set of traditions in the Pentateuch claim that the beginning of the cult of Yahweh dates back to the wanderings in the wilderness by the Exodus group. Then the Israelites had a tent as a sanctuary. This tent in Hebrew language is called *ohel Mo'ed*, the tent of re-union, or of meeting, the place where they believed Yahweh talked with Moses. Whichever position anyone takes, the worship of Yahweh is central in Israelite belief-system, and it is acclaimed that the traditions about the cult of Yahweh in the Old Testament assumed their acceptable form in the exilic or post - exilic period. Hinson says that some scholars believe that Ex. 34:14 -26 comes from the time when the Israelites were at Mt Sinai.

They believe that these verses give the original form of the Ten Commandments and call these verses the 'Cultic Decalogue' because they are chiefly concerned with the 'cult' or ritual worship of God. They believe that these verses were written earlier than the 'Ethical Decalogue' recorded in Ex. 20 which is chiefly concerned with people's behaviour toward God and one another.⁷ A wide variety of archeological discoveries added some important information to the historical record of Israel's culture. The data provided shows how the religion and liturgy of Israel experienced changes. This has produced four major changes in scholarly perspectives. Early Israel initially witnessed a spectrum of religious worship that

⁴ Walter Eichrodt, 1961. *Theology of the Old Testament volume one Translated by J.A. Baker*, Great Britain: SCM Press Ltd. p. 99.

⁵ A. O. Dada, 2002. *Vestige of Israelite cultic practices in the Activities of some Nigerians Indigenous Churches Papers in honour of Tekena Tamuno @ 70* Ibadan: Oputuru Books p. 57.

⁶ G. H. Parker Taylor, 1975. *Yahweh: The Divine Name in The Bible* Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University Press, p.145.

⁷ D. F. Hinson, 1990. *History of Israel, Old Testament Introduction 1* Revised edition, London: Hollen Street press Ltd. Slough, Berks p.69.

included the cults of various Canaanite deities. Inscriptional and Biblical evidence reflects the overwhelming religious hegemony of Yahweh for nearly all periods of Israelite history. The most significant change involves Israel's cultural identity. That Israelite culture largely overlapped with and derived from Canaanite cultures, that is, the Israelite culture was largely Canaanite in nature. In early Israel, the cult of Yahweh generally held sway but Israelites religion apparently included worship of Yahweh, El, Asherah and Baal. "The shape of this religious spectrum in early Israel changed due in large measure to two major developments; the first was convergence and the second was differentiation".⁸

Israelite monolatry developed through conflict and compromise between the cults of Yahweh and other deities. During the period of the Judges and the first half of the monarchical government, there was convergence, which involved the coalescence of various deities and some of their features were absorbed into the Yahwistic religion of Israel. This process of absorption is evident in the poetic compositions considered by a number of scholars to be the oldest stratum of Israel's literature.⁹ The second major development involved differentiation of Israelite cult from its Canaanite heritage. This development began first with the rejection of Baal worship in the ninth century, continued in the eighth to sixth centuries with legal and prophetic condemnations of Baal worship, the Asherah, solar worship, the high places and other religious features. Indeed, "the two major developments of convergence and differentiation shaped the contours of the distinct monotheism that Israel practised and defined in the Exile following the final days of the Judean monarchy".¹⁰

The period of monarchy produced the conditions for the gradual development of monotheism, but monarchy fostered the inclusion of various deities or their features in the cult of Yahweh, particularly by King Solomon. The monarch built up the development leading to the eventual emergence of monotheism. The Judean monarchy generally maintained a special relationship with Yahweh and He was taken to be the national God. This is why Israelite service focused and was regarded only on Yahweh in the monarchical period. It eventually developed into a notion of universal service to Yahweh. Since the

⁸ B. Halpern Brisker, 1987. *Pipes Than Poetry: The Development of Israelite Monotheism in Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* ed. J. Neusner, B.A. Levine and E.S. Frerichs ,Philadelphia: Fortress, p. 88.

⁹ F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, 1975. *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry*, SBLDS 76 Missoula, MT. Scholars p. 100-103.

¹⁰ H. Gottlieb and Morton Smith, 1971. *Palestinian Parties and Politics that shaped the Old Testament* New York: Columbia University Press p. 21-22.

discovery of the Ugaritic texts early in the twentieth century, scholars have intensely examined the relationship of the early Israelite cult to its antecedents in Syro-Palestine. Most of the information available shows that, until recently, many followed the masterful synthesis of Albright, who holds that Israelite religion, from the start, rejected the Canaanite deities and demanded exclusive loyalty to one God, Yahweh. The normative Israelite cult, in this view, struggled against Canaanite syncretistic influence in "popular" circles, and gradually the monolatry of early Yahwism developed into fully expressed monotheism by the exilic period.¹¹

Through the work of Smith a new critical consensus has emerged. Smith and his colleague reached this view of early Israelite religion by means of conventional historical-critical methods. Smith suggests that comparative work in collective memory studies will help to explain the conflicted quality of biblical Israel's relationship to its past. According to this view, early Israelite worship included Yahweh along with El, Asherah, Baal, and other divinities attested in extra-biblical sources, especially the Ugaritic texts. Through "convergence and differentiation," in Smith's terms, some features of these pre-Israelite gods merged with the figure of Yahweh, others were rejected as Canaanite. Thus, at Israel's origin there was no Mosaic monotheism, unlike how Albright conceives it. Moreover, in order to embrace the monotheism that took shape later in the biblical period, it was necessary for Israel to re-interpret or to suppress the memory of its own polytheistic beginnings.

This shows that the religion of the Israelites was polytheistic in nature at the inception and it took certain processes by which the religion moved toward monotheism by forgetting its polytheistic origin. Smith traces, in detail, the emergence of the monotheistic idea. He maintains that the earliest Israelite cult centred on a divine royal household ordered like the Ugaritic pantheon. And the head of this household was El and his consort Asherah. Baal, Yahweh, and other deities held a secondary rank. By the monarchic period, the national divinity, Yahweh (now Yahweh-El), became king of the gods, still accompanied by Asherah; the sun, moon, and astral deities held a secondary rank. Eventually, the perspective advanced by the Deuteronomists and others, in which Yahweh alone headed the cult and the other figures were suppressed, with the exception of divine messengers and servants

¹¹ S. M. Smith, 2004. *Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis : Fortress. p. 189.

prevailed.¹² The central point here is that both “cultural memory and amnesia are at work in the emergence of Israel’s monotheistic faith. The development of the Sinai tradition is a key illustration. Originally, a minor element, the Sinai revelation is eventually enshrined in cultural memory (and Scripture) as the most important event. Sinai, “mountain above all others,” looms over every religious site.

Centuries of religious innovation from the monarchic, exilic, and post-exilic periods are transposed back onto the foundational setting of Sinai, transforming it from a commemoration of sole worship of Yahweh (Ex. 20:3) to the basis for denying the reality of other gods. In actual fact, there were other gods at the beginning of Israelite religious history, but they fell to collective amnesia. The original distinction of Yahweh and El faded, Baal largely converges with Yahweh, and Asherah was excluded. The divine household diminished, and elements of earlier Israelite cultic practice were projected onto the essential biblical Order.¹³

Smith’s work shows one of the memorable processes, that is, the Sinai experience, through which Yahweh gave specific instructions on how to worship only one true God, which is known as ceremonial laws, through which Israel made covenant of monotheistic religion, to worship only Yahweh. Both ceremonial and moral laws were given on Mt. Sinai – Lev. 7 :38, 25:1 26 :46, 27 :34 cf Ex. 19; 24 :12 -18. These God’s laws, especially the Ten Commandments, are spoken of as the Law of Moses written in a book as well as on stones. Many terms are used to apply to both, such as the Law , my law (Ps. 89 :30- 31, Hos. 8 :12-13), the law of the LORD, the book of the law of Moses, the law of God, the statues, ordinances, and so on.

John quoted Watts who claims that Israel, like her neighbours of that period, thought and practised worship purely in terms of ritual or cult. An Israelite believes that he must follow some specific God-given rules in worshipping God. He must worship God at specific holy or sacred places, through the use of definite holy objects, like stones, trees, pillars and altars; with the help and leadership of certain holy men of God, like priests and prophets, in definite holy ways, worshipping through sacrifices and rituals; and at fixed holy days or

¹² S. M. Smith, 2004, *Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis: Fortress. p. 288.

¹³ S. M. Smith, 2001., a leading authority on the ancient Ugaritic literature and the history of Israelite religion in its West Semitic context, has written two important studies of the emergence of biblical monotheism: *The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2nd ed., 2002), and *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts*.

periods, festivals, Sabbaths, atonement day and so on, in obedience to God's instructions as given to Moses at Sinai. Therefore to him, Israelite worship "is perforce to consider ritual behaviour and intention, based on three basic elements, which are something done, depicted and uttered."¹⁴

Poythress avers that cultic practices in worship as recorded in the book called Leviticus, which was sequel to Exodus for the Levitical sacrificial system and found in the life of the Israelites, was a divine revelation given by God through Moses as a part of the covenant obligation at Sinai. This was instituted for a people redeemed from servitude in Egypt and in a covenant relationship with their God, putting much emphasis on ceremonial holiness, wherein persons, animals, or objects are set apart from profane use or cultic pollution for the service of God. Under the Law, sacrifice was given by God as the only sufficient means for the Israelites to remain in harmonious fellowship with Him. But it is observed that these sacrifices were limited in their moral efficacy and not a complete and final scheme whereby all forms of sin could be removed because a truly acceptable sacrifice must have been prompted by genuine faith and moral obedience to the revealed will of God.¹⁵

According to Campbell, the ritual act and sacrifices were limited in scope and purpose, but their spiritual value at that time was pedagogical, in teaching Israel about the right way to approach a holy God as shown in the book of Exodus "and Jehovah called unto Moses, and spoke unto him out of the tent of meeting". The book of Exodus ends with the story of the covering cloud; and there is really no break between the close of that book, and the beginning of Leviticus. The book of Leviticus deals with the first half of the second part of the message of Exodus, having to do with worship. Therefore, the contents of the two books are interwoven and closely knitted. Leviticus focuses primarily on the formal worship of Israel, that is, on regulations concerning the priesthood, sacrifices, and ritual purity and so on.¹⁶ These rituals commanded by the Lord in Leviticus were used as visual aids to portray the Lord as the only Holy God and to emphasize that fellowship with Him must be on the basis of atonement for sin and obedient living. Likewise, the LORD's instruction to the

¹⁴ D. W. John, October 1966-JUSTOR 2000-2007, "Elements of Old Testament Worship" *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July, 1958) pp217-221.

¹⁵ S. V. Poythress, 1991. *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*, Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. pp. 6-18.

¹⁶ M. G. Campbell, 1993. *Student Survey of the Bible*, Iowa Falls: AMG- World Bible Publishers. Inc, p. 26.

Israelites through Moses, which Lindsey refers to, is not the way of salvation, but the way of fellowship. They are to teach God's people on how to worship and give thanks in fellowship and how to restore that fellowship when it is broken by sin.

No doubt, the Levitical sacrifices were efficacious both for restoring the covenant relationship and for the actual forgiveness of specific sins, but this efficacy was derivative, needing to be validated by the once all - sufficient sacrifice of Christ on the cross of Calvary. This researcher feels that there is sense in what Finto's claim that these Laws in the life of Israel then were intended to point to the one who would give them righteousness by faith, since they have no merit in God's sight by works of flesh and laws, but are saved and accepted as righteous when they receive by faith the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. The different cultic offerings symbolized truths of what worship and fellowship involved for Israel. They typify for us today many aspects of Christ's offering, as He became the archetype for all offerings. The researcher is of the opinion that without these explanations in Leviticus, New Testament believers cannot fully grasp the meaning of Christ's death on the cross of Calvary. The underlying teachings are "possibility of restored approach to God and the priesthood was that by which it was possible for man to appropriate the provision".¹⁷

Augustine rejects the historicity of the patriarchs and their religion. He argues that the patriarchal traditions were retrogressions, dating from the Monarchical period. Alt's essay 'Der Gott der Väter' marks a watershed in the study of patriarchal religion. In this essay, he argues both for a patriarchal religion distinct from Mosaic religion and for the possibility of its originating during or at just before the settlement of Israelite clans in Canaan. While many scholars have continued to argue against the historicity of the patriarchs, a number of scholars, in the light of Ugaritic and other archaeological discoveries, have followed Alt in arguing for a distinct patriarchal religion before the Mosaic period.¹⁸ Orthodox or normative belief describes the primary features of Yahwism, including exclusive worship of Yahweh, means to communicate with God, and places to meet him, actions that reflect obedience to God's instructions, and so on.

¹⁷ M. G. Campbell, 1993. *Student Survey of the Bible*, Iowa Falls: AMG- World Bible Publishers. Inc, p. 27.

¹⁸ Augustine Pagolu, 1995. *Patriarchal Religion as Portrayed In Genesis 12-50: Comparison With Ancient Near Eastern And Later Israelite Religions* unpublished Ph.D. thesis; in the Open University, p 2.

Heterodox Yahwism grows out of features that seem to be in conflict with some aspects of orthodoxy. For example, diverse cultic objects, such as plaque-type figurines, seem to have been incorporated at various sites, coming into favour and going out of favour at different times, if the archaeological evidence is interpreted correctly, but they were not approved by normative Yahwism. Biblical support for changing viewpoints on cultic practice may be seen in the rise and fall of "high places" or in varying attitudes towards the consultation of the dead (compare 1 Sam. 28 with Isa. 8:19). Why these elements arose in Israel is difficult to determine. "Syncretistic Yahwism" receives specific attention by the prophets (see especially Ezek. 8). Representative elements of syncretism include the worship of Baal, worship of the "Queen of Heaven," and children sacrifice. Miller provides plausible explanations for these elements from biblical and comparative evidences.¹⁹

Miller's study of ancient Israelite religion fits nicely between the detailed. The two-volume work of Albright provides a carefully argued examination and reconstruction of ancient Israel's religion in light of the growing material findings of archaeology, current understandings of religious practices from biblical texts, and recent studies of ancient iconography and comparative Semitics.²⁰ Many studies of the religion of Israel emphasize one area of evidence with disregard for others. One study might focus on comparative evidence to such an extent that the biblical record is neglected. Miller strikes a balance of extra-biblical and biblical evidences. He outlines issues with great care, weighing the strengths and the weaknesses. He tries not to go beyond the evidence and is quick to observe when consensus is not available, although this may prove frustrating to the reader. He affirms that Yahweh sits at the centre of Israelite religion.²¹

Moreover, the nature of the patriarchs' involvement in their cultic practices bears no comparison to that of the Ancient Near East or Israel. The patriarchs are described as engaging in these cultic practices in order to maintain their religious piety. There is a consistent portrayal of these practices as being distinctive to their religion and lifestyle. In the Ancient Near East, altars were not built by individuals, but were largely restricted to

¹⁹ Patrick D. Miller, June 2003. "Religion of Ancient Israel", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox 2000.p 335.

²⁰ P.D. Miller, 2003. *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, and the introductory treatment of Susan Niditch *Ancient Israelite Religion*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000 p. 55.

²¹ Patrick D. Miller, June 2003. "Religion of Ancient Israel", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox. 2000. p.336.

organised or popular cults at sanctuaries where priests presided. Similarly, planting trees or raising pillars in order to worship God was explicitly prohibited in latter Israel, yet the writers of Pentateuch, in spite of their Yahwistic ethos, portray these patriarchal practices as unexceptionable and even approved by God.

Prayer, vow making and purificatory rituals were common and occur within the family in ancient Israel, which later largely took place at sanctuaries with the aid of the priests, and were regulated by detailed legislation. In the patriarchal narratives, by contrast, the patriarchs themselves officiated, and there was no legislation relating to any of these practices. Thus there emerged a pattern peculiar to patriarchal religion. In the Ancient Near East and Israel, worship was highly organised, with an established cult and cultic personnel, and with the occasion, purpose and procedures of sacrifices elaborately prescribed. By contrast, the patriarchal cultic practices were informal, with no fixed cult place or cult personnel and with no prescribed sacrifices or procedures. Patriarchal altars were usually outside the settled communities and probably distinct from their public shrines.

The occasions for their sacrifices were prompted by theophany, relocation, covenant and guidance. Unlike in the Ancient Near East and Israel, they had no festivals or sacrifices for healing or for battle. The purpose of patriarchal sacrifice is less clear, although it seems mainly to have been for worship, and occasionally for the fulfillment of vows or for thanksgiving. Similarly, prayer in the patriarchal narratives occurs in the family and other informal contexts, unlike in the Ancient Near East and, to a large extent, Israel. Prayer is preserved entirely as conversation between the patriarchs and God. The intercession of Abraham is the most telling example of this. Thus, the content, setting and theology of prayer in the patriarchal narratives are distinct from that of both the Ancient Near East and Israel. The range of problems for which the Ancient Near East and Israel approached the deity are surprisingly lacking in the patriarchal narratives, in that there is no prayer for sin and guilt, oppression by enemies or abandonment by the deity, although the patriarchs experienced all these problems. Another distinctive aspect of patriarchal prayer is the prayer of blessing which is never cultic, unlike the case in the Ancient Near East.

One of the most distinctive features of patriarchal religion is the raising of pillars by Jacob. These pillars were unique, in that they signified theophanies, worship and commemoration of God and an establishment of a contractual bond with him. Pillars were

strongly condemned in later Israel. In the Ancient Near East they were not attested as being raised in response to theophanies but were found only in cultic areas or were promised by the devotees. The patriarchs' practices of vow making and purificatory rites were similarly distinct, and compatible only with their lifestyle and worship.

The ideas of purity and defilement attested in the patriarchal narratives are compatible with patriarchal lifestyle and religion, and are unlike those attested in the Ancient Near East and Israel. Although death, burial and mourning customs are frequently attested, they gave little or no significance, in contrast to their paramount importance in the priestly system. The only time the concepts occur with any religious importance is in the Jacob stories, in Genesis chapter 35. But they do not have the same import as in the Priestly texts. Their background is to be sought in the Ancient Near East, where purification is often called for before approaching a holy place and foreign gods are carefully buried to affirm loyalty to one's own god. That Jacob was following such practice is demonstrated from his own experience at Bethel, in Paddan-aram and at Shechem. Therefore, Jacob's practice is distinct from Israel's. In some aspects, it is also distinct from Ancient Near East practices, because the place where Jacob went to meet with God had no organized cult or priest. Acting by himself, he called for purification, buried the idols and other tokens of foreign gods. On arrival at the holy place he built an altar, offered sacrifices and worshipped God.

Thus, the patriarchal religious practices are compatible with their worship pattern and their belief in a family God who went along with them wherever they went. Their worship and religious practices are distinct from both those of Ancient Near East and Israel, although they reflect elements of the latter at several points. The patriarchal religion is family oriented, clan -based and compatible with the semi-nomadic lifestyle of the patriarchs. Thus, the Pentateuch's account of patriarchal religion is feasible, and not likely to be a product of later imagination. Likewise, the patriarchs appear not only to be living as aliens in the land, but also as aliens to the indigenous cult. Their social and political relations with the native inhabitants were usually harmonious, but only on the basis that they were still aliens. This means that their ethnic difference made them distinct as much as their religious practices did. This probably had a great effect on their religious observances. The problem of religious syncretism became an issue only after Israel had claimed the land as her own and wanted to become like the native inhabitants. But this does not seem to have

been a problem for the patriarchs. Their religion was probably less syncretistic than that of Israel at other periods.

Miller examines family religion with its personal and social deity, sacred areas or shrines, festivals, and practices. Local and regional cults came about when families joined together to worship as a larger community. Some sanctuaries and cult places excavated may have witnessed the worship of Baal or other deities, but they may also reflect a heterodox or syncretistic worship of Yahweh. Larger community worship often revolved around the whole of Israel coming together for one of the festivals at a central shrine and eventually focused in Jerusalem and the temple. Miller's explanations of these aspects in various biblical texts draw from scholarly consensus, often aided by the viewpoints of his teacher, Frank Cross.²² He further describes Israel's system of sacrifices and offerings. In his definitions and descriptions, he weaves a careful path through diverse interpretations. After examining the main kinds of offerings and sacrifices, Miller attempts to place them in a conceptual framework.

He portrays them as serving a social purpose (support and welfare), a concern for order and restoration from disorder (clean from unclean and so on), a sacred ritual (flesh and blood), and a concern for community and solidarity (food and gift). Miller shows that no explanation of Israel understanding of offerings and sacrifices explains the complexity, but he suggests that the idea of a "gift" to God is central. The trend toward ritualism is obvious in the history of sacrifice in Israel. In early times, sacrifice was a joyful fellowship meal (Judg. 13:16ff), but in Leviticus, sacrifice, such as scapegoatism, has become an elaborate priestly function whose prime purpose was the atonement of sin.

Wenham opines that Leviticus, for instance chapter 17:1-9, simply assumes that all sacrifices and cultic practices must be offered in the tabernacle. But according to most of the critical scholars, the tabernacle and the cult described in Leviticus are projections into Mosaic past of the temple in Jerusalem. The writer of Leviticus just took it for granted that all sacrifices will take place in the tabernacle, which is the temple. The fact that he needed to

²² Patrick D. Miller, June 2003. "Religion of Ancient Israel", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000, editor Hagan, G. Michael p.336.

underline the point shows that Josiah's centralization measures had been universally accepted, having taken place a long time ago.²³

Although the prophets spoke words of rejection against the sacrifices and offerings of Israel, it was not because they needed to abandon the sacrificial system or cultic practices, but because the people had failed to obey the requirements of the Law in terms of moral life and justice. Miller also looks at holiness and purity. He avers that the holiness of Yahweh was supposed to be reflected in the life of Israel, but it ended with cultic participation. He has often personally viewed specific artifacts to determine his understanding. In addition, he is a clear communicator who spells out all sides of possible interpretations. Even though his historical reconstructions that provide the framework for his topical discussions in the book are themselves based on questionable reconstructions of biblical traditions, his approach is conservative, compared to many interpreters in this area. This treatment is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the religion of Israel, especially the Cultic practices.

Leviticus is borrowed from the Latin Vulgate translation, which in turn, had adapted it from the Septuagint, the early Greek version of the Pentateuch. Leviticus means "matters pertaining to the Levites". Nevertheless the title seems to be misleading because the book also deals with many issues relating to purity, holiness, the sanctity of God and holiness in everyday life. The material in Leviticus is, for the most part, clearly and logically arranged. The first sixteen chapters of Leviticus focus almost exclusively on Israel's priestly responsibilities. By preserving her purity, these laws enable her to remain in contact with God and witness to His presence in the world. The remaining chapters focus on the demand for national holiness.²⁴ It is a book of laws set within a narrative framework. Therefore, Leviticus is more than a description of past historical events and more than a collection of dated laws. It tells us about God's character and will, which found expression in his dealings with Israel and in the laws He gave them. For Christians, there are insights that are still valid and relevant. But the theology of Leviticus can hardly be discussed in isolation from other books of the Pentateuch. Wenham claims that it would be wrong to describe Leviticus simply as a manual for priests because it is equally, if not more, concerned with the role the

²³ G. J. Wenham, January 1985. *The New International commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Leviticus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 10.

²⁴ G. J. Wenham, January 1985. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Leviticus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company p. 3.

laity should play in worship, regulations of what the layman should sacrifice, telling him or her when to go to the temple, what to bring and relationship with neighbours.

The theology of Leviticus and Exodus can be summarised under four main headings, viz the presence of God, holiness, the role of sacrifice and the Sinai covenant. God is always present with Israel in a real way. In short, the enduring presence of God is one of the theological presuppositions running through the whole book. God is present not only in worship, but at all times, even in the mundane duties of life. This is why the whole of man's life is expected to live in the presence of God. The recurring refrain in sections like Lev. 18:2ff and 19:3-4 remind the Israelites that every aspect of their life, including religion, sex, relations with neighbours and so forth should glorify God.

Christians should have it in mind that God's presence is made known through incarnation. Every Christian is a temple, for the Holy Spirit in which God is to be glorified. Like Old Testament temple, the Christian enjoys the permanent presence of the spirit, every Christian ought to be filled with the Spirit and live a life that displays God's glory to the world.

Uncleanliness results from natural causes such as disease, or through human actions, such as sinful acts. The Israelites, through the laws received, realised that everything was clean or unclean, holy or common. This is saying that what is not holy is common and common things divide into two groups, - the clean and the unclean. This is why different degrees of uncleanness require different cleansing rituals. Chapters like 13, 14 and 15 show this. This insistence on ritual cleansing and purification of the unclean is a corollary of the idea that Israel, her camp, and especially the temple, are holy. Holiness characterises God himself and all that belongs to him. Therefore, anyone or anything given to God becomes holy. Holiness or purity is not simply acquired by ritual action alone. This is why Leviticus stresses the two aspects of sanctification, a divine act and human actions. To demonstrate holiness, man must keep the law (Lev. 19: 2ff). According to Davies, Israelite cultic practices were concerned with restoring the relationships between God and Israel, and between different members of the nation.²⁵ The Sinai covenant had created a fellowship characterised by life and order, harmony between God and man and between man and man. According to Leviticus, sacrificial blood is necessary to cleanse and sanctify. It can also

²⁵ D.J. Davies, 1977. "An Interpretation of Sacrifice in Leviticus" *Zaw* 89, pp.387-399.

remove the effects of sin and human infirmity and capable of reversing the disease or sin that can lead to profaning of the holy person.²⁶

The contact between the holy and the unclean can result in death. Where the uncleanness caused by sin was left unatoned for by ritual or sacrifice, like scapegoatism, death may occur. Pentateuch records a number of incidents where the enormity of the sin led to instant judgement (Ex. 32: 25-35, Lev. 10). Those who refused to undergo the appropriate decontamination procedures endangered themselves and the whole community. In some situations, the death of animal in some way, substituted for the death of the guilty person. This is what it is “to make atonement” *Kipper*. To make atonement may be derived from Hebrew word *Koper*, meaning “ransom price”. Literally it is to pay a ransom for one’s life, family or community. In short different degrees of uncleanness require different cleansing ritual. For example, the slight uncleanness due to sexual intercourse required the couple to wash and wait till the evening for the uncleanness to clear. Menstrual discharge results in an uncleanness lasting seven days , while those healed of unclean skin diseases have to wash, and then wait for seven days, before they can offer required sacrifice (Chapters 14 and 15).²⁷

The theology of Leviticus and Exodus links the idea of holiness to everyday life. It goes beyond the issue of sacrifice. The sacrificial worship and the work of the priests are explained with caution and great care. The concept of holiness affects not only the relationship that the individual has with Yahweh, but also the relationship of love and respect that everyone should have for his or her neighbour. The code of holiness permeates the work because each individual must be pure even as Yahweh himself is pure. The purity of every one is the foundation of the holiness of the entire covenant community. It is noteworthy that the teaching of Jesus Christ in Matt. 7:12 reflects the content of Lev. 19:18. From the foregoing, it is clear that the practices, elements, actions and events of Israel are seen as symbols of spiritual realities, and as being prophetic of things and happenings of the future, in both the spiritual and natural realms. Due to heavy emphasis upon symbolism, it is good to keep in mind the fact that the people and events of the Bible actually took place in the real world, among real people.

²⁶ Philip R. Davies, 2005. *In Search of 'Ancient Israel'*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press p.166.

²⁷ G. J. Wenham, 1985. *The International Commentary on the Old Testament the book of Leviticus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B, Eerdmans Publishing company. p. 25.

Some scholars believe that every detail of these ancient rituals had some inner, mysterious, allegorical meaning, which became ultimately clear and realized in Christ. This work opines that the ritual system established by Moses was an unparalleled gift of God, which the researcher sees as a peculiar revelation of the divine will to the Israelites. Although Mosaic ritual is regarded today as the least distinctive element in the religion of Israel and we are overwhelmed with genuine parallels from so-called “primitive” religion everywhere. We must avoid looking only at the externals of the ancient Israelite practices and customs. Rather, we need to take cognizance of the inner meaning too. We must be watchful in the way some scholars today interpret the contents of these books, because there is need to understand a few general principles and read their content with instructed imaginations. This will make their contents to be alive and relevant to ordinary Christians and priests today.

The cultic practices found in Leviticus were actually practised in Israel, while some are still in practice till today among the orthodox Jews. Examples include the observance of Sabbath day, just like in the time of Moses; and using the Ark of the Covenant. Another one is having special Rabbi praying for the nation of Israel at Wailing Wall twenty four-hours of the day. Even Jews and foreigners or pilgrims (including Africans, Europeans, Americans, and Asians) do visit the place for special prayers, inserting all sorts of prayer requests written on small pieces of paper inside the various holes inside the Wailing Wall. The researcher personally experienced this in March 2006 and December 2010 in the city of Jerusalem (see the photograph in the appendix).

These practices and events reveal spiritual truths to the adherents, because they provide temporary solutions to some of their problems and speak of the future in some cases. But the institution has already served its purpose and seems not too relevant to the Africans context. We must try to understand the law and ceremonial instructions given to Moses on its own terms, within its own historical context and environment. God intended it to be heard and understood by Israelites who had just been redeemed from Egypt, where she had witnessed people worshipping other gods. The orthodox Jew’s veneration for the Mosaic institute made the majority of the Jews to reject Christianity altogether. The same principle operated in a malignant manner on the minds of many people who were induced to

embrace the Jewish religion and some of their cultic practices. This work shows the imperfection of this religion today for salvation of mankind.

Jesus Christ came and established a new covenant between man and God through his death on the cross of Calvary. He was the perfect sacrifice, served as the ideal high priest, and manifested the presence of God, thus replacing the temple and all forms of cultic practices. This institution was free from all defects of the old. Even the theologians acknowledge that the laws relating to the formal worship apparatus of Israel, like sacrifice of animals in different formats and levels, are no longer applicable to Christian worship today.²⁸ Yet some of these practices have significance and benefits to members of African Indigenous Churches.

2.2 Contextualisation in African Indigenous Churches

Peel opines that the “Aladura Movement in Western Nigeria” came into existence in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. He further claims that the Aladura Movements evolved a true Christian tradition that was wholly African.²⁹ Ayegboyin and Ishola assert that, beginning from the nineteenth century to the present day, a number of indigenous churches, independent of the mission churches have emerged in Africa. Owing to their diversity, it is not easy to have a common name for them all. They have various names, such as Separatist, Ethiopian, Spiritual, Aládúrà and Pentecostal. They also itemise the factors responsible for the formation of these African Indigenous Churches, some of which are nationalist feelings, desire to indigenise the Christian faith in Africa, the need for a purer form of Christianity, and the need to exercise gifts of leadership.³⁰ However much as their work is insightful, it does not dwell much on the need for contextualisation in Africa.

African indigenous churches refer to peoples in cultures borrowing elements from Christianity and incorporating them into their own religious structures. Indigenisation or Africanisation of Christianity is the attempt by Africans to redress their cultural heritage which Christianity tends to erode. The religious nationalist writers, like Adrian Hastings,

²⁸ Akin Omoyajowo, 1982. *Cherubim and Seraphim, the History of an African Independent Church*, Lagos: NOK Publishing pp.3- 8.

²⁹ J.D.Y. Peel, 1977. *The Aladura Movement in Western Nigeria in Tarikh: Christianity in Modern Africa Vol.3 No. 1(eds.) S. Osoba and O. Ikime* London : Longman pp.48-55.

³⁰ D. Ayegboyin. and S. A. Ishola, 1997. *African Indigenous Churches: A Historical Perspective*, Lagos : Great Heights pp31-35.

Geoffrey Parrinder and Iwe Nwachukwu, see the indigenisation of Christianity as an attempt by Africans to adopt Christianity and make it more appealing to their cultural and traditional environment.³¹

The defenders of the faith, known as Christian apologists, such as Paunw and Molet, refer to Indigenisation of Christianity as syncretism and heresy which must be condemned in all its ramifications. But the religious analysts, like Laroche and Calvin Rieber, are more critical and analytical in their approach. They see indigenisation or Africanisation of Christianity objectively.³² According to Baillie “Theological ideas are created on the Continent of Europe, corrected in Great Britain and corrupted in America”. In the past, many communicators of the Good News have often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communication, while some were so insensitive to the cultural thoughts, patterns and behaviours of the people they are leading, teaching and proclaiming the Gospel to, these have affected the outcome of their mission work negatively.

Indigenisation, according to Sundhir, “is going native, everything foreign becomes native, local person takes upon himself and behave like foreign missionaries”.³³ Truly, there will be changes in certain areas like language, putting on one’s culture by using native names for Church, but administration still remains foreign. In short, structure, power, money and properties are at stake in indigenisation. It only helps to increase nominalism which is a hindrance to mission work because indigenisation has no passion for mission. Therefore, it cannot achieve the expected result. This is why contextualisation is necessary to do work of mission today and communicate the Gospel everywhere to every culture appropriately. The participants in the Jerusalem Conference in 1928 defined the Indigenous church as “understanding cultural accommodation” while the Madras Conference of 1938 restated the definition, emphasizing witness to Christ in “a direct, clear, and close relationship with the cultural and religious heritage of the Country”. Kato's swift acceptance of the notion of contextualisation was particularly significant. The provenance of the word itself, as first employed in 1972 by Shoki Coe in the World Council of Churches document Ministry in

³¹ Geoffrey Parrinder, 1969. *Religion in Africa*. London: The Pall Mall Press Ltd.

³² Tasié George, 1991. *Indigenisation of Christianity in Isiokpo Ikwere Local Government Area River State B. A. Project*, Department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan. Unpublished.

³³ As cited by E. S. Isaiah, 2007 Seminar/Lecture paper at Bethany International University, Singapore Unpublished.

Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund, made it suspect to many evangelicals.³⁴

Kato, however, recognises its importance for the well-being of the African church and believed that it does not imply compromising any of the theological principles that he considers fundamental. His approach ensures that mainstream African evangelicalism should not become entrenched in an obscurantist and contextually irrelevant fundamentalism. Certainly, Kato's understanding of contextualisation reflects his time. Nevertheless, his book and articles remain exemplary in at least two respects. First, his intention was truly to contextualise the Gospel for Africans, hence he faithfully addresses African issues. Second, his theological activities are aimed at a much broader African readership than just the theological cognoscenti. He avoids the trap that besets much Western theology, that of academic theologians producing works of scholarship for one another that are inaccessible to outsiders. As Kato himself says, "I am fully in favour of the ever-abiding gospel being expressed within the context of Africa, for Africans to understand". His concern is for the church and the fulfillment of its calling in the world, rather than the approbation of the academy.³⁵

Nicholls says that Kato was no pawn of missionaries or of Western parachurch bodies, nor was he a neocolonial spokesman of Western theology. He was a "twentieth century prophet, somewhat in the school of an earlier African, Tertullian, for while he identified with black Africa in its cry for liberation against unjust oppression, he was fearless in his denunciation of all liberal theology and philosophy that deviated from the authority of the Bible as the Word of God.". The goal of his work was to advance the ambition vibrantly expressed in his famed rallying cry, "Let African Christians be Christian Africans".³⁶

The word contextualisation in reference to Christian practices, according to Sundhir, is "Presentation of an unchanging Gospel in a Changing World and capacity to respond meaningfully to the gospel within the framework of one situation". He further says that" it is

³⁴ World Council of Churches, *Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund, 1970-77* Bromley, U.K.: TEF Fund, 1972.

³⁵ Byang Kato, 1976. *African Cultural Revolution and the Christian Faith* (Jos, Nigeria: Challenge Publications, p. 54.

³⁶ Bruce J. Nicholls, "Byang H. Kato-a Personal Tribute," *Theological News* (WEF) 8 (January-March 1976): 2.

a dynamic practice of meeting the felt need of the people, where it hitches or scratching". This means contextualisation is doing theology on the spot and is a dynamic Christian practice. It is not just a method or one of the methods but a practice that ought to be embraced by all Christians, especially missionaries, for effective and efficient spreading of the Gospel.

He also defines contextualised theology as the dynamic reflection carried out by the Church in the light of the Word of God through this dynamic process, the Church through the Holy Spirit continually challenges, incorporates and transform elements of the culture in order to bring this under the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the members of the society reflect upon the word of God through their own thoughts employing their own culture gifts they are better able to understand the Gospel as incarnation³⁷.

Feliciano describes contextualisation as "the process of communicating absolute truths from the Bible to an individual's historic –cultural experience and background, his social structure and orientation, his thought pattern and world view. This means that contextualisation is the process of communicating the Good News in Cultural forms, meaningful, relevant and understandable to the hearers in such garments (liturgy) and thought forms(contents) that speak to the real issues and needs of the hearers, in the framework of their society structure".³⁸

There are various meanings of Contextualisation. Bosch explains the term by saying that it is having the Church "incarnated in the life of the recipients".³⁹ Hesselgrave defines it as presenting the supracultural message of the Gospel in culturally relevant terms.⁴⁰ Bevans says that the term contextualisation not only includes all that is implied in the older indigenisation or enculturation, but also seeks to include the realities of contemporary secularity, technology and the struggle for human justice.⁴¹ From the foregoing this work avers that contextualisation is applying the liturgy, worship and Gospel in any context in a way that will make it possible for the respondents to understand and apply it to their lives and circumstances, including every aspect of Church life. The Cherubim and Seraphim Church

³⁷ E. S Isaiah, 2007. Seminar paper / Lecture at Bethany International University, Singapore Unpublished

³⁸ David V. Feliciano, 1977. Contextualisation of the Christian Faith in the Philippine setting," *Christian Forum*, An annual Journal Silang, Cavite: PMI. pp 28ff.

³⁹ D. J. Bosch, 1991. *Transforming Mission, Paradigm Shifts in theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis.p.421

⁴⁰ D.J. Hesselgrave, 1989. *Communicating Christ cross-culturally: an introduction to Missionary Communication*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.pp.1-7

⁴¹ S. B. Bevans, 1992. *Models of Contextual Theology* : Maryknoll: Orbis. p.21.

is doing the task for which God sent it in making sure that it is incarnated in the life of the people.

When the Church is incarnated in the lives of the recipients, they look at every aspect of Church life. The working definition of Contextualisation for *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim is, therefore, taken to mean that the Church is doing the task for which God sent it in Ibadan land and as it does the task it makes sure that it is incarnated in the life of the members of the Church. Since the Biblical message is a prepared message for a people, the Gospel must be presented in a language the recipients can understand. The Church must make sure their worship and liturgy are relevant to the culture of the community. She would have to incarnate in the community by interacting with the community with a view to appreciating the importance of the cultural dynamics in the process of relating the biblical message to the life of the people.⁴²

There is the need to identify the elements of the culture that will make it easier for the communicator to be understood. This work is of the opinion that the liturgy, and the way of worship we introduce in Ibadan should be relevant to our community in a concrete situation, active participation is important in worship not the domination of rules and rites, hence the Holy Spirit of God must be given liberty as it operates at Cherubim and Seraphim especially at Ona Iwa Mimo Church. Africans must be careful against Western-imported principles and methods in our liturgy, practice and worship, which often do not suit Africans or Yoruba way of doing things.

Ritchie asserts that God has already prepared all the people on earth to hear the Gospel because the preparation has been done through general revelation and special revelation. The previous concepts, such as “adaptation” did not go far enough and helped very little, if at all, because adaptation meant replacing a white pastor with a black one who did exactly the same thing in exactly the same ways as did the ‘Euroamerican’ Pastor. There was rejection of adaptation in 1974, followed by the adoption of the theology of incarnation in its place; there was an incarnation of Christianity with truly African roots.⁴³ Ritchie says African theologians were in search of a Church with African leadership, with truly African

⁴² S.B. Bevans, 1992:30. *Models of Contextual Theology* : Maryknoll: Orbis. p.21 and Hesselgrave and Rommen . 1989 *Communicating Christ cross-culturally: an introduction to Missionary Communication*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. pp.1-7 1989:211.

⁴³ D.J. Hesselgrave, 1999. *The Role of Culture in Communication, in Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, edited by R. D. Winter and S. C. Hawthorne. Pasadena: William Carey library: 392-396.

mind and spirit, and where Africans could feel free to explore the meaning of a truly African Christianity without restrictions imposed from outside mission agencies, without “Euroamerican” Christianity constantly looking over their shoulders. They wanted the freedom to innovate in their attempts to Africanise Christianity in a manner analogous to the founders of the African independent Church movements.⁴⁴

This background is necessary in formulating a working definition of contextualisation; without it, we might make the same past mistakes others have made the attempt to make the acceptance of the Gospel easier for non-Christian customs which might be offensive.⁴⁵ Contextualisation is a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word. It will help to explain the content of the Scripture but it is not indigenization because is broader in scope than the traditional concept of indigenisation in missions. It helps to show a particular form of culture through which God revealed His truth through Christ to different specific culture in a particular time and place.

Contextualisation is to be able to communicate the Gospel in a more understandable, culturally relevant form, contextualised theology will help to reach out to the less-reached and the unreached. This is because through the Holy Spirit, will help to bring dynamic reflection to make the revealed words in the scripture to interact with the revealed word in the culture. The result will challenge the people to have re-think of their forms and meanings. The challenges will make them to build into their system new things because members will effect changes themselves. When this takes place, Christianity will not be seen as a religion whose part one can transfer into their culture and call it Church or movements, like Cherubim and Seraphim does, but will be seen as incarnation. Contextualisation, according to Sundhir Isaiah, is described as faithful to the scripture and relevant to the culture - John 4:22-23. It is a suitable way of making the gospel relevant to the culture of a church group, denomination or people group, such as Indigenous African Churches (Cherubim and Seraphim *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* in Ibadan). Newbiggin says “the value of the word contextualisation is that it suggests the placing of the gospel in the total context of

⁴⁴ I. Ritchie, 1999. African Theology and social change: An Anthropological <http://www3.simpatico.ca/ian.Ritchie/ATSC.contents.htm>

⁴⁵ D.J. Hesselgrave, and E. Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: Meaning, Methods and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

a culture at a particular moment, a moment that is shaped by the past and looks to the future”.⁴⁶

Among the Roman Catholic Church members, contextualisation is taken to be inculturation. Gelbi claims that inculturation is a theological term that characterises an ideal of sound evangelization. Inculturated evangelisation seeks an “incarnational” proclamation of the gospel, meaning that the divine word took flesh in a particular people and drew upon the religious heritage of the Hebrews to interpret to others His person, and mission. Therefore, in the same way, the proclaimed word of the gospel must find embodiment in a various nations, traditions and people.⁴⁷

Upkong describes inculturation as an approach in evangelisation which is an ongoing process of rooting and rerooting the Christian faith in a culture. It also involves a process whereby the Christian faith is made to influence a culture and attain expression through the genius of that culture. This approach makes the gospel to challenge and animate the culture and also helps to utilise the resources of every culture in expressing the Christian faith.⁴⁸ McGavran agree that Contextualisation of our liturgy and worship is needed but he believes that in all cases, culture must be put under the testing authority of the absolute truth of the word of God, though cultures are to be subjected under the Word of God, yet cultures must be taken seriously, because God commanded men to create rich cultures and wants them to glorify God and we must allow differences of opinion since meanings change adjustments in culture are inevitable.⁴⁹

2.2.1 Contextualisation among the African Indigenous Churches

The practice of contextualisation in Africa Indigenous Churches, especially in Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan land, can only be put in proper perspective if the history of Christianity in Africa is briefly appraised from the day of Pentecost. It was the day the New Testament Church was born with the accounts of the Acts of the Holy Spirit

⁴⁶ Leslie Newbigin, 2008.” Foolishness to the Greeks” in Paul Chilcote & Lacey C. Warner (eds.) *The study of evangelism: exploring a missional practice of the Church*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans publishing company p. 346.

⁴⁷ Donald L. Gelpi, 1988. *Inculturating North American theology: an experiment in foundational method*, Atlanta: Scholar Press, p.2.

⁴⁸ Justin S. Upkong, 1990.” Jesus and the Jewish Culture and Religion: A New Testament Perspective on Christology and Inculturation” *Proceedings of the 5th Nigerian Theological Conference*. p.39.

⁴⁹ Donald MCGavran, 1974. *The Clash Between Christianity and Cultures*, Washington D.C.: Canon Press. pp51-78.

through the activities and contributions of the Early Apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts of the Apostles. It is evident that the Gospel reached Africa from the early period of the New Testament church. The encounter of the Ethiopian eunuch with Phillip and his subsequent baptism did prove that Christianity got to Africa a long time ago. (Acts 8). According to Dada, the subsequent attempts made to spread the gospel and properly root Christianity in Africa failed woefully. The over-running of Christianity in North Africa by the forces of Islam confirmed this failure. Even Church historians have talked about three strands of the planting of Christianity in Africa. These strands have been regarded as an unbroken cord. The reason for this can be linked to failure to properly situate the Christian faith within the local context.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, missionaries from Europe and America made efforts to spread Christianity extensively in Africa right from the eighteenth century. In spite of the achievements made by these missionaries, some people believe they would have performed better if they had allowed proper integration of the gospel within the cultural matrix. The missionaries' insensitivity to the indigenous culture which arose from an erroneous theology of mission had bad consequences on their efforts of planting churches in Africa.⁵¹ Various attempts were made at contextualising the Christian faith in Africa. These attempts basically focused on issues concerning liturgy, doctrine and interpretation of Biblical texts. Some churches introduced what could be described as indigenisation (not detached from foreigners or Westerners liturgy, authority and control). Churches variously referred to as the African indigenous churches or African Independent or Instituted churches were able to introduce African elements into liturgy of the church in Africa. *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan is one the churches known as African Indigenous Churches. It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that African Indigenous Churches were established by African leaders who sought to reflect African culture and ways of life in their lives.

Falk articulates the contributions of African Indigenous Churches in making Christianity relevant in African continent thus:

⁵⁰ A .O. Dada, Cultural Adaptation or christo- paganism: An Evangelical Reflection on Contextualisation in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June, 2010. p.148.

⁵¹ J.N.K. Mugabi, "A Fresh Look at Evangelism in Africa" in Paul W. Chilcote & Lacey C. Werner(eds.) *The study of Evangelism : Exploring a Missional Practice of the Church* p.354.

The African Independent Churches constitute a significant portion of Christianity in Africa and unique spirit in African Christianity. The development of Independent Churches has attained a dimension that is unprecedented in the history of the Christian church. These independent church movements have been founded by a separation from parent churches, missions or independent Churches- in a few cases under the initiative of a dynamic leader...such ministries may be found in many countries of Africa, especially South of the Sahara; these ministries have large influence on the population.⁵²

The indigenous churches contextualised the liturgy of the church in the area of church music because the Western missionaries and leaders of mission churches did not allow the use of traditional African music in and outside the church, because they regarded African musical instruments like local drums, talking drums (*gangan*) and lyrics as originally dedicated to the worship of idols. This denial made African Christians to be unable to express the deepest level of their being in worship; unlike they did in the traditional worship. The nationalistic and cultural awareness of the late nineteenth century sensitised the African Christians on the value of traditional music. The indigenous churches were quick to appropriate and adopt traditional music in worship. This made their worship to be more meaningful, relevant to their context and lively. Leaders and members of indigenous churches, such as *Ọ̀nà Ọ̀wà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church, composed songs that utilized traditional categories in praising Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, the Indigenous Churches also adapted African traditional elements and rites to make their faith meaningful. Elements like Holy olive oil and water, incense, salt, honey, ritual cleansing, ritual baths and sacred preparations are common phenomena in these churches. They are often used for healing, deliverance from evil power and to providing solutions for people going through one problem or the other.

In the traditional context, some of these elements and rituals are integral part of the healing process. Incantations (*ògèdè* or potent words) are often invoked on elements like honey, water and salt. Such specially prepared elements are administered to the sick.

Likewise, ritual baths are prescribed for people going through one serious problem or chronic diseases. In the traditional African context, water is used to symbolically cleanse a person from every evil power that is causing misfortune or serious sickness. That is why a running water or water in an enclosure is often sanctified by the traditional priest who uses it

⁵² P. Falk, 1999. *The Growth of the church in Africa*, Jos, Nigeria: African Christian Textbooks. P. 452.

to bath the person in need of it. The ritual use of water in the African Indigenous Churches can, therefore, be understood in the light of this context.⁵³ With the transition to Christianity, this African traditional practice and Israelite sacred cultic element of ritual baths as recorded in Exodus and Leviticus are contextualised in different form in Indigenous Churches, such as *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Churches. In contextualising, these elements are adapted into the healing process and used to provide solutions to the problems of members. Instead of the incantation (potent words) recited on them in the traditional set-up, special psalms, some portions of the Scriptures and prayers in the name of Jesus Christ are now recited and read on them as directed by the Holy Spirit.

The traditional background has also enriched the conception and understanding of Jesus Christ in the indigenous churches. Leaders and members of indigenous churches have got a deeper understanding of Christ through their songs, prayers, praises and reflections that emanated from the influence of their culture and social structure. For example, Jesus Christ has been variously referred to as the living ancestor and the great king. Awolalu says, ancestors constitute the closest link between the world of men and the spirit world and they are believed to be keenly interested in the welfare of the family. The living, therefore, have the confidence that they live in a world in which their ancestors are interested and over which they are watching.⁵⁴

They also contextualise the reading and interpretation of the Bible in Africa. One of the novel ways the reading of the Bible has been contextualised in Africa is what Adamo describes as “the Bible as Power approach”. This is an “existential” and “reflective” approach to the interpretation of the Bible. The use of the Bible as means of protection, healing, and success is an approach that is popular in the African Indigenous Churches.⁵⁵ Ukpong also seeks this method of using the Bible as “biblical inculturation”, which is a dynamic ongoing process by which people consciously and critically appropriate the Bible and its message from within the perspectives and resources of their culture.⁵⁶

⁵³ A.O .Dada, Cultural Adaptation or Christo- paganism: An Evangelical Reflection on Contextualisation in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June,2010. p. 151.

⁵⁴ J. O. Awolalu, 1981. *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, Essex: Longman Group Limited, p. 61.

⁵⁵ David T. Adamo, 2004. *Decolonizing African Biblical Studies*, Abraka, Nigeria: Delta State University pp 24-27.

⁵⁶ Justin Ukpong, “Inculturation as Decolonisation of the Bible in Africa” in S. O. Abogunrin, et al.(eds.) *Decolonisation of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan : Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies pp. 53-56.

In African Indigenous Churches, the Bible is often creatively used to address an unbearable and dangerous condition. Among the indigenous churches in Ibadan, the Psalms feature as a multipurpose panacea for curing sick people or people attacked by evil forces. Some of the elements and practices peculiar to Indigenous churches in Africa, especially in Ibadanland, in the name of contextualisation, are creeping into mission and even Evangelical Churches in recent times. The use of anointing oil, blessing of water for healing and reading of special psalms are now very common in the midst of these aforementioned churches. Living Spring Chapel, Ibadan, Winners Chapel, Ibadan, Christ Apostolic Churches in Ibadan and so on now use water and anointing oil for healing, restoration and protection. This is because they have realised that the people find it easy to relate with the African elements introduced into indigenous churches and that they attract more members to the church which, perhaps, ultimately result in stable finance for the church. In order for it to be meaningful to Africans, the Bible's life-giving message must be served in an African cup. But, so as not to develop into heresy, as it has in so many cases among the liberal religionists, the text of the Holy Bible cannot be allowed to be swallowed up by the various cultures it confronts. In other words, if the truths taught in the Bible must first be sifted through the cultural sieve of the target society before they can be pronounced "genuine," then the resulting combination is syncretistic and not "Christian" at all. On the other hand, if the Bible is seen as supra-cultural (standing over and above all cultures) but, at the same time, providing practical guidance and answers to the problems of life in every culture, the various indigenous cultures can be filtered through the sieve of Biblical truths.

An African Indigenous Church (AIC) developed out of discontent with European mission, in order to meet some of the perceived needs of Africans especially Yoruba Christians, which were not met within the missions. African Indigenous church means a purely black-controlled denomination with no links in membership or administrative control with any non-African church. These churches are churches that have completely broken the umbilical cord with the Western missionary enterprise. Yet these churches are not racist at all in theology and outlook. According to Oshitelu, these churches made conscious efforts to revive and perpetuate selected aspects of Yorùbá culture.⁵⁷ Parrinder says these independent

⁵⁷ G. A. Oshitelu, 2000. "The trends and development of Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches in Yoruba land" *Orita* XXXII: 1-2:110.

African churches were brought about by the need for independence, sometimes against dictatorial missionaries and, most times, against the formalism of foreign ways, which led to “quenching the Spirit”. Although these churches kept to the Bible, prayer books and hymn books of the parent missions, they added colour in costume and music, using different types of drums like the talking drums, ‘*iyá-ilù*’ and calabashes instead of the dreary harmonium.⁵⁸

The rise of these churches was a result of the general feeling that African customs, laws, dancing, family, marriage, language, sayings, philosophy and so on were decaying where they were not crushed. The founders and members of these independent churches sought to put their own interpretation upon Christianity. This is one of the most influential ways of contextualising the religion. According to Atansuyi, members of African indigenous churches strongly believe that the Christian faith which the Gospel proclaims is fine, but should be indigenised and contextualised in a holistic, Biblical, incarnate and conscientising evangelism. It should be alert to the current historical and cultural moment in each place where the church is called to witness the Gospel.⁵⁹ Okolo further claims that the faith proclaimed by the Gospel is not a solitary thing. The aim of God is not simply that we rejoice in Him, but also to show us how great it is to rejoice with one another in Him. To enjoy God by oneself is great, but to enjoy God in company with others is far greater.⁶⁰

It is not enough to Africanise Christianity. African Christianity must discover a catholic vocation. From various sources, it has been discovered that African theology is a "theology based on the biblical faith of Africans, and which speaks to the African soul".⁶¹ Most of the missionaries held the belief that the inspiration or charismatic gifts among Africans were of evil spirit. They believed that Africans, that is the black race, were not fertile enough to produce their own ideas. It is true that Africans give a special character and local colour to their beliefs, religious observances and practices, languages, psychological reactions and more generally, to their behaviours.

⁵⁸ Geoffrey Parrinder, 1969. *Religion in Africa*, London, The Pall Mall Press Ltd p.37.

⁵⁹ H.O. Atansuyi, 1996. Seminar paper on the Gospel and culture from the perspective of African Instituted Churches pp.2-8 (Unpublished).

⁶⁰ C.B. Okolo, 1976. "Diminished Man and Theology: A Third World Culture and Religion" in *AFER*, vol. 18, N. 2, Paraphrased as "Christ is Black" by Aylward Shorter in *African Christian Spirituality*, London: G. Chapman, p. 71

⁶¹ In the conference of AACC held in Nairobi in 1969 African Theology was defined as written above take the numerous African nationalists time to see Christianity as aiding or being in close alliance with the white power structures that have enslaved them. (AACC 1969 Engagement, Nairobi.) an International conference.

Some of the remote and immediate causes of the emergence of African Indigenous Churches include the following : Conflict of leadership between the white missionaries and the black pastors; the missionaries neglected the organisation of the Africans, that is, their customs, institutions and many other things that are African; the tyranny of the rule of the missionaries and their attitude on polygamous rule; the permission of ritualism which often deteriorated into magical system of sacrifice and ceremony, whereby we give God what He wants in order to get from Him what we want. However these missions made reasonable and considerable impact on the society and paved the way for the later successes of the Church in this African country.⁶²

Omoyajowo asserts that “the approach by the foreign missions was largely negative. The general tendency by them was to condemn African things *in toto* and to paint the picture of a dark continent. The missionaries had no respect for the peoples' way of life, their religion or culture.” He even gave an example of negative attitudes by a Capuchin missionary in Congo, who says “On my way, I found numbers of idols which I threw into the fire. The owner of these idols....seemed very annoyed. To calm him down by humiliating him, I let him know that if he persisted in anger, I should see that he himself is burnt with his idols”.⁶³ Omoyajowo also points out the feelings and comments of African nationalists. They said “We are, therefore, little surprised that the Christianity imbibed by the Africans from these foreign missionaries was vaneer and in most cases superficial and hypocritical. It was these weaknesses that the 'African' group of Churches the African "indigenous" Churches exploited in establishing their Churches.”⁶⁴

It did not take the numerous African nationalists time to see Christianity as aiding or being in close alliance with the white power structures that have enslaved them. It is this negative attitude which characterised the missionary work of the foreign missionaries. It was a kind of evangelism that had no regard for the peoples' culture and religion. They were too simply convinced of the enormous superiority of the European West and came unconsciously, but naturally, as bearers not only of the Christian message, but also of Westernisations’. “Africans therefore denounce 'Western Christianity' or 'White Christ'

⁶³ Akin Omoyajowo, quoting Adrian Hasting, 1966. *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, Fordham University Press .p. 59.

⁶⁴ Akin Omoyajowo, 1982. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*, Lagos: NOK Publishing p.4.

because they see this as tied up with the colonialism and neo-colonialism that have created ghastly realities of hunger, unemployment, repression, racism and violence in the third world."⁶⁵ It is only from this perspective that we can understand Moore's view the editor of a book 'Black Theology' which was banned by the racist government of South Africa when it first appeared under the title 'Essays on Black Theology' in 1972, that:

In South Africa the Christian Church has probably been one of the most powerful instruments in making possible the political oppression of the black people. While the white colonists were busy with the process of robbing the people of their land and their independence, the churches were busy however, unconsciously, undermining the will of the people to resist. This was done in a number of subtle and not so subtle ways.⁶⁶

He also explained that the black people were made to believe not that salvation is in Christ alone, but that salvation is in accepting the new white ways of living. The effect of this was to internalise in the black people a sense of inferiority of the interchangeability, in religious language, of 'black' and 'evil' which according to him the black man was made to believe, were synonymous words, and it was therefore not difficult to persuade him that a black man was an evil (and inferior) person; and that his blackness is a sign of his inferiority as an outcast from the Grace of God. And that the Church helped to colonies the minds of the black people, cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand. Perhaps Buthelezi has made the point in a more passionately succinct way when he said:

"The naked truth is that the African lives at the fringe of life. He has been a victim of selective giving and withholding. He has not been allowed to realise the potential of his humanity. In other words, he became alienated from that wholeness of life which in his religious tradition helped him not to live as a split personality."⁶⁷

At inception, Indigenous African Churches were known as Aladura Churches. The name Aladura is derived from 'àdùrà', prayer, and 'praying churches' is an apt description of these organisations. The founders of the Aladura churches formed 'praying bands' within the

⁶⁵ Akin Omoyajowo, 1982. *Cherubim and Seraphim. The History of an African Independent Church*, Lagos: NOK Publishing pp.4-6.

⁶⁶ Basil Moore, 1973. *Black Theology: the South African Voice*, London, C. Hurst & Co. Editor's preface p. viii

⁶⁷ Manas Buthelezi, 1973. "The Theological meaning of True Humanity" in *Black Theology*, London p. 102

mission churches, and they only separated when their activities were seen as unorthodox by the mission authorities. The major difference lies in their approach to the problems of everyday life, as seen by the members. Whereas the traditional cults and Islam were able to offer healing techniques, protection against witches and knowledge of the future, mission Christianity did not. The mission churches were seen as being more concerned with salvation in the next world rather than solving their members' problems in this world. The Aladura prophet, on the other hand, by interpreting dreams and visions, performs a role similar to that of the *Alfas* and *Babaláwo* (herbalist). Peel says it is not surprising that most converts to the Aladura churches come from the mission churches; Muslims seldom join because some of their practices are similar.⁶⁸

Mitchell divides the Aladura churches into two broad groups: apostolic and spiritual. The largest of the apostolic churches is the Christ Apostolic, which by 1958 had become the third-largest church in Western Nigeria. The largest group of spiritual churches is the various offshoots of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement.⁶⁹ It is here that the tendency towards fragmentation has been greatest. The prophet is all-important in these churches. They are less opposed to the use of medicine, and polygamy is allowed. In Cherubim and Seraphim movement, there are some similarities between their practice and traditional religion. First, words are thought to have an inherent power of their own, and the recitation of 'holy names' or passages from the Psalms as magical formulae is common. Some prophets prepare charms using written verses from the Bible in the same way the *Alfas* uses the Koran. Second, there is the use of categories similar to those of traditional beliefs in explaining misfortune. The emphasis given to combating witchcraft is an obvious example. The Aladura prophets also have a reputation for being able to deal with *àbíkú* (born- and -die -early) spirits.⁷⁰

The extensive use of holy water and the exclusion of menstruating women from the sanctuary are both reminiscent of traditional practices and ancient Israel. The long-haired prophets of the spiritual churches wearing colourful robes, the congregational processions through the streets, and the 'Houses of Prayer' with their singing and dancing are among the most distinctive features of present-day Yoruba religious life. Kato avers that "The thousands of African Independent Churches, with the emphasis on healing, ecstatic behaviour, and exorcism, began to spring up throughout African continent and there was

little the established churches could do about it”.⁷¹ Generally, the Aladura have emphasised ritual rather than a developed theology. Fasting and prayer to achieve visions and holiness are more important than doctrinal disputes. All of them emphasized the importance of spiritual power (*agbára*), and the role of the Holy Spirit.

The importance of the archangels in the Cherubim and Seraphim Churches is especially interesting. Each of them guards one of the gates of heaven, and is associated with one of the four elements. Each has a clearly defined role in mediating between man and God, and their feasts are among the most important church occasions.⁷² The parallels with the “*òrìsà*” (gods) are very striking. Although African indigenous Churches, like Cherubim and Seraphim claim to still regard the Bible as the ultimate source of spiritual authority, and that their basic theology and liturgy are close to those of the mission churches, they agree that worship tends to be a more enthusiastic affair, especially during the healing sessions which supplement the regular services. But the main point and concern is that the trust and expectations members of these churches have in their prophets to heal them is far more than the one they have in Jesus Christ. Most times, they believe in what they can see and not the creator Himself. They continue the practices of the Jews in the way of rites, ceremonies and certain forms of worship, like observing scapegoatism, ritual cleansing, and sacred / spiritual preparation having special sacred places, either at the back or side of their places of worship and so on. Prophet Okesola (*Wólú Ibadan*) founder of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim in *Ìbàdàn*, claimed that these sacrifices do not form an integral part of their worship as such, they are observed only as a result of divine revelations to their prophets and leaders.⁷³

The key figure is the prophet, who is regarded as the healer. Among African Indigenous Churches, especially *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim, the use of these sacred elements and other practices, using the instructions God gave to Moses at the foot of Mt. Sinai as instance, and why they need do them to be reviewed for proper usage as Christians. Of particular concern are the explanations given on why the adherents use salt, palm leaves, candles, sacrifice of animals, going about bare footed because the use of foot-wears is forbidden in places within the dedicated temple, making of holy inquiries for all

⁷³ Interview with Pastor David Okesola on 25th May 2008 at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim, church No.1 Mokola, Ibadan.

members of the church on matters affecting their lives, and not carrying corpses into the temple called “*inú Àgò*” have to do with salvation of mankind. Atansuyi claims that the use of these elements or substances does not mean that the members of African Indigenous Churches do not have faith in Jesus Christ who shed his blood for humans. What it does mean is that healing can also be achieved through other means, such as the prophets asking Namaan the leper to bath in specific River. It is observable that African culture and Israelite form of worship are akin to these observances and practices mentioned.⁷⁴

The researcher quite respects these views and agrees to some extent with Atansuyi and others; that the first missionaries westernized the Gospel brought to Africans and failed to realize objectively and scientifically the African social structure and their concept of God. But the researcher is of the opinion that the Westerners used what they have and gave us education with the ability to read and write for us to read the scripture and choose the right way. There is nothing wrong with contextualisation or enculturation to make our worship lively and relevant, dancing, singing and drumming in African ways, but this should not tamper with our belief and faith in Christ. There is nothing wrong in subjecting the Gospel to critical scrutiny in a cross-cultural situation.

This work wants to remind everybody that Christ came to the world challenging and confronting man with His demand to dislodge whatever has secured their allegiance and replace it with Him because He is the Lord of every person and every culture. Also, they are to know that God gave the ceremonial laws at the foot of Mount Sinai in order for the people of Israel to come into His presence pure and holy. They had to undergo careful and detailed rituals of sacrifice and cleansing from sin. The word “Christians” means Christ followers, those who left all and carry the cross and follow Jesus Christ wholly. This work will like to show that Abraham and other old people of faith left culture, tradition and worship life styles of their countries that they had been used to for a long period.

Also Paul and other Apostles left all and followed Christ, because He is the only way, the truth and life. Arts, sciences, philosophy and culture must be tested by the Scripture and subjected to the Lordship of Jesus Christ because Christ is the Lord of all. The Gospel evaluates all cultures according to its criteria of truth and righteousness and insists on moral

⁷⁴ Olu. H. Atansuyi, 1996. a paper on “Gospel and Culture from the Perspective of African Instituted Churches”. This paper was read to the World Council of Churches - African Instituted Churches Consultation held January 9 -14, 1996 in Ogere, Nigeria.

absolutes in every culture. The word of God will reject any act which opposes the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is universal and unchanging and is above all cultures although there may be differences in the cultural contexts in which the missionary delivers the message. We need to trust and rely on the Holy Spirit to illuminate the minds of recipient and bring obedience to God's word and the Lordship of Christ. We must view everything in our culture and tradition under the Lordship of Christ. We should not be culture relativist to the point of breaking God's law.

Also, we must not forget that the purpose of contextualisation is to communicate the truth of the Gospel such that it is clearly understood by the hearer without distortions that come from his cultural traditions and background. We also need to see the Gospel powerfully influencing the lives of the people, deeply affecting their world view, behaviour, beliefs and values. The Lordship of Christ and Biblical values should affect the convert's behaviour and life. Contextualisation is meant to improve the presentation of the Gospel, and on no account must it end up distorting or reinventing the true message of the Gospel.⁷⁵ According to Kraft, world views are necessary in the formation and maintenance of cultures. As Christians, our goal is not to shed entirely the world view of whatever culture we might live in. Instead, our goal is to become self-conscious of our world view, altering our world view where it endorses values that are contrary to Christianity.⁷⁶

Failure to distinguish between biblical and cultural messages can lead to confusion.⁷⁷ People cannot think without conceptual categories and symbols. So, the message must be put in some cultural expressions to the biblical message, to give dynamically equivalent Gospel presentation. The Gospel content is all about Jesus Christ and God, not culture. It concerns Jesus Christ. Its healing is not power unto salvation but Jesus Christ Himself is the power of the Gospel and unto salvation. The Gospel is all about Jesus, who He is. The Gospel was empowered at His death, because it is different from all the others because the power of atonement lies in His resurrection showing the approval of His atonement (Rom. 4:24). It is only in Christ that we have atonement; this is strange to all other religions.

⁷⁵ Jim Chew, 1990. *When Cross Cultures Vital Issues Facing Christian Missions*, The Navigators, Singapore, pp. 1-45.

⁷⁶ Charles H Kraft, 1988. *Christianity in Culture* Mary knoll: Orbis Books and John Wimber with Kevin Springer, Power Evangelism Signs and Wonders Today Holder and Stoughton, limited, London p. 75.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Lewis, 2006. *World Mission An analysis of the World Christian Movement 2nd Edition*, Cross-cultural considerations Part Three by William Carey Library, Pasadena, California. Pp.11-20.

There may be the need to focus on the new revelation brought into the world by Christ through His redemptive work on the cross of Calvary for mankind. Looking at the New Testament Biblical principle although unaccepted by many Jews to this day, it is circumcision of the heart that counts (Jer. 9). The new believers of a new culture do not have to speak the language, wear the clothes or follow all the customs of the Jewish culture. Though some scholars opined that, for Nigerians or African Christians, the cultural detail of the Jewish laws or African culture and traditions seems not to be relevant any longer with the redemptive work of Christ.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, this study opines that believers in each culture could adopt practices that will make their worship and activities faithful to the scripture and relevant to their culture. Yet there is need to be cautious in order not to abuse the adoption.

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⁷⁸ Basil Moore, (ed.) 1973. *Black Theology : the South African Voice*, London, C. Hurst & Co. p.428.

CHAPTER THREE

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CULT IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

3.1 The Early Stage of the Cult in Israel

Available records show that prior to the nineteenth century the Holy Bible was the chief source, if not sole source, that provides knowledge of the ancient world before the time of Greece and Rome. The matrix out of which Israel emerged was the flourishing Canaanite civilization of Syria-Palestine in the late second millennium B.C.E. The language (Hebrew is the southern dialect of the Canaanite tongue), culture, and many of the customs of this Canaanite civilization are preserved in the Bible. Even the Canaanite Poetic style and imagery are reflected in the Psalms and in the poetry of the prophets.¹

Cult has been described as a term used for the formal and ritual aspects of worship. The cult is also regarded as the visible expression of faith. This is why cult is being placed in a strategic position in the faith of the Israelites. Dryness sees it to be “the cultus embodied the faith of Israel, it was the rehearsal of God’s mighty deeds- and therefore his self - disclosure- of the past, it was an appropriation of the past, also the dramatic convergence of meaning in the present and brings past and present into the immediate continuum of identity”.² In the period of the patriarchs, according to Wellhausen, sacrifice was personal, spontaneous, and joyful. Thanksgiving was the primary purpose of these early sacrifices. It seems as if the patriarchs, then, were not founders of the cult, but of the holy places to which the people brought their gifts to God. In the historical books, the cult holds a large place in the life of the individual and the community, but the focus is on the sacrifices’ being offered to Yahweh alone, rather than to other gods.³

Biblical records of Israelite worship of Yahweh, at least during the formative years of the Israelites, appear to attest that the cult of Yahweh was undoubtedly not aniconic.⁴ Therefore any prohibition or critics on cultic practices must reflect a much later stage of the religious development of Israel which marked it out from the primitive era. Even in Ancient Near East, images were regarded as a means by which the deity manifested himself, but the

¹ Anthony R. Ceresko, 1992. *The Old Testament A liberation Perspective* Mary Knoll, New York: Orbis Books pp.22-24.

² William Dryness, 1979. *Themes in the Old Testament Theology*, Illinois: Intervarsity Press p.145.

³ Julius Wellhausen, 2003. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*, Eugene: Wipf and Stock. p.53.

⁴ Von Rad, 1975. *Old Testament Theology, Vol. 1*, Study Edition, London: SCM. p.212.

images themselves were never identified with the deity. The Israelites also shared in this belief of an image being charged with divine presence as we have in Ex. 28 –Ephod and 1 Sam. 4: 3- ark of Covenant in Shiloh. These were cultic objects which were at a time allowed in Yahwism and later condemned as idolatry due to misuse or abuse in practices in post exilic period. Akao avers that, the intended Biblical picture of an aniconic cult of Yahweh is part of the ideological programme of the Deuteronomist school which in the light of Exilic and Post- Exilic experience tried to rid Yahwism of all syncretistic and idolatrous practices. The aniconic cult of Yahweh grew out of a conscious effort to differentiate Yahweh from all other gods of the nations around them.⁵

In traditional usage, the cult of a religion, quite apart from its sacred writings, theology or myths or the personal faith of its believers, is the totality of external religious practice and observance, the neglect of which is the definition of impiety. Cult in this primary sense is literally the "care" owed to the god and the shrine. Antonaccio wrote that, the term cult identifies a pattern of ritual behaviour in connection with specific objects, within a framework of spatial and temporal coordinates. Ritual behavior would include (but not necessarily be limited to) prayer, sacrifice, votive offerings, competitions, processions and construction of monuments. Some degree of recurrence in place and repetition over time of ritual action is necessary for cult to be enacted, to be practiced.⁶

Cult is embodied in ritual and ceremony. Its present or former presence is made concrete in temples, shrines, and churches, and cult images (denigrated by Christians as "idols") and votive deposits at votive sites. By extension, "cult" has come to connote the total cultural aspects of a religion, as they are distinguished from others through change and individualisation. The comparative study of cult practice is part of the disciplines of the anthropology of religion and the sociology of religion, two aspects of comparative religion. In the context of many religious organizations themselves, the study of cultic or liturgical practices is called liturgiology. Scattered throughout the book of Leviticus are numerous instructions concerning various ways to make one ritually clean and, therefore, to be able to enter the presence of Yahweh, especially in Leviticus 11–16. Even the message, which

⁵ J. O. Akao, *The Aniconic Cult of Yahweh and the Imageless Supreme Being in African Traditional Religion*, *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XIX/2 December 1987 pp.100-101.

⁶ Carla Antonaccio, "Contesting the Past: Hero Cult, Tomb Cult, and Epic in Early Greece", *American Journal of Archaeology* 98.3 July 1994 pp.389-410.

promotes compassion towards one's neighbors as indicative of one's regard for Yahweh, flows throughout the Old Testament passages that contain criticism of the cult and highlights its importance.

3.1.1 Etymology of Cult

Cults may designate either forms of worship, such as the cult of one of the saints in the Eastern Orthodox churches or a small, deviant religious group centered on a charismatic leader. A cult denotes an intensity of devotion and unusual life-style in its members.⁷ Roland De Vaux defines cult thus: "By 'cult' we mean all those acts by which communities or individuals give outward expression to their religious life, by which they seek and achieve contact with God".⁸ The term "cult" first appeared in English in 1617, derived from the French *culte*, meaning "worship" or "a particular form of worship" which, in turn, originated from the Latin word *cultus* meaning "care, cultivation, worship," originally "tended, cultivated," as in the past participle of *colere* "to till the soil". In French, for example, sections in newspapers giving the schedule of worship at Catholic churches are headed '*Culte Catholique*'; the section giving the schedule of Protestant churches is headed *culte réformé*.⁹

Its meaning as "devotion to a person or thing" was given since 1829, but in a later period, especially at about 1920, "cult" acquired additional six or more connotatively positive and negative definitions that are separately discussed in an the article. In Roman Catholicism, *cultus* or *cult* is the technical term for the following Catholic devotions or veneration extended to a particular saint. Some Christians make distinctions between worship and veneration, both of which can be outwardly expressed in a similar manner. Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy distinguish between worship-Latin *adoratio*, Greek *latreia* [λατρεία]) which is only acceptable to be offered to God alone, and veneration (Latin *veneratio*, Greek *doulia* [δουλεία]), which may be offered to the saints. These distinctions between deity and mediators are exhaustively treated at the entries for *latria* and *dulia*.

⁷ William H. Gentz, ed. 1986. *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press. p.235.

⁸ Roland de Vaux, 1997. *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* trans. John McHugh; The Biblical Resource Series 3; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. p. 271.

⁹ "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cult_\(religious_practice\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cult_(religious_practice)) assessed on 12 Feb, 2012 at 11pm.

3.1.2 Cult practice

This work terms sacred cult as any ritual activity, public or private, associated with homage to a deity. Therefore, it can consist of offerings, sacrifices, prayers, singing, or celebrations of feast days. Buchanan writes that cultic activity is the stuff of which ancient religions were made. The praxis, the administration of the cultic establishments, the vested interests of the clergy¹⁰ and Westermann says cultic is worship.¹¹ There is advancement of various marks of cults in modern phenomenon. These marks or characteristics are of two types, they are theological and phenomenological or behavioural.¹² Among the observances in the cult are rituals, ceremonies, liturgy or audits, which may involve spoken or sung words, and often involve personal sacrifice. Other manifestations of the cult of a deity are the preservation of relics or the creation of images, such as icons (usually connoting a flat painted image) or three-dimensional cultic images, designated as "idols", and the specification of sacred places, hilltops and mountains, fissures and caves, springs, pools and groves, or even individual trees or stones, which may be the seat of an oracle or the venerated site of a vision, apparition, miracle or other occurrence commemorated or recreated in cult practices. Sacred places may be identified and elaborated by construction of shrines and temples, on which are centered public attention at religious festivals and which may become the centre for pilgrimages.

Miller examines family religion with its personal and social deity, sacred areas or shrines, festivals, and practices. Local and regional cults came about when families joined together to worship as a larger community. Some sanctuaries and cult places excavated may have witnessed the worship of Baal or other deities, but they may also reflect a heterodox or syncretistic worship of Yahweh. Larger community worship often revolved around the whole of Israel coming together for one of the festivals at a central shrine and eventually focused in Jerusalem and the temple. Miller's explanations of these aspects in various

¹⁰ George Buchanan Gray, 1978. *Setting of the Priestly School*, Oxford: Clarendon, p. 210-229.

¹¹ Claus Westermann, 1982. *Elements of Old Testament Theology* trans. Douglas W. Stott; Atlanta: John Knox. p.187-204); while Milgrom sees it as "sacrifices and offerings" (Jacob Milgrom, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* SJLA 36; Leiden: Brill, 1983pp. 119-121.

¹² William H. Gertz, ed. 1986. *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press p.236.

biblical texts draw from scholarly consensus, often aided by the viewpoints of his teacher, Frank Cross.¹³

The faith of Yahweh describes the faith of the people of Israel, a faith which developed in the desert rather than in Palestine. The earliest record of the faith of Israel on the worship of Yahweh comes from Judges 5. In this poem Yahweh is described as the God of Israel whose home is in the south and whose coming to aid his people causes the forces of nature to tremble (Judges 5:4). From this poem though victory is achieved by the bravery of the fighters, it is Yahweh who ensures victory. A hymn speaking of the Exodus declares, 'Yahweh is a man of war' (Ex. 15:3) and one of his pre-eminent titles was 'Lord of Hosts' or armies.¹⁴

The inauguration of Theocracy took place at Mount Sinai where Yahweh entered into a covenant with Israel; where He made all to be equal by sharing from the common mowl, Ex.19: 6 say, "you shall be to me a kingdom of priest and a holy nation", where kingdom and nation are the civil words while priest and holiness are the religion words. In this sense civil and religion matters in theocracy are inseparable. Israel came to know LORD and entered into covenant with Yahweh in the desert and the event at Sinai then was the sealing of the covenants between Israel and LORD God. Though the stipulations were given through Moses through whom they were given the Decalogue which gives us the peculiarities of Israel's faith. But a major requirement is holiness and wholesome loyalty to only LORD GOD.¹⁵

The provisions of the Hebrew Scriptures are presented as an expression of the covenant relationship established by God between himself and Israel. The ideal worship under both old and new covenants is a matter of responding to God's initiative in salvation and revelation, and doing so in the way that He requires. Worship is made possible for mankind by God's choosing to enter into a relationship with mankind. Worship as depicted in the Hebrew Scriptures is more than just a cultic or institutional expression of that relationship. Worship in the New Testament is a comprehensive category describing the Christian's total existence. It appears to be coextensive with the faith-response wherever and

¹³ Johnston, Sarah Isles, *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press p. 418. Patrick D. Miller, 2000. *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*. The Religion of Ancient Israel, Louisville: Westminster John Knox p.335.

¹⁴ Johnson, Sarah Isles, *Religions of the Ancient World: A Guide*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press p. 418

¹⁵ Van der Toorn. Karel, 1995. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. New York: E.J. Brill. p49.

whenever that response is elicited.¹⁶ In a nutshell, worship can be understood as the active expression in word and action by humans in response to a relationship that has been initiated by God with them. It is reverence and respect of God and His sovereignty over the entirety of creation. The reverencing is exhibited several times through ceremonies, and sundry sessions of worship, which may be done individually or collectively. It is an embodiment of the way we think and act. God entered into a relationship because God is both the initiator and receiver of worship, with humans receiving benefit from their participation in it.

The people of Israel were given precise instructions about how they must go about the worship of the one true God. These instructions were carefully designed to teach the Israelites that God is completely unlike the gods of Egypt and completely unlike all the gods they would encounter in the nations around them or in the countries they would possess. As they followed God's instructions for worship, the Israelites learned that God is perfect and holy, that he is good and faithful, that he is never deceived or tricked, that he knows everything, and that impurity cannot even come into his presence.¹⁷ They learned that he is subject to nothing and nobody, that all things are subject to him, and that he is to be worshipped on his own terms. When the Israelites left Egypt, their concepts about divinity were heavily influenced by the Egyptians and the other nations of the region. The early stage of the cultic practices according to some traditions dated back to the wilderness experience, known as wanderings in the wilderness by the Israelites.

There are two important themes that appear in the history of ancient Israelite and later Jewish worship. First, God takes the initiative in making himself known and in establishing a way for his chosen people to have a relationship with him. The second theme is ancient Israel's response to God's great acts of salvation that he has performed in their history. The chief focus of this response centred on the Exodus especially the Sinai event. The book of Exodus proclaims that God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt so that they might worship him. They were redeemed for the purpose of worship (Ex. 3:18; 7:16; 20:2). Likewise the sacrificial system was given by God to be the means of dealing with the problem of sin, separation from God and to maintain the covenant relationship. This was

¹⁶ Tite Tienou, 1992. *Evangelical mission Quarterly magazine – Tite which way for African Christianity: westernisation or indigenous authenticity?* p. 18.

¹⁷ Tite Tienou, 1992. *Evangelical mission Quarterly magazine – Tite which way for African Christianity: westernization or indigenous authenticity?* p.18.

effective only because of God's promise and his gracious enabling. The New Testament writers focus on Christ's death as the means by which humans are sustained in an eternal relationship with God. From this we can see that there is continuity and discontinuity between old and new covenant worship. Both the old and new covenants worship revolves around the idea of relationship with God. The New Testament has superseded the Old Testament but not discarded it; the whole must be seen as one continuum.

In general, the people were to approach, engage and know God through the cultic system that was set up in connection with the Sanctuary. Within a covenant framework, the sacrificial system was the means by which God made it possible for a sinful people to draw near to him, to receive his grace and blessing, without desecrating his holiness and so incurring his wrath against them. By God's provision through the cult, the covenant relationship could be maintained.¹⁸ The failure of ancient Israel to worship God in the way that he found acceptable culminated in the judgment of exile. The prophetic hope for the restoration of Israel and the blessing of all nations was the vision of renewed worship in a new Temple (Ezek. 40). New Testament writers, such as John, developed this theme by presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of all the Jewish Cultus and the fulfillment of all Jewish prophetic hopes for instance (Jn. 2:19-21).

Wellhausen highlights the drastic differences between the pre-exilic and post-exilic praxis of the cult. According to him, the influence of the priests, during and after the Exile, on the administration of the cult, whose practice they centralized in the Temple in Jerusalem, and focused specifically on sin and atonement, made the cult less personal than it had been in the pre-exilic period.¹⁹ The Exile thus became the great dividing line between the joyous personal celebrations of sacrifices in communion with Yahweh and the need for atonement because of the individual and national awareness of sin in the life of the people. Wellhausen examines those portions of the Pentateuch attributed to J/E, the historical books (Judges, 1–2 Sam. and 1–2 Kgs), and the pre-exilic prophets (Amos, Isa., Hosea, Micah, and Jeremiah), in his exploration of the subject of the cult before the Exile. He notes that the stories about sacrifice in the Pentateuch offer insights into the origins of the Israelite cult. He further notes that the only difference between the Israelite cult and that of other ancient

¹⁸ Eugene, H. Peterson, 1992. *Five smooth stones for pastoral work*, Bible Old Testament Five scrolls –use: Atlanta Georgia: W.M. B. Eerdmans publishing co. p.49.

¹⁹ Julius Wellhausen, 2003. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* Eugene: Wipf and Stock. p. 53.

cultures was that the Israelites offered gifts to Yahweh, while non-Israelites offered gifts to their gods. In fact, according to Wellhausen, aside from the exilic redactional material found in 1–2 Kgs, nowhere in the historical books or the pre-exilic prophetic writings are the cult outside of Jerusalem deemed illegitimate as long as it is offer to Yahweh.²⁰

In the Hebrew Scriptures, God's self-revelation to ancient Israel was particularly associated with the Sinai event, the Tabernacle and the Temple. These things represented God's presence and involvement in the lives of his people. The Temple in Jerusalem was built for worship of Yahweh (1 Kgs.5:19) on a grand scale (1 Kgs. 5:27-32). The Temple's location on the top of a hill (2 Chr. 3:1), its structure (1 Kgs. 6) and furnishings (1 Kgs. 7:13-51) proclaimed to all the central position the cult held in the life of Israel. Lev. 1–7 and Num. 28–29 describe the numerous kinds of sacrifices and offerings, as well as the times of and reasons for the feast days on the Israelite calendar.

The lengthy descriptions of the vestments worn by the priests (Ex.28), and their consecration (Ex. 29; Lev. 8) demonstrate the importance attached to these persons. There are likewise biblical texts that report the large number of sacrifices offered to Yahweh (1 Kg. 8:5, 62-63; 1 Chr. 29:21-22; 2 Chr. 29:32-35; 30:24-25; 35:7-9). The existence of cultic practices is not in dispute in the life of ancient Israel. Rather, that such an institution should be portrayed in a negative light by the eighth century prophets is what attracts attention.²¹ No doubt, the old covenant laws and rites were to sustain ancient Israel in a right relationship with God. The Ancient Israel's failure to worship God in an acceptable way through the old covenant provisions led to their captivity and resulted in their failure to provide the blessing to the rest of humanity that had been intended (Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5-6).

Historical facts are specific events which prove God's nature; an example of this is the Exodus where God displayed His power. Worship grows out of history of God's revelation and interaction with mankind. Every denomination has history and scriptural support for the way she worships God. The life of fellowship with God cannot be built up in a day. It begins with the habitual reference of all to Him, hour by hour, as Moses did in Egypt. It moves on to more and longer periods of communion. The religious institution of

²⁰ Julius Wellhausen, 2003. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel Eugene*, OR: Wipf and Stock, pp. 53 -54.

²¹ George Buchanan Gray, 1978. *Setting of the Priestly School*, Oxford: Clarendon. p. 220- 229

Israel was being used by God as a vehicle of revelation. The ancient Israel thought of worship purely in terms of ritual or cult. She believed that he must worshipped God at specific holy places, through the use of definite holy objects such as altars, stones, pillars, trees and so on, with the help and leadership of certain holy men like priests in definite holy ways through sacrifice and ritual and at fixed holy days or periods festivals, and Sabbaths among others. Therefore, Hebrew worship is accompanied with ritual behaviour and intention.²² Generally, worship took the most central of the life of the Jews. The sacrificial rite formed the basic feature of the patriarchs' worship. Any consecrated spot of the altar served as the sanctuary since the people were at time living a nomadic life. But, as time went on, sanctuaries were built at places like Shechem, Bethel, Mamre, Beersheba, Gilgal, Shiloh, Mispah, Gibeon, Ophra and Dan where regular worship and rites were performed.²³ Nevertheless, all these recognized sacred places were replaced when King David centralized worship centre in Jerusalem.

Archaeology has given evidence for the existence of sacrifice in Canaan before the Israelite took possession of the Canaan land. It was opined that the Israelite religion before Moses was the same as that of the Canaanites, as made known to us in the poems of Ras Shamra. Smith avers that "the earliest Israelite cult centered on a divine royal household ordered like the Ugaritic pantheon and at the head of this household was El and his consort Asherah. Baal, Yahweh, and other deities held secondary rank. He further claims that, by the monarchic period, the national divinity Yahweh (now Yahweh-El), became king of the gods, still accompanied by Asherah; the sun, moon, and astral deities held secondary rank".²⁴ Eventually the perspective advanced by the Deuteronomists and others prevailed, in which Yahweh alone headed the cult and other figures were suppressed, with the exception of divine messengers and servants.

Since the discovery of the Ugaritic texts early in the twentieth century, scholars have intensely examined the relationship of the early Israelite cult to its antecedents in Syro-Palestine. The Biblical record condemns the goddess Asherah much less frequently than

²² In commentary of H. H. Rowley, he explained much about how religious institution was being used by God as a vehicle of revelation to the Israelites.

²³ G.O. Abe, 1986. Sacrificial Rites in Israelite Religion and the Ancient Near East *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XVII/ I June 1986. p.18.

²⁴ S. M. Smith. 2002, *The Early History of God, Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan. pp. 160- 162.

Ashram, though the symbol was originally acceptable feature of Yahwistic cult, but later it was treated as a non-Yahwistic aberration. Prophetic condemnations of the Asherah and Asherim include other cultic paraphernalia, and denounce other deities' altars, and asherim and incense altars (*hammanim*) which include not only altars and Asherim, but also the high places (*bamot*) where these objects were considered to have been used –(Isa. 17 :8,27:9, Jer. 17 :2, Mic. 5:10 -15). Long before the prophets condemned and raised objections to the usage of these practices and elements legally, some of these practices belonged to Yahweistic cult. For instance, the Asherah, high places were acceptable both in the period of the judges and during the monarchy. Samuel is described to be conducting worship at a high place in 1st Samuel chapters 9-10 while in 1 Kgs. 3:4-5, Yahweh appeared to King Solomon in a dream in high place of Gibeon. Even Solomon sacrificed and burned incense at high places, which indicates royal support for these traditional religious practices. There are indications that high places functioned in Israel down to the reign of king Josiah.- (2 Kgs. 23 : 8, cf 2 Chro. 14 :4). However a Deuteronomistic apology for Solomon's use of the high place claims justification for him, that because no house had yet been built for the name of the Lord.²⁵

Yahweh starts out as a local manifestation of Canaanite *El* who is accepted as the national god of the early Israelites. The only Baal type characteristic he might have at this stage would be that as warrior hero. It was claimed that Yahweh is a shortened form of a sentence name taken from a cultic formula *Yahwe šba'ot*. On the basis of the mythological parallels, *šba'ot* in this context probably means "the hosts of heaven," the *bani 'ilima*, "sons of 'EL" or "holy ones." In this case Yahweh is described as *du yahwi šba'ot* "He who creates the (heavenly) armies," a title of the divine warrior and creator. It is thus not greatly different from 'El's epithets, "Father of the gods," "creator of creatures." Moreover, such an epithet lent itself to use not merely as a creation formula, but as an appropriate name of the god who called together the tribes to form the militia of the League, who led Israel in her historical wars. In the holy war ideology Yahweh led the cosmic forces of heaven alongside

²⁵ S. M. Smith, 2002. *The Early History of God, Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan. pp. 160- 162.

the armies of Israel.²⁶ Until recently, many followed the masterful synthesis of Albright, who held that Israelite religion, from the start, rejected the Canaanite deities and demanded exclusive loyalty to one God, Yahweh. The normative Israelite cult, in this view struggled against Canaanite syncretistic influence in "popular" circles, and gradually the monolatry of early Yahwism developed into fully expressed monotheism by the exilic period. Thus, we see that the theological history of the Israelite nation begins with monotheism, with no place for gods or polytheism.

The introduction of gods into the Israelite nation is first attested in the Bible when it makes mention of Laban's daughter and wife of Jacob, Rachel, stealing her father's household gods. Although the reference is here made as a matter of course, soon we see that keeping gods, believing in a multiplicity of gods, and worshipping them is totally prohibited and condemned.

God entered the Israelite nation through other foreign nations. "So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, 'Get rid of the foreign gods you have with you, and purify yourselves and change your clothes' (Gen. 35:2). Note that God's declaration against worshipping gods would come to his people only later on in the theological history of the Israelite nation, in Ex.2. Polytheism is a perversion of divinely revealed truth to smuggle in falsehood. For all the gods of the nations are idols (1 Chro.16:26), and these idols are worthless (2 Kgs. 17:15). These worthless idols did no good to people (Jer. 16:19). The idol gods speak²⁷ deceit (Zech. 10:2). People pray to gods that cannot save (Isa.45: 20). Man-made gods are no gods at all (Acts19:26).

A new critical consensus is emerging, in which Smith's work plays an important part. According to this view, early Israelite worship included Yahweh along with El, Asherah, Baal, and other divinities attested in extra-biblical sources, especially the Ugaritic texts. Through processes of "convergence and differentiation," in Smith's terms, some features of these pre-Israelite gods merged with the figure of Yahweh, others were rejected as Canaanite. Thus, at Israel's origins, there was no Mosaic monotheism, as Albright famously conceived it.

²⁶ Dietrich, Manfred; Loretz, Oswald; *Ugarit-Forschungen: Internationales Jahrbuch für die Altertumskunde Syrien-Palästinas, Volume 31*. p.362.

²⁷ S. M. Smith, 2004. *The Early History of God, Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. pp. 160- 162.

Moreover, in order to embrace the monotheism that took shape later in the biblical period, it was necessary for Israel to reinterpret or to suppress the memory of its own polytheistic beginnings. Smith and his colleagues reached this view of early Israelite religion by means of conventional historical-critical methods, but Smith suggests that comparative work in collective memory studies will help to explain the conflicted quality of biblical Israel's relationship to its past. The Deuteronomic writer described Israel as a peculiar people unto Yahweh (Deut. 14: 2.) 'He says did any people ever hear the voice of a god speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard and still live? Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation'. He hath not dealt thus with any other nation" - Ps. 147: 20, Deut. 4: 33 – 34. This shows that Israel had from the beginning of its history belonged to God in a way which was unique, the result of a purely divine choice. It is clear that the development of Israel's religious institutions must run parallel with the various stages of her growth into a nation. There was patriarchal period, Israel in the wilderness, the tribal period embracing the conquest and settlement in Canaan, the monarchical period, and the post-exilic period.

Most of the religious institutions of Israel can be found in the experiences of the patriarchs revealed in the fragmentary traditions preserved in the Book of Genesis. The first element of the cult which calls for consideration is the *berith* - the covenant in Genesis 15 and Exodus 32 & 33. We have the account of the first establishing of a covenant between Yahweh and Abraham and a description of the ritual, which accompanied the making of the covenant. All the patriarchs are said to have built altars: Abraham at Bethel – Gen. 12: 8, Hebron – Gen. 13 : 18 and Mt. Moriah – Gen. 22 : 9; and Isaac at Beersheba – Gen. 26 : 25; and Jacob at Shechem – Gen. 33 : 30, Bethel – Gen. 35: 7. In the earliest period individual heads of families played the role of priesthood in the family, or the eldest man was the priest in the large families. But as sacrificial worship developed, both the kings and the priests became prominent in the community sacrificial service.²⁸

At the time of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, the world was almost wholly given to idolatry. The first objects of idolatrous worship were probably simply the sun, moon and heavenly bodies, or other conspicuous objects of creative wisdom and power. New Testament writers, such as John, present Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all the Jewish

²⁸ E. Jacob, 1958. *Theology of the Old Testament*, London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd, pp. 250-255.

cultus and the fulfillment of all Jewish prophetic hopes for instance Jn. 2:19-21 concerning Him; God chose from the masses of heathendom one man, called him alone and led him to follow Him into a strange land. He used him and his descendants. God welded them together into one, so that they might be able to receive and retain as a part of their national life those great truths with which they were to be entrusted. He accomplished the welding by the tie of a common parentage, by the bond common of an occupation, and by the pressure of a common trial, which together with the marvelous deliverance granted them, remained fresh and indelible in all after their generations.

God set Himself to teach them concerning some of those great qualities, the knowledge of which lay at the foundation of all right dealings between the people and Himself. In order to achieve His purpose, He made use of outward significant signs; which did more than the most elaborate discourse to instruct the people He had taken for His own. He clearly designated Moses to be the organ and channel of communication to them. It may be said that the various cultic practices of Israel have their close parallels in the religions of Canaan or, in their more developed form, of Mesopotamia, looking at the acts of sacrifice, Passover rites, new moons and Sabbath. But the decisive event, which determined Israel's faith and practice, according to Herbert, was Exodus from Egypt, when Israel's history and religion truly began. Israel had some form of organization (Ex. 17:9-13, 18:25, Num. 11:17).

God entered the covenant with His people at Sinai to restore to man, and to require of man, dominion over His creation, which man had squandered in Eden God gave Israel a "heaven-planned culture" which was what He had always intended for all mankind. At Sinai, God gave Israel a distinct identity, giving explicit instructions regarding the distinctive lifestyle He wanted them to adopt. But the new lifestyle was not easy to adjust to. However, having accepted God's directives for a God-centered culture; they entered their inheritance and established a kingdom reflecting God's design for justice and righteousness. Israel's new lifestyle was markedly different from the lifestyles of the nations surrounding her because of the modeling of a theocracy-God's kingdom among men.²⁹

The ritual of circumstances was adopted by the Hebrew tribes after their entry into Canaan. Both Abraham and Jacob are said to have offered sacrifices, Abraham at Mt. Moriah – Gen. 22: 1- 13, and Jacob in connection with his covenant with Laban – Gen. 31:

²⁹ Philip M. Steyne, 1992. *The God of the nations*, Houston, Touch Publications, Inc. pp. 137-144.

54. The offering of Isaac and the substitution of a ram for the human victim raises the question of the institution of human sacrifice and its obstinate survival in Israel. Ephod is a cult object – Judges 8: 27, 17: 5, 18: 14, 7; I Sam. 2: 28, 14: 3, 21: 10. Ephod was used to make inquiry of Yahweh; it was so in two cases. Ephod can also mean a linen garment worn by the priests – I Sam. 2 : 18, 22 : 18, II Sam. 6 : 14; and in the later laws, a special vestment of the high priest - Ex. 28 : 6 – 14, 29 : 5, 39 : 2 – 7, Lev. 8 : 7, which had a pocket of breast piece *bosen* to contain the Urim and Thumim.³⁰

It is primarily from the Old Testament that we have learned what we know about this invisible Being we call God Almighty that He is unapproachable by anything or anyone unclean, or anyone tainted by sin. That is why before the Israelites could come into the presence of God, they had to undergo careful and detailed rituals of sacrifice and cleansing from sin. God entered into a relationship with ancient Israel through the terms of the old covenant. The Old Testament testifies to family worship before and when they were in Egypt. When the Israelites left Egypt, their concepts about divinity were heavily influenced by the Egyptians and the other nations of the region.

Judaism, the religion of the Jews, is built firmly on the Torah or Law that were given by God to Moses, with which God promised that if the Israelites obeyed the Law they would be blessed and becoming blessings to other nations of the world.³¹ The book of Exodus proclaims that God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt so that they might worship him. They were redeemed for the purpose of worship (Ex. 3:18; 7:16; 20:2). Later in their history, with the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem and the building of the Temple as a permanent sanctuary, the exodus tradition became attached to the city of David. The rule of God was then expressed through the Davidic kingship and God's presence with his people was expressed through the Temple.

In general, the people were to approach, engage and know God through the sacred cultic system that was set up in connection with the Sanctuary. Within a covenant framework, the sacrificial system was the means by which God made it possible for a sinful people to draw near to him, to receive his grace and blessing, without desecrating his holiness and so incurring his wrath against them. By God's provision through the cult, the

³⁰ This variation of meaning is partially obscured by the RSV which follows the traditional KJV rendering.

³¹ Fritz, Ridenour, 1979. *So what's the difference?* Ventura California: Regal Books. p. 57.

covenant relationship could be maintained. The failure of ancient Israel to worship God in the way that he found acceptable culminated in the judgment of exile. The prophetic hope for the restoration of Israel and the blessing of all nations was the vision of renewed worship in a new Temple (Ezek.) Records have shown that God's self-revelation to ancient Israel was particularly associated with the Exodus/Sinai event, the Tabernacle and the Temple. Hahn said that there were two preliminary components that produced specifically Israelite worship. These are worship of the God of the fathers on the part of the desert tribes, which probably included the Pre-Yahwistic original form of Passover, and the Yahweh cult of the early period, associated with the Sinai tradition.³²

The ancient Israelites worship may be divided into two main periods, patriarchal and theocratic. Prior to the Mosaic institutions, there were few indications of formal and public worship among the patriarchs. The times of the patriarchs reveal rather the individual, personal, and occasional acts of worship that would characterize a semi-nomadic people living apart from organized society for instance, Abraham at Moriah, Gen 22:1-5; Jacob at Bethel, Gen 28:18-22). Genesis does, however, picture the beginnings of ritualistic religion in the institution of sacrifices and the building of altars (Gen 4:3-4, 26; 8:20-22). There was little information about the nature the earliest Yahweh cult and occurrence of the covenant concept and individual ceremonies. It was only after the entrance into Canaan that there was a closer alliance with the constitution of an Israelite amphictyony at the Shechem assembly in Joshua Chapter 24. Even in the earliest period of the Israelites certain traditions of the settled territory became associated with her faith, because it was evident that immediately afterward there was an extensive adoption of formerly Canaanite Cultic practices and traditions in her system. The entire sacrificial and festival cult that remained authoritative and legal was associated with an all- encompassing propitiatory ritual, reaching its high point in the annual observance of the great Day of Atonement –Lev. 16.³³

3.2 Centralisation of the Cult in Israel

In the Old Testament LORD seems distant; he is approached only with fear, trembling, and sacrifice. He is present only in certain geographical location, and these places, whether altar, tabernacle, or temple, are surrounded with prohibitions and taboos.

³² Ferdinand Hahn, 1980. *The Worship of the Early Church*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press p. 7-11.

³³ Roland de Vaux, 1964. *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press p.17.

Whereas in the New Testament, God seems close to worshippers and we have an intimate relationship with Him.³⁴ It is not an exaggeration to say that the religion of Israel as a nation cannot be separated from her history; and it can be assumed, based on her traditions, that religion accounted for the beginning of the nation. This makes religion to be very significant for the Israelites, since it covers her total life.

Nevertheless, it is the worship of Yahweh that gave Israel's religion its unique character although there have been various opinions by Old Testament scholars on whether or not the Israelite religion was Yahwistic from her cradle to when it became a centralized religion. Some were of the opinion that the Yahweh who revealed Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai was none other than the Yahweh who revealed Himself to the patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, it is claimed that the religion of Israel really began with Abraham when he was asked to leave his home in Mesopotamia and later commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Von Rad opines that the pre- Mosaic ancestors of Israel had not always been worshippers of Yahweh, but His self- revelation entered their life at a definite point in time.³⁵ This view is based on the fact that the Elohist and the priestly document take account of this gap in the continuity of the history of revelation. According to Alberts, it is believed generally that Israel's religion went through processes of development because no religion has absolute beginnings or lies in total isolation from the rest; rather, all built on earlier strata of religion. This fact is true of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity.³⁶ Walton says "Israel while being the recipient of divine revelation that gave her a unique theological distinctiveness, reflected in many ways the culture of the ancient Near East. Such a reflection implies that Israelite thinking cannot be understood in isolation from its ancient Near Eastern cultural context. The similarities that exist can be very instructive and should not be ignored. The Ancient Near East literature should and instruct us about the common worldview of biblical times. Israel at times conformed to that worldview and at times

³⁴ Longman Tremper, III, 2005. *Making sense of the Old Testament*. Michigan: Baker Book House Co.p.98.

³⁵ Von Rad as quoted by Ronald Youngblood, 1983 . *The Heart Of the Old Testament* Grand Rapids; Baker Book House.

³⁶ Rainer Alberts, 1992. *A history of Israelite religion In The Old Testament Period Vol.1* (London: SCM Press, p. 25.

departed from it; in either case, we can appreciate and understand Israel better once we know what informed the assumptions of surrounding cultures.”³⁷

A wide variety of archaeological discoveries added some important information to the historical record of Israelites culture. The data provided illuminates how the religion and liturgy of Israel have experienced major changes in scholarly perspective. The most significant change involves Israel’s cultural identity. That Israelite culture largely overlapped with and derived from Canaanite culture, that is to say Israelite culture was largely Canaanite in nature. The Israelites early life witnessed a spectrum of religious worship that included the cults of various Canaanite deities. Inscriptional and biblical evidence reflects the overwhelming religious hegemony of Yahweh for nearly all periods of Israelite history. In early history of Israel, the cult of Yahweh generally held sway, nevertheless Israelite religion apparently included worship of Yahweh, El, Asherah and Baal. Halpern wrote that, “The shape of this religious spectrum in early Israel changed due in large measure to two major developments; the first was convergence and the second was differentiation”.³⁸

Information gathered shows that ancient Israel continued most of the Canaanite heritage religious practices in juxtaposition with Yahwistic cult such as practices associated with the dead. Spronk made efforts in his contributions to minimize the Canaanite cum Israelite nature pertaining to the dead by distinguishing between Yahwistic religion and popular religion.³⁹ At Mt. Sinai a unique event happened in the history of Israel and mankind. Here we found the roots and greatness of a faith without precedent or prototype which was strong enough to conquer the globe.⁴⁰

It was where she pledged her faith to one sole omnipotent God and put herself under the obedience of Yahweh. Moses, who believed in a host of deities and in gods of all shapes and forms; here proclaimed his faith only in one God. Moses who was brought up in a foreign land was the herald of monotheism. He spoke to the people whom Werner describes

³⁷ John Walton, 1990. *Ancient Israelite Literature In its Cultural Context* Grand Rapids: Zondervan publishing House, p. 13.

³⁸ Baruch Halpern, 1987. *Brisker Pipes than Poetry: The Development of Israelite Monotheism in Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel*, Philadelphia: Fortress. p 88.

³⁹ Spronk. K. Beutific, 1986. *Afterlife in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 219, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn, p.138-140.

⁴⁰ T. J. Lewis, 1989. *Cults of the dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, HSM 39, Atlanta, G A: Scholars press, 1989 pp 1-4.

as 'Nomads in their goats- hair tents, camping in the desert under the open sky, are the first to hear this astounding message, to accept it and transmit it ... they speak among themselves of the one great God, YHWH'. This assertion was revealed through archeological discoveries in Egypt, the land in which Moses grew up and received his education. The lands of the Ancient East and Egypt experienced the worship of numerous deities. Both the sun-worship of *Akhnaten* and the appearance in Mesopotamia of a blending of many deities into one sole god, *Ninurta*, god of war, are but vague preludes to monotheism.⁴¹

In all these conceptions what is lacking is the concentrated power and redemptive moral purpose rooted in the Ten Commandments, which Moses brought down from the lonely heights of Mt. Sinai unto the hearts and minds of men. One thing that cannot be denied is that it is only among the people of Israel out of the whole of the area Keller calls 'Fertile Crescent,' that there was the awakening of the new idea of God in all its clarity and purity, untainted magic, free from a variegated and grotesque imagery, and conceived as something other than a materialistic preparation for perpetuating the self beyond the grave. During the theocratic period, the corporate and ritualistic concept of worship became prominent. A very highly organized and comprehensive system of worship which was revealed to Moses by God at Sinai, which included:

1. Special kinds of offerings and sacrifices for the whole nation: (a) daily (Num. 28:3-8); (b) each Sabbath (Num 28:9-10; Lev.24:8); (c) at the new moon (Num. 28:11-15); (d) the Passover or the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Num. 28:16-25; Ex. 12:1 -4). on the fourteenth day of the first month, which is the prototype of Christ and was succeeded by the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:17- 29)⁴²; (e) Feast of Weeks or of the First fruits of the wheat harvest (Lev. 23:15-20; Num. 28:26-31), which is the prototype of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; in that Christ was to be sinless, only unleavened bread was to be used in the Passover; in that we are sinful, leavened bread was to be used for Pentecost; (f) Feast of Trumpets on the first day of the seventh month, which is prophetic of the final future re-gathering of Israel (Lev. 23:23-25; Num 29:1-6; cf. Isa. 18:3; 27:12-13; Joel 2:15-32); (g) Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:26-32; Num. 29:7-11), on the tenth day of the seventh month, which was to be a time of repentance and was prophetic of Israel's final repentance at

⁴¹ Werner Keller, 1959. *The Bible as History*, London, Hodder & Stoughton . p.139.

⁴² Roland de Vaux, 1964 . *Studies in O.T Sacrifice*, Cardiff :University of Wales Press p.17

Christ's second coming (Zech. 12:10 -12.; 13:6; Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7); (h) The Feast of Tabernacles, when on the fifteenth day of the seventh month just after the harvest was in, while the people dwelt in booths made with boughs of trees in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, the priests offered seven days of special sacrifices (Lev. 23:33-44; Num. 29:13 ff).⁴³

2. Particular sacrifices to be offered by an individual for himself and his family, such as the Passover meal and the Passover itself (Ex. 12; cf. Lev. 23:5); a burnt offering of a male of the flock without blemish, for himself and his family (Lev. 1:1 ff) with which he identified himself and upon which both his and their sin were typically placed as he put his hand on the head of the offering as it was slain; a meal offering as an offering of praise pointing to the perfections of God and of Christ (Lev. 2); a peace offering pointing to Christ as our peace (Lev. 3). For sins of ignorance there were appropriate offerings- (Lev. 4-5) and for trespasses (Lev. 6:1-7).

3. Special sacrifices for the priests themselves at the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:2, 14, 15); at the anointing of a priest (Ex. 29:15 ff ; Lev. 6:19-23); when a priest sinned (Lev. 4:3 ff); at the purification of women (Lev 12:6, 8); for the cleansing of lepers (Lev. 14:19); to remove ceremonial uncleanness (Lev.15:15, 30); at the conclusion or the breach of a Nazarene vow (Num. 6:11-14). It was God Himself that initiated a change when at Sinai made formal the transition of God's people from a family to a nation (Ex .19-24), He revealed His intention to Moses on Mount Sinai at that time a single open altar like that used by the patriarchs would no longer suffice for so numerous a people, God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle where He could make His presence known in a special way (Ex. 25:9;26:30). Now that the people of God were numerous, He established a larger corporate place of Worship and used the occasion to institute the priesthood a whole tribe (The Levites) was established. No longer could the head of the clan handle the responsibilities required.⁴⁴

Joshua, in obedience to Moses' instructions, brought Israel together and led them in worship and covenant ceremony immediately Israelites entered the promised land (Deut.

⁴³ K. B. Spronk, 1986. *Afterlife in Ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East*, AOAT 219, Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker pp. 138-140.

⁴⁴ Tremper Longman III, 2005. *Making Sense of The Old Testament 3 Crucial Questions*, Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books. p. 92.

27:1-8; Jos. 8:30-35) and did it again at Shechem in order to forestall the very kind of covenant defection which he had suspected in the altar by the Jordan erected by the eastern tribes. In his realization that a new generation had arisen and faced new conditions, he once again assembled the nation for covenant renewal, which means in this gathering and centralisation of worship, he was addressing a new generation of Israelites, a generation which had for the most part not participated in such covenant renewal and worship. He first rehearsed all of God's mighty works on Israel's behalf (Jos. 23), how he had fought for them, given them inheritance in the land. Though part of the land had not yet been occupied but he assured them of ultimate success.

This would depend on their obedience and firm adherence to the covenant requirements. Failure to fulfil the covenant would invite wrath and judgement of Yahweh, Holy God. He, therefore, urged them to join him in rejecting all rival monarchs that is other gods, and being loyal only to Yahweh. They concurred and pledged their total obedience to Yahweh and rejected other gods.⁴⁵

The covenant ceremony was followed "by a rite which included the recording of the commitment and the erection of a commemorative steal which ever afterwards would serve to witness to the promises that they had made. The ceremony took place at Shechem, for it was there that Israel's father, Abraham called into the covenant by Yahweh, had himself erected an altar in celebration of the theophanic presence of God."⁴⁶ There was undoubtedly much confusion during the period of the judges. The dispersion of the tribes throughout the land further unsettled the religious picture. In the Judges period, Israelite divinities might have included Yahweh, *El*, Baal and Asherah. During the monarchy, Yahweh, Baal, Astarte, the sun, the moon and stars were considered deities in Israel. The emergence of Israel as a people coincided with the appearance of Yahweh as its central deity.⁴⁷

The corporate concept of worship, in spite of everything, was destined to increase. Sanctuaries were established and sought out by the people year after year; Dan, Gilgal, Shechem, Shiloh, and Beersheba, to name the more important places. Syncretistic tendencies

⁴⁵ H. Merrill Eugene, 1987. *Kingdom of Priests, A History of Old Testament Israel*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company p. 137.

⁴⁶ H. M. Eugene, 1987. *Kingdom of Priests, A History of Old Testament Israel*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Company, pp. 137-140.

⁴⁷ S. M. Smith, 2002. *The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis: Fortress. pp. 182- 184.

in religion constantly corrupted the worship at these places, infusing pagan practices into the religion of Israel. Due to constant and increasing corruption, Israel's religion was at low ebb when Saul and the monarchy arrived. There are indications that the people were sacrificing at the high places claiming that special centralized temple as place of worship were yet to be built. The high places functioned in Israel up to the time of King Josiah. King Solomon was at the high place of Gibeon where Yahweh appeared to him in a dream. Prophet Amos even referred to the high places in the northern Kingdom like the royal religion of the central sanctuaries. These high places were staffed with priests who conducted sacrifices. (1 Kgs. 13 :2,33; 23:20; 2 Kgs. 17 :11, 18: 22, 23 : 8- 9,15; 2 Chr. 14 :4, Am. 7 :9,13, Ezek. 6:3-4,18:6,15;20 :28). The geographical range of the high places reflects “a widespread popular support for high places because high places were found both in the urban and rural settings probably for clan religion, as opposed to sanctuaries and temples, which operated for higher levels of social complexity (tribes and nations), under “higher” authorities (traditional priests lines at sanctuaries, some employed as monarchic functionaries”.⁴⁸

According to Biblical tradition, all sectors of Israelite society ,including priests, prophets, and kings, participated in what was later condemned as non-Yahweistic religion especially practices pertaining to the dead, deities and their cult symbols as well (Isa. 28 :7;30 :10; Jer. 2:26-28; 6:13). Therefore, either the Law or the literary prophets may not⁴⁹ be accepted to represent the official religion of Israel or a clear distinction between official and popular religion cannot be supported, at least for some deities and cultic practices.⁵⁰ The Sinaitic covenant had a remarkable significance in their life, later in their history. With the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem and the building of the Temple as a permanent sanctuary, the Sinai tradition became attached to the city of David. The rule of God was then expressed through the Davidic kingship and God's presence which His people expressed through the Temple.

God entered into a relationship with ancient Israel through the terms of the old covenant. The Tabernacle and Temple became the chief representation of the relationship,

⁴⁸ S. M Smith, 2002, *The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Grand Rapids Michigan : Wm.B. Publishing Co. p.161.

⁴⁹ S. M .Smith, 2002. *The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Grand Rapids Michigan : Wm.B. Publishing co. p .182.

⁵⁰ S. M. Smith, 2002.*The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel* Grand Rapids Michigan : Wm.B. Publishing Co. p. 167.

so that man will know that God loves to dwell among them or else, to their minds, God would always have seemed distant and unapproachable (Ex. 24 : 44) . A new stage was claimed to be marked by the association of the amphictyonic cult with the Jebusites cult traditions of Jerusalem under David. In his effort to centralize the life of the Kingdom, he brought the Ark, the ancient symbol of God's presence into the Sanctuary in Jerusalem. The establishment of a centre both politically and religiously for the administration of the Kingdom were followed by consolidation in many other ways. Indeed, David's reign could be viewed as a time of religious revival which culminated in the erection of the temple under Solomon's authority. Undoubtedly David's own experience of worship in private and fellowship with the Lord in the most trying circumstances gave him the desire to lead others to praise and worship God – Psa. 42:1-4; 122:1; 2 Sam. 6:12-18; 1Chr. 16:1-36.⁵¹

The monarchy tended to be conservative in its modifications of traditional religious forms. Older covenantal forms became prominent under the monarchy, and the royal Davidic covenant drew on an older Israelite concept of the covenantal relationship binding Israel to Yahweh as the only main deity. The special relationship between Yahweh and the Davidic dynasty assumed the form of a formal covenantal relationship called, in 2 Sam. 23:5, an “eternal covenant” (*berit olam*).⁵² The Temple in Jerusalem, according to the biblical text, was finally built by King Solomon in the tenth century B.C. and was well established as a national shrine for Yahweh by the eighth century. There were also other shrines, some extant before the erection of the Temple in Jerusalem, in use at Bethel, Dan, Shechem, and Gilgal, in the northern kingdom.⁵³

This achieved special significance in centralization of worship for the Israelites. The innovative centralisation of national worship was also part of the process leading to monotheistic Yahwism, as it encouraged a single national deity and devalued local manifestations of deity. They claimed then that Yahweh God is the creator of the universe, the earth, and all mankind, that He is the only one true and living God, who has revealed

⁵¹ Peter R. Ackroyd, 1986. *The People of The Old Testament*, Madras , India : Christian Literature Society ,pp. 53-56.

⁵² S. M. Smith, 2002. *The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis: Fortress p. 185.

⁵³ Oded Borowski, 2003. *Daily Life in Biblical Times*, Archaeology and Biblical Studies 5; Atlanta: SBL. p. 13.

Himself to them at the wilderness and must never demote Him to the status of a tribal deity or petty gods like Chemosh the god of the Moabites, or Milcom (Molech) the god of the Ammonites; or Baal, the male deity, or Ashtoreth, the female deity, of the Canaanites.⁵⁴

King Josiah and Hezekiah's actions were also a significant step of centralisation of the cult shortly before the exile, which was based on Deuteronomistic ideas. McCarter comments on these two Davidic Kings thus: "their policies, by unifying the worship of Yahweh, had the effect of unifying the way in which He was conceived by His worshippers, thus eliminating the earlier theology of local manifestations".⁵⁵ But this was confirmed by the principles of the Priestly Document which depended on Ezekiel and the Holiness code. No doubt the centralisation of the cult began before the Exile. The effect of the temple on Israel's worship was unequalled by any other factor. Gradually all other places of worship were eliminated, and the temple in Jerusalem remained as the only place for sacrifice, the basis of worship. The Tabernacle built before settling in the land of Canaan and the Temple built by King Solomon in Jerusalem were taken as holy places, and heart of religious ceremony and practice, though according to Verkuyl, they were intended not just to serve Israel, but also had a wider purpose by bringing blessings to foreigners – 1 Kings 8: 41-43, 54-56.⁵⁶

Besides all the offerings and sacrifices specified by God in the Mosaic Law, there developed a system of public worship in such things as:⁵⁷

- 1) Special sacrificial acts for extraordinary occasions, such as the consecration of the tabernacle – Num. 7 or of Solomon's temple – 2 Chr. 7:5 ff.
- 2) Particular ceremonial acts at which the people expressed unusual reverence, such as when the high priest offered incense in the holy place, when Solomon blessed the people (1Kgs 8:14, and when the priests sounded the silver trumpets (2 Chr. 7:6).
- 3) Services of praise at the temple when vocal song and musical instruments of every sort were employed (2Chro. 5:13). Moses composed a song of deliverance after God had led

⁵⁴ S. M. Smith, 2002. *The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis: Fortress p. 186.

⁵⁵ S. M. Smith, 2002. *The Early History of God Yahweh and the other Deities in Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis: Fortress p. 186.

⁵⁶ J. Verkuyl, 1978. *Contemporary Missiology: An introduction* (D. Cooper, Ed. and Trans), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. pp.95 -96.

⁵⁷ J. Verkuyl, 1978. *Contemporary Missiology: An introduction* (D. Cooper, Ed. and Trans), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. pp.95 -96.

the people to walk on dry land through the Red Sea, and Miriam, his sister, and the women accompanied their antiphony with tumbrels (Ex. 15:1, 20). David had appointed a choir of Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord after its recovery from the Philistines -1Chro. 16:4, and had set up an orchestra (1Chro. 16:6, 42-43; cf. 2 Sam.6:5). The last psalm commands that musical instruments of every sort be used to praise the Lord (-Ps. 150). There are possibly some antiphonal psalms like -Ps. 20, 21, 24; 107, 118

- 4) Public prayer as when the people were led by Moses -Deut. 26:15, by Solomon (1Kg. 8:23-54, and as found in Ps. 51, 60, 79, 80 and many others.
- 5) Public addresses, such as Moses' summation of his work with five discourses in the book of Deuteronomy; Solomon speaking to the congregation (2Ch. 6:4-11); Nehemiah having the law read and then having the Levites pray (Neh. 9:3-38; cf. 13:1-5). It is revealed that after the captives returned from Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple was, in a sense, the rebirth of national religion. In the centuries following the return, Israel's worship became even more highly developed and ritualistic.

The religious calendar was expanded to include the post-Exilic feasts and holy observances. The Temple was not just a building, but the centre that brought the worship of the entire nation into focus. Some evidence reveals that some sects of Judaism (such as the Essenes) were anti-temple in their expression of worship, but the main stream of Jewish life, fed by many and differing tributaries such as the Sadducees and the Pharisees, flowed through the temple. After the return from the Babylonian Exile, the synagogue appeared as a rival to the temple. The synagogue was designed for instruction and not worship; but practically, there appears to have been some element of worship in the synagogue service from its beginning.⁵⁸

In fact, it was an increasing element; and after the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, the synagogue appropriated to itself all that remained of Jewish worship. With the ministry, death, burial, and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, all the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings became a thing of the past. There is now "no more sacrifice for sins," for the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world - Jn. 1:29, Heb. 10:26. Now

⁵⁸ G. J. Wenham, January 1985. *The New International commentary on the Old Testament: The Book of Leviticus*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co. p. 10.

the believer has an advocate before God in Christ to plead for him if he repents of his sin -1 Jn. 1:9; 2:1, and he needs no earthly priest. Therefore, the form of worship soon began to change. Old covenant worship forms have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus brought something new to the worship of God. Since worship is the response of God's people to his mighty acts of salvation and grace, the content and form of worship is a direct reflection of the fundamental beliefs of God's people. Jesus summarised the essence of Christian belief in Lk. 24:44-48. Luke records:

He said to them, 'this is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'this is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

Public worship, in the first days of Christianity was still associated with the temple. The book of Acts pictures Jewish Christians continuing their worship in the temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:20, 42), even to the time of Paul's arrest (Acts 21:26-33). Only the hostility of those who controlled the temple seemingly kept the first Christians from that holy place. At the same time Christianity began to turn toward private residences for places of assembly (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12). The element of sacrifice which was basic in the temple was perpetuated only in the supper which memorialised the sacrificial death of Christ. This observance seems to have been at first a part of a communal meal which Christians shared (1Cor. 11:20-34). Later it became associated especially with the Lord's Day, the day that soon was set aside for Christian worship. The Jewish Sabbath was gradually displaced by the first day of the week, resting as that day did upon the earliest Christian experience with the resurrected Christ (John 20:19,26; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev 1:10).

Preaching and teaching were elements of supreme importance in public meetings for the young churches (Acts 11:26; 15:35; 18:25; 20:7). Those elements that were part of worship in Judaism also appeared in early Christian services; reading of the Old Testament (1Tim. 4:13; Prayer (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinth. 14:14-16); singing (Eph. 5:19; Col 3:16); and giving of alms 1 Cor. 16:1-2. Christ did not Himself prescribe for His disciples specific forms of public worship, no doubt assuming that His own example and the Holy Spirit

would bring it about spontaneously. He stressed that worshipers must worship God "in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:23 f) and sought to guard their worship from merely outward forms, emphasizing privacy and reality before God (Mat 6:1-18). The Apostle Paul permits us to glimpse something of his private devotional life when he tells of speaking mysteries to God by his spirit and of praying, singing, and blessing God both with the spirit and with the mind (1Cor 14:2, 14-19).⁵⁹

In summary, Christian worship is entering into, or participating in, the gospel; it is not entering into the Israelite Exodus. The worship pattern given to ancient Israel was, for them, given specifically to them so they could properly respond in worship and celebration for what God had done for them at the Red Sea, in the wilderness and in the Promised Land.⁶⁰ Christian worship, on the other hand, is Spirit-guided and is not found in a written code (Jn. 4:24), just as the law of Christ is rooted in the Spirit and not in a written code. Christian worship specifically responds to the gospel, the surprising and amazing new thing, planned from the very beginning, which God did in the fullness of time in Jesus Christ for the salvation of all the people of the earth.

3.3 Cultic functionaries and their duties

The Yahweh who entered into the history of the Israelites did not remain inactive in the wilderness period and in Religious leadership resided in priests who were associated with sanctuaries, and also in Prophets, who were bearers of divine oracles. In the political sphere the king was understood as the appointee and agent of Yahweh.⁶¹ It seems that during the earlier ages of the world, every man was allowed to offer up sacrifices for himself. It was clearer that at inception among the Semites, there were no developed personnel; religion partook of the general simplicity of desert life.⁶² Before Aaron and his descendants were chosen as priests, family heads carried on priestly functions like offering sacrifices. Moses had some young men to make the sacrifices to confirm the covenant (Ex.24:5). May be these

⁵⁹ A. S. Herbert, 1959. *Worship in Ancient Israel*, Richmond: John Knox Press,

⁶⁰ Moshe Greenberg, 1960. *The Religion of Israel, trans. and abridged*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, Franklin M. Segler, 1967. *Christian Worship: Its Theology and Practice*, Nashville: Broadman Press. H. Strathmann, "Latreuo, etc.," TDNT, IV, 58-65.

⁶¹ Patrick D Miller, 2000. *The Religion of Ancient Israel*, Westminster John Knox Press. pp.50-51.

⁶² S. J. Rui De Menezes, 2009. *The Old Testament for Our Times* Mumbai: St Pauls Press p.186.

were the firstborn who had been redeemed at Passover, and for whom the Levites later became the substitute.⁶³

There used to be private worship of household gods and the oblations and salutations offered at the graves of the departed kinsmen, visits to the tribal sanctuary to salute to worship with a gift of first-fruits or the occasional pilgrimage to discharge a vow at the annual feast and fair of one of the more distant holy places. These acts required no priestly aid; each man slew his own victim and divided the sacrifice in his own circle. The share of the god was the blood which was smeared upon or poured out beside the stone set up as an altar or perhaps as a symbol of the deity. The sacrifices and offerings were acknowledgments of divine bounty and means used to ensure its continuance. The sanctuary later became a seat of judgement, and there compacts were sealed by oaths and sacrificial ceremonies. During the Patriarchal period, there had been only a few people, and the head of family or clan could easily serve as a priestly type of mediator.⁶⁴ Israel was chosen to be God's peculiar people. She was given obligation through opportunities God gave them to fulfil their covenant obligations. However, their sinful and disobedience life prevented its realization. When brought before Jehovah God at Sinai, they could not endure the immediate presence of God, and there arose the need for a special divinely chosen person to be a mediator. This need arose in order to maintain fellowship between the Holy God and the sinful nation.

It was then the religious personnel were instituted for Israel.⁶⁵ Looking at the practice of theocracy it would have been impossible without human agents acting for the LORD, in this sense He appointed three sets of people who have different functions to play in Israel. The priests were chosen to officiate at the Holy Place of the tabernacle temple. Because of their function as intermediaries between God and Israel and because of their proximity to the temple, they were dedicated by God to the office of priest (Lev 21:6-8). Aaron as the high priest was "the holy one of the Lord (Ps 106:16). The priests were to offer

⁶³ Lois Fuller, 2008. *The Pentateuch Foundation of God's Message to the World*, Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks p.89.

⁶⁴ Tremper Longman III., 2005. *Making Sense of the Old Testament 3 Crucial Questions*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids Michigan. pp. 90 -91.

⁶⁵ Merrill F. Unger, 1961. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*; Moody Press, Chicago, p. 886.

sacrifice in the altar, the king to be on the throne and prophets are to declare the Word of the LORD as His oracle.

The Levites were set apart for priestly service, surrounded the tabernacle, creating a buffer against anybody who might intentionally or unintentionally profane the holy sacred place. While Aaron's priestly descendants could go only into the tabernacle area, it was only the High priest who could enter only on the Day of Atonement the Most Holy Place.⁶⁶ In the Book of Exodus we read of the Priests who came near the Lord and of young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace offerings to the Lord at a period prior to the choice of the tribe of Levi, or the consecration of Aaron and his family. (Ex. 28, Heb. 5, Jn. 10:11; Phil.).⁶⁷ The earliest forms of Hebrew priesthood were not Canaanites in character.⁶⁸ It was God Himself that initiated a change when at Sinai He made formal the transition of God's people from a family to a nation (Ex 19- 24).⁶⁹ He revealed His intention to Moses on Mount Sinai at that time a single open altar like that used by the patriarchs would no longer suffice for so numerous a people. God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle where He could make His presence known in a special way (Ex 25:9; 26:30). Now that the people of God were numerous, He established a larger corporate place of worship and used the occasion to institute the priesthood when a whole tribe (The Levites) was established.⁷⁰ No longer could the head of the clan handle the responsibilities required.⁷¹

This shows that at the commencement of the Mosaic dispensation, the priesthood was appropriated to Aaron and his family. The dignity of the priesthood centred on Aaron, he being constituted, and the high-priesthood made hereditary in his family. Owing to developments there was" the need for the appointment of a particular class of men by God to manage the concerns of their brethren with the Divinity by means of vicarious atonement and intercession; to avert God's displeasure, propitiate His favour, and secure friendly

⁶⁶ Tremper Longman III, 2005. *Making sense of the Old Testament*. Michigan: Baker Book House Co.p.94.

⁶⁷ John Brown. 1994, *A Geneva series commentary*, The Bath Press Ltd, Bath, Avon, Great Britain, p. 238.

⁶⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol.18 Plants to Raymond of Tripoli, Hazells offset Limited, Slough, England 1964 p.480ff.

⁶⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol.18 Plants to Raymond of Tripoli, Hazells offset Limited, Slough, England 1964 p. 480ff.

⁷⁰ John Brown, 1964. *A Geneva series commentary*, Avon, Great Britain :The Bath Press Ltd, Bath, , p. 238.

⁷¹ Tremper Longman III, 2005.*Making Sense of The Old Testament 3 Crucial Questions*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Books. p. 92.

intercourse with Him in the acceptance of services from them and the communication of blessings to them. These personnel, especially the High-priest, were appointed to be the substitute of his fellow men and do for them what is necessary to be done but which the emblematical nature of the Jewish economy required should be done by another standing in their place.⁷²

They were as mediators for the benefit of their fellow-men in things pertaining to God, offering both gifts and sacrifices for sin, to manage the people's religious interests, to do for them what must be done with God, to expiate their sins, and to secure the acceptance of their religious services.⁷³ The High Priest had the supervision of the rest of the priests and of the entire worship and was at liberty to exercise all the other sacerdotal functions as well. The High Priest also in addition to his strictly religious duties was the supreme civil head of the people, the supreme head of the state, in so far the state was not under the sway of foreign rulers. Likewise in the days of national independence the hereditary Asmonean High Priests were priests and kings at the same time a later period again, the High Priests were the presidents of the people in their relations with the Romans. The High Priest presented the sin offering for himself (Lev. 4:3), and the congregation. On the great Day of Atonement, he must present sacrifice and burnt offering for himself and the people and consult God by means of the Urim and Thumim in regard to important matters affecting the theocracy and gave necessary information to people afterwards.⁷⁴ God entered into a relationship with ancient Israel through the terms of the old covenant. The Tabernacle and Temple became the chief representation of the relationship, so that man will know that God loves to dwell among them or else, to their minds, God would always have seemed distant and unapproachable –Ex. 24.

Since the Rabbinic period duties (*motzivot*) have been classified as those between man and God (*ben adam le-makom*) and those between man and his neighbours (*ben adam le-havero*). It should be noted that the obligation with regard to both groupings is a religious one that are being carried out by the priests.⁷⁵ Even some prophets like Jeremiah, Ezekiel

⁷² John Brown, 1994. *A Geneva Series Commentary, Hebrews*, Bath, Avon Great Britain: The Bath Press Ltd, p. 237-239.

⁷³ John Brown, 1994. *A Geneva Series Commentary, Hebrews*, Bath, Avon Great Britain: The Bath Press Ltd, p. 240.

⁷⁴ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*; Chicago, Moody Press, p. 887- 888.

⁷⁵ Jacobs Louis, 1992. *Religion and the individual: A Jewish perspective*, Cambridge University press p.42.

and others were very closely associated with the cult. Though prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos and Micah in their messages was against this practice (Isa. 1:10-17, Jer. 6:16-21, 7:1-26, Amos 5:21-27 and Mic. 6:6-8) but one must be careful to interpret these highly exaggerated passages against their proper background and in the right context. What they are castigating is not the cult as such but the hypocrisy of the cult, warning the Israelites against seeking false security in the Temple and cult. They insist that the lives of the Israelites must correspond to the cult, to brand the cult as material would be quite foreign to Hebrew mentality, thought and their conception of the human being which is holistic.⁷⁶

The priests and Levites carried out duties such as to pronounce blessings on people, offer prayers and sacrifices (Lev. 1-7:16, teach the law(Lev.10:10-11, to judge difficult cases, such as accusation of adultery,(Num 5:11-31, unsolved murder and final decisions on cases referred to them by the lower courts (Deut 17:8-9).⁷⁷

3.4 Selected cultic elements and practices in Exodus and Leviticus

The word Exodus is taken from the Greek word Exodus which means “departure” or “going away”. The Hebrew word which is similar in meaning to the word Exodus is *Yasae/קשדשק* which means to deliver, save or set free.⁷⁸ According to Davidson, *Hose'tti* is the form of this verb and it means I will bring out and this statement is in agreement with Ex. 6:6. This very verse uses two other parallel expressions, the first word is *Hissaletti* which means “I will deliver or I will cause you to be delivered. This is to take away or to snatch away”. The second one is *ga'aletti*, which means “I will redeem you from the root *ga'al*, meaning to redeem, ransom, recover by paying back the value for”.⁷⁹

The theology of the book of Exodus deals with the aspect of LORD God's nature, showing LORD God as the invisible controller of all history and circumstances, even though God's name was silent at the earlier stage of the book. The contents of the book show that nothing is beyond LORD'S control and power, not even the foolishness and stubbornness of a pharaoh. Ex.4:21. It was the confirmation of his utterances and promises that made Israelites to see the Exodus as the important fact of all history and also as God's act of

⁷⁶ S. J. Rui De Menezes, 2009. *The Old Testament for Our Times* Mumbai : St Pauls Press p.185-186.

⁷⁷ Lois Fuller, 2008, *The Pentateuch Foundation Of God's Message To The World*, Bukuru: Africa Christian Textbooks p.90.

⁷⁸ B. Davidson, 1970. *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldec Lexicon* Grand Rapids : Zondervan p 358.

⁷⁹ B. Davidson, 1970. *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldec Lexicon* Grand Rapids : Zondervan pp. 127, 555.

salvation for them.⁸⁰ Alan confirmed this historical act, hence he says “No Israelites could doubt for they had indeed been saved from Egypt and the only possible explanation of this impossibility was that God had done it-since all things were made under his control” and that LORD is YHWH/ יהוה. Exodus makes plain that the revelation of God under this name was fundamental to the theology of the Mosaic age.⁸¹ Since Israel is YHWH’s people, YHWH’s name is involved in all that happens to them, - Ex. 19:5.

He rules over every event for the good of his people, whatever may be the immediate effects. Despite that the LORD GOD participated in all her historical events, yet the Israelites as a nation failed to understand the purpose of Exodus until they arrived in Canaan. Hence Rowley says “...He is a participator in the drama of all our lives and especially in the drama of history”.⁸² The book of Exodus contains the most fundamental peculiarity of Israelite religion, namely, that Yahweh their God revealed himself to them primarily not in nature nor in the cult but in the socio-political events of their history. Yahweh chose and established Israel as a nation in the form of covenant, chosen to be His people not on any merit on Israel’s part.⁸³ The theme of deliverance from slavery permeates the New Testament. The deliverance, however, is both from physical and spiritual bondage. The Passover night marked the actual redemption of Israel from the Egyptians’ bondage as recorded in Exodus 12: 29-32.

The Exodus of the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt forms the background of the Christian understanding of the redemption which God fully accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ. As deliverance from Egypt was important to Israelites, likewise is the salvation from sin is important to the present day Christians. The theme of the presence of God based on a covenant relationship is also carried into the New Testament, and a new covenant is established by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Christians are able to have fellowship with God and to experience God’s abiding presence because they have been purified by the blood of Christ, and thereby become a chosen people- 1 Pt. 2:9.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Solomon Agbane, 2009. *The Exodus and The challenge of moving Away From the Mess* Nigeria : Path light publications. p.34-35.

⁸¹ Cole R. Alan, 1973. *Exodus*, London: International Varsity Press. P.19, 20 & 42.

⁸² H.H. Rowley, *The Rediscovery of Old Testament*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

⁸³ Rui De Menezes, 2009. *The Old Testament for Our Times* Mumbai: St Pauls Press p.53.

⁸⁴ Keith N Schoville, 2004. *Exodus and Leviticus*. New York: Abingdon Nashville Press p.12.

However, the fact that God is present among the Israelites is the centre of thought in the whole theology of Exodus and assurance that the presence of GOD will continue to abide with them, gave them confidence and lead them to the Promised Land. It is the presence of God that gave the Israelites the enablement to cross the sea, to overwhelm the Egyptians, lead and protect them in the wilderness. Even the whole aim of building the tent, living a holy and clean life, the whole process of the making of the covenant, as well as the giving of the law, is a guarantee of the reality of LORD God's presence- Ex. 20 :1. 24: 1-11, 25: 8. This is telling the church today that Christ is in our midst working for the redemption of the lost souls through the power of the Holy Spirit -John 14: 15-17. The content of the book also implied that this incident recorded there occurred about four hundred years after Joseph's death. Exodus is also regarded as the book of the covenant Ex. 24: 7, because it is taken to be the oldest piece of Hebrew legislation available. The laws contained in it are spoken in 24 :3 as consisting of two elements, the Words or Commands and the Judgements-Ex.21 :1.They are the provisions relating to civil and criminal law, prescribing what is to be done when particular cases arise cf Ex.21 : 2- 22:17.The Words are positive injunctions of moral, religious, and ceremonial law, introduced mostly by "Thou shall or thou shall not " and contained in 20-23 :33 which is hortatory epilogue, consisting chiefly of promises intended to suggest motives for the observance of the preceding laws.⁸⁵

In Israel LORD Yahweh is holy God. It is in Exodus 3 5 that is regarded to be the first occasion upon which the adjective 'holy' appears in the Pentateuch. 'Holy' is one of the adjectives most frequently used to define the nature and being of God, especially in Leviticus. This is to show that LORD of Israel is different, therefore holiness in Israel has a moral content and she is called upon to be a holy people; therefore hence stern moral demands are made of her. Since God is holy, anything associated with Him, or devoted to His service, partakes of this characteristic. It may convey the idea of some mysterious danger on manual contact,- Ex. 19 : 12-13, even inanimate object such as oil for anointing and healing is forbidden for common use- Ex. 30 : 32. A large part of the book especially Ex. 21-23 reveal, what it means to be God's people, a holy people, therefore holiness is, in the deepest sense, a definition of GOD's nature as He expects to find it reflected in His

⁸⁵ S.R. Driver, 1953.*The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, The Book Of Exodus*, Cambridge: University Press. London. p.202.

children.⁸⁶ It is this concept of God's holiness which is also applicable and portrayed in the very construction of the meeting-tent, temple or synagogue.

Exodus also shows that, YHWH, LORD God, is a God who acts, but His activity is not limited to salvific work, He is also a GOD who can be angry even with His own servants, as He did with Moses. This can be shown by the judgments that He brings on disobedient people such as what happened in Ex. 32:10, 28, 35. However, GOD's anger is never arbitrary, not like other gods. His wrath can be atoned by intercessory prayer- Ex. 29: 35- 37; 32: 30 cf Lev. 17: 11.⁸⁷ Leviticus is taken to be a most unique book of the Pentateuch because it contains mainly the laws of God given to the Israelites. The laws are mostly from the Priestly School and deal with matters of cult. De Menezes claim that Klosttermann has singled out one block out of the lots of laws given called the Holiness Code in Lev. 17-26. It is not of one mould but from very different times, because pre-exilic and post-exilic materials have been put together in the form of blocks rather than codes.⁸⁸

This work opines that in order to understand these laws and practices properly today one has to read these laws against the contemporary religious background of those times. These laws demanded that Israel attained to a high level of purity and consequently avoid the religious practices and customs of the Canaanites. Yet, one should not forget that the interpretation of Yahweh as law-giver who manifests His will to Israel, was introduced already by the Deuteronomist to contrast Him with the Canaanite gods and goddesses (*Baal and Asherah*) who were identified with the processes of nature.⁸⁹ Leviticus is taken from the Greek and Latin versions of the Hebrew Bible which means the book pertaining to the persons and duties of the Levitical priests. It was thus named because they came to be considered as the sons of the tribe of Levi (Deut. 18:1). The book of Leviticus is a book about the rituals of worship and holiness. It is a continuation of the law which is set forth in Exodus. Exodus ends with the construction of the Tabernacle while Leviticus tells us about the worship which takes place within that Tabernacle and teaches God's people how they are to approach Him and live pleasing in His sight. Its central command is to "be holy." (Lev.

⁸⁶ Cole R. Alan, 1985. *Exodus an Introduction and Commentary*, London: International Varsity Press. pp.21-24

⁸⁷ Cole R. Alan, 1985. *Exodus An Introduction And Commentary*, London: International Varsity Press. pp. 30-32.

⁸⁸ Rui De Menezes, S.J..2009. *The Old Testament for Our Times* Mumbai : St Pauls Press p.67.

⁸⁹ Rui De Menezes, S.J. 2009. *The Old Testament for Our Times* Mumbai : St Pauls Press p.67.

19:2). Averbeck says, the “theological structure of the book features three main topics: atonement, tabernacle holiness and purity, and national holiness and purity”.⁹⁰

The theology of Leviticus can hardly be discussed in isolation from that of the other books of the Pentateuch, particularly of those most closely related to it, the book of Exodus. Leviticus, however, provides the reader with remarkable insights into the character and will of God which found expression in His dealings with Israel and in the laws He gave them, particularly in the matter of holiness. Due to intervention of Yahweh in the history of Israel by freeing her from the slavery of Egypt, He has right to impose His will and His laws on Israel. Hence, the phrase that keeps recurring throughout Leviticus is, “Yahweh spoke to Moses, he said;” Lev.4:1; 5:14; 6:1; 7:28; 8:1; 12 :1 and elsewhere. This is in keeping with the understanding of cult in the priestly author, making statements like “ I will meet the sons of Israel in the place consecrated by my glory, I will consecrate the Tent of meeting and the altar...” Ex. 29: 43.⁹¹

Leviticus is thus a work of towering spirituality, which through the various rituals points unerringly to the atoning death of Jesus, our great High Priest. According to Harrison, an eminent nineteenth-century writer once described Leviticus quite correctly as the seedbed of New Testament theology, for in this book is to be found the basis of the Christian faith and doctrine.⁹² Indeed the Epistle to the Hebrews expounds Leviticus in this connection. Leviticus is a well-organized reference manual for the Old Testament priesthood, and consists of two principal divisions or themes which have chapter sixteen as their pivot, dealing with regulations governing the annual Day of Atonement. The first fifteen chapters deal broadly with sacrificial principles and procedures relating to the removal of sin and the restoration of persons to fellowship with God. The last eleven chapters emphasize holiness, ethics and morality. The unifying theme of the book is the insistent emphasis upon God’s holiness, coupled with the demand that the Israelites shall exemplify this spiritual attribute in their own lives. The material content is priestly in character, and therefore deals with the

⁹⁰ Richard E. Averbeck, 1996. *Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

⁹¹ Rui De Menezes, 2009. *The Old Testament for Our Times* Mumbai: St Pauls Press p.68.

⁹² R. K. Harrison, 2008. *Leviticus*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Part of a series: (Tyndale Commentary Old Testament Series) Inter-Varsity Press, England and Wales’s p ii and <http://www.ivbooks.com/series/Tyndale Commentary Old Testament series> assessed 20 July 2011.

covenant obligations of the Israelites at a level which is not found elsewhere in the Pentateuch.⁹³

Few cultic elements and practices are chosen in this part of the work. These elements constituted the revealed manner in which the worship and sacrifice of Israel were to be made to God. Again, the primary function here was that of sacrifice: the offering of an animal to propitiate and atone (make amends or reparation) for the sin of God's people. The belief of the early Church was that the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and His subsequent resurrection supplanted all temple sacrifices as a means of propitiation and atonement. In the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus Christ becomes the propitiation for all sins of mankind; He is the Lamb of God, who took away the sins of the world (Jn. 1:29). Thereafter, for Christians, there was no need for an additional sacrifice. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that sins are forgiven in Him, and in Him Christians are reconciled to the Father. So why are some people contextualising any of the temple practices today? Because they included communion as well as sacrifice and because they constituted revealed worship; they were part of God's intent from the beginning. And because temple worship was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the worship which Christians offer to God goes on forever. It continues both here on earth and in Heaven, before the throne of God. That is, heavenly worship is a dynamic condition of liturgy, praise and worship unto the Father. And earthly worship partakes now of the eternal, heavenly worship.

Hebrews Chapter 8 describes the role of Jesus Christ as the heavenly High Priest in contrast with the Old Testament priesthood. And what is the word used to describe what the High Priest is doing? It is liturgy. The passage properly reads from the first verse of the chapter as follows: "We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in heaven, a liturgist (*leitourgos*) in the sanctuary and true tabernacle which is set up not by man but by the Lord." (8:1-2) The worship of heaven, the liturgy, has been established forever by God Himself. Hebrews then goes on to demonstrate that what is done on earth should be patterned after that in Heaven, both in the Old and New Covenants.

⁹³ R. K. Harrison, 2008. *Leviticus*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, Part of a series: (Tyndale Commentary Old Testament Series) Inter-Varsity Press, England and Wales's p.ii and [http://www.ivbooks.com/series/Tyndale Commentary Old Testament series](http://www.ivbooks.com/series/Tyndale%20Commentary%20Old%20Testament%20series) assessed 20th July 2011.

Literally, "Now Jesus has been given a liturgical work (liturgist) which is superior to theirs, just as the covenant which He arranged between God and His people is a better one..." (8:6).

According to the Holy Bible, there is worship in Heaven, and it is to be our pattern. The original Greek word in every major early text is '*leitourgos*'- λειτουργος. It means liturgy, or liturgical worship. It is easy to understand why the early Christians continued in their synagogue and temple practices. Worship had been revealed to them by God. Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all that God had promised in the Old Testament; in Him, all the hopes of Israel were fulfilled. It was only natural, that in worshipping God through Jesus Christ, believers would continue to do so as they had been told, in the manner God revealed to them. This was natural, almost automatic for the Jews who accepted Jesus Christ as Messiah. There was, however, one major change for these Jews which had been completed in Jesus Christ. The animal sacrifices of Old Testament practice had been fulfilled in the person of Christ. All that had been anticipated was now completed. All that had been prophesied was now reality. The Messiah had come. So for these early Christians, the Jewish worship practices were continued with a brand new understanding of the centrality of the victorious Christ, and new-found joy. Christians did not view their Jewish liturgical practices as pass, nor did they simply continue in some kind of mindless habit of outmoded ritual. They maintained this liturgy as their own, as described in the inspired Scriptures of the Old Covenant carried over into the New. In fact, that Jewish liturgy made the work of God in Jesus Christ comprehensible. The Old Testament worship practices now fulfilled and given new meaning in Christ, became the core of Christian worship within this New Covenant.

3.4.1. Ritual baths and cleansing

A ritual is a prescribed, formal and symbolic act. In ancient Israel, purity remains the main focus of her religion. In the light of this, therefore, cultic materials, worshippers and functionaries are expected to be clean and faultless. The reason behind this cleansing might be to encourage personal hygiene, to have inner spiritual purity and restoration (Ex.30: 17-20; Lev. 12,13,14 and 15). There are many rituals of purification relating to menstruation, childbirth, sexual relations, nocturnal emission, unusual bodily fluids, skin disease, death, and animal sacrifices. When one looks at the regulations of biblical and oral law which

generally prescribe a form of water-based ritual washing in Judaism for removal of any ritual impurity, sometimes requiring just washing of the hands, and at other times requiring full immersion; the oral law requires the use of *un-drawn water* for any ritual full immersion - either a natural river/stream/spring, or a special bath (a *Mikvah*) which contains rain-water. These regulations were variously observed by the ancient Israelites; contemporary Orthodox Jews and (with some modifications and additional leniencies) some Conservative Jews continue to observe the regulations, except for those tied to sacrifice in the Temple in Jerusalem, as the Temple no longer fully exists. These groups continue to observe many of the hand washing rituals, but those connected with full ritual immersion; perhaps the quintessential immersion rituals still carried that are still in practice are those related to *nidda*, according to which a menstruating woman must avoid contact with her husband, especially avoiding sexual contact, and may only resume contact after she has first immersed herself fully in a *mikvah* of living water seven days after her menstruation has ceased.⁹⁴

Baptism, as a form of ritual purification, occurs in several religions related to Judaism, and most prominently in Christianity; Christianity also has other forms of ritual purification. Traditionally, Christianity adhered to the biblical regulation requiring the purification of women after childbirth; this practice, was adapted into a special ritual known as the churching of women, for which there exists liturgy in the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*, but its use is now rare in Western Christianity. The churching of women is still performed in a number of Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches.⁹⁵ In ancient Israel rituals were performed either outdoors on hills or in groves, or inside temples. Outdoor cult places are called *bamah*, which can be translated with "high place". On these places, pillars were erected, one in stone for the male god, and one in wood for the female goddess. Bamahs could be built on hill tops or open space. When temples were built, bamahs were sometimes built in front of the entrance but it will still be under open sky. The reason of erecting temples, were that the gods needed a house, in order to

⁹⁴ Ritual purification From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia assessed and retrieved on 11th August, 2012 at 2.40pm.

⁹⁵ Ritual purification From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ritual_purification retrieved on 11th August, 2012.

exercise his power over humans and the earth. The house was also believed to be a place where gods could dwell and bless the worshippers that will be there to worship.

Central to the rituals was offerings that were consummated by the gods. Offerings were both vegetable and animals. We also see that various sacrifices were fairly common then in some areas, even though some scientists believe that the frequency of this has been exaggerated by outside sources, like what we read in the Old Testament. But at least in the North-African colony of Carthage we know that children were thrown into a fire in front of a statue of a god. But from Ugarit there are no indications on child sacrifice.⁹⁶ The myth of Baal's death and resurrection is believed to have been the source of some of the main religious festivals. Other festivals appear to have involved eating and drinking (alcohol) by the partakers. A third group of rituals involve that statues of gods were carried down to the sea, rituals that could involve either a sacred marriage or the blessing of the sea and the ships. A fourth group of rituals were the very central festival where sacrifice were hung from trees, and then put on fire.

Priests in Ugarit were called *khn̄m* (there must have been vowels in the pronunciation, but these were not written, and cannot be reconstructed). Under the priest ... (there may have been) *qdsh̄m*, sacred prostitutes, performing their sexual rituals in the temples to promote fertility. There was also room for oracle priests or prophets that received messages from the gods during states of ecstasy.⁹⁷

This work opines that the Israelites transferred some of this ritual acts into the worship of Yahweh later in life. In all forms of divine worship whether minor or major, ritual ceremonies and socio-religious rites performed in honour of preternatural beings and on behalf of man, water, whether of running streams or from special consecrated wells plays an inestimable role, positive or negative among the Yoruba people,⁹⁸ especially in African Indigenous Churches like *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́ C&S* in Ibadan. Ritual cleansing is performed on a person who have chronic problems and ladies who are forbidden to enter the church after child delivery and monthly menstruation.

⁹⁶ http://www.adath-shalom.ca/Israelite_religion.htm#bamah accessed and retrieved on 16th June 2012

⁹⁷ James Edward Anderson, 1975. "The Idolatrous Worship of Baal in Israel." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation Dallas Theological Seminary.

⁹⁸ S. A. Adewale, 1986. The Cultic Use Of Water Among The Yoruba, *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XVIII/1 June 1986 :28

In African religious perspective, it can refer to the act of pouring something to gods, goddesses and ancestors during worship. In Christian context, the word ritual can refer to the ceremonies or celebrations of various specific services like Eucharistic service or that of ablution. They are meant to symbolize important beliefs, values and practices cherished in a particular society. The purpose of rituals, according to Amoah, is to maintain good relations between the worshippers and the objects of worship. The ultimate aim of rituals is to sustain life in general.⁹⁹ Adewale says ceremonial rite with water, helps to buy favour and avert the wrath of supernatural beings, and believed that it makes worshippers to be spiritually clean.¹⁰⁰ In Nigerian Indigenous Churches, there are ranges of ritual cleansing. The most popular and conspicuous symbol for purification in the Indigenous churches is the use of water.

They use sanctified or sanctuary water which they believe has spiritual power and is as potent and effective as medicine to cure diseases and enable the adherents to achieve their desires, this special water is not only for healings and fruitfulness but also for other conditions of life like safe delivery and protection against sudden death and infant mortality. Ritual cleansing in Israel now adapted for rituals and ceremonial cleanliness for group or individual by the prophets and prophetesses in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim church. They have ritual cleansing that is corporate in character and the prescribed ritual cleansing for individuals. This set of rituals served as a panacea for existential problems besetting people. The implication of this is that all spiritual impurities blocking success in the desired area will be cleansed and helps to eliminate visible and invisible enemies who are capable of manipulating situations, events, intellect of human beings, times and spaces.

Furthermore, they claim that water is a divine element endowed with supernatural power and therefore its role in religion cannot be overstated. Hence at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church there is constantly a supply of fresh water to the sanctuary for the people who have physical or spiritual problems. Though they ascribe their use of water in their religious activities to divine revelation or guidance but when the researcher compares how Aladura Christians use water to solve human problems, with the ways the

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Amoah, 1996. "Rituals Africa", *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies* (eds) Russell Letty M. and Clarkson J. Shannon Lousiville, Westminster and John Knox press. p.250.

¹⁰⁰ S. A. Adewale, 1986. The Cultic Use Of Water Among The Yoruba, *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies XVIII/1* June 1986 : 29.

adherents of the Indigenous religion use water, one will be tempted to make a categorical confession that Aladura Christians borrow and truly contextualised the idea from the adherents of the Indigenous religion.

Exodus 29: 37 implied holiness or shall become holy or only those who are holy may touch holy things and able to remain in His presence. Exodus 29:4, this washing extended to the entire person, and was different from the subsequent ordinary washings of the hands and feet before the daily ministrations of Exodus 30: 17 water/spiritual cleansing. Leviticus 15:1 is an issue out of his flesh hence unclean.¹⁰¹ According to 'P' priestly documents, Exodus 25-31 contain the instructions stated to have been given by God to Moses on the mount for the construction and equipment of a sanctuary, the vessels of the sanctuary such as the ark, the candlestick and altar table, also for the vestments and consecration of a priesthood.¹⁰²

Priests were washed at their consecration (Ex. 29:4). Levites, too, were sprinkled with water (Nu. 8:7) and special ablutions were demanded of the chief priests on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 11: 4, 15: 5ff) and of all men for the removal of ceremonial defilement. Even the laver before the tabernacle was a constant reminder of the need for cleansing in the approach to God (Ex. 33: 18-21). A developed form of this ritual ablution was practiced by the Qumran Sect and by a variety of Jewish Baptist sects which flourished before and after the turn of the Christian era.¹⁰³ This provides the background to John's baptism of repentance and to the Christian baptism of cleansing, initiation, and incorporation into Jesus Christ. This work opines that, that is why Christian rite of baptism involves the use of water, either by the sign of the cross, sprinkling or immersion into a river. The Lord God gave instructions to the Israelites on ceremonial cleanness for the priests, beginning with a death threat to those who might violate the rules given. In Leviticus chapters 12-15, the means and ways of having consistent fellowships with God Almighty were given. It is inferred that any discharge from an individual made the person ceremonially unclean. Hence having gone through child delivery with much flow of blood a woman become ceremonially unclean and she had to go through purification ritual to be ceremonially clean. Her ceremonial

¹⁰¹ S.R. Driver, 1953. *The Cambridge Bible for schools and Colleges, The Book Of Exodus*, Cambridge: University press. London. P. .315.

¹⁰² S.R. Driver, 1953. *The Cambridge Bible for schools and Colleges, The Book Of Exodus*, Cambridge: University press. London. p. 25.

¹⁰³ S. A. Adewale, "The Cultic Use Of Water Among The Yoruba", *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XVIII/1 June 1986: 37.

uncleanness was not on moral ground, hence the relationship between the woman and God was not affected. In the New Testament it, is clearly shown that the blood of Jesus Christ has made Christians acceptable to God at any time and in the way we are, the moment we can surrender ourselves to Him.

It is part of the laws for a woman having menstruation period not to move near the temple or tabernacle because she is unclean. After child birth a woman will have to stay off the temple for certain period before she can be allowed to enter the temple for worship. A woman having menstruation is separated from entering the sanctuary because of her uncleanness. A menstrual discharge was considered to be just as much as cause of defilement as long-term male discharges in men, yet no sacrifices were required to atone for that of men. But a period of waiting and cleansing with water was all that was required among them. The case of irregular discharge was thus treated in a similar fashion as long term discharges in men. These were discharges apart from the normal period of menstruation such as those suffered by the woman who came up behind Jesus Christ and touched the edge of His cloak. That woman had been subjected to bleeding for twelve years, but when she touched Jesus' cloak the bleeding stopped immediately Lk. 8:43ff. Perhaps, the menstrual flow was prolonged unduly, or there was a problem connected with the reproductive system which resulted in a flow of blood not associated with the menses. To the Jews and members of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim, such woman is regarded as unclean as long as her discharge lasted.

They believe that anything she touched, sat on, or lay on also became unclean. Any woman with the issue of blood, be it menstruation, blood flow after childbirth or an abnormal flow, was segregated from the people. Whoever associated with such would be unclean for certain period of time.¹⁰⁴ All these help us to understand why the woman whom Jesus healed of the issue of blood fell at His feet, because she had been in a state of uncleanness. The law forbade her to touch anyone or anything, and the consequences of disobeying this law were severe. But whenever the problem ceased, she had to wait seven days and then offer the least expensive of the sacrifices, such as one bird for a burnt offering and one bird for a sin offering.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ D. Guthrie & J.A. Motyer Eds., 1970. *The New Bible Commentary* London IV The Tyndale Press. p.152.

¹⁰⁵ Mark L. Lenz, 1996. *Leviticus*, St Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House Jefferson Avenue. p.130.

Although it is true that some kinds of uncleanness required only a time of waiting, followed by washing, yet God's people were repeatedly warned not to ignore these rituals. Every member who did so would "be held responsible" according to Lev. 17:16, would be "cut off from his or her people" (Lev. 19: 8) and would become guilty and die for treating these rituals with contempt. (Lev. 22:9). The rituals were used as visual aids to portray the Lord as a Holy God and to emphasize that fellowship with Him must be on the basis of atonement for sin and obedient living. Likewise it was also believed that those who were unclean could not participate in the worship of God Almighty at the tabernacle or worship centres. If they did, they would be subjected to death for defiling the Lord's dwelling place. The relationship between the individual and God can be considered from two points of view. In Jewish teaching the soul of each individual is unique, with its own special relationship with God, and each individual has to employ his body in giving expression to this relationship.¹⁰⁶

Some scholars would conceive the two notions in the cultic text as mutually incompatible, whereas others would take them to be synonymous with each other. The term uncleanness is the translation of Hebrew "am'ij.yl. The concepts appear repeatedly in the cleanness or uncleanness regulations in Lev. 11-15. Questions concerning uncleanness are generally abstruse. The sense of unclean amm can be either tangible or metaphorical. When unclean amm has a tangible meaning it means 'dirty' but it is used metaphorically in almost all its occurrences in cultic law.¹⁰⁷ While some scholars believe that uncleanness is related to death, for instance, in Lev. 11: 24ff, am'ij.yl uncleanness is contracted by physical contact with animals only when they are dead. In other words only dead animals can convey am' ij.yl uncleanness. Num.19: 13ff deal with the contagion of uncleanness produced by human death and is probably presupposed by Num. 31:19-34, which speaks of contact with corpse in war. Uncleanness is also accompanied by various diseases: serious skin diseases Lev.13 and serious male and female discharges Lev. 15 : 2-15, 25-30. Naturally these

¹⁰⁶ Jacobs Louis, 1992. *Religion and the Individual : A Jewish perspective*, Cambridge University Press. p.42.

¹⁰⁷ J. Neusner, *The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism* p.1 or N. Kiuchi, 1987. *The purification offering in the priestly literature*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield England. p. 62.

diseases could be seen as the manifestation of death.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, it has been demonstrated by Wenham that an opposition between life and death can explain why menstruation and emission of semen are defiling; they are regarded as the loss of 'life liquid'.¹⁰⁹ This type of defilement makes one to be unclean and is regarded as more serious than other cases for which only washing clothes and ablution are required, though the exact criterion of the degrees of uncleanness is debatable. Thus with Wenham we postulate that uncleanness symbolizes as 'aura of death' which can lead to separation from God, hindrance to receive answer to prayers and spiritual death. Though there is a clear distinction between sin and uncleanness but sin that is regarded as natural defilement, however is more severe or special case of natural uncleanness. Leviticus 5 :2-3 and 15 : 31 shows that as long as the purification rites are observed, the defilement itself is not regarded as sinful. This is clear from the fact that the expiatory rite is preceded by the purificatory rite (Num. 8: 7, 12).

Chapter 14 explains in details the purification and ritual cleansing of sick people especially with leprosy in running water, killing of animals like bird in an earthen vessel over running water vs. 5. Purification by ceremonial substances used in purification rites include ashes of a red heifer mixed with water (Num 19:7ff) and, in case of leprosy, cedar wood, scarlet, cloth, hyssop- Lev. 14:2- 9, 16 :18 -19 and Ezek. 43 :20. This part of Leviticus reveals the elaborate rituals for the leper who must be ceremonially cleansed after he or she had been healed. Although the exact medical cause of leprosy was not known, it was sometimes seen as a punishment for sin. Since the disease could also spread by close contact, lepers had to be kept outside the camp, not unlike leprosy colonies outside towns and cities in endemic areas in our society today in Africa .The dreadful disease brought shameful isolation, physical disfigurement and, at times eventual death. The miraculous healing of this kind of disease restores dignity and revives fellowship as well as the life of the flesh.

The rite of cleansing was of importance as it brought the former leper back to the camp for fellowship with his family and the community as a whole. The ritual cleansing would also give the healed person access into God's sanctuary. Although rituals are

¹⁰⁸ N. Kiuchi, 1987. *The purification offering in the priestly literature*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield England. p. 63.

¹⁰⁹ N. Kiuchi quoting Wenham, 1987. *The purification offering in the priestly literature*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield England. p.64.

generally based on culture and tradition at any given time and place, nevertheless Leviticus 14 : 7ff shows that the leper's ritual of cleansing was communal and symbolized the restoration to fellowship of the healed lepers, just as the blood of Jesus Christ was shed on the Calvary tree to reconcile mankind to God. Even the specific mention of ear, thumb, and toe could symbolise that the cleansed person should hear God's voice, do works of righteousness with his hands and walk in God's ways. Real atonement should affect the whole individual.

There was a ritual with special concession for a leper who was poor and had limited means, even though he or she still had to go through the normal ritual (guilt offering, sin offering and burnt offering must be offered) and atonement had to be made for him/her with the implication that his leprosy might be related to some sin committed. Just like the leper's ritual of cleansing was communal, so also the fellowship of the Church is vital for the growth and welfare of all believers. No one is meant to live in spiritual isolation, since Christ has offered Himself to us freely as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the whole world, both the rich and the poor. This is why it is important for all to come to Jesus Christ who offers freely the salvation and deliverance of our souls in order to reconcile us to God our creator. The ritual cleansing also applies to property. In the case of the clothes of healed lepers destruction and wastage should be restricted, minimized and avoided as much as possible. The ritual for cleansing a home was not very different from that prescribed for the leper before he was restored to the community. It would be the duty of the head of the house to inform the priest at the slightest indication of a leprous attack in the home. In this same way, whenever a serious sin exists in a family or community of believers, it is like a plague that should be dealt with promptly and properly through appropriate means. We must not forget what happened to Eli the priest in 1 Sam. 3: 13, when he failed to carry out necessary actions at the appropriate time.

This work opines that the LORD laid down these regulations for a number of reasons, such as having concern for hygiene, to keep them in good communion with Him by living holy life, to differentiate Israel from the Canaanites. It was also intended to make known that sexual intercourse made people unclean and unable to participate in worship and that sex is associated with demonic powers. These regulations automatically ruled out Israelites participation in Canaanite fertility rites with their ritual prostitution. That must be

why fertility rites attached with ritual prostitution linked with worship was strictly banned among the Israelites, because anything suggesting the sexual or sensual was banned from the worship of God. God's regulations also make prostitutes social outcasts in Israel.

3.4.2 Vicarious victim or scapegoatism

Scapegoatism is a noun meaning the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to another, as to detract attention or responsibility away from oneself. A discussion of the meaning of the Day of Atonement in the light of the significance attached to the term "scapegoat" in Lev. 16 considers the various interpretations given to the identity of *Azazel* as a place, a thing, or a person. Since all these interpretations reveal certain inadequacies that possibly it is an abstraction and therefore concludes that both goats were a sin offering to the Lord; one was sacrificed, whereas the other was sent off into the wilderness to convey visibly and strikingly the truth of complete removal and dismissal. The escape goat does not represent Christ any more than it stands for Satan. That which was symbolized by both goats pointed to the finished work of Christ on Calvary. The Temple was designed to remind people that their sins had cut them off from God. The part of the Temple called the Holy of Holies was a forbidden inner *sanctum*, which contained the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, representing the throne of God. The Holy of Holies was veiled from public view by a thick curtain that stretched from floor to ceiling. Only once a year was anyone allowed behind that veil. Even then, only the High Priest was allowed to enter, in-order to perform a set of prescribed rituals. If the High Priest, or anyone else, went in for any other reason or at any other time, they were struck dead. It sounds harsh, but God was making a point in those Old Covenant days, that sinners were *personae non grata* in the presence of the Holy One.¹¹⁰

Indeed most *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim leaders and members emphasized this and use it as a pointer and the need to be Holy and not allowing unholy and unclean things or persons such as women menstruating into the worship centres or church buildings known as 'Ago'. But the Gospels tell us that at the precise moment Jesus died, the veil in the Temple was miraculously torn apart, from top to bottom.

¹¹⁰ Joseph Tkach, 2012. Peanuts and Grace speaking of LIFE GCI Weekly updates, 13 June 2012 and <http://www.gci.org> retrieved on 16th June 2012 at 2a.m.

The Holy of Holies then lay exposed with the Mercy Seat in full view. It's most likely that horrified priests rushed to repair the veil, but the point had been made, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and great High Priest of our salvation, had sacrificed Himself for humanity and thereby cleared the way for all to have access to the Mercy Seat of God. We know that, but somehow we have a lot of trouble believing it. We still think we must try to be good enough, or must do something to earn God's grace. It is as if Jesus Christ, through his death and resurrection, only put a nick in the edge of the curtain, to get us started, but we still have to go to the effort of pulling it apart. So we find some groups of worshippers that still go through all sorts of spiritual calisthenics, hoping to build up the strength to rip open the curtain the rest of the way. But the good news is that there is nothing we have to do. When Jesus gave himself for us, everything that needed to be done or everything that could possibly be done was done, was finished, to open up the throne of grace, mercy, and forgiveness. The curtain that separated the Mercy Seat from the people was not just nicked, or a corner lifted; it was ripped violently apart from top to bottom.

Though the priests of Jesus' day, blind to the meaning behind what had happened, sealed off the Holy of Holies again. But they could not close off the permanent access given to the real throne of God. That's why the epistle to the Hebrews reminds us in chapter 4, verse 16, "Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it." Abe quoting Moraldi claims that the offerer of any sacrifice is substituting his life with the victim, in order to undertake his deserved punishment as a result of his sin or spiritual attack, because with Israel, sinners would not go unpunished; therefore the Levitical elaborate spiritual legislation on sin and rites was obligatory in cleansing. Blood which is regarded as life must be shed, hence a victim must be killed in place of the sacrifice for redemption.¹¹¹ This ritual was not a sudden invention because it was ascribed to the time of Moses and initially connected with the sin of Nadab and Abihu. This presupposes that the act can be traced back to immemorial antiquity. Eerdmans claims that this rite must be pre-exilic on the ground that the mercy seat and the testimony were not to be found in the holy of holies after the exile. This claim notwithstanding, there are certain features in the act that confirmed that the rite is in some

¹¹¹ G.O. Abe, Sacrificial Rites in Israelite Religion and the Ancient Near East *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XVII/ I June 1986. : 20

sense pre-exilic.¹¹² It was during the post - exilic times that the rites received official recognition and were exalted to represent the great day of the Jewish year known as Day of Atonement.

This Day of Atonement became the supreme event in the Jewish ecclesiastical calendar. The act of sending away the scapegoat or vicarious victim to *Azazel* may have been the most spectacular and dramatic element in the rite, as witnessed by the people; but the essential moment of the rite took place when the high priest entered into the holy of holies in order to offer the appointed sacrifices on the annual day of national repentance and hope. That which is translated the scapegoat in the King James Version of the Bible is in Hebrew language the goat for *Azazel* in Revised Standard Version. Who or what was *Azazel*? It is difficult to answer this question with precision. Nevertheless, in the book of Enoch, *Azazel* is leader of the evil spirits (Enoch 8:1; 10:4). We read in Deut. 32: 17 of the sacrifice to “devils”, in Psalm 106: 37 we also found the sacrifice of children to “devils”, and in Isa. 34:14 something similar was recorded. Likewise, we read that in pre-exilic times, King Jeroboam ordained priest for “the high places” and for “the devils” (2 Chr. 11:15).¹¹³

These devils were the spirits of the waste-land and the desert to whom the unfaithful Israelites sacrificed to. The belief in the existence of these spirits extended to New Testament period. Even Jesus Christ also used the language of the people about “unclean spirits” in (Mk. 5:13); and in Rev. 18: 2 the angel cries that Babylon has become “a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit”. *Azazel* is an evil spirit among the cohorts of Satan. Kleinig opined that scapegoat is the translation of the Hebrew word *azazel*/אזאזל some claimed that it was the name of the mountain where the goat was killed, others say that the word might be translated as “complete destruction”, meaning the sins of Israel were totally destroyed. Still others suppose it to be the name of a demon that lived in the wilderness, which the sins of Israel being returned to this demon, their supposed author. Regardless of the exact meaning or definition of the Hebrew term, the sins of Israel were

¹¹² D. B Eerdmans, 1947. *The Religion of Israel* , Leiden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, p. 88.

¹¹³ Nolan B. Harmon and Samuel Terrien Ed. 1990. *The Interpreter's Bible in Twelve volumes volume ii the book Leviticus*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, p. 77.

symbolically transferred to the goat which was then led into the wilderness.¹¹⁴ In modern terms, we might say that the sins of the people are laid upon a goat which is then consigned to the devil. Such an idea is what some scholars called primitive, obsolete and unchristian, since Christ has sacrificed himself once and for all.

Scapegoat or vicarious victim was the goat that was sent into the wilderness on the Day of Atonement, symbolically bearing away the sins of the people (Lev.16). It was when God spared the Hebrews and punished the worst offenders who made graven image and worshipped the calf in Ex. 32:9ff that He revealed the legal and priestly order that Israelites would be used as a special chosen nation of Yahweh. The regulations for the day's proceedings began by specifying the animals needed and outlining the main offerings, namely a sin offering for the priests because the priests also were sinners, and had to make atonement for themselves before they could make it on behalf of others and a second part of sin offering for the people (Lev. 6: 1-22 and Heb. 9:7).

On this day in Israel Aaron would sacrifice the priests' sin offering at the altar in the temple courtyard, the He would then take fire from this altar along with blood from the sacrifice into the temple. He used the fire to burn incense on the golden altar that stood in the Holy place against the curtain dividing the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. And as he drew back the curtain to enter the Most Holy Place, incense from the altar floated through the open curtain and covered the mercy seat which consisted of a solid gold slab that covered the Ark of the Covenant box, which to the Israelites was the symbolic dwelling place of God. He then sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial animal on and in front of the mercy seat. The mercy seat was an object that has traditionally been called the mercy seat by virtue of its derivation to atone, make atonement and the rite of atonement that was performed on it. Seat in this phrase refers to the location that was the source, the place where mercy was procured, the place of atonement. Atonement for sins was necessary before God would display his mercy toward mankind especially His people.

This sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat reminded the Israelites that God's mercy was their only hope for salvation. It also reminded them that, in spite of all their sacrifices and other rituals, when they at last reached the climax of their highest religious

¹¹⁴ John W. Kleinig, 2003. *Concordia Commentary A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture Leviticus St. Louis*, M.O. Concordia Publishing House pp.330-331.

exercise, they could do nothing but acknowledge that they were helpless sinners, dependent entirely on God's mercy for their forgiveness.¹¹⁵ After completing the ritual for the priests' sin offering, the high priest would come out of the temple into the open courtyard. He then offered the people's sin offering on the altar of sacrifice, and returned into the Most Holy Place with the sacrificial blood to repeat the ritual at the mercy seat. The Israelites believed that everything that human beings had contact with was affected by their sin. Thus the blood of the people's sin offering would also be used to make atonement for all parts of the Temple that any person had touched. (Heb. 9 : 21 -22).

The people's sin offering consisted of two goats. After sacrificing the first goat and applying its blood inside the Temple, the High Priest then returned to the courtyard to carry out the ritual with the second goat which was the vicarious victim or what was termed scapegoat. He laid his hands on its head, confessed over it the sins of the people, and sent it far away into the wilderness to a place from which it could not return. This was apparently a further picture to the people that their sins and problems had been laid on an innocent victim and taken far away from them – Lev. 16:20ff. Although the blood ritual (meaning life) of the annual Day of Atonement had meaning to the Israelites of Old Testament times, it was still regarded by the New Testament only as a shadow or outline of the reality that was to come through Jesus Christ.

The casting of lots over two goats forms part of the priestly ritual prescribed in Leviticus 16:1- 34 for the Day of Atonement. The goat on which the Lord's lot fell was to be sacrificed; the fat of the sacrificed goat was then to be burned on the altar; and its entire remains consumed in a fire outside the camp. The scapegoat or goat for *Azazel* was to be presented live before the Lord. With the blood of the first, the High priest was to sprinkle the altar and Tabernacle; he would then place both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities and all the transgressions of the children of Israel, meaning that he had put them upon the head of the goat and send it away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. Scapegoatism was an action carried out by Israelites only on the Day of Atonement which was instituted by God for the complete atonement of all sins as found in the Book Leviticus. The day was the holiest day of the Israelites year, a special day in the

¹¹⁵ Don Fleming, 1994. *Bridge Bible Commentary*, Australia Bridgeway Publications, Brisbane Australia pp. 58 -60.

year when the high Priest would enter the most Holy Place to make atonement for the people. Shedding of blood and buying back (scapegoatism) were the central act on such day and only the high priest could enter the inner sanctuary known as the Most Holy Place on this special day , once a year. (Lev. 1: 4; 16ff). Celebration of Day of Atonement showed that Israel believed the cleansing of their sins was accomplished by the rites commanded by God. God's dramatic judgment on Aaron's two sons in Lev. 10, shows clearly that the priests needed to act with care and reverence in everything they did especially inside the tabernacle in the Holy of Holies. To the Israelites, the day provided ceremonially cleansing for one year, and pictured the forgiveness of God's available to all who believed and repented.

They had the belief that on this special day of the year when entrance into God's presence was available, all the sins of the previous year were brought before God for His forgiveness and removal, so that the people, through their priestly representative, could freely enter His presence unhindered. The high priest's ministrations on the Day of Atonement were not only for himself and the other priests and Levites, but also for the nation in its entirety. The English word "atonement" originally signifies "the making to be at one" (at-one-ment) or reconciling of persons who have been at variance. But by its secondary meaning, it denotes an act or a payment through which reconciliation is made or achieved.¹¹⁶

In the Old Testament usage, the Hebrew word 'Kapar' / כָּפַר signifies.. which sin is covered or expiated or the wrath of God averted (Lev. 14:21, 35, Ex. 21: 30, 29:33). The Hebrew verb כָּפַר(kapar) means to purge or atone (as in *Yom Kippur*; the Day of Atonement). The noun כֹּפֶר(koper) means ransom. This Old Testament usage of the Hebrew word *kapar* also means "to atone by offering a substitute. It refers to the priestly ritual of sprinkling sacrificial blood, thus "making atonement" for the worshipper. Its Old Testament background is brought about by sacrifices, and it is strongly held that the atoning virtues are in the blood:" and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11). In the same vein, the New Testament *αἷμα* meaning blood is very significant in its consideration of talking about life

¹¹⁶ Samson A. Fatokun, 2010. *Soteriology: An African Outlook (A Historical Study of the Christian Doctrine of salvation from African Perspective)*, Ibadan, End – Time Publishing House Ltd. p.33.

and concept of salvation for mankind. Bietenhard says *Αἷμα* is used physically as the bearer of life and the life force.¹¹⁷ Moreover, it is true that guilt had to be atoned for by blood, therefore sacrificial blood was regarded by the Israelites as having strengthening and cleansing power. Atonement was central to everything connected with the temple worship system, as spelled out in the three components of the ceremonial law: In ancient Israel, as well as in Judaism today, the greatest of the holy day was *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. It was the day that gathered up the worship of every other day. The high priest would stand before the people as their divinely appointed representative, bearing the names of all of the twelve tribes engraved on his breastplate and shoulders. He would perform the rituals of animal sacrifice using the blood of a bull and a goat, and as the representative of every Israelite, confess the sins of the whole nation. Only on this one day each year the high priest, and only the high priest, after performing special rituals for his own cleansing and self-consecration, would enter the most holy and sacred chamber of the Temple, the Holy of Holies, on behalf of all Israel, praying for the people and sprinkling the sacrificial blood for all their sins.¹¹⁸

In the normal sin offerings, the sacrifice was the outward symbol and expression of the penitence of the worshipper, who at least if he or she was a man or woman of some spiritual perception, believed that in the mercy of God his sin was taken away, but not that his sin was transposed from himself or herself to the victim and thus physically removed. This symbolic gesture pictured the transfer of the sacrificer's sin to the sacrificial animal and was likely done with a prayer of repentance and request for forgiveness or healing on his behalf. This was a substitution sacrifice that prefigured the ultimate substitute Jesus Christ represents for mankind (Isa. 53, 2 Cor. 5:21). The ritual of the goat for *Azazel* may therefore represent a concession to popular demands. The adherents of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim* in Ibadan accept this act as sufficient to satisfy them in carrying away their sins, help to heal and to certain extent sanctify them. Almost all of the interviewees claimed that there is no more sacrifice of any animals for scapegoatism because Jesus Christ has done so once and for all. They now use Holy Water and Psalms as directed by the Holy Spirit for

¹¹⁷ H. Bietenhard, 1978. "Blood" in Colin Brown (ed.) *Dictionary of NT Theology* (Vol. 1) Exeter: The Paternoster Press, p. 226.

¹¹⁸ H. Bietenhard, 1978. "Blood" in Colin Brown ed. *Dictionary of NT Theology* (Vol. 1) Exeter: The Paternoster Press, p. 226.

healing and deliverance in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Church, even the contents of constitution of the church re-affirmed the view that Jesus Christ is enough sacrifice done once and for all.¹¹⁹

The animal sacrifices were the appointed means of atonement under the old covenant. Not any sacrifice was acceptable, but only the animal specified by the law, in most cases a male lamb. The person bringing the sacrifice placed his hand on the animal's head as it was slain (Lev. 1:4; 3:8, 13; 4:15, 29, 33; 16:20-22). This signified the transfer of human sin to the substitute, which bore God's judgment in the sinner's place. These sacrifices foreshadowed the death of Christ, the "Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29; Heb. 10:10), and were provisional until His coming (Rom. 3:25, Heb. 9:15; 10:8-14). Wurzburger avers that atonement may represent the process of covering up sins to forestall retribution, a form of catharsis that decontaminates individuals from impurities induced by sinful behaviour or expiatory or propitiatory acts designated to avert divine wrath and bring about reconciliation and redressing the imbalance caused by offences against the Deity.¹²⁰ The chief goal of atonement is making at one with God of humanity once estranged by sin.

The Aaronic priests were the appointed mediators of these atoning sacrifices. By God's explicit appointment, only men from the tribe of Levi and the family line of Aaron were qualified to serve in the priesthood (Numbers 3:10; Ex. 29:9; Num 18:1-7). Male Levites from family lines other than that of Aaron performed subordinate temple duties under priestly supervision (Num 3:5-9). A recent scientific study published in the prestigious British journal *Nature*, found a genetic link among contemporary Jewish men claiming priestly lineage; this lends support to their claim of common ancestry tracing back three thousand and four hundred years to the biblical Aaron.

Just as the Passover was the solemn spring festival of expiation so in the autumn, which marked the beginning of the year came the great Day of Atonement- Leviticus 16. Baker says an analysis of the ordinances of the feast reveals a fusion of various rituals which compromised an ancient ceremony of expiation connected with the sacred Tent, by which the ritual transgressions of the congregation were effaced and the focus of which was the rite

¹¹⁹ Apostle Segun Phillips, General Apostle Laniran, Prophetess Ayeni and others including leaders and members confirmed this "No more animal sacrifice" in the questionnaire filled and spoken words during interview.

¹²⁰ Walter S. Wurzburger, 1987 "Atonement in *Mircea Eliade (ed.) Encyclopedia of Religion*. Vol. 1 New York: Macmillan, p 493.

of the scapegoat for Azazel.¹²¹ What the act of Atonement created was given special significance by making the congregation active participants with the result that the Day of Atonement now became the great day of repentance and the medium through which the whole nation expressed her need of reconciliation, the tremendous consummation of that concept of Atonement which dominated the whole sacrificial law. The Day of Atonement is regarded as the most sacred day in the calendar of Israel. The people recognized their sins, confessed them before the Lord in fasting, in repentance and self-examination. The Jewish sages even taught that each person must first forgive his or her neighbour before requesting for forgiveness from Yahweh. (Lev. 19:18). The scapegoat was, perhaps, the most striking feature of the ceremony, symbolizing sending the nation's sins away from them (Lev. 16:21ff). This was the one facet observed by the entire nation and this ceremony prefigured Christ's crucifixion and many of its elements are discussed in the book of Heb. 9.

This ceremony carried out in Old Testament is inadequate and temporary because it was done repeatedly annually and dealt partially with the people's sins and problems caused by immoral or unclean acts. But Jesus Christ's crucifixion was once and for all, completely dealing with the sin and purification issues before God Almighty. Theologically, the atonement of the Old Testament covered sin only temporarily, but it did not eliminate sin or later judgement (Heb. 10:4), because the one time sacrifice of Jesus Christ fully atoned for our sin. It satisfies God's wrath forever, insuring eternal salvation – Heb. 9: 12, 15; 1 John 2 : 2. Actual atonement was based on cleansing through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary – Rom. 3:25 -26, Heb. 9:15.

The total sinfulness of human creates our need for atonement. Isaiah describes the hugeness and depth of our sins –Isa. 53: 6, but Jesus Christ is all in all. On the Day of Atonement, one of the two goats would be slain while the other would be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement (Lev. 16: 10). That “scapegoat” would be driven out into wilderness bearing the sins of the people. The goat would be banished instead of being killed, and the goat, bearing the sins of the people, suffered the fate of the sinner who is banished from God. The goat was a substitute for the people and all were to show the genuineness of their repentance by fasting, prayer, self-examination, and refraining from

¹²¹ Walter Eichrodt, 1961. *Theology of the Old Testament Vol. One Translated by J.A. Baker*, SCM press Ltd, London p. 131.

work on the Day of Atonement. The participants in the rituals of this most important day gave evidence of the Israelites total dedication to God. The New Testament writers saw this sacred ceremony as the foreshadowing of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, who came from God as patriarchal religion as portrayed in Gen. 12-50.¹²²

Hebrews chapter 13 verses 11 – 13 makes a connection between the sacrifice of animals on the Day of Atonement and the death of Christ "outside the gate" of Jerusalem. The Early fathers variously took each of the two goats to represent Jesus Christ. For St. Cyril of Alexandria and Theodora the goats are representative of Christ in His two natures, the first, his human nature, that the Son of Man died in the flesh and the second is the scapegoat or vicarious victim which is let go and not killed which represent the Divine nature of Christ, showing how the Son of God triumphed over death by His resurrection.¹²³ The New Testament sums up the Old Testament idea of atonement by saying that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9: 22). Throughout the Christian centuries, the scapegoat has been taken as the type of Christ.

3.4.3 Sacred elements and places

Sacred elements (Lev. 14) in Israelite cultic activities include the use of consecrated water, candles and oil to encounter God's power and glory. Sacred places where sacred elements are being carried out are usually chosen by divine revelation, this special sacred site may be revealed to a founder, prophet/prophetess through dreams or visions, once this is ascertained, the place becomes sacred by way of special dedication as may be led by the Holy Spirit. It could be a corner of a room, a small room of a house, a grove, a specific spot on the mountain or in a forest / wilderness totally marked out as sacred places. Otto, describes the word numinous, an event, an experience, a place, an object that evokes in us a sense of mystery, of terror mixed with fascination.¹²⁴ This is saying that "That which was holy is separated, set apart and consecrated for the service of God and therefore needed to be treated with reverence and awe, not as a common thing or place.

¹²² Augustine Pagolu, 1995. *Patriarchal Religion as Portrayed In Genesis 12-50: Comparison With Ancient Near Eastern And Later Israelite Religions* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis; the Open University. Unpublished.

¹²³ David Lyle Jeffrey, (General Editor) 1992. *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, Wm. Grand Rapids, Michigan: B. Eerdmans Publishing Co .p. 684.

¹²⁴ Rudolf Otto, 1923. *The idea of the holy*,(tr. J.W. Harvey. London: Oxford University press p 88.

The regulations of the book of Leviticus define the communion of the covenant people with the holy majesty of their God.¹²⁵ In Leviticus, as well as in the other Israelites legal documents, holy means more than merely numinous, because holiness is derived from a relationship to God. The Israelites believe that it is a reflection and emanation of God's glory. The holiness of the God of Israel refers, at once, to His infinite majesty, His immeasurable power and His perfect righteousness. The psalmist wrote on this and says "By terrible things in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation" Ps. 65:5. Holiness includes moral purity, but it has a wider concept than moral purity as explained in the Book Leviticus. This book confirms that the external is significant because it is, or should be, an expression of the attitude of the heart. Thus Zion is a holy hill, as the dwelling place of the Lord, and all that is included in the approach to Him, the ritual, the place or land to be used in making some sacred preparation and the priests or church leaders and the garments must be holy in order to receive favour from the Lord God Almighty.¹²⁶

In ancient times the Israelites had several holy sites or cultic centres. These centres, according to Dada have a long history behind them and attained their sacred character because one patriarch or the other had divine encounter in these centres. These holy sites include Shiloh, Gilgah, Bethel, Beersheba, Moriah, Tabor, and Sinai and so on. They attained significant position because of the opinion that the Almighty God manifested His glory at a specific time in the history of the people.¹²⁷ The teaching of Jesus Christ in Jn. chapter 4 that God is spirit and therefore can be worshipped anywhere and anytime, did not prevent some Nigerian Indigenous Churches, like *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church, from creating special sacred spaces where sacred preparations will be carried out from time to time as directed by the Holy Spirit.

Most of these African Indigenous Churches have holy sacred places known as *Ijù* (wilderness) *Ilẹ̀ -Àánú* (land of Mercy), Ile Agbara (Power House). Most of these specially created sacred places are micro-spatial units situated next or very close to the church building. These sacred holy places are designated for individual and at times for collective

¹²⁵ Wilhelm Vischer, 1935. *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments*: Munich : C. Kaiser p 1, 26.

¹²⁶ Nolan B Harmon and Samuel Terrien, eds. 1990, *The Interpreter's Bible in Twelve volumes volume ii The book Leviticus*, Nashville: Abingdon Press. p. 88-89.

¹²⁷ A. O. Dada. 2002. Vestige of Israelites' Cultic practices in the activities of some Nigerian indigenous churches, *Papers in Honour of Tekena N. Tamuno* Professor Emeritus at 70 Edited by Egbe Ifie, Oputoru Books, Ibadan p. 62.

special prayer session and spiritual struggle. They are places where founders, minister in charge, church leaders and members often undertake special spiritual activities because of their belief in the overwhelming presence of angelic forces in these sacred places. Members have the belief that God's glory and special power can be encountered in these sacred sites. Some of these places have a special deep well called '*Kànga Ìyè*' for special healing and deliverance of members who may be afflicted by demons or evil spirit. For example At *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Nigeria and Overseas, *Gàngánsì, Oríta Mèrin Ọ̀nà Àrà* Local Government, the Minister in charge (Apostle Solomon Awujoola) granted the researcher permission to enter the sacred land of the church on 7th August 2012, where we found the followings: Holy Bible, consecrated Keg and Bowl of water, Candle stand, Cross, flag with special inscription and bottles all these are for sacred preparation for healing and deliverance without any hidden or syncretic acts (see Photo in the Appendix)

Snr. Superintendent Apostle (Dr.) Bamikole Lawrence said it is a place where church leaders can investigate or find out matters or problems that one is confused of, a place where you pray prayer tagged "*Ó ti fẹ̀ sù mi, ó yẹ́ kí Ọlórún ti dá mi lóhùn tàbí Oluwa ó ti jẹ́ tí èyí fi farasin fún mi, kí ló fàá tó fi rí báyi!*" meaning a place where one can have special, intensive and challenging prayers and dialoguing with God by saying "O Lord am almost fed up, I want to give up, or why are you hiding solution to specific spiritual problems or difficulty from me."¹²⁸

In *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim church the sick and private properties are anointed with varieties of oil for healing and protection respectively, consecrated water is sprinkled on residential, business and worship premises and building for protection and purification. They also use candles for healing and to enhance access into supersensible realms.

3.4.3.1 Holy oil and holy water

Holy is an adjective *Qadosh- Qadosh* "holy." The Semitic languages have two separate original forms of the root. The one signifies "pure" and "devoted," as in Akkadian *qadistu* and the other in Hebrew *qadesh* *קדש*., "holy." The word describes

¹²⁸ Snr. Superintendent Apostle (Dr.) Lawrence Bamikole Interview held on 28th February, 2012 at Cherubim and Seraphim church, Monatan Ibadan.

something or someone. The other signifies "holiness" as a situation or as an abstract, as in Arabic *al-qaddus* "the most holy or most pure." In Hebrew the verb *qadash* שָׁדַשׁ and the word *qadesh* combine both elements: the descriptive and the static. The traditional understanding of "separated" is only a derived meaning, and not the primary.

Qadosh is prominent in the Pentateuch, poetic and prophetic writings, and rare in the historical books. In the Old Testament *qadosh* has a strongly religious connotation. In one sense the word describes an object or place or day to be "holy" with the meaning of "devoted" or "dedicated" to a particular purpose: "And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel..." Num 5:17. Particularly the Sabbath day is "devoted" as a day of rest - Isa 58:13-14. The prescription is based on Gen 2:3 where the Lord "sanctified," or "dedicated," the Sabbath. God has dedicated Israel as His people. They are "holy" by their relationship to the "holy" God. All of the people are in a sense "holy," as members of the covenant community, irrespective of their faith and obedience: "And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" Num. 16:3. God's intent was to use this "holy" nation as a "holy," royal priesthood amongst the nations Ex 19:6. Based on the intimate nature of the relationship, God expected His people to live up to His "holy" expectations and thus to demonstrate that they were a "holy nation": "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine" Lev. 20:26. The Old Testament clearly and emphatically teaches that God is "holy." He is "the Holy One of Israel" Isa 1:4, the "holy God" Isa 5:16, and "the Holy One" Isa 40:25. His name is "Holy. In the Septuagint the word *hagios* "holy" stands for the Hebrew שֶׁמֶן.¹²⁹

Holy Anointing Oil

Shemen, means "(olive) oil; olive; perfume; olivewood." Cognates of this word appear in Ugaritic, Akkadian, Phoenician, Syriac, Arabic, and Aramaic. This word appears about 190 times and in all periods of biblical Hebrew. *Shemen* means olive "oil": "And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a

¹²⁹ *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it" Gen 28:18. Olive "oil" was also used to anoint a future office bearer Ex 25:6; 2 Kgs 9:6; one's head as a sign of mourning 2 Sam 14:2; one's head as a sign of rejoicing Ps 23:5; and one's ear lobe, thumb, and toe as a ritual cleansing Lev. 14:17.

Shemen is used as a preservative on shield-leather 2 Sam. 1:21 and in baking Ex. 29:2 and as a medication Ezek 16:9. This "oil" is burned for light Ex 25:6. Its many uses made olive oil a valuable trade item Ezek. 27:17. In many contexts shemen perhaps means the "olive" itself: "...but ye, gather ye wine, and summer fruits, and oil, and put them in your vessels..." Jer. 40:10. The word appears once, to mean lavish dishes, or dishes mixed with much oil: "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things - Isa. 25:6. Shemen is "a kind of perfume," or olive oil mixed with certain odors to make a perfume, in passages such as Song 1:3: "Because of the savor of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth..."¹³⁰

¹³⁰ *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

It was a Jewish practice and never mentioned among the Gentiles. Anointing with oil for the purpose of healing is only mentioned two times in the NT, (James 5:14, Mk 6:13), Customs varied in the cultures of the Middle East. However, anointing with special oil was in Israel either a strictly priestly or kingly right. Extra-biblical sources show that it was common to anointing kings in many ancient Near Eastern monarchies, therefore in Israel anointing was not only a sacred act but also a socio-political one Ex. 30:23-25.¹³¹ In modern western societies the odors of decay (such as the stench of dead bodies, feces, and sweat) are largely eradicated or at least cosmetically covered. The modern olfactory organ is much less depended on for survival than are those of sight and hearing.¹³² "Extra-biblical sources show that the practise of anointing kings was common to many ancient Near-Eastern monarchies ... that in Israel anointing was not a purely sacred act but also a socio-political one".¹³³

The Old Testament Israelite way of life came from a cultural environment in which the sense of smell was highly depended on for survival and was highly esteemed. It contributed to the ability of man to orientate himself and to find his way in a world where life and death were permanently struggling. Where stench arose, he diagnosed the presence of disease, decay, rotting processes and death (Exodus 7:18).¹³⁴ Spices and oils were chosen which assisted man in orientating himself and in creating a sense of safety as well as a sense of elevation above the physical world of decay. The sense of smell was also considered highly esteemed by deity. In Deuteronomy 4:28 and Psalms 115:5-6 the sense of smell is included in connection with the polemics against idols. In the Hebrew Bible, God takes pleasure in inhaling the "soothing odor" (*reah hannihoah*) of offerings (Genesis 8:21 etc.). In one Jewish custom a portion of the *challah* is set aside (refrigerated) until the making of new *challah* when the old is added to the new. It is recorded in Exodus 30:31 "And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, this shall be holy anointing oil unto me

¹³¹ BibleGateway.com. <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2030:23-25&version=KJV>.

Retrieved 11/08/ 2012. Commentary on the Bible, by Adam Clarke. Holy anointing oil From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_De_Vaux *Les institutions de l'ancien testament* (Paris: Cerf, 1958); English 1965 - rep. Ancient Israel: its life and institutions – P. 104 1997 "Was anointing, in Israel, a strictly royal rite? In I Kg 19: 15-16 God commands Elias to go and anoint Hazael, Jehu . . . and Eliseus. Hazael was to be king of Syria, Jehu would be anointed king of Israel by a disciple of Eliseus,).

¹³² Shemaryahu Talmon. 1986. *King, cult, and calendar in ancient Israel: collected studies* P. 36 ed.

¹³³ A. Corbin. 1982. *Le Miasme et la jonquille. L'odorat et l'imaginaire social, 18e-19e siecles* Paris From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki> retrieved on 11/August/ 2012.

¹³⁴ M.C.A. Korpel, 1990. *A Rift in the Clouds, Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Munster, 1990), pp. 99,105, 142, 419.

throughout your generations." (Ex. 30:31). Commenting on this verse Rashi quotes a teaching of the Sages that the original Shemen HaMishcha that Moses made, to anoint the priesthood and the tabernacle furnishings, would remain intact in its entirety into the distant future (*l'asid lavoh*). When the Temple was to be rebuilt they would then need that very same Holy Anointing Oil to anoint the priests prior to their service in the Third Temple as well as to anoint the furnishings of the mishkin.¹³⁵

It recorded that, in Christianity, the formula for the holy anointing oil influenced the traditions regarding the preparation, consecration and use of Chrism. The Churches of the Eastern part keep back a portion of their liturgical bread, known as Holy Malka, and when new bread is made the old is added to the new. It is claimed this continuity reaches back to the original loaf used by Christ and his disciples at the last supper. They also add a portion of the old anointing oil to the newly made anointing oil to establish a continuity of the oil, believed to reach back to the early disciples. The holy anointing oil (Hebrew: דִּיקְצֶקֶמ *shemen* "oil", *ha-mishchah* "of anointing" (שמן המשחה) formed an integral part of the ordination of the priesthood and the high priest as well as in the consecration of the articles of the tabernacle (Ex. 30:26) and subsequent temples in Jerusalem. The primary purpose of anointing with the holy anointing oil was to cause the anointed persons or objects to become *qodesh* – most holy (Ex. 30:29).

Originally the oil was used exclusively for the priests and the Tabernacle articles but was later extended to include prophets and kings. It was forbidden to be used on an outsider (Ex. 30:33) or to be used on the body of any common persons (Ex. 30:32a) and the Israelites were forbidden to duplicate any like it for themselves (Ex. 30:32b). The holy anointing oil described in Exodus 30:22-25 was created from: Pure myrrh (מר דרור *mar deror*) 500 shekels (about 6 kg), Sweet Cinnamon (קִינְמוֹן בֶּשֶׂם *kinnemon besem*) 250 shekels (about 3 kg), Sweet Calamus (קְנֵה בֶּשֶׂם *keneh bosem*) 250 shekels (about 3 kg), Cassia (קִדְדָה *kiddah*) 500 shekels (about 6 kg), Olive oil (שֶׁמֶן זַיִת *shemen sayith*) one *hin* (about 5 quarts according to Adam Clarke; about 4 litres according to *Shiurei Torah*, 7 litres according to the Chazon Ish.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Elias Zuluf, Article on The Significance of The Unique Holy Water and The Holy Anointing Oil By Elias Zuluf [http:// EzineArticles.com/5124924](http://EzineArticles.com/5124924) retrieved on August 11, 2012 at 2am.

¹³⁶ Elias Zuluf, Article on The Significance Of The Unique Holy Water and The Holy Anointing Oil By Elias Zuluf <http://EzineArticles.com/5124924> retrieved on August 11, 2012.

In Israel priests and kings were anointed to mark them out as specially chosen by God for special work and positions- Ex. 30 : 22- 33, 30 cf 1 Sam. 15 : 1, 1 Kgs.1 :39 and Isaiah 61 : 1; Lk. 4 : 16-21. The spices which were very rare and costly then would be soaked in water for several days and boiled (Gn.37:25). The scented liquid would then be mixed with the olive oil (Ex.30: 24). The anointing would be done by sprinkling a little oil on each person, article or object- Lev.8: 11. Even Jesus Christ was so much recognized by His followers as the Anointed one that they gave Him the title *Messiah* Hebrew word for 'the anointed one' or *Christos* which is the Greek word for 'the anointed'.¹³⁷ In the Christian church, the practice of anointing with oil has been used to heal the sick people- James 5: 14-16, Mark 6:13, which is common at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim worldwide today. Exodus 30: 22-23, 37: 29. The Holy Oil commonly known as the anointing Oil at *Ona Iwa Mimo* is taken as special blessings for healing and deliverance from the LORD.

Driver says the holy anointing oil in ancient Israel was an aromatic oil to be prepared, by mixing, in stated proportions, olive oil with probably the essences of myrrh, cinnamon, sweet-smelling cane, and cassia; and at the Tent of the meeting, with its appurtenances, as also Aaron and his sons, to be anointed with it, as a mark of consecration to Jehovah LORD GOD is used to distinguish from ordinary priests or person. The oil thus prepared to be reserved exclusively for sacred purposes to be used according to Yahweh's directives.¹³⁸ As investing the priest with official garments was a recognition before men of the official position of the person (Ex. 28: 3), so the anointing him with oil was an acknowledgment that all fitness for his office, all the powers with which he would rightly fulfill its duties, must come from the Lord. So, again, with the sanctification of the holy things, each of them was intended by divine wisdom to convey a spiritual meaning to the mind of man. They were means of grace to the devout worshipper. The oil poured upon them was recognition of this fact, and at the same time it made them holy and set them apart from all profane and ordinary uses. On kindred grounds, though to express another idea, the altar was to be sanctified also by blood. (Lev. 8 : 15).¹³⁹

¹³⁷ John H. Dobson, 1991. *A Guide to the Book of Exodus*: London, SPCK.pp.148-149.

¹³⁸ S.R. Driver, 1953, *The Cambridge Bible for schools and Colleges, The Book Of Exodus*, Cambridge: University press. London. p. 335.

¹³⁹ Assessed and retrieved from [http:// bible.cc/Leviticus/ 8-15.htm](http://bible.cc/Leviticus/8-15.htm) retrieved on 11/August, 2012 at 10.45 pm.

The Holy Water

The Holy Water (Num.5:17, Psalm 28:3) is sacred water used in different religions for various purposes, whether it is in the African Traditional Religion or Christianity. Every religion has its own significance and they use the water for purification, healing or deliverance purposes. In Scripture, water is used to cleanse, purify, and heal human beings (Ex.23: 25) Cleansing as in Lev 14:8-9,50-52; 15:5-27; 17:15; Num 8:7; 19:12,18-19; 2 Ki. 5:12; Psa. 51:7; Ezek 16:4; 36:25; Eph 5:26; Heb 10:22. Purifying as in Ex 29:4; 40:12,30-32; Lev 11:32; 16:4,24,26,28; 22:6; Num 19:7-8; 31:23; Deut 23:10-11; 1 Kg. 18:33-34; Jn. 2:6; Heb 9:19. Healing as in 2 Kgs. 5:14; Isa. 35:5-7; and Jn. 5:4 ; 9:6-7. The ritual use of this precious substance is ancient and rooted in the Old Testament. When the Israelites entered the Temple, they had to undergo purification by immersion in a *mikvah* (modern Jews still make use of *mikva'ot* on Yom Kippur, on wedding days, for purification after menstruation or coming into contact with a dead body or semen, etc.). These ritual purifications by water prefigured Christian Baptism, which we recall when we bless ourselves (cross ourselves) using holy water upon entering our churches. Devoutly blessings one's self with Holy Water remits venial sins.

In Israel whenever you enter into a temple you are asked to use that water so that you become pure and then you can perform all the rituals. This holy water is believed to have special curative properties, is also used by the priest in Israel and prophets in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan to sprinkle the people before the beginning of service to make them pure or for healing and deliverance especially at *Ilẹ̀ Àánú* (Sacred space). The church extols the divine power of its holy water for healing, purification, protection and healing. They claim and intend people to believe that holy water can be used for asking for various kinds of blessings, such as fertility, deliverance from the power of the devil success in examination and protection from sickness.

When any ordained church leaders, prophet or prophetess carries out special prayers they sprinkle the holy water on the people who are gathered there. It is considered that these water drops are the blessings of the God which are showered on the people. The water is kept in a special vessel which is called as the "aspersory" and a stick is dipped in it. Through the stick the water droplets are sprinkled on all the people after they have completed the rite or their prayers. It helps to heal, deliver and bring victory to the people. Thus it is the best

way to make the people come closer to God and feel the divine presence. Along with the water some special prayer or words are chanted by the priest to mark the end of the gathering.

3.4.3.2 Use of Candles

In Israelite religion, candlestick symbolizes life and also the light from it represents the glory of the LORD which is reflected in the consecrated lives of the Israelites. The use of candle is one of the basic features of Nigerian Indigenous churches' liturgy. Their use of the candlelight is patterned after the Israelite's use in the Old Testament (Ex. 25: 31-33). They approved the use of candle for liturgical purpose and to create an atmosphere that will aid the transition to alter state of consciousness which gives access to the supersensible realms.

Although, most of the leaders interviewed by the researcher agreed that candle might be used by some prophets/ prophetesses especially from *Pápá Njò* group with sinister motive, but they are the bad eggs found in virtually all organisations.

CHAPTER FOUR

FUNCTIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ISRAELITE CULTIC ELEMENTS AND PRACTICES

It is important to take a careful look at the practice of worship in Israel, because worship is where Israel worked out its unique identity and sustained its distinctive life in the world. Furthermore, we must note that the cult became a place of self-indulgence and satiation and that Yahweh became a function of a religious enterprise that was manipulative and self-satisfying. Brueggemann argues that the prophets were concerned with gross abuses in the cult and would not have entertained the notion of condemning or abolishing the cultic practices; rather, they thought the cult should be a witness to and embodiment of the practice of communion with Yahweh. The cult is a place where Israel could be in the presence of God. There is no evidence that the prophets opposed public worship itself, so long as the worship focused on Yahweh.¹

4.1 The social functions of Israelite cultic elements and practices

The Israelites, a peculiar people whose God is Yahweh, worship idols or worship only out of obedience to the law is unacceptable. Among them, to come forward with illicit gifts or as a perpetrator of corruption in one's transactions with fellow Israelites does not demonstrate a proper relationship with God. What is required by Yahweh, according to the law, is doing right and justice. The relationship each person had with his fellow Israelites, according to the prophets, should be a reflection of their relationship with Yahweh. Eakin writes:

For the priests and prophets mere legalities were largely unimportant. What was vitally significant was the individual's treatment of his fellowman. Transgression of the neighbor's inherent worth as a creature of Yahweh was anathema, whether the means to the transgression was legal or not. "Man's inhumanity to man" was more than a social problem for the prophet, nor could he have contented himself with political programs that emphasized man's relationship to his fellow while ignoring his relationship to God.²

¹ Walter Brueggemann, 1997. *Theology of the Old Testament: testimony, dispute, advocacy*, Minneapolis: Fortress. p. 651.

² Frank E. Eakin, Jr., 1971. *The religion and culture of Israel: an introduction to Old Testament thought* Boston: Allyn and Bacon. p.238-9.

In the ancient law codes, it is not cult or religious matters that occupy an important place and more space, but rather social justice, love and concern for the poor, the underprivileged, the marginalised, and sincerity in one's dealings with the neighbour (Ex.20 : 22-23 :33.).

A strict attitude towards the marital union of those near of kin was a typical of the Mosaic legal code is indicated by the enactments of Leviticus 18: 1-30. These prohibitions have a distinct bearing upon the marital customs of the day and age. And it is opined that children born to near relatives may experience serious health problems and those improper sexual relations destroy family life.³ Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for sexual sin. It is believed that the Roman Empire fell because of this same sexual sin. The temple worship system, with its tabernacle/temple, Aaronic priesthood, and sacrifices, is a major component of the Mosaic law commonly designated the "ceremonial law." Whereas the moral code of the Mosaic Law (Ten Commandments) reflects the righteous character of God, and shows human's desperate spiritual need before a holy God "by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20; see also 4:15; 5:13; 7:7); the ceremonial law demonstrates the redeeming love of God and His gracious provision of atonement, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Old Testament as a whole, as well as the Torah in particular, finds fulfilment in the life and work of Jesus Christ.⁴ When the Jews accepted the Torah at Mt. Sinai, they became the chosen people whose role and responsibility was to bring a God-given code of morality to the world. They were to be "the light unto the nations", in the words of prophet Isaiah. This was what Hitler wanted to bring an end to, when he massacred the Jews, because, as long as there were even a few Jews left on earth, they were going to continue that God-given mission:

If only one country, for whatever reason, tolerates a Jewish family in it, that family will become the germ center for fresh sedition. If one little Jewish boy survives without any Jewish education, with no synagogue and no Hebrew school, it (Judaism) is in his soul. Even if there had never been a synagogue or a Jewish school or an Old Testament, the Jewish spirit would still exist and exert its influence. It has been there

³ R.K. Harrison, 1977. *Introduction to the Old Testament* Gran Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans publishing Company pp.610-613.

⁴ Vern S. Poythress, 1991. *The shadow of Christ in the law of Moses*, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company p274.

from the beginning and there is no Jew, not a single one, who does not personify it.⁵

God wanted the Israelites to keep themselves pure and be set apart for Him (Lev. 18: 1-5). He did not want His people absorbed into the surrounding culture and environment as they moved from one idol-infested country to another. Lev.18: 6-18 shows the list of people with whom sexual relations are forbidden. Marriage is a divine institution, intended for the comfort of human life, to ensure decent and honourable propagation of the human race. By marriage, two are to become one flesh. Therefore, those that are in a sense one flesh by nature could not become one flesh by institution. This shows that God's agenda cannot be changed in the institution of marriage.

Consequently, adultery is grievous enough as a civil crime, even outside the context of the holiness of Israel, to merit the death penalty. The Israelites believe that adultery unleashes damage on the institution of the family. The family is such a central institution that it is arguable that such general damage to society ought to be recompensed by damage to the persons involved, in the form of the death penalty. Likewise, parent-child incest, homosexual practice and bestiality warrant the death penalty in the context of Israel's holiness, because sexual perversion disrupted the general order of society. It was acceptable that if a person disrupts the order of society, society ought in turn to disrupt the order of the offender, by passing on them the death penalty. Neglect of these purity rules pollutes the tabernacle and leads to the death of the offender.⁶ In the context of the church, subsequent to the resurrection of Christ, such offence warrants excommunication when such individual is not ready to repent.

A lengthy ritual laid down for the restoration of a cleansed leper or any other person who has been healed of an infectious skin disease was given to the Israelites by God. Available information revealed that the leprosy recorded in the Old Testament was not always the disease that we know as leprosy today. The word had a broad meaning that covered a number of infectious skin diseases, some of which were curable. It applied even to fungus or mildew on clothes and buildings; this is one of the reasons why the Temple will

⁵ Robert S. Wistrich, 1998. *Hitler's Apocalypse: Jews and the Nazi Legacy*, Colorado: St Martins press p. 122.

⁶ G. J. Wenham, 1985. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, The Book Of Leviticus*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing company, Grand Rapids, Michigan pp.18-24.

also be sanctified by pouring sacrificial animal blood on it on the Day of Atonement.⁷ Laws were laid down because such disease was symbolic of sin, it made people ceremonially unclean and unable to join the community for any social or religious activities till they were healed and ceremonially cleansed. Likewise, the public health had to be protected by separating infected people from the camp and destroying anything that might carry the disease to others.

Canaan's society and religion appealed to worldly desires, especially sexual immorality and drunkenness. This practice would help them to avoid practising the ungodly desires of her ailing society because, whenever they compromised godly living, it eliminated or reduced their effectiveness in serving God faithfully. These practices would make them pursue righteousness rather than transient pleasures which might lead to defilement of the bodies. It is glaring that God gave some other forbidden things, such as committing adultery, having homosexual relations and having sexual relations with animals. These practices, which were common in pagan religious cultures, led to disease and untimely death. God specially chose Israel for His own purpose and made a covenant with her at Sinai, He bound the nation to Himself in grace and set down stipulations designed to teach them how to live together in a harmonious, mutual and beneficial way. The goal of the stipulations God spelt out at Sinai reflected His original purpose for the human race. The commandments were given in order to instruct them on how they should live in the light of the fact that He declared them to be His special people. Israel's life under God's direction was to be a means of attracting other nations into fellowship with the one true God. God did not give them the laws as guidelines for effecting salvation but gave them as guidelines for reflecting salvation. Contemporary societies take pleasure in engaging these forbidden practices, even trying to make them acceptable, both within and outside the church. There are various groups of people fighting for gay or lesbian rights and some people openly talk about their immoral lifestyle even on television shows. God's sovereign solution to this infection is that, we must keep to His commandments, as shown in Lev. 18: 30.

God has much concern and cares for the poor, widow, alien and low-class people in society. Therefore, the Israelites are enjoined to reflect His nature and characteristics in their

⁷ R.K. Harrison, 1977. *Introduction to the Old Testament* Gran Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans publishing Company pp.607- 610.

attitudes and actions (Lev. 19:10). They are required to be honest in all their dealings. All that we have in the world must be acquired honestly. Let your yes be yes and your no be no and take nor keep anybody's right from him or her. (Lev. 19: 12-13). Provisions were also made for the poor. The gifts were based on the ability of the individual. These are laws to teach the Israelites and Christians today that God does not expect us to borrow or steal in the society in order to be popular, live or give to him. For example Mary the mother of Jesus Christ brought what she could afford for the dedication of Jesus Christ (Lk. 2: 22 -24). The people must imitate God in holiness by practising numerous duties that reflect Him. In Leviticus 19, there is a lot of emphasis on numerous commandments and mandates from God given to the people regarding good neighbourliness, caring for the poor and respect for the old and the aliens. The book of Leviticus is relevant for the life of the church today because the sanctity of God and His great desire for fellowship with His redeemed people are clearly seen in the description of the sacrificial system. Being separated, known as holiness for Christians in fellowship with God, was the primary issue for the ancient Israel, as it is for the people of God today.

4.2 The religious functions of Israelite cultic elements and practices

Israel's covenant with Yahweh was a religiously grounded and sanctioned mechanism that went far beyond its religious meaning and role. The covenant serve as the basis and ordering force for the whole complex of society in ancient Israel, regulating economic, political and social relations as well as the religious dimension.⁸ The peculiar nature of Israelites is expressed in the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people; the Sinai covenant is of central importance in the life and thought of Israel. The Sinai covenant was Israel's acceptance of the Lordship of Yahweh and it was then the notion of the rule of God over His people, the kingdom of God, so central to the thought of both Old and New Testaments, had its start. Israel's tribal organization became theocracy under the kingship of Yahweh and the ark of covenant was the symbol of kingship.⁹

The book of Leviticus and part of Exodus focus on the persons and duties of the Levitical priests, and life and the worship of ancient Israel. The instructions received made

⁸ Ceresko Anthony, 1992. *The Old Testament A liberation Perspective* Mary knoll, New York: Orbis Books p.142.

⁹ E. G. Ojo, and P. A. Ojebode, 2010. *History and Religion of Israel from the formative period to the fall of Judah*, Lagos: Nathy Publishers pp. 41-47.

them to worship Yahweh in special chosen places either as a family, community or nation. These places were regarded as high places or sacred places. Leviticus indicates what is to be done when performing a specific rite or ceremony and how it is to be done. Some ideas of the liturgy to be used and ideas that were supposed to be in the worshipper's mind were also given through the injunctions received from Yahweh. These also helped the Israelites to have a richer spiritual content in their act of worshipping Yahweh. The Hebrew word *bmh* בִּמְה - is the literal translation of the high place in the English version of the Old Testament. This rendering is etymologically correct, as it appears from the poetical use of the plural in such expressions as to ride, or stalk, or stand on the high places of the earth, the sea, the clouds, and from the corresponding usage in Assyrian. But in prose, *bdmh* בְּדַמְה is always a place of worship. It has been argued that it was so called because the places of worship were originally on hilltops, or an artificial platform or mound, perhaps imitating the natural eminence which was the oldest holy place. However, neither view is historically demonstrable. The development of the religious significance of the word took place probably not in Israel but among the Canaanites, from whom the Israelites, in taking possession of the holy places of the land, adopted the name also.

In old Israel, every town and village had its own place of sacrifice, and the common name for these places was synonymous with 'יִםֶדֶת־טַפְרֵשֶׁבֶק holy place (Amos vii. 9; Isa. xvi. 12). From the Old Testament and from the existing remains, a good idea may be formed of the appearance of such a place of worship. It was often on the hill above the town, as at Ramah (1 Sam. ix. 12-14); there was a, דֶּאֱקֶרֶן צִשְׁנִי special seat, the seat of the deity, and a wooden post or pole (*azerah*), which marked the place as sacred and was itself an object of worship; there was a stone altar, often of a considerable size, and hewn out of the solid rock or built of unhewn stones, on which offerings were burnt. In literary translation, it means slaughter place; a cistern for water and perhaps, low stone tables for dressing the victims; sometimes also a hall for the sacrificial feasts.¹⁰

The religion of the ancient Israelite centered on these sacred holy places, chosen by Yahweh (Ex. 20: 24-25). At festival seasons, or to make or fulfill a vow, he might journey to more famous sanctuaries at a distance from his home, but ordinarily the offerings which linked every side of his life to religion were paid at the *bifmah* of his own town. The

¹⁰ John Knox and Patrick Miller. 2000. *The Religion of Ancient Israel*. Louisville: Westminster, p 335.

building of royal temples in Jerusalem or in Samaria made no change in this respect. They simply took their place beside the older sanctuaries, such as Bethel, Dan, Gilgal, and Beersheba, to which they were, indeed, inferior in repute. The religious reformers of the 8th century viewed the popular religion as corrupt and licentious, and as fostering the monstrous delusion such that immoral men can buy the favour of God by worship. But they made no difference in this respect between the high places of Israel and the temple in Jerusalem (Amos 5: 21, Isa. 1: 10 ff). Hosea stigmatizes the whole cultus as pure heathenism, Canaanite Baal-worship adopted by apostate Israel. The fundamental law in Deuteronomy chapter 12 prohibits sacrifice at every place except the temple in Jerusalem. In accordance with this law, Josiah, in 621 B.C., destroyed and desecrated the altars (*במות*/*bmot*) throughout his kingdom, where Yahweh had been worshipped from time immemorial, and forcibly removed their priests to Jerusalem, where they occupied an inferior rank in the temple ministry. In the prophets of the 7th and 6th centuries the word *bdmotz* connoted seat of heathenish or idolatrous worship. The historians of the period applied the term in this opprobrious sense not only to places sacred to other gods, but also to the old holy places of Yahweh in the cities and villages of Judah, which, in their view, had been illegitimate from the building of Solomon's temple, and therefore not really seats of the worship of Yahweh. Even the most pious kings of several altars of this type have been preserved.

Judah is censured for tolerating their existence. The reaction which followed the death of Josiah (608 B.C.) restored the old altars of Yahweh. They survived the destruction of the temple in 586, and it is probable that, after its restoration (520/516 BC.), they only slowly disappeared, in consequence partly of the natural predominance of Jerusalem in the little territory of Judea, and partly of the gradual establishment of the supremacy of the written law over custom and tradition in the Persian period.¹¹

It may not be superfluous to note that the Deuteronomic dogma that sacrifice can be offered to Yahweh only at the temple in Jerusalem was never fully established either in fact or in legal theory. The Jewish military colonists in Elephantine in the 5th century B.C. had their altar of Yahweh beside the high way. In Egypt in the Ptolemaic period, the Jews had,

¹¹ P.D. Miller, 2003. *Religion of Ancient Israel*, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, p.335.

besides many local sanctuaries, one greater temple at *Leontopolis*, with a priesthood whose claim to valid orders was much better than that of the High Priests in Jerusalem, and the legitimacy of whose worship was admitted even by the Palestinian rabbis. The Jerusalem temple was preceded by a portable, prototype temple, or tabernacle. The tabernacle was built sometime between the 15th and 13th centuries B.C according to detailed plans divinely revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. chapters 25-27, 30, 35-40).

When Israel left Egypt to begin a new life as an independent nation, God gave detailed arrangements for its organized religious life. According to these arrangements, Israel's place of worship was to be a tabernacle or tent, set up in the centre of the camp. The tabernacle was the symbol of God's presence, a sign that God dwelt among His people because, inside it, there must be the Ark of Covenant. It was also known as the tent of meeting or tent of the testimony (Ex. 38:21, 39:32) for it was the place where God met with His people, to remind them that, within it, in the Ark, was the testimony of God, the law which was to guide and control their lives. He provided this as a central place of worship where the priests could officiate in religious matters and a sacrificial system by which they could demonstrate their true faith towards Him. The tabernacle was made sacred to show that God's word must guide His people in their daily living and to show that God is holy, and that it is a holy place, where God's presence was to be made known.¹² The tabernacle or Temple was the appointed place where the atoning sacrifices were to be offered. Israel was to have but one temple to reflect the fact that there is only one God (Deut. 12:5, 13, 14; 16:5, 6), and to avoid the corruption of their worship (1 Kgs. 12:26-33). The tabernacle's portable nature was suited to the nomadic period of Israel's forty years of wilderness wandering, and the early, unsettled years in the Promised Land. Later, when the nation was fully settled in the land, the Lord Himself chose Jerusalem as the location for the permanent temple (1 Kgs. 8:44, 48; 11:13, 32, 36; 14:21; Ps. 78:68-70).

The instructions and laws given to Moses by God on mount Sinai and elsewhere concerning cultic elements and practices were meant to prepare the Israelites for fight for survival and for them to be able to live a new life in the Promised Land. These laws were to preserve them in a purely physical sense as they went into land of Canaan. Furthermore, it was given to ensure that priests and people alike were holy and pure in their relations with

¹² John H. Dobson, 1991. *A Guide to the Book of Exodus*: London, SPCK. p.126.

Him and with one another. Having received the law, they needed instructions on how to worship and serve at the sanctuary in addition to how to live this life of holiness. The Levitical regulations helped to maintain sexual purity among the Israelites. A chaste and decent life is part of God's will for His people at any time in the history of the world. It seems that national worship of Yahweh was inaugurated by some covenant ceremony (Ex.24:3-8). The remembrance of this initial act was perpetuated by tradition. Israel knew that its relations with Yahweh had begun at a certain date through a pact that was freely accepted on both sides.

Organized forms of worship were established for the tabernacle. The Israelites expressed through this medium acts of worship, such as sacrifices and festivals in the way she worshipped Yahweh. These elements and practices help to deal with spiritual organization of the people, having the key phrase as "You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy" – Lev. 19:2. The word holy means 'set apart'. It also helps to emphasize the need for worship and fellowship with the Lord. The word holy, termed *qodesh* in the Hebrew language, is used in Leviticus more than in any other book of the Holy Bible. The term is used more for things and places. It is also used to describe the Lord (Lev.11: 44). The Hebrew word קֹדֶשׁ *qodesh* and the equivalent Greek word ἅγιος, together with their derivatives, have been translated with one of three words, or derivatives, in older English versions, namely: holy, hallowed, or sanctified. Another word 'sacred' is also used in modern versions, and generally in ecclesiastical literature. *Qudšu* was later used in Jewish Aramaic to refer to God,¹³ and *Qudš* is the proto-form of the Hebrew word *qadōš*, meaning "holy". The root *qdš* was used frequently in West Semitic languages as a verb meaning "consecrate", whereas in Akkadian texts, the verb conjugated from this root meant to "clean, purify." It could also be used as an adjective meaning "holy", and a substantive referring to a "sanctuary, sacred object, sacred personnel." It was used this way in Ugaritic, as for example, in the words *qidšu* (meaning "holy place" or "chapel") and *qad(i)šu* (meaning "consecrated gift" or "cultic personnel").¹⁴

¹³ Foxwell W. Albright, 1990. *Yahweh and the gods of Canaan: a historical analysis of two contrasting faiths*, Eisenbrauns.

¹⁴ Van der Toorn, K.; Becking, Bob; Van der Horst, Pieter Willem 1999, *Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible: DDD*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

The triconsonantal root q-d-s appears some 830 times in the Hebrew Bible, where it is used to express the notion of holiness and when attributed to God, is used to refer to his unspeakable nature. Its use in the Hebrew Bible evokes ideas of separation from the profane, and proximity to the orderliness of God, while in non biblical Semitic texts, recent interpretations of its meaning link it to ideas of consecration, belonging, and purification.¹⁵ Often, the Lord's people are commanded to be holy and warned not to take part in, nor to copy, the religious practices of the Canaanites (Ex.22 :18-20; 23 :18-33). Exodus 22 and 23 refer to magical practices by which the Canaanites hoped to get fertility for crops and herds.¹⁶ This is used in a technical sense as "being set apart unto the Lord". It also helps to emphasize the need for worship and fellowship with the Lord. Holiness in Leviticus is symbolized by wholeness. Animals must be perfect to be used in sacrifice to the God of Israel and priests must be without physical deformity. Mixtures are an abomination; hence, the Israelites must behave in a way that expresses wholeness and integrity in their actions. When a person shows visible signs of lack of wholeness in a persistent patchy skin condition, he or she has to be excluded from the Israelite community. This shows that the Levitical laws, especially on skin diseases, are eloquent testimony to the importance of purity and holiness in ancient Israel. It was considered so important to preserve the purity of the tabernacle or temple and the holiness of the nation that individuals and families might be forced to suffer a good deal. They believe that individual discomfort must not be allowed to jeopardize the spiritual welfare of the nation. To them, God's abiding presence with His people depended on uncleanness being excluded from their midst.

In her sacrificial system, Yahweh provided a way of atonement through shedding of blood of animals. This system had five main categories of sacrifices. The major categories of sacrifices were the burnt offering, cereal or grain offering, the peace or fellowship offering, the sin offering and the guilt or repayment offering. Although the different types of sacrifices were for different purposes, there were elements of atonement and devotion associated with them all (Lev. 1:5, 2:22, 3:2, 5; 4:4-7, 5:18). The blood of the animal killed signified the death of the animal. This work agrees that God gave animal flesh to humankind

¹⁵ Köhler, Ludwig; Baumgartner, Walter; Richardson, Mervyn Edwin John; Stamm, Johann Jakob 1994, *The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament*, v. 3, E.J. Brill and Joosten, Jan (1996), *People and Land in the holiness code: an exegetical study of the ideational framework of the law in Leviticus 17-26*, Brill, , & [http:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/assessed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/assessed) on 19 March, 2011.

¹⁶ John H. Dobson, 1991. *A Guide to the Book of Exodus*: London, SPCK. p126.

as food, but in taking the life of animals' people have to acknowledge God as the rightful owner of that life, because the shed blood of an animal represented its life that had been taken, which people were not to eat or drink (Gen. 9: 3-4). They were to pour the blood at the altar in the case of animals suitable for sacrifice or out there on the ground in the case of animals not suitable for sacrifice. Therefore, when the Israelites wanted to kill animals from their flocks or herds to obtain meat, they were not to slaughter the animals thoughtlessly, but bring them to the Temple altar and kill them as peace offering. This, according to the Israelites, besides getting their meat was acknowledging God in an act of worship, and was an act of sacrificial thanks to God for the benefit given by God. It also prevented the killing of animals in the open fields, where the Israelites might be tempted to follow the Egyptian custom of offering animals to satyrs – goat - like demons. (Lev. 17: 1-7).¹⁷

The sacrificial system demonstrated that no system could solve the problem of sin or provide automatic cleansing. Nevertheless, the sacrifices pointed beyond them to a higher being – The merciful, loving God. This is why this work is stressing the need for every being to turn only to God Almighty, who is able to forgive and cleanse our guilt, through Jesus Christ, whose sacrifices is capable of removing sins, cleansing the guilt in conscience, bringing total forgiveness and securing eternal redemption for mankind. Jesus' words in Jn. 4:20-23 underline three important points regarding the Old Testament temple and its relationship to the New Testament faith: (1) The Jews were God's elect people. Through them, the Lord uniquely revealed His plan of redemption, of which the temple worship system (consisting of the tabernacle/temple, Aaronic priesthood, and sacrifices) was a central part. Although the Samaritans worshipped Jehovah (or Yahweh, as modern scholars believe it should be pronounced), the one true God, they rejected important parts of His scriptural revelation and Jesus Christ pronounced their worship false (v. 22). (2) The Scriptures stipulate only one temple (Deut. 12:5ff; 14:23-24; 16:2ff; 26:2; Lev. 17:8-9) the Jews and the Samaritans were divided over its proper location. It is clear that Jesus took side with the Jews in this dispute. He specifically identified Himself with the Jews ("we know what we worship . . ."), and elsewhere He called the Jerusalem temple "my Father's house" (Jn. 2:16).

¹⁷ M.D. Coogan, 1978. *Stories from Ancient Canaan*. Philadelphia: Westminster, pp. 9-25.

Nevertheless, Jesus' words in Jn. 4:23 plainly signal the imminent end of worship at a temple building. Jesus instituted a New Covenant under which God does not dwell among His people through a temple building, but in His people, through the Holy Spirit. The Scripture mention that God appointed construction of the tabernacle (and later the temple) because of His desire to dwell among His people (Ex. 25:8; 1 Kg. 6:12, 13). However, in its design and activities, the temple was an object lesson illustrating the exclusive elements in the Jewish religion, and emphasising the separation of sinful man from God and the difficulty in approaching the divine presence under the old covenant. The primary function of the temple worship system was to teach the need for atonement of sin as a precondition for worshipping the true and living God. Solomon in his prayer of dedication for the Jerusalem temple asks: "who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifices before him?" (2 Chronicles 2:6). All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory and His righteousness demands. Sin has no respect for the priests, king, prince, scholars, literate, illiterate, rich, poor, youth and adult (Leviticus 4 :1-3,13). Unintentional sin or sin of ignorance gets hold of us at one time or the other. Therefore the Old Testament priest must have their sins atoned for because it is then the leading of worship will be acceptable unto the Lord.

The cultic in Yahwistic religion is not spared the problem of understanding its character and growth. For example, when the Israelite religion reached its present position remains a serious debate in Old Testament scholarship. Dada claims that elaborate and formal worship was put in place in Jerusalem after the centralisation of the sacred cultic worship by the Israelites in Jerusalem, the capital city. That made Jerusalem's Temple to become the only place where sacrificial worship could be legally performed, after many years of hard struggle against the rural sanctuaries, a trend which favoured decentralisation. Jerusalem's temple became unique until the Israelites went into exiles.¹⁸

In 722 B.C., the Northern Kingdom of Israel was taken into exile by the Assyrians. This marked the end of the ten tribes of Israel as an entity religiously and politically, while the Southern Kingdom also went into exile in Babylon. This occurrence brought in changes into the cultic history of the Israelites. The whole scenario changed because a new

¹⁸ A.O. Dada, 2002 Vestige of Israelites' cultic practices in the activities of some Nigerians Indigenous churches. *Papers in honour of Tekena @ 70*. E.Ife(ed) Ibadan : Oputuru Books p.58

community emerged in exile. It was no longer a natural cultic community, but one marked by adherence to tradition and law. The Israelites, during the exilic period had a stressful, hard and unpleasant situation. Sacrificial worship became impossible, as the unique Temple in Jerusalem had been destroyed. Cohen notes that, with Jerusalem reduced to rubble, all that was left of the Temple was an outer, retaining wall of the precinct. This was known for generations as the Wailing Wall. This became the Jews' holiest place of prayer, and it was the closest they could come to the site of the sacred Temple. Since the re-unification of Jerusalem city in 1967 it has been renamed 'the Western Wall'.¹⁹

It was during the exilic period that worshipping in synagogue originated. Synagogue was established in the circumstance of the Babylonians and Assyrians exiles when the Jews might be presumed to have gathered together to strengthen one another in their devotion to the religion of their fathers. Among the dispersions, generally, synagogues acted as civic centres for the community and especially as schools. The synagogue was of great importance to the Jews, even during the ministry of Jesus Christ and early Church and up till now. The experience of the researcher in Jerusalem in December 2010 confirmed this. The researcher was at the Western wall, known as sacred prayer ground in Jerusalem on 13 December 2010, where he had discussion and interview with a rabbi, the leader of Western Wall then, named Mordecai Haman. (see appendix 5 page 15 photograph with the researcher).

Any ten Jews gathering together could associate at a synagogue. Once they formed a quorum there was no need for a priest, as the temple required. Originally, there were religious services in the synagogues on three days of the week, on the Sabbaths, on Mondays and on Thursdays, but later, there were three services a day, at 9.00a.m, noon and 3 p.m. The earliest element of synagogue service was the reading of the law, which was in Hebrew, and would be concluded with a verse or two from the prophets, known as '*Haftarah*' ,meaning conclusion. This reading of the law would be followed by an explanation in Aramaic – the vernacular. Another development in the synagogical service was the prayer session, the eighteen benedictions known as '*Shemoroh Esreh*'. These are still in use in the present-day synagogue in Israel, although there are nineteen now and they are sometimes called

¹⁹ Daniel Cohen, 2010, *The Holy land of Jesus*, Yehuda, Israel: Doko Media Ltd, p. 107.

'*Tefillah*' (prayer) and '*Amidah*' (standing). The synagogue became an important vehicle for Jesus Christ's proclamation during his earthly ministry (Mk 1:21 - 28, 3: 1-6). Simeon Peter, Paul the apostle, and other missionaries later made use of the synagogues of the Jewish dispersion. Synagogues are still held in high esteem by the Israelites, wherever they are living on the surface of the earth as a community.²⁰

4.3 The psychological functions of Israelite cultic elements and practices

Boecker looks to wisdom traditions, which direct attention to ritual actions and usually use antithetical parallelism to articulate their instructional message, as a potential source material available to the priests and prophets when they composed their criticism of the cult. He notes that wisdom traditions teach that the internal attitude of the one who offers is reflected in the kind of ritual act performed. If a person rejects the instruction of the law, then his prayer, which is his ritual action, is considered repugnant (Prov. 28:9). The prophets, at a particular time, referred to the cult that Israel performs as the cult of the wicked, which is an atrocity to YHWH that can only be rejected.²¹

The law of the Covenant is not only on worship life, but also concerns social and family life. They suggest that God has a plan for every part of our lives. Although we cannot apply all the Old Testament laws directly to our lives today, they may help to consider the importance of law in the life of our society today. Hence, the Israelites felt that they must be loyal and obey Yahweh in order to have peace, harmony, longevity and good agricultural production. Yahweh is the only living God who can allow the sustenance of life. Furthermore, they must keep the covenant made with Him and be faithful in all their deeds and actions. The patriarchs are described as engaging in these cultic practices in order to maintain their religious piety. There is a consistent portrayal of these practices as being distinctive to their religion and lifestyle, particularly, the special altars that were not built by individuals, but were largely restricted to organised or popular cults at sanctuaries where priests presided. Similarly, planting trees or raising pillars in order to worship God is

²⁰ Daniel Cohen, 2010., *The holy land of Jesus*, Yehuda, Israel : Doko Media Ltd, p. 106

The researcher was at the Western wall tagged wailing wall in Jerusalem on 13th December 2010, where he had discussion and interview with the leader of Western Wall, known as sacred prayer ground , a rabbi named Mordecai Haman.

²¹ Hans Jochen Boecker, 1981. "Überlegungen zur Kultpolemik der vorexilischen Propheten," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlt, eds.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, p.169-80.

explicitly prohibited in latter Israel, yet the writers of Leviticus, in spite of their Yahwistic ethos, portray these patriarchal practices as unexceptionable and even approved by God.

These instructions involve one's holy walk with God, and the patterns of spiritual living still apply today. Worship, therefore, has a horizontal aspect, that is, God is honored by our lives as we relate to others. The Bible does not hide their sins because He blessed those who kept the law and disciplined those who disobeyed His commandments, which shows that the Israelites were warped and twisted, disciplined when needed and shown love whenever they returned to the LORD. Everything in the moral realm was understood as a part of relation to Yahweh as a manifestation of holiness. Family relationships and the welfare of the weaker members of society were protected by divine law, and purity of conduct, dress, food, and so on were regulated.²² These churches, (African Indigenous churches especially, Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and seraphim in Ibadan land) are meeting women's needs. Likewise, they provide opportunity and an acceptable place in society for women who have become "displaced persons" (through childlessness, divorce, or accusations of witchcraft). Mission or Main line churches can learn from the independent churches in the area of meeting felt needs.

Christianity is a universal religion instituted by God, which came into being in consequence of the invincible love of God for the world which He created and through Jesus Christ the saviour of the world and the sacrificial lamb. Christianity came to Nigeria, and Ibadan land, through the Westerners, using them as vehicles and transmitters of His redemptive truth to Yorubas. It is the eternal purpose and plans of God that Christianity would come to Nigeria through this means. These Europeans received Christianity through Asians. Hence, they also must pass it on to, and share it with, others. Christians in Ibadan land must also reach out and transmit the gospel but it will be convenient once the church attains true selfhood and is sufficiently alive and virile. This will make her to have indigenous expression and be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. Dynamic influence models are called for, which will allow the church to develop along culturally sensitive lines. Therefore, the church in Yoruba land should no longer be an outreach or a colony of Rome, Canterbury, or Westminster in London or the vested interest of some European or American missionary boards. Contextualising Israel sacred cultic

²² Patrick D Miller, 2000. *The religion of ancient Israel*, Westminster John Knox Press . pp. 50–51.

practices by *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim is to make the church in Ibadan land to worship God in a way which is compatible with their own spiritual temperament, that is, to sing in her own way, pray to God and hearing His living words in an idiom and a language which are clearly intelligible to them in their context.²³

4.4 The significance of cultic elements and practices in Israel's socio-cultural context

The Ancient Israelites had a strong sense of belonging to God in a peculiar way. God is seen as living among them. He is not only transcendent and highly exalted, but He is also God dwelling among His people. Mosaic Law of the Old Testament, which could be seen as the stipulations of their covenant relationship with Yahweh, reveals that there is a significant concern for some environmental issues. Likewise, there is a critical analysis of certain taboos and forbidden actions in it, which this study takes as God's concern for regulating human behaviour, especially that of the Israelites. The Israelites were given various laws covering practically every area of their daily lives. It is required that Israel be a holy people because the God of Israel is a holy God and Israel was distinguished from all other people by peculiar laws and customs. This was meant to teach them real separation from the world and the flesh and entire devotedness to God. They must be consecrated to God's honour and conform to His nature and will alone (Lev. 20: 26).

Brueggemann claims that the sacred cult was an appropriate practice, but that offerings would only be acceptable if the people also practise righteousness and justice. He identifies the practice of the cult as a witness, or as a testimony, that one is behaving in a just manner. But this work avers that the people needed to have the priority of righteousness and justice brought to their attention prior to their bringing gifts to the Temple, Justice and righteousness can be understood to have been a prerequisite of Israelite behaviour at least from the time of the Sinai Covenant. Seventy percent of the Decalogue deals with just and right treatment of others.²⁴ The cultic actions were rejected as long as the people did not correct their social interactions within the community. It is Yahweh's will that justice,

²³ Hans Jochen Boecker, 1981. "Überlegungen zur Kultpolemik der vorexilischen Propheten," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Peritt, eds.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag. p.180.

²⁴ Walter Brueggemann, 1997. *Theology of the Old Testament: testimony, dispute, advocacy*, Minneapolis: Fortress. p. 651.

concord, and loyalty to the sacred customs of the clan and the family should obtain among His people. The economic and political life of the people was reflected in their temple worship in that those who could afford to offer sacrifices did so. These same people would have participated in the other activities that usually took place in the temple, such as singing of psalms, praying, and bringing offerings. However, the secular society, the life lived outside of temple activities, should also have reflected the same reverence for יהוה (YHWH) as was being shown inside the temple. The festival celebrations were meant to be celebrated by all in the society. This shared celebration should have reflected a society who cared for even its weakest members. Israelite justice demanded that all in the community be given equal treatment in matters of law, commerce, and religion. Righteousness would only be measured in terms of how the most unfortunate people in the society were being included in fair court decisions, equitable market transactions, and tolerable living conditions for all. Unless and until all received just and righteous treatment as a first priority, יהוה (YHWH) would consider the praxis of the cult as unacceptable and undesirable.

Hertzberg avers that, rather than offering sacrifices, the prophets declared that the people should do the will of God, behave rightly, and that this would lead to a direct relationship with God. The prophets observed the discrepancy between life and the cult. Their job, in the service of God, was to speak out against abuse of the cult since the practice of the cult should have represented the moral life of the people.²⁵ The Holy Bible's discussion of leprosy is concentrated in Leviticus 13-14, where the laws for the ritualistic treatment of "unclean" conditions are found. Jeffrey asserts that the conditions here and some instances elsewhere in the Bible are probably not true leprosy but are rather various milder skin diseases, such as the one called psoriasis. The type of disease is often said to be a result of sin specifically, according to post - biblical Jewish tradition, which is regarded as one of the offences mentioned in Pro. 6: 16. The sins in question range from "haughty eyes" and "a lying tongue" to sowing discord among brethren , which is similar to the punishment of Miriam in Numbers 12, Gehazi in 2 Kgs. 5 :20 -27, and Uzziah in 2 Chr. 26 :16-23 because of their sins. Once afflicted the person is unclean and not fit to live among people in

²⁵ Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, 1962. *Beiträge zur Traditionsgeschichte und Theologie des Alten Testaments* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.p. 83.

Israel. Namaan, who was called a just man, valiant and honourable, had the stigma of uncleanness until he experienced ritual cleansing in River Jordan (2 Kgs. 5)

Although the casual connections between generic sin and leprosy frequently obtain in the literature, the malady sometimes symbolises particular vices. For example, a bond between envy and leprosy is established by the plight of Miriam, Moses murmuring sister whom God plagued with leprosy for her sin in Num. 12. Even in the Golden Legend, Jeffrey says there is a connection between heresy and leprosy, which manifested and was evident in the case of Constantine, the emperor whose apostasy made him a leper for a specific time before his conversion.²⁶ Yahweh's laws and commandments reveal His nature and clearly set out for Israel what is acceptable and unacceptable by Him. He gave the commandment for the Israelites not to take His blessings for granted and not to copy or adopt the customs of their neighbours or nations of this world. He warns His people about the sins of idolatry, consulting the spirit of the dead, cursing of parents, various forms of abominable sexual sins and eating of unclean foods (Lev. 20:2ff). The seriousness attached by God to these practices made Him to proclaim that anyone who commits these sins must be put to death (Lev. 20:2, 9-10). This is saying that even if the community they may found themselves refuses to see sin as sin, and handles sinful act with levity, God will not accept such as right standard of holy living. Therefore, they must flee from sinful acts. God's regulations served to make prostitutes social outcasts in Israel. Among the Israelites, by contrast to other community, anything suggesting the sexual or sensual was strictly banned from the worship of God.

This work suggests a number of reasons why the LORD laid down regulations regarding the reproductive processes. They include concern for hygiene, the idea that sexual intercourse made people unclean and is associated with demonic powers because procreation since the fall of man into sin produces offspring that are by nature sinful and subject to the curse of death, to differentiate Israel from the Canaanites and the feelings that these laws would surely restrain sexual behaviour in the Israelite community. The main principles of biblical religion, both in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus Christ, clearly stated that what matters most in religion is loyal love for God, living holy life and humble trust in

²⁶ David Lyle Jeffrey, 1992. *A Dictionary of Biblical tradition in English Literature*, Grand Rapids Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdsman Publishing Co. pp. 442 -443.

Him, combined with practical love for our neighbours. Therefore, too much concentration on details of sacrifice and ritual may make worshippers to derail or fail in the most important matters of faith and practice. According to Boecker, the prophets uncompromisingly rejected the cult because of their conviction that ritual actions could no longer repair the relationship of the people with God. The prophets discouraged the praxis of the cult because it could no longer affect its intended purpose. The prophets claimed that the practice of the cult had become senseless and perverted. Therefore, the prophets made it clear that the cult was only being performed for the sake of Israel's own interests, irrespective of how God received it.²⁷ This situation explains why Amos 5:21 refers to "your feasts" and "your assemblies" and Isa 1:11 exhibits the same pronominal usage, "your sacrifices." Boecker investigates whether the common message and language of the prophets who criticize the cult can be explained by the literary dependence of Isaiah on Amos. He rejects such dependence.²⁸

Micah says the LORD required justice, loyal love and walking humbly with Him (Micah 6:8); Jesus Christ said the central demand of God's law is for justice and mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23, Mark 7) Paul the Apostle said the kingdom of God is of righteousness, peace and joy that Holy Spirit gives (Rom. 14:17).²⁹ The whole system of ritual cleanness and uncleanness was an object lesson in sin, its results and its cleansing. This may be why one of the main duties of the priests was to distinguish between what was holy and unholy, clean and unclean. This holiness was to extend to every part of the people's lives, including the food they ate and their bodily cleanliness. Those who broke any of the laws of cleanliness were considered unclean and had to be ceremonially cleansed before they could join again in the full religious and social life of the nation Israel. Besides having a religious purpose, the laws ensured that the nation as a whole would be physically healthy because the laws prevented people from eating the foods that could be harmful, ensured that diseases received proper attention, and limited the chances of infectious diseases spreading through the camp. The Laws also prevented the Israelites from mixing too freely with people of

²⁷ Hans Jochen Boecker, 1981. "Überlegungen zur Kultpolemik der vorexilischen Propheten," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt, eds.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag. P. 169-80.

²⁸ Hans Jochen Boecker, 1981. "Überlegungen zur Kultpolemik der vorexilischen Propheten," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten: Festschrift für Hans Walter Wolff zum 70. Geburtstag* (Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt, eds.; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, p.169-80.

²⁹ John H. Dobson, 1991. *A Guide to the Book of Exodus*: London, SPCK. p.136.

surrounding nations, and thereby helped preserve the purity of Israel's religion especially the cultic practices. Fleming claims that these laws cum cultic practices and elements were not meant to govern the lives of all people in every country or every age.³⁰

The people of Israel observed weekly and annual practices. The seventh and fiftieth years also had religious significance. These observances recognized that God was the ultimate owner of the land and the people. God intended the people to be free from slavery so they might serve under the covenant. God separated them to be a distinct people dedicated to the Lord and share God's character – holiness. To keep the laws, ordinances and covenant meant blessings and to refuse to keep them meant curses and calamities. Owing to the promises made to their forefathers, God would not completely destroy the people. The cultic practices, elements, rules and covenant made with Israelites by God were to show that the earth is the Lord's, people are to be good stewards of it, and God blesses those who are faithfully obedient. It helped them to be focused on the only living God – Yahweh, not to worship gods like other nations around them, such as Egypt. This definitely helped them not to copy what they would meet in the land they were sent to and serve God with all their hearts, minds and souls.

The Old Testament Scripture is clear in its prohibition of spiritualism which has not been authorised by God. 'Ye shall not eat anything with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times' (Lev. 19: 26). This verse, and other portions, warns concerning forbidden practices include superstitious omens and astrology. When the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land, they were specifically warned by God to uproot the perverted spiritual practices of its former inhabitants (Deut. 12: 29 – 31). They were to live a holy life because they had been set apart as a holy nation (Num. 23: 9). They were singled out by the Creator – Himself for all time to devote their lives to Him. To be holy is to be removed from the realm of the ordinary. Therefore, the Israelites were to live separately according to the Torah's commandments.

Disobeying His commandment would make Him to withdraw from their midst and their protection, peace and prosperity might be withdrawn. God, a Holy God, is the creator of man and the world and watches over His creation as a sovereign Lord. But since man has freedom of will, God requires man to behave in ways that would preserve the created order,

³⁰ Don Fleming, 1994. *Bridge Bible Commentary*, Australia: Bridgeway Publications, Brisbane. p. 256.

giving conditions of blessings for right action and woe for detrimental actions. We need to obey His commandments and live a holy and acceptable life.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 THE NECESSITY FOR CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Christianity has been in Africa for a long period, Acts of the Apostles confirms that the Gospel reached Africa from the early period of the church (Acts 8). The Christian Church entered Africa in the apostolic age. Church historians have talked about three strands of the planting of Christianity in Africa, and these strands have been regarded as an unbroken cord.¹ Nevertheless, the efforts and several attempts made to spread and properly root Christianity in Africa failed because of the failure to properly situate the Christian faith within the local context and missionary methods were themselves defective both in the attitude taken towards the people to be evangelised and towards what was being brought to them. This fact is corroborated by the over-running of Christianity in North Africa by the forces of Islam. In spite of the achievements made by missionaries from Europe and America, they would have done better in Africa if they had allowed proper integration of the gospel within the cultural matrix and not had wrong views that acceptance of Christianity necessarily demands total rejection of African cultural and religious heritage and the adoption of the culture of the missionary without question or criticism. Hence the message of the gospel is not properly internalised by the Africans.²

The consequence of this missiological error has been a superficial acceptance of Christianity, which is displayed in formal, ecclesial settings and sustained in the normal, daily life of the majority of the African Christians. Although there have been different efforts aimed at contextualising the Christian faith in Africa and Ibadanland, these attempts have focused mainly on issues bordering on worship, liturgy and interpretation of biblical texts. This is done extensively by African Indigenous churches, who introduced African elements into the liturgy of the church in every ethnicity such as Yoruba. African Indigenous churches constitute a significant portion of Christianity in Africa.

The Church's second great opportunity in Africa came and went and there was almost nothing to show for it, because it had never been offered the gospel appropriately. Christianity in the modern sense, however, entered Africa in the nineteenth century. Hiebert

¹ A.F. Walls, 2002. *The Cross-Cultural process in Christian History*, Maryknoll : Orbis Books. pp77-80.

² A.O. Dada, 2010. Cultural adaptation or christo- paganism: an evangelical reflection on contextualisation in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June: 148- 149.

describes the protestant mission era from 1800-1950 as the period of non- contextualisation. This is a period when the majority of the missionaries believed that Western theology had eternal validity and theologians believed that the Christian faith was based on eternal unalterable truth, which had been stated in its final form.³ The Christianity and Christian truths that were introduced to the Africans by the first missionary were heavily tinged with Western culture. In fact, the cross-cultural differences between American or European culture and African culture are formidable. Consequently, the American evangelist who thinks he can come to this African nation and effectively communicate the life-giving and soul-changing message of the gospel without becoming “all things to all men” (1 Corinthians 9:22) is committing a grievous error. The linguistic, cultural, historical, and religious setting in Ibadanland, for instance, is much different from that found in America or Europe. As a result, translating biblical truths into African culture takes some practice. In reality, so many of the examples used in the American pulpit to illustrate biblical truths simply do not work appropriately in Ibadan.

In order to apply biblical principles to African life, it is essential to know something about the African culture and contextualise her faith. This implies that there is a need to understand the cultural plurality of the community and present the gospel in a way that can be understood according to the forms and symbols of Africans. Therefore, the church must make sure their worship and liturgy are relevant to the culture of the community. She would have to incarnate in the community by interacting with the community with a view to appreciating the importance of the cultural dynamics in the process of relating the biblical message, liturgy and worship to the life of the people.⁴

Baillie avers that “theological ideas are created on the Continent of Europe, corrected in Great Britain and corrupted in America.”⁵ In the past, many communicators of the Good News have often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communication, while some were so insensitive to the cultural thought, patterns and behaviour of the people they are leading, teaching and proclaiming the Gospel to. This has affected the outcome of their mission work negatively. The discontentment of Africans with the mode of organisation of

³ Paul Hiebert, 1987. Critical contextualisation’ *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol.11 pp.104-112.

⁴ D. J. Hesselgrave, and E. Rommen, 1989. Contextualisation: meaning, methods and models. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House p.211.

⁵ John Baillie quoted by Isaiah 2000 : 63.

mission or mainline churches by foreign white leaders led to the emergence of African Indigenous Churches. African Indigenous Churches were founded by Africans for Africans without depending on foreign aids and assistance. They are self-supporting, self-governing and self-financing with a target set before them to contextualise the gospel by respecting African opinions and mindsets.⁶ Africans ought to be at liberty to adopt or adapt the original contents of the Scriptures for the purpose of effective communication. While adoption implies a faithful reproduction of the original text, adaptation involves substantial modification without distorting the basic message.⁷ This work sees adaptation as only a form of modification that does not provide the appropriate solution needed.

Indigenisation, according to Isaiah “is going native, everything foreign becomes native, local person takes upon himself and behave like foreign missionaries”.⁸ According to Koyama, Indigenisation means a “theologically informed endeavour to make the content and expression of Christian theology, ministry and life adapted and rooted in a community of different cultural localities”. He avers that the purpose of indigenisation is to create an authentic Christian community.⁹ Even in Henry Venn’s mission principle, he advocated the concept of training indigenous leadership, local leadership, to replace the white missionary. He pointed out that native agency is basic to the development of the mission in Africa. He told native teachers then that they were those “upon whom the hopes of an African Church are fixed”. In this statement he intertwined the principles of native agency, education, self-reliance, and continuous advance which will help to inculcate self-reliance rather than dependence. He even pointed out the need to draw out Africans’ native resources and let them feel their own powers and responsibilities. This action brought some changes in certain areas like language, putting on one’s culture by using native names for Church, but administration still remains foreign, with European habits, European ideas and European tastes in vogue.¹⁰

⁶ G. A. Oshitelu, 2007. *History of the Aladura Independent Churches, 1918-1940* Ibadan : Hopeful Publications p.1 and D. Aiyegboyin, & S.A. Ishola, 1997. *African Indigenous Churches*, Lagos : Greater Heights Publications p.9

⁷ Matthew M. Umukoro, 2010. ‘Nigerian theatre and the multilingual challenge’, *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies (Nos. 19 & 20) 2009/2010*, Ibadan : Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria p.95

⁸ E. S. Isaiah, 2007, *Course outline and notes on contextualisation of theology Parts 1 and 2 (Gospel and Culture or Doing Theology*, Bethany International University ,Singapore, Unpublished

⁹ Kosuke Koyama, 1978 quoting P.B. Santram, ” Indeginisation of the Church in India: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal”, Samuel Amirtham(Ed.), *A Vision For Man*, CLS, Madras. p.180.

¹⁰ Wilbert R. Shenk, 1983. *Henry Venn-Missionary Statesman*, Mary Knoll, New York Orbis Books pp.31-33.

In short, structure, power, money and properties are at stake in indigenisation. It only helps to increase nominalism, which is a hindrance to mission work because indigenisation has no passion for mission therefore it cannot achieve the expected result. This is why contextualisation is necessary to do work of mission today and communicate the Gospel everywhere to every culture appropriately. The participants in the Jerusalem Conference in 1928 defined the indigenous church as “understanding cultural accommodation” while the Madras Conference of 1938 restated the definition, emphasizing witness to Christ in “ a direct, clear, and close relationship with the cultural and religious heritage of the Country”.¹¹ Inculturation is sustaining worship in every culture. It is interpreting values, principles and practices of Christianity through cultural lens. It is in itself a cultural hermeneutical process (interpretative process) to effectively pass across the whole essence of the gospel to the people of a particular culture. Thus, it is all-encompassing covering every aspect of Christian worship and faith.

Contextualisation is a new term imported into theology to express a deeper concept than indigenisation does, because contextualisation makes concepts, methods or ideals relevant in a given or historical situation. Contextualisation is a derivative of the word "context", which has its roots in *contextus* (Latin) meaning "weaving together." In literary pursuits, context is that which comes before and after a word, phrase, or statement, helping to fix its meaning or the circumstances in which an event occurs. Missiological contextualisation can be viewed as enabling the message of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ to become alive as it addresses the vital issues of a socio-cultural context and transforms its world view, its values, and its goals.¹² It is not simply a fad or a catchword but a theological necessity demanded by the incarnational nature of the Word. Contextuality is the capacity to respond meaningfully to the gospel within the framework of one's own situation. The heart of contextualisation is having an unchanging gospel in a changing world.

Contextualisation has been practised from Old Testament times, but was articulated as a named subject only in the early 1970's with the TEF (Theological Education Fund) of

¹¹ Isaiah, E. S, 2000 *Contextualisation, a Course Reader*, Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University, Singapore.

¹² J. M. Terry, Ebbie Smith and Justice Anderson. 1998. *Missiology: An Introduction to the foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers. p. 318.

the World Council of Churches. Their coining and definition of the word “contextualisation” was largely based on the Louvain Conference held in 1972 when the theory confirmed that the Holy Bible merely “contained” the Word of God and contemporary context determines its meaning. Context becomes the source of theological truth. The provenance of the word contextualisation, first employed in 1972 by the directors of the Theological Education Fund, Shoki Coe and Aharon Sapsejian; in the World Council of Churches document *Ministry, in Context of The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund*, made it suspect to many evangelicals. The TEF report for that year, *Ministry and Context*, suggested that contextualisation implies all that is involved in the familiar term Indigenisation but seeks to press beyond it. The report introduces the TEF’s Third Mandate as a response to “the widespread crisis of faith and search for meaning in life; the urgent issues of human development and social justice; the dialectic between a universal technological civilisation and local culture and religious situations”.¹³ By then, the Bible had officially lost its foundational normative character, and culture was seen as a large determining factor in the search for theological truth.

The term however was soon adopted and largely redefined by Evangelicals at Lausanne I in 1974, when Byang Kato masterfully asserted the need for contextualisation, but one that is firmly rooted in Biblical truth, without damaging Christian tenets or over-adapting to culture. It was then that contextuality was viewed, to mean the capacity to respond meaningfully to the gospel within the framework of one’s own culture and situation. Kato recognises its importance for the well-being of the African church and argues that it did not imply compromising any of the theological principles considered fundamental. His approach stresses that mainstream African evangelicalism should not become entrenched in an obscurantist and contextually irrelevant fundamentalism.¹⁴

Feliciano describes contextualisation as the process of communicating absolute truths from the Holy Bible “to an individual’s historic-cultural experience and background,

¹³ Bruce J. Nicholls, 1976. *Contextualisation : a theology of gospel and culture*, Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, & The Paternoster Press, Exeter, England. p.21 & World Council of Churches, *Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund, 1970-77* Bromley, U.K.: TEF Fund, 1972.

¹⁴ Paul Bowers, 1980. "Evangelical theology in Africa: Byang Kato's Legacy," *Trinity Journal*, n.s., 1 : 86). and (Byang H. Kato, “The Gospel, cultural context and religious syncretism,” *Let the earth hear His voice*, pp1216-1228.

his social structure and orientation, his thought pattern and world view".¹⁵ Whiteman terms contextualisation as an attempt to communicate the gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs and penetrates their world view, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture.¹⁶ Contextualisation, then, seeks an effective, long-term Christian witness in a culture foreign to the communicator. This definition rightly presumes that the gospel is a transcultural message capable of being authentically embodied in the wide embrace of human societies. This principle is implicit in Jesus' teaching (John 4), directed the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8) and became axiomatic for first century Christian missionaries (1 Corinthians 9). In taking the gospel beyond Palestinian Judaism, evangelists to the Gentiles clearly separated cultural Jewish wineskins from the wine of the gospel. Reaction from Judaizers was both swift and predictable, but God's wisdom prevailed and the Apostles affirmed that salvation is independent of conversion to Judaism. The scriptural question, then, is not "if," but "where" and "how" contextualisation should shape understanding of the scripture, the missionary enterprise and mode of worshipping LORD.

Contextualisation of the gospel is an inevitable task, if we take it to mean making concepts or ideas relevant in a given situation; and working in an effort to express the never-changing word of God in ever-changing modes for relevance in Christian practices, liturgy and worship. Since the gospel message is inspired but the mode of its expression is not by white missionaries in Africa, contextualisation of the modes is not only right, but also necessary.¹⁷ Contextualisation is a dynamic process of the church's reflection, in obedience to Christ and his mission in the world, on the interaction of the text as a specific human situation. It is essentially a missiological concept. Contextual theology can be defined as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the spirit and the gospel; the tradition of the Christian people; the culture in which one is theologizing; and social change in that culture, whether brought about by Westernisation process or the grass-roots struggle for equality, justice, and liberation. In today's understanding of doing theology,

¹⁵ Feliciano, V. David, 1977, Contextualisation of the Christian Faith in the Philippine setting," *Christian Forum, An annual Journal Silang*, Cavite: PMI. March :1-31.

¹⁶ Darrel L. Whiteman, 1997. "Contextualisation: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January, : 2.

¹⁷ B. Kato, 1975. *Theological pPitfalls in Africa* Nairobi : Evangel Publishing House p.23.

contextualisation is part of the very nature of theology itself. To understand theology as contextual is to assert something both new and traditional. The one engaged in this process may be part of the context or as a cross-cultural communicator, represent a second context in a three-way process.¹⁸

Contextualisation is not a passing trend. It is essential to our understanding of God's self-revelation. The incarnation is the ultimate paradigm of the translation of the text into context. Jesus Christ, the word of God incarnate as a Jew, identified with a particular culture at a limited moment of history though transcending it. He had shown a supreme model of contextualisation; each of his command was actually a command to contextualisation, whether to love one's neighbour or to disciple the nation. The implication of this process is seen in the apostolic witness and the life of the New Testament church. Contextualised theology is the dynamic reflection carried out by the particular church upon its own life in light of the word of God and historic Christian truth. How does the message of the gospel get into the hearts of people of all nations, and how do churches and church leaders maximize the power of the gospel touching all the life? While this is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit, the responsibility of how to get the message across lies upon the messenger. The issue at hand therefore is the way in which the word, as scripture, and the word as revealed in the truths of culture interact in determining Christian truth for a given people and place. Many conservatives feared that the absolute truths of the gospel were in danger of being compromised in what appeared to be a low view of revelation.¹⁹

Speaking about contextualisation implies that our faith and life are not fully inserted into African culture, or that the Christian and religious life of Africans remain something foreign to us. The production of any creative work requires being truly rooted in one's tradition. In Africa everything has an inborn nature with it, whether it is culture, tradition, language, religion or life style. Hence, Hesselgrave interprets contextualisation to mean "the communication of the Christian message in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, which is meaningful to

¹⁸ Anna Egun Ogunlokun, 1995. "Towards the contextualization of Theology in the Two Thirds World with special reference to the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria". M.A. Thesis, Ashin University Korea. p.3

¹⁹ Anna Egun Ogunlokun., 1995. "Towards the contextualization of Theology in the Two Thirds World with special reference to the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria". M.A. Thesis, Ashin University Korea p. 7.

respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts”.²⁰ This is an attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God’s revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teaching of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. Contextualisation, which is both verbal and nonverbal, will affect theology, Bible translation, interpretation and application, liturgy, lifestyle, evangelism, church planting, church growth, church organisation, worship style, and all the components of Christian mission, as reflected in the Great Commission. Therefore, to be able to contextualise the gospel in a given culture, a good understanding of the culture and its world view will be required.²¹

Contextualisation, according to Sundhir Isaiah, is faithful to the scripture and relevant to the culture- John 4:22-23. It is a suitable way of making the gospel relevant to the culture of a group, or people group, such as Indigenous African Churches (Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim church in Ibadan.) Newbiggin says “the value of the word contextualisation is that it suggests the placing of the gospel in the total context of a culture at a particular moment, a moment that is shaped by the past and looks to the future”.²² Among the Roman Catholic Church members, contextualisation is taken to be *inculturation*. Gelbi claims that inculturation is a theological term that characterises an ideal of sound evangelisation. *Inculturated* evangelisation seeks an “incarnational” proclamation of the gospel, meaning that the divine word took flesh in a particular people and drew upon the religious heritage of the Hebrews to interpret to others His person, and mission.

Therefore, in the same way, the proclaimed word of the gospel must find embodiment in a various nations, traditions and people.²³ Therefore, this work opines that contextualisation can be described as communicating the Good News in cultural forms that are meaningful, relevant, and understandable to the hearers or worshippers in liturgy and

²⁰ D. J. Hesselgrave, & E. Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: Meaning, Method and Models*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. p.143.

²¹ David J. Hesselgrave, 1991. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. p 143.

²² Leslie Newbiggin, 2008. “Foolishness to the Greeks” in Paul Chilcote & Lacey C. Warner (eds) *The study of evangelism: exploring a missional practice of the Church*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans publishing company p 346.

²³ Donald L. Gelpi, 1988. *Inculturating North American theology: an experiment in foundational method*, Atlanta: Scholar Press, p.2.

thought forms (contents) that speak to the real issues and needs of the worshippers or hearers in the framework of their societal structure. This seems not to be available in the way American and European missionaries brought and spread the Gospel in Africa. Feliciano asserts that, when American missionaries were coming to Africa or Philippines Island with purpose of evangelisation, they often overlooked the necessity of “acculturation, of identification, and of cultural relevance”. They were too fully convinced that their culture was a superior culture, which they expected the “natives” to adopt. Thus, Christians in a place like Ibadan land often become strangers to their own people, whereas this is certainly not in God’s plan.²⁴

Upkong describes inculturation as an approach in evangelisation which is an ongoing process of rooting and rerooting the Christian faith in a culture. It also involves a process whereby the Christian faith is made to influence a culture and attain expression through the genius of that culture. This approach makes the gospel to challenge and animate the culture and also helps to utilise the resources of every culture in expressing the Christian faith.²⁵ The effort to make the gospel meaningful and relevant in a particular context is continuous and is as old as the gospel itself. This is because, in one way or the other, the apostolic Church utilised Greek and Roman socio-cultural ideas and elements in order to meaningfully reach out to as many people as possible with eternal truth. This establishes the fact that the gospel did not emanate and cannot be preached in a setting that is culturally fallow. Every human/people group like the *Yorùbá* has an existing system of beliefs about God, man, spirits and magic. Therefore, when missionaries enter a new culture, they are not entering a cultural vacuum as against the view of the missionaries that brought the Gospel to Africa, especially into Yoruba and Ibadan land. Whereas, the missionaries ought to learn how the people view their world, in order to effectively communicate the gospel to people of another culture.²⁶

The liturgy and the way of worship in Ibadan should be relevant to the community because active participation is important in worship not the domination of rules and rites.

²⁴ Feliciano V. David, 1977, Contextualisation of the Christian Faith in the Philippine setting,” *Christian Forum*, An annual Journal Silang, Cavite: PMI. March : 26.

²⁵ Justin S. Upkong, 1990. “Jesus and the Jewish Culture and Religion: A New Testament Perspective on Christology and Inculturation” *Proceedings of the 5th Nigerian Theological Conference*. p.39.

²⁶ Gailyn Van Rheenen, 1991. *Communicating Christ in animistic Context*, Grand Rapids : Baker Book House. pp148-149.

The Holy Spirit of God must be given liberty, is the case at *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadanland. Africans must be careful of Western principles and methods in liturgy, practice and worship, which often do not suit Africans or Yoruba way of doing things. Imasogie opines that negative attitude towards African culture, condemnation and looking down on the usable vehicles within Yoruba culture made the gospel seems not to be effectively propagated among many African Christians. Evidence of this is seen in the double life some Christians are living. Some people even believe that what is responsible for this is that the message of the gospel is not properly internalized by the people. The missionaries that brought the gospel to Yoruba land were, to some extent, guilty for not incorporating the socio-cultural contexts of the native converts into the form of teaching, preaching, liturgy and gospel presented. The Ibadan people were excluded from their existential context.

The result of this is a gospel that failed to address the totality of the people's experience, which made them to pledge superficial allegiance to "God" of the Whiteman, they accepted this God only intellectually.²⁷ The consequence of this missiological error of superficial acceptance of Christianity is displayed in formal, ecclesial settings and sustained in the normal, daily life of the majority of the African Christians. Some Christians will attend mainline churches such as Anglican, Baptists, and Methodists, on Sunday and attend African Indigenous Churches, such as Cherubim and Seraphim, in the night or during the week; while some will attend the church in the morning and attend the traditional shrine in the evening. In some of the interview conducted by the researcher, leaders like Senior Apostle A. O. Bosede, of Cherubim and Seraphim, Goshen Parish Mokola, Ibadan and Senior Superintendent Apostle Joshua Ajagun Jesu Oluyoola confirmed the double life by Christians and even Church leaders.²⁸ It is in view of this that the contextualisation of the Christian faith in Africa, Yoruba and Ibadan land has been extensively advocated across denominational boundaries. The main objective of contextualisation is to make worship and the gospel meaningful and relevant by adopting the socio-cultural forms and template as

²⁷ O. Imasogie, 1993. *Guideline for Christian Theology in Africa*, Achimota : Africa Christian Press. p. 69.

²⁸ Senior Apostle A.O. Bosede, Interview conducted on 18th April, 2012 at Sango, Ibadan (IBNLG). And Senior Superintendent Apostle Joshua Ajagun Jesu Oluyoola on 20th July 2012 in the church premises C&S Mount Zion, Agbala Jehovah Nissi, Akintobi Olodo, Ibadan, and LAGELU LG of Oyo State

vehicle for transmitting the gospel truths and to make adherents have relevant acceptable worship and practices.

The value of the word contextualisation is that it suggests the placing of the gospel in the total context of a culture at a particular moment, a moment that is shaped by the past and looks to the future. The divine word, it argues, took flesh in a particular culture or people and drew upon the religious heritage of the Hebrews to interpret to others His person, and mission on earth. Therefore, in the same way, the proclaimed word of the gospel, liturgy and worship must find embodiment in a variety of nations, people groups and traditions.²⁹ Among some evangelicals, however, contextualisation of the gospel is sometimes viewed with suspicion, because they feel it may undermine the fundamental essence of the gospel, and that it may lead to the substitution of the truths of the gospel with human traditions and culture.

They also feel it has not engendered genuine conversion exemplified in godly character and good conduct. The evangelicals are described as those Protestants who claim to remain faithful to the spirit and the letter of historic Christianity. In the history of the Christian church the word has acquired the meaning of one who conforms to the essential doctrines of the gospel and to the basic facts and truths of Christianity.³⁰

The need to make the gospel meaningful, relevant and efficacious is at the heart of contextualisation. If the gospel is to be understood, if it is to be received as something which communicates truth about real human situation, then it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols that are meaningful to every people group. It is only the gospel and liturgy that is meaningfully communicated, understood and internalized that can be effectual, and result in individual and ultimately community transformation. It has to be undertaken in ways the local community will understand and appreciate. Most Senior Apostle Jacob Bamimore commented on the necessity of contextualisation, that English service, preaching or communication of the Gospel in non- native language (Yorùbá) is meant for the white men or else it is mere wasting of time for people like him who do not understand the English language, “*Isé isin tàbí iwàásù lédè òyìnbó ní ilẹ̀ Ìbàdàn tàbí ilẹ̀ aláwò dúdú ko ran ẹnítí kò*

²⁹ Donald L. Gelpi, 1988. *Inculturating North American theology: an experiment in foundational method*, Atlanta: Scholar Press. p.2.

³⁰ Tite Tienou, 1990. *The theological task of the church in Africa*, Achimota: African Christian Press. p.9.

*gbóyìnbó bí irú èmi báyii lówó, oníwàásù tàbí adarí ìsìn bèè nise fún ara rẹ̀ ni, ó kàn nífẹ̀sẹ̀ ara rẹ̀ múlẹ̀”.*³¹ This confirms that contextualisation is a dynamic equivalent that conveys the same meaning but uses different terminology, terms and meaning. For instance, in a desert or jungle area, snow is unknown and meaningless, but it can become “white as whiteness or anything that conveys the meaning of whiteness to that culture. To fail to contextualise current beliefs and practices is to repeat the same mistake that the Church committed when the gospel was first introduced to Africa. Some of the leaders and members of indigenous churches believe that, instead of consulting pastor in mainline churches for solutions to their problems, since the cause of the problem was indigenous then it could be solved only by one who knows how to handle things locally using native language and methods but must be under the guidance and leading of the Holy Spirit (“*pè èpè la fi wépe*”, fight curse with curse). The view that indigenous spiritual problems can only be solved by local means is often reflected in Africa movies.

The particularity of Christianity is Christ. Despite the acknowledgement of the pluralistic contexts among Christians in Africa, the Lordship of Christ must not be negotiated since Christ is above all cultures. The Gospel must be presented appropriately using forms and symbols that will make the message meaningful, understandable, and integrated with the new-age culture. It is important to understand the forms of the new-age culture, use it appropriately in presentation of the Gospel, since forms reflect deeper meaning of every culture.

5.1 Types of contextualisation

The effort to make the gospel meaningful and relevant in a particular context leads to the emanation of various types of contextualisation. The way the apostolic church utilised Jewish, Greek and Roman socio-cultural ideas and elements in order to meaningfully reach out to different people groups with the eternal truth shows that, in one way or the other, the gospel did not emanate from and cannot just be preached in a setting that is culturally fallow. Scholars call the exercise of contextualisation by different names, with various definitions. They even used terms like accommodation, adaptation, indigenisation,

³¹ Most Senior Apostle Jacob Bamimore, Interview held on 18th July 2012 at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church, New Jerusalem Ilupeju, Bodija Ibadan in the church premises.

inculturation, and local theologies.³² But true and faithful communication of the gospel begins with the contextualisation of the gospel in the life of the communicator or church leaders; it concerns the needs of people in society as well as in their relation to God.

The verb "contextualise" comes from the word "context". Context pertains to situation or the circumstances in which a particular event occurs. A text can be correctly and properly understood if seen from its context. Contextualisation involves the task of communicating the gospel message so that it can be understood by the people within cultural contexts and needs. Therefore, to contextualise the gospel message means that the Church cannot simply ignore the contemporary factors in cultural change in her task of proclaiming the gospel and worshipping God. Indigenisation tends to be used in the sense of responding to the Gospel in terms of a traditional culture.

Contextualisation, while not ignoring this, takes into account the process of secularity, technology, and the struggle for human justice, which characterize the historical moment of nations, especially in the Third World. Contextualisation is both verbal and nonverbal. Hence, acceptable contextualisation is a direct result of ascertaining the meaning of the biblical text, consciously submitting to its authority, and applying or appropriating that meaning to a given situation. It determines what the biblical text says and also the meaning of what has been said. It is also a process with three distinct elements, which are revelation of God's truth in language, meaning of the language used by leaders, missionaries or different writers, and the understanding the audience and recipient will have. It is interpretation of the intended meaning, and influenced by the interpreter's own culture and that of the text and God.

Scholars distinguish between contextualisation and three similar but distinct terms: indigenisation, inculturation and transformation. Indigenisation means the translatability of the universal Christian faith into the forms and symbols of any culture. It relates to traditional cultural values, which is similar to contextualisation, but indigenisation does not go far like contextualisation in taken into account the contemporary factors, which include socio-economic, religious, political and economic factors as well. The basis of the indigenous concept is self-propagation, self-governance, and self-financing, which is built on the independence or individualisation concepts of Western philosophy. Inculturation, a

³² Paul G. Hiebert, 1994. *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker. p109.

theological term, characterizes an ideal of sound evangelisation, which is the reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between two cultures. Barney describes inculturation as that process or state in which a new principle has been culturally clothed in meaningful forms in a culture.³³ God is absolute, underived and unchanging. Inculturation is an ongoing process of rooting and rerooting the Christian faith in culture, which involves a process whereby the Christian faith is made to influence a culture and attain expression through the genius of that culture. Inculturated evangelisation seeks an “incarnational” proclamation of the gospel, just like the divine word took flesh in a particular people and drew upon the religious heritage of the Hebrews to interpret to others His person, and mission, our worship and proclaimed gospel must find embodiment in a variety of nations, people and traditions.³⁴

Inculturation refers to the correct way of living and sharing one's Christian faith in a particular context or culture. Transformation focuses on the changes of a society into one that more adequately reflects the kingdom of God. As individuals come to Christ they are encouraged to transform their social networks and society. Others seek to transform society through legal and mass persuasion techniques, to demonstrate God's kingdom values in a needy world.³⁵

Some other types of contextualisation are as follows:

5.1.1 Prophetic and Apostolic contextualisation

The evangelical orthodox refers contextualisation to the “apostolic” biblical examples, and the method of effecting the contextualisation which must be didactic, signifying “teaching the truth. Prophets and apostles reported what they received (the divine message) in linguistic and cultural frames of reference. They contextualised (translated, interpreted, adapted, applied) the body of truth to the people of a respondent culture in such a way as to preserve as much of its original meaning and relevance as possible. It emphasizes the supracultural nature of the biblical Gospel and recognizes that biblical revelation is not acultural, but that God oversaw the process so that His message was transmitted. The emphasis is on” taking the apostolic faith ‘once for all entrusted to the saint’ (Jude 3) and contextualising (translating,

³³ G. Linwood Barney, 1973. “ The supracultural and the cultural: Implications for frontier missions” in R. Pierce Beave ,(ed) *the Gospel and Frontier people*, Pasadena CA: William Carey Library. p. 57.

³⁴ A.O. Dada, “Cultural adaptation or christo- paganism: an evangelical reflection on contextualization in Africa”, *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June, 2010 : 147.

³⁵ Michael, Pocock, “et al”, 2005. *The changing face of world missions: engaging contemporary issues and trends*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group. pp. 327-329

interpreting, adapting, applying) that faith (body of truth) to the people of a respondent culture in such a way as to preserve as much of its original meaning and relevance as possible”.³⁶

Prophetic contextualisation is carried out by entering the cultural context, discerning what God is doing and saying in that context, and speaking and working for needed change. In the New Testament era, the biblical writers, whose authority and message belonged to the apostolic tradition of the primitive church, wrote from within a Hebrew cultural framework. In the fulfilment of communicating the Gospel to the whole world, which included the Hellenistic and the Judaist cultures, the New Testament writers contextualised by utilizing contemporary forms of religious expression as modes of communication. They adopted and transformed some Hellenistic and heathen language forms and rejected others. They utilized words that were common to both the Septuagint and to Hellenistic philosophy, such as *mysterion* (mystery), transformed and used in a totally new setting. (Eph.1:9, 3:3, 6:19; Col. 1: 26-27).³⁷ The incarnation is the ultimate paradigm of the translation of the text into context. Jesus Christ, the word of God incarnate, as a Jew, identified with a particular culture at a limited moment of history though transcending it. He had shown a supreme model of contextualisation; each of his commands, was actually a command to contextualisation, whether to love one’s neighbour or to disciple the nation. The implication of this process is seen in the apostolic witness and the life of the New Testament church.

5.1.2 Minimal Contextualisation

This type of contextualisation is tied largely to what many have seen as colonial missions. The idea is that the missionary does not separate the gospel from their sending culture. The host culture is seen as primitive and also in need of change. In order to be Christians, they must become like the missionary that brought the gospel. While this type of contextualisation is like fingernails on the chalkboard to many, it still exists. We see this today in church planting when pastors parachute drop into a new community and carry with them a particular brand of church that is assumed will connect.³⁸ This type of

³⁶ D. J. Hesselgrave, & E. Rommen, 1989, *Contextualization: Meaning, Method and Models*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. p.149.

³⁷ Isaiah, E. S, 2000 *Contextualisation, a course reader*, Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University, Singapore. Unpublished pp .48, 123.

³⁸ David J. Hesselgrave, 1995. 'Contextualisation that is authentic and relevant', *International Journal of frontier missions*, vol 12:3 Jul.-sep. 1995.

contextualisation is saying that the more we live with and study the people we serve, the more we become aware of the depth and power of the people's culture, and the need to contextualise both the messenger and the message for them to understand and live the gospel. The negative effects of this practice are that there is fear that this can distort the gospel. So the idea is that it must be done minimally; hence they equate Christianity with their beliefs and practices.

5.1.3 Uncritical contextualisation

Uncritical contextualisation is taken as an effort to be relevant and contextual; the prophetic offence of the gospel was sometimes ignored. This practice came on board as colonialism slowly crumbled; Christians woke up to the futility of the Church's "non-contextualisation." Gradually, the Church began to talk about contextualisation. Although the majority of missions still continued to exercise authority and impose Western styles and structures, some began to encourage autonomy of young churches and the use of indigenous leadership and methods.³⁹ The good and positive aspects found in other cultures were emphasised, while the evil or dysfunctional elements were ignored. Hiebert points out that the result of this type of contextualisation is relativism.⁴⁰ This is common today, especially in the Western oriented churches. In many churches, more concern is given to being relevant than is given to confronting people and cultures in their sin. Preaching becomes watered down and barely distinguishable from popular psychology and self- help books.

5.1.4 Dogmatic contextualisation

Dogmatic contextualisation is a type of contextualisation that recognises the importance of cultural and ideological factors which help to resist the temptation of mere verbal assent to the Bible's authority, and facilitate wholehearted affirmation, that is what the Bible says God says. Bible authority is the authority derived from Jesus Christ's authority, which is the central figure and affirmation of the Bible. Dogmatic contextualisation takes seriously the social sciences, and recognizes the importance of cultural and ideological factors in one understands. It also recognises distinctiveness of the

³⁹ George G. Hunter, 1987. *To spread the power*. Nashville, Tennessee : Abingdon Press.

⁴⁰ Paul G. Heibert, 1994. *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues*. Grand Rapids: Baker, P.91

Biblical writers' cultural heritages. The role of this type of contextualisation is missiological and this must be its focus always.⁴¹

Dogmatic contextualisation that is true to both the Gospel and the context of people begins with the basic commitment to the authority of the Bible, and accepts the supra-cultural factor of the Good News, for example the transformation to Jesus Christ and the acceptance by faith His Lordship over all other things, including culture. It teaches that that contextualisation demands the willing acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and joyous servanthood and suffering for others, to present and produce the life-transforming power of the living God in the life of the theologian-communicator.⁴² This process of contextualisation recognizes distinctiveness of the biblical writers' cultural heritages and situations. It also affirms an inseparable relationship between the content and form of the Word of God, since both are overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. Nichols' observation is important to note: "The hermeneutical process of distancing and of identification, exercised under the Lordship of Christ and the Holy Spirit, ought to ensure a progressive approximation of the communicator understands of the Gospel to its biblical formulation".⁴³ Therefore, the role of such contextualisation continues to be missiological; the true and faithful communication of the Gospel commences with the life of the leader or the communicator. It takes place through worship, fellowship, prophetic justice, evangelistic witness, disciple making and diaconal service.

5.1.5 Comprehensive contextualisation

Moreau describes the seven-fold dimensions for grasping the scope of contextualisation, drawn from Ninian Smart's model for understanding religions, which include doctrinal, mystical, ethical, social, ritual, supernatural experience, and artistic or material elements.⁴⁴ The doctrinal dimension refers to beliefs expressed in religious form, which is the attempt to answer questions such as, "How did the world come to exist?" and "What powers rule the world?" These beliefs are found in the Bible, and can be organized in a way that makes sense to a particular audience, whether through books, hymns, sermons,

⁴¹ Ed. Dudek, 2008. 'Panoramic views of Contextualisation', *Globe serve Journal of Missions* 2:4 April, 2008 p5.

⁴² J. Andrew Kirk, 1978. *Gospel in Context*, IVP, Downers Grove.p.25

⁴³ B.J. Nicholls, 1979. *Contextualisation: A Theology of Gospel and Culture* Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press. p. 54.

⁴⁴ A. S. Moreau, 2007. April. "Contextualisation that is comprehensive." *Lausanne World Pulse*. Retrieved 7th September, 2012, from <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives/673>.

Bible studies, and so on. This approach can be focused on a particular goal that reflects liberation theologies or around a particular set of practices which are Pentecostal theologies. It may also have a subset in mind that is found in black theologies and feminist theologies. The acts or practices that try to be universal, which is Western systematic theologies are also in this practice.

The second dimension is the mythic. In the broadest sense, myth refers to the stories of a culture that reflect how it thinks about the world. The way we are using the term should not be confused with the more popular idea of myths as stories that are untrue. Myth in this sense is the power of the stories of a people to embody the things they cherish and value (as well as show why some things are not valued). Typically, a society's myths express that society's ideals about several themes, including sacrifice, love, honour, power, wisdom and heroism. While the doctrinal dimension focuses on what is true, the ethical dimension focuses on how people should live. This includes how we are to interact with other people and with the rest of God's creation, and how society regulates behaviour to prevent or stop people from behaving inappropriately.

The social dimension is seen in the ways Christians organize themselves in the light of scripture and local cultural values. It includes the sense of "togetherness" that comes from participating in Christian rituals together for example the Eucharist, commonly known as Holy Communion. This also includes all of the institutions within the Church and how they are organised and run. For instance, it includes such obvious things as church governance and all forms of church association (formal and informal, such as children's clubs in children Sunday school, youth forum, choir, women's guilds, denominational issues, enforcement of ethical standards which is how knowledge is passed on from one generation to another, and so on.

The ritual aspect includes not just what we formally think of as ritual, but also any repeated symbolic actions done in relation to Christian faith. This can range from formal Christian rituals, such as baptism, communion, marriages and funerals to non - formal ritualistic activities, such as sermons, committee meetings, evangelistic outreaches and prayer meetings. The dimension of supernatural experience takes into account the fact that, in every society, people encounter the supernatural, through dreams, visions, miraculous experiences,

signs and wonders, and other means. While many in the Western Church have followed the lead of Western culture and dismissed such encounters, the African Indigenous Church pays careful attention to them, especially vision, and acknowledges them as real and needing to be addressed.

This may seem to be a difficult area to contextualise, since they are less amenable to “control” than doctrine or rituals. Contextualisation of this dimension should include at least three components: local Christians must study the scriptures and develop Bible-based perspectives on them. Christians can then consider developing biblically founded rituals that enable encounters with God through Jesus Christ as well as rituals that will help people who struggle with negative experiences (for instance, demonic expulsion). Those who follow Christ need to be given the freedom and the language to talk about their experiences and find Bible centered and culturally-sensitive ways to handle them.

Christians around the world express their values and ideals through artistic and material means, beginning from church architecture that values the sermon (seen by the elevated pulpit facing the congregation) to sculptures that portray Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf to clothing that indicates status and authority, Christians regularly create and use imaginative ways to express thoughts, feelings and attitudes about their faith. A comprehensive approach to contextualisation recognizes this as an essential element of the faith of a local body of believers and finds ways to enable them to express their artistic giftedness in Christ-honoring ways.⁴⁵

5.1.6 Syncretistic contextualisation

Syncretistic contextualisation involves selecting the best insights of various major religions and evolving a faith that goes beyond any one of them.⁴⁶ Syncretism is the contamination of the biblical message of the gospel with other religions. This is the blending of Christianity with the beliefs and world views of African religions. Theological syncretism assumes that the Bible is culturally conditioned so that its cultural text is considered as only one of the other cultural contexts and the biblical context is not final and authoritative. This

⁴⁵ A. S. Moreau, 2007, April. "Contextualisation that is comprehensive." *Lausanne World Pulse*. Retrieved 7th September, 2012, from <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives/673>

⁴⁶ Ed Dudek, 2008. Panoramic view of Contextualisation, *Globe serve Journal of Missions* 2: 4 April, 2008. p.2.

method involves the process of relativizing the teachings of various religions so that "the sum total of particular truths is greater than the expression of any one truth."⁴⁷

Syncretism, or the unbiblical blending of true religion with false ones, is an ever-present risk for contextualisation. Syncretism ("union of communities") blends different points of view into a mixture of beliefs by ignoring distinctiveness and contradictions. Some religions encourage syncretism, while most oppose it. The key is to keep biblical elements that are not negotiable and to discard unbiblical cultural or religious elements. As in many discoveries, however, early proponents of contextualisation tend to overemphasize it, swinging the practice from one extreme of non-contextualisation to the other liberal extreme of uncritical contextualisation. The latter can lead to many other problems. For example, it can easily overlook the fact that sin is found not only in individuals but also within the institutions of society and in cultural ideologies. The denial of absolutes and of truth also runs against the gospel as a self-evident and divinely affirmed truth. "An uncritical incorporation of old beliefs and practices into the life of the church opens the door to syncretism of all kinds as well as to cultural and philosophical relativism, which destroys all truth and authority".⁴⁸

5.1.7 Critical contextualisation

The critical contextualisation takes the Holy Bible seriously as the rule of faith and life. The Bible is seen as divine revelation, not simply as humanly constructed beliefs. In contextualisation, the heart of the gospel must be kept as it is encoded in forms that are understood by the people, without making the gospel captive to the contexts. Critical contextualisation means that the Word of God is our controlling authority and that we do not accept our own culture uncritically-the Word is our touchstone. Translating culturally inherited or adopted deep-rooted besetting sin was an interesting challenge.⁴⁹ In contextualisation the heart of the gospel must be kept as it is encoded in forms that are understood by the people, without making the gospel captive to the contexts. This is an

⁴⁷ Bong Rin Ro, 1984."Contextualisation: Asian Theology." *In The Bible and Theology in Asian Contexts: An Evangelical Perspective on Asian Theology*, eds. Bong Rin Ro and Ruth Eshenaur, 63-77. Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association.

⁴⁸ Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou, 1999. *Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices*. Grand Rapids: Bakerp.21.

⁴⁹ Percy B Yoder, 1978. *Towards Understanding the Bible* Newton, Kans. : Faith and Life. pp 22-23.

ongoing process of embodying the gospel in an ever-changing world. Here cultures are seen as both good and evil, not simply as neutral vehicles for understanding the world. Contextualisation needs to be carried out critically, endeavouring to remove unnecessary religious practices. Critical contextualisation provides the needed balance. On the one hand, failure to contextualise at all adds extra-biblical requirements to salvation. On the other hand, allowing the culture to contextualise with no theological or biblical limits results in syncretism and aberrant expressions of Christianity. This is where the hermeneutical community brings the needed balance. As the believers in a culture have come to know the Lord, they join the preacher in studying the Holy Bible to know how to contextualise it among them. Critical contextualisation is essential, not simply trendy or stylish, and it does not water down Christ's message but helps the hearers to properly understand the gospel message and in their effort to worship LORD God.⁵⁰

Critical contextualisation involves two major tasks, which are interpretation and decontextualisation (revelation, interpretation, application) and contextualises the message to communicate it effectively to respondents in the target culture. It is not monocultural (ethnocentric) nor pluralistic (cultural relativity) but it seeks to enable people in one culture to understand messages and ritual practices from another culture with a minimum of distortion. It is based on a critical realist epistemology. It takes historical and cultural contexts seriously.⁵¹ The question is, Do our practices match our beliefs? The first step in critical contextualisation is to study the local culture phenomenologically so that people will understand deeply usable vehicles in their culture. The purpose is to understand their ways of worship and liturgy, not to judge them. The leader, pastor or founder must also have a metacultural framework that enables him or her to translate the biblical message into the cognitive, affective and evaluative dimensions of another culture, just as Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim leaders and members are using Jewish Culture as a mean of contextualising their faith in worship, liturgy and lifestyle. Leaders ought to lead the church

⁵⁰ Dean S. Gilliland, ed. 1989. "Contextual Theology as Incarnational Mission," in *The Word Among Us*, Dallas: Word Publishing. pp. 10-11.

⁵¹ Charles Kraft, 1979. *Christianity and Culture*: Mary knoll, : Orbis Books pp.64 -65.

members in the study of the scriptures that related to the elements and practices from the Holy Bible.⁵²

Hiebert sees contextualisation as an on ongoing process that involves anthropological reflections on missiological issues, exegetical review of the Scripture (which is what it means, critical response(that is to evaluate customs in the light of the new biblical understanding and make appropriate decisions). It also helps to build the hermeneutical bridge by translating the Biblical message into the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions of another culture. Without the bridge there will be a distorted view of the Gospel and checking against syncretism may be difficult, since the church is regarded as a hermeneutical community. There is an offence in the foreignness of the culture the white missionaries brought along with the gospel itself, which we dare not weaken. The gospel must be critically contextualised, but it also must remain prophetic, standing in judgment on what is evil in all cultures as well as in all persons.⁵³ The divine revelation given in human contexts is influenced by the incarnation of Jesus and understands that the gospel must be communicated in a cultural context.

This work, therefore, calls for contextualisation that is informed by the Holy Scriptures, guided by the Holy Spirit and discerned by the Church. Good contextualisation is not measured by the crowd it attracts but by the lives and communities that are transformed as a result of ideal contextualisation. Furthermore, it opines that critical contextualisation deliberately works against the grain of perceiving missions as a monocultural activity because it does not operate from a monocultural perspective nor is it premised upon the pluralism of incommensurate cultures. It seeks to find metacultural and meta-theological frameworks that enable people in one culture to understand messages and ritual practices from another culture with a minimum of distortion. It is based on a critical realist epistemology that sees all human knowledge as a combination of objective and subjective elements, and as partial but increasingly closer approximations of truth. It takes both historical and cultural contexts seriously. And it sees the relationship between form and meaning in symbols such as words and rituals, ranging all the way from an equation of the

⁵² The term “metacultural” here is used as a position above two or more systems of the same level, developing the ability to stand above two cultures and compare them /Hiebert, Paul G. 1987. “Critical Contextualisation”. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. 2 (3):104-11.

⁵³ Paul G. Hiebert, 2009. Critical Contextualisation *Trinity Journal* 30: 2 Fall pp 109-125.

two to simply arbitrary associations between them. Finally, it sees contextualisation as an ongoing process in which the church must constantly engage itself, a process that can lead us to a better understanding of what the Lordship of Christ and the kingdom of God on earth are about.⁵⁴

Christian contextualisation that is both authentic and effective is based on careful attention to both the biblical text and respondent cultures. Authenticity is primarily a matter of interpreting the texts in such a way as to arrive, as closely as possible, at the intent of the author through the application of sound hermeneutical and exegetical principles. This work avers that a call for contextualisation without an equal call for preserving the gospel message without compromise opens the door to syncretism. As people contextualise the gospel, worship and liturgy in Ibadanland they must also remain prophetic, by standing in judgment on what is evil in all cultures as well as in all persons. They must not forget that in each culture Christians face new questions for which they must find relevant, meaningful and appropriate Biblical answers. Contextualisation must be balanced; it must be faithful to the biblical text with meaningfulness to the audience or worshippers.

Generally, scholars like Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tiénoú observe that the proponents for contextualisation value cultures highly, and that those who advocated this approach had a deep respect for other peoples and their cultures, and recognized the high value people place on their own cultural heritage. They also recognized that the foreignness of the Christian message was one of the major barriers to its acceptance. Consequently, they stressed the communication of the gospel in indigenous forms and called for little or no cultural dislocation.⁵⁵

Critical contextualisation produces ideal, authentic and relevant contextualisation everywhere. Thus, acceptable contextualisation is a direct result of ascertaining the meaning of the biblical text, consciously submitting to its authority, and applying or appropriating that meaning. This perceived meaning is affected by the two horizons of the interpretive task: the horizon of the interpreter's own culture and that of the biblical text. Contextualisation that is authentic and relevant deals with God's revelation, faithfulness to the authority and content of the will of God as revealed in creation, conscience and

⁵⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, 2009. Critical contextualisation *Trinity Journal* 30: 2 Fall p. 111.

⁵⁵ Paul G. Hiebert, Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénoú. 1999, *Understanding folk religion: a Christian response to popular beliefs and practices*. Grand Rapids: Baker. p21.

Scripture. But authenticity does not guarantee that the message is meaningful and persuasive to the respondents. Relevance speaks of its effectiveness. It is communication that grows out of understanding of the respondents in their particular context and the work of the Holy Spirit in us and them. It is the supposed Christian contextualisation which is the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. It is both verbal and nonverbal and has to do with theologising, Bible translation, interpretation and application, incarnational lifestyle, evangelism, Christian instruction, church planting and growth, church organisation, worship style, and so on.⁵⁶ Appropriate or ideal contextualisation must be faithful to the Scripture and at the same time relevant to the culture, having dynamic interaction between the word revealed in the Scripture and culture which will help to achieve maximum relevance of the truth for specific time and place.

Contextualisation is a process of making the gospel as well as the Christian life and theology relevant to its culture and time, hence the need for constant re-contextualisation in order to avoid syncretism. This shows that, that which has been contextualised in the past needs to be constantly reviewed as society changes. The church in the 21st century must be proactively engaged in contextualisation. The gospel among African Christians seems not to be effective. The evidence of this is seen in the double life some Christians are living. They attend the church in the morning and attend the traditional shrine in the evening. What is responsible for this is that the message of the gospel is not properly internalized by Africans.⁵⁷

5.2 Methods of contextualisation

Fleming provides an understanding and background of the diverse interpretations of what it means to contextualise. For many evangelicals, contextualisation is simply a more popular way to inculturate the Christian message in the context of culture. In the opinion of those in theological matrixes of neo-orthodoxy and neo-liberalism, contextualisation could mean prophetic contextualisation, and the method of contextualisation would be dialectic,

⁵⁶ A. Walls, 1996. *The missionary movement in Christian history: Studies in the transmission of the faith* Maryknoll: Orbis. p. 235.

⁵⁷ A. O. Dada, 2010. Cultural adaptation or christo-paganism: an evangelical reflection on contextualisation in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLIV/ 1, June, p. 146.

which will assist in discovering the truth. For theological liberals, contextualisation may involve syncretism; and the method employed would be dialogic, meaning pursuing the truth.⁵⁸ The basic difference between evangelical thought and neo-orthodox and liberal approaches to contextualisation is that for the neo-orthodox and the liberal approaches the context becomes part of the content of the message. This view follows more closely the sociological understanding of contextualisation. The evangelicals would see the message as unchanging yet relevantly communicated into the cultural thought forms and language of a particular group of people. This view follows the inculturation aspects of the contextualisation process.⁵⁹ There are aspects of every culture which may be called "lifestyle" which clash with the message of the Holy Bible. In such cases, the authority of God's Word is held higher than cultural authority. The Christian, then, is called upon to change his lifestyle to conform to the message of the Bible. There are also aspects of culture which cannot be categorized as right or wrong. In other words, there are cultural practices which the Christian community in that culture needs to evaluate for themselves.

Fleming and McGavran approach contextualisation from a theoretical perspective. McGavran peppers his ideas with some practical examples. He says, "Let's leave room for differing opinions".⁶⁰ Mayers approaches the change process that occurs when two individuals or cultures meet from four perspectives: the trust bond, social structure, the validity of distinct societies, and effective ministry. These perspectives or models, according to Mayers, are viewed in theory as principles in cross-cultural communication. He proposes a lifestyle which hastens the cohesion process in contextualisation.⁶¹ This is an anthropological study relying on accepted knowledge from the behavioural sciences to help the communicator of the Christian message. The emphasis is on practice. Some scholars have concentrated on the unchanging message of the gospel and how it can be contextualised and made relevant in other cultures. Their author's view of contextualisation is a combined version of both the social scientific understanding of contextualization and the inculturation approach to contextualisation. It is not possible to ignore the change that

⁵⁸ Stephen Neill, 1966. *Colonialism and Christian Missions*, London: Lutterworth, p. 415.

⁵⁹ Bruce Fleming, 1980. *Contextualisation of Theology : an Evangelical Assessment* William Carey Library p.45.

⁶⁰ McGavran, Donald, 1974. *The clash between Christianity and cultures*. Washington, DC: Canon press. Mercy p.69.

⁶¹ Mercy Marvin Mayers, 1987. *Christianity confronts culture*.

occurs within a culture when new information is received into that culture. This process of change is the process of contextualisation.

McGavran also follows an inculturation understanding on what contextualisation is, asking, "Is there one way or many ways to God?"⁶² His answer attempts to define the issues involved. He proposes three possible answers to the question. The problem is more than just a question of dress, housing and language, but an issue of moral and ethical right and wrong. Like Fleming, McGavran takes a high view of Scripture and exhorts that there is "a right way" based on what is said in God's Word. His approach is similar to the concept that takes Jesus Christ as the transformer of culture. Darrell opines that contextualisation has to do with how the gospel revealed in the Scripture authentically comes to life in each new cultural, social, religious and historical setting. Every church in every particular place and time must learn to do theology in a way that makes sense to its audience while challenging it at the deepest level.⁶³ Contextualisation is more than a change in music, dress codes and furniture. Changes are not made because something works somewhere else, in another church, in another city. A desire to be contextual is driven by a passion to make disciples among all peoples and, therefore, requires an understanding of language, values, societal rhythms, and world views. Christians learn to contextualise their faith as Christians within their African culture

In more recent times, there has been an enlarged concept of context and deepened understanding of culture. "A new word was needed to denote the ways in which we adjust messages to cultural contexts and go about the doing of theology itself. That new word is *contextualisation*," which first appeared in the 1970's in protestant conciliar circles. Hesselgrave and Rommen have this to say about contextualisation:

To its originators it involved a new point of departure and a new approach to theologizing and to theological education: namely, praxis or involvement in the struggle for justice within the existential situation in which men and women find themselves today.⁶⁴

⁶² McGavran, Donald, 1974. *The Clash between Christianity and Cultures*. Washington, DC: Canon press. Mercy p.27.

⁶³ Darrell L. Whiteman, 1997, "Contextualisation: the theory, the gap, the challenge," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, January, : 2.

⁶⁴ David J Hesselgrave, and Edward Rommen. 1992, *Contextualisation: Meanings, Methods, and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker .pp. 28- 32.

Contextualisation captures in method and perspective the challenge of relating the Gospel to culture. Contextualisation attempts to communicate the Gospel in word and deed and to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people's deepest needs and penetrates their world views, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their own culture. But the heart of contextualisation is what Isaiah calls "an unchanging gospel in a changing world".⁶⁵

When the Gospel is presented in word and deed, and the fellowship of believers we call the church is organized along appropriate cultural patterns, then people will more likely be confronted with the offence of the Gospel, exposing their own sinfulness and the tendency toward evil, oppressive structures and behaviour patterns within their culture. Nevertheless, since Jesus Christ is the transformer of culture and is found in every culture Christ must be above culture in our ways and methods of contextualisation. Contextualisation helps to develop the contextualised expressions of the Gospel so that the Gospel itself will be understood in ways the universal church neither experienced nor understood, thus expanding the understanding of the kingdom of God. The Evangelicals adopted the word but not the meaning or method by making concepts or ideals relevant, translating the Gospel into a meaningful form, discovering legitimate applications of the gospel in a given situation. For the evangelicals there is not yet a commonly accepted definition of the word contextualisation."⁶⁶ Contextualisation, culture and theology began at the same time when the silence was broken by the voice of God, communication commenced between man and God. This work supports the proposition of Talman that a relevant and appropriate contextualisation agenda should include at least seven critical areas, namely: Bible translation, language, evangelism, church planting, worship and music, theology and leadership training.⁶⁷

When the task of contextualisation was introduced, there was no unanimous agreement among theologians and church leaders regarding the proper approach. It was rightly observed that any attempt to contextualise must be done with great caution because

⁶⁵ E. Sundhir Isaiah, 2007, *Contextualisation of theology Part 1 and 2 Gospel and Culture or doing Theology*, Course outline and requirements for Bethany School of Missions, Singapore unpublished

⁶⁶ Darrell L. Whiteman, 1997. "Contextualisation: the theory, the gap, the challenge International" *Bulletin of Missionary Research—January* p.35.

⁶⁷ Harley Talman, 2004. *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21:1 Spring .6.

the approach to contextualisation determines the outcome or product of the contextualisation process. Bong classifies the four theologies that emerged from four different types of contextualisation methods Biblical Oriented African Theology. Western theologies have been derived from Western cultural and historical contexts. African theology must address the African cultural contexts. The cultural situation must not be allowed to distort the biblical teachings of the church. African theologians have yet to come up with an African theology derived from a proper contextualisation process. Of the four types of contextualisation methods, the Biblically oriented African Theology is the nearest to the ideal. It preserves the Biblical tradition and at the same time attempts to relate the message to the cultural context. This method will be the most appropriate for the Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church which accepts the Bible as the infallible revelation of God's will, and the standard of character and basis of doctrines.

Situational Theology arises when the teachings of the church arise out of a specific situation. The situation or the cultural context oftentimes becomes the norm and the biblical teachings of the church are set aside. Bong illustrates this situational theology with the Ark of the Covenant.⁶⁸ Recognizing the diversity of cultures, there is need to use culture as a channel for communication. The absolute facts pertaining to God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the condition of man, salvation, judgment and eternal punishment, that are unchangeable and need to be meaningfully communicated.⁶⁹ In order to present the good news of Jesus Christ to the Yoruba in Ibadan land, Christians must go beyond both cultural and theological contextualisation. There are some who consider only the religious aspects as the relevant sphere, while others deal only with the ideological aspect. A holistic contextualisation, taking into consideration the total pre-understanding of the receptor, must be taken into considerations. The task of the church is to be seen as transforming the world not only in the spiritual and religious dimensions, but also in all the aspects of life. This is integral contextualisation. Contextualisation will lead to the building up of a just society, the kingdom of God.

⁶⁸ Bong Rin Ro, 1984 "Contextualisation: Asian Theology." *In The Bible and theology in Asian contexts: an evangelical perspective on Asian theology*, eds. Bong Rin Ro and Ruth Eshenaur : 63-77. Taichung, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association.

⁶⁹ David V. Feliciano, 1977. "Contextualisation of the Christian Faith in the Philippine setting" *Christian Forum*, March, p.26.

Accommodation considers prevailing customs and religious practices and accommodates good ideas from other religions. This method describes as incorporating good concepts and customs of other religions into Christianity. This method is considered valid as long as the concepts and customs accommodated are re-interpreted appropriately because the basic and essential message of Christianity must be retained and explained. To do contextualisation, the concerned culture should be understood. If theology is an understanding of biblical revelation through our cultural lens, then we must be able to filter our cultural lens to get to the heart of biblical revelation. Unless we understand how our own cultural biases impact our understanding of the gospel and our practices of faith, we will not be able to adequately contextualise the gospel into a foreign culture.

Even some leaders at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim church in Ibadan land complained of some groups known as *Pápá Njò*” or “*Omo Ogun Sòkalè*”, who had no mentor or spiritual fathers, that trained or made them disciples. That they have grown in their faith void of spiritual fathers, no training nor been disciple through the worship service. It is hard for someone who has not been made disciple to make disciple of others. Without discipleship, contextualisation is void of transformation and bends towards syncretism. Once these prerequisites are met, the work of contextualisation can begin. Jonathan says: “The task of the missionary then becomes that of building a bridge between revelation and a given human culture.” While Lewis cited Townsend notes that, “The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It never needs a furlough, is never considered a foreigner globally”.⁷⁰

This work shows three ways the gospel relates to culture: the gospel affirms most of culture, it critiques and confronts some aspects of culture; and it transforms the usable aspects of all cultures. Hence, there is need for continuous adaption to the culture, because cultures and languages are always changing. This shows that a correct interpretation and contextualisation at one time does not mean that it is valid for all times, that means contextualisation is ongoing. Today’s contextualised church is tomorrow’s disconnected and irrelevant church. This could buttress the similar view raised by some leaders and members of *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan, to support why there are

⁷⁰ Jonathan Lewis ed. 1994. World mission : an analysis of the World Christian Movement, second edition *The Biblical/ Historical Foundation Part One*, Pasadena, California: William Carey Library .p5-19.

differences in the cultic elements and practices in ancient Israel and what is in practice today in most Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, especially the issue of sacrificing animals, which has reduced drastically.⁷¹ Therefore, contextualised expressions must be evaluated by and according to their fidelity to the Scriptures and the accepted tenets of the Christian faith. Our own interpretations are shaped by our social, cultural, psychological, and historical contexts. These need to be checked by others from other cultures that can help us see any biases.⁷²

In the light of the tower of Babel it is easy to see how one culture is not good for humanity. The picture of the multitudes in heaven is also a poignant reminder that we need one another in community to better understand the gospel and ensure that our cultural biases give way to biblical revelation. Christianity is not about knowing; it is about appropriate living and incarnation. It is about a life lived today so people can see Jesus Christ in believers. When viability of churches are simply measured by attendance and offering collected, we are missing the point and can quickly slip into uncritical contextualisation which leads to syncretism. We must study Scripture and understand what a disciple of Jesus Christ is and use that as our measuring stick. Good contextualisation is not measured by the crowd it attracts, but by the lives and communities that are transformed as a result of it.⁷³

5.3 Benefits of contextualisation

Culture means the totality of the life of a people. It refers to the common ideas, feelings, and values that guide community and personal behaviour, which organize and regulate what the group thinks, feels, and does about God, the world, and humanity. Culture itself is not evil, but a composite of good and evil as understood biblically; it is values and vocations, customs and creations, beliefs and behaviors that characterize a particular people in a particular place. Culture is not simply a neutral vehicle for understanding the world. No culture is absolute or privileged but we are all relativized by the Gospel globally. All human cultures have a natural tendency to harmonize a trans-cultural message within their own world view and practice. Hiebert identifies three dimensions of culture: cognitive

⁷¹ Interview held with Special Apostle Prophet (Dr.) Jonathan Kola Olaniran, The General Secretary Worldwide and Leader of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Orogun, Ibadan, in Akinyele LG on 29th April, 2012 and Apostle Segun Philips in the church premises at Ona Iwa Mimo Temple of Solution Spiritual Evangelical Ministry. Awotan, Ibadan, Ido LG on, 7th May, 2012.

⁷² Paul G. Hiebert, 1984. "Critical Contextualisation." *Missiology: An International Review*, 12: 97, 287-296.

⁷³ Hesselgrave, David J., and Edward Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: meanings, methods and models*. Leicester, England: Intersarsity.

dimension, which reflects the knowledge shared by the society; affective dimension, which deals with the attitudes, notions of beauty, tastes in food and dress, likes and dislikes, enjoyments and sharing of sorrows; and evaluative dimension, which is concerned with values, standards by which human relationships are judged, sense of right and wrong, truth and falsehood.⁷⁴

The Willowbank Report notes that culture holds people together over a span of time and it is received from the past, but not by any process of natural inheritance. This shows that culture has to be learned afresh by each generation. This enculturation takes place broadly by the process of absorption from the social environment, especially in the home. In many societies, certain elements of the culture are communicated directly in rites of initiation, and by many other forms of deliberate instruction.⁷⁵ Therefore contextualisation can be seen in the light of the word of God present among men being expressed it in different cultures and transforming them. The Old Testament reflects the profound interaction of the supra-cultural and revealed Word and the cultural life of the Hebrews and those of the surrounding nations. Even in the formation of the covenanted people as “my people”, God transformed some of these cultural forms to His purposes and rejected others as idolatry.⁷⁶ People are born and reared into culture; they are enculturated; they define the world around them by deciding what is real and how to react to this reality. Through cultural adaptation, the gospel can be made relevant to the hearers (1 Cor. 9 : 19,22), even Jesus Christ adapted to interests, needs, and points of view within various contexts. He ministered within the confines of the world view of Judaism. Simeon Peter also adapted his message to the world view of the house of Cornelius - Acts 10: 34-43.

The Christian message is, indeed, abiding and universal. Since contextualisation simply means, communicating the gospel in understandable terms appropriate to the audience, all Christian communication should be contextualised. If Christian meaning is not to be lost in the communication process, contextualisation is required. Contextualisation does not compromise or water down the gospel message in any way. In fact, this is what

⁷⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, 1985. *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, Grand Rapids, Baker, pp. 30-34.

⁷⁵ The Willowbank Report: Report of a consultation on gospel and culture,” Lausanne Committee of World Evangelisation and The Willow bank Report: Report of a Consultation on Gospel and Culture,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 484.

⁷⁶ E. S. Isaiah, 2000 *Contextualisation, a Course Reader*, Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University, Singapore. Unpublished. p122.

non-contextualisation does, because it obfuscates the message.⁷⁷ Durkheim, the father of the relative social contextualisation of religion viewed religion as a significant contributor to the well-being and effectiveness of a society by providing sanctions and limitations from a sacred source. The rituals, beliefs and religious practices of a society are irrevocably linked with the culture of that society.⁷⁸ Contextualisation is a dynamic process of the church's reflection, in obedience to Christ and his mission in the world, on the interaction of the text as a specific human situation. It is essentially a missiological concept. Contextual theology can be defined as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the spirit and the gospel; the tradition of the Christian people; the culture in which one is theologising; and social change in that culture. Contextualisation guards against the imperialism of theology. In today's understanding of doing theology, contextualisation is part of the very nature of theology itself. Therefore, to understand theology as contextual is to assert something both new and traditional.

Contextualisation helps to get the message of the gospel into the hearts of people of all nations, and helps church leaders to maximize the power of the gospel touching the lives of members. While this is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit, the responsibility of how to get the message across lies upon the messenger. The issue at hand therefore is the way in which the word, as scripture, and the word as revealed in the truths of culture interact in determining Christian truth for a given people and place, not minding the opinion of some scholars, who are of the view that many conservatives feared that the absolute truths of the gospel were in danger of being compromised in what appeared to be a low view of revelation.⁷⁹ Contextualisation fosters the growth and multiplication of churches, because churches that are not contextualised seem strange to the believers of that society. It can be recognised that if people are to be won to Christ in any considerable numbers, they must be approached with the gospel on their own terms and cultures.

There are different efforts aimed at contextualising the Christian faith in Africa and Ibadan land especially. These are being actively carried out by African Indigenous or Instituted Churches - Cherubim and Seraphim, Church of the Lord Aladura, Celestial

⁷⁷ A. Walls, 1996. *The missionary movement in Christian history: Studies in the transmission of the faith* Maryknoll: Orbis p.235.

⁷⁸ Emile Durkheim, 1912. *The elementary forms of the religious life*.

⁷⁹ Anna Egun Ogunlokun, 1995. Towards the contextualisation of theology in the Two Thirds World with special reference to the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria". M.A. Thesis, Ashin University Korea.pp.3 & 7.

Church of Christ, and others. They extensively introduced African elements into the liturgy of the church in Africa. These attempts have focused mainly on issues bordering on liturgy and the reading and interpretation of Biblical texts. These churches emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and they were founded by African leaders who sought to reflect African culture and ways of life in their living. These independent church movements were founded by a separation from parent churches and missions and in a few cases under the initiative of a dynamic leader. Falk articulates some of the benefits of contextualisation being practised by African Indigenous Churches: they make Christianity relevant among every people group; they constitute a significant portion of Christianity in Africa and have unique spirit in African Christianity. The development of African Instituted Churches has attained a dimension that is unprecedented in the history of the Christian Church⁸⁰.

Contextualisation is being practised because people find it easy to relate with the African elements introduced into the liturgy. It brings more members to the church which, perhaps, ultimately results in stable finance for the church. It is essential to our understanding of God's self-revelation. Kato also, recognizes its importance for the well-being of the African church claims that it does not imply compromising any of the theological principles that are fundamental.⁸¹ Contextualisation is not something that is to be left only in theory with definitions and explanations. We should also apply it in the areas of complexity where there is hindrance to the gospel because of the non-understanding of its Meta cultural aspects. Hence, how this can be presented without hindering the essence of the gospel and in what areas it can be made ought to be taken cognizance in the efforts of contextualising the faith. The very fact that we speak about contextualisation implies that our faith and life are not fully inserted into African or (Yorùbá) culture or in other words, that is the Christianity and our religious life remain something foreign to Yoruba land.. For the production of any creative work we have to be truly rooted in our tradition.

In Africa everything has an inborn nature with it, whether it is culture, tradition, language, religion or lifestyle. Contextualisation is taken to be, "the communication of the Christian message in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, which is meaningful to respondents in their respective

⁸⁰ P. Falk, 1999, *The growth of the church in Africa*, Jos, : African Christian Textbooks. p.452.

⁸¹ Paul Bowers, 1980. "Evangelical theology in Africa: Byang Kato's legacy," *Trinity Journal*, n.s., 1 : 86.

cultural and existential contexts”.⁸² With this understanding even in Africa especially among the Yoruba, the gospel has to be contextualised in a way that it reaches even to the unreachable despite the barriers. Hence, contextualisation is necessary in order to present the gospel transparently and make it convenient in such a way that it is understood by anybody, anywhere. It helps to work out the process of showing the Holy Bible to be meaningful and relevant to the receiver in whatever culture and context he may be, in order that he may truly discover what the Bible has to say to him.

One of the visible ways the indigenous churches have contextualised the liturgy of the church is in the area of church music. The use of traditional music in worship by the indigenous churches have a ripple effect on the worship or liturgy of the historic or mission churches like Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, and so on. In these historic churches, worship was said to be cold, stereotyped and uninspiring, perhaps, because they were patterned after Western or American model, designed to meet the need of the White people⁸³. Although some of the historic churches in Yoruba land have adapted traditional music in their worship, it is not extensively accommodated as it is in the indigenous churches, which are genuinely contextualising their worship and liturgy.

No doubt, Africa traditional elements and rituals have been adapted to make the faith meaningful in the African context. The use of elements like holy oil, incense, holy water and ritual baths, sacred preparation and so on are common in these churches. These elements are now also adapted into the healing process, just as some of these elements and rituals are an integral part of the healing process in the traditional context. Even with the transition to Christianity, this traditional practice continued in different perspectives in these indigenous churches. Instead of the incantation (potent words) recited on them in the traditional set-up, prayers in the name of Jesus Christ and some portions of the Holy Bible in the Book of Psalms are now recited and read on them.⁸⁴ Prophetess Olojo confirmed this act, and gave the example of how God, through the Holy Spirit, asked her to read specific chapters of the

⁸² Hesselgrave, D.J & Rommen E, 1989, *Contextualisation: Meaning, Method and Models*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, p.143.

⁸³ J. O. Awolalu, 1977. “The Philosophy and psychology of Worship” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, xi no 2 December 1977 : 101

⁸⁴ A. O. Dada, 2010. “Cultural Adaptation or christo- paganism: An Evangelical Reflection on Contextualisation in Africa”, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June, 2010. : 151-152.

Book of Psalms for healing and deliverance from bondage of Satan and enemies for some people.⁸⁵

This has helped to heal and provide solutions to spiritual problems. In the name of contextualisation some of the practices that are peculiar to the indigenous churches in Africa are in one way or the other, creeping into the historic or mainline churches; they claim to find it easy to relate with the African elements introduced into the liturgy.⁸⁶ Contextualisation helps to present the gospel transparently and make it convenient in such a way that is understood. It also helps a local church to work with its immediate community to bring about positive changes using the communities own God-given resources. This process enables them to make difference in their community, bringing hope, and transformation and providing solutions to spiritual problems of people.

Contextualisation can be considered as the mode for the mission enterprise today and for the future. Contextual principles begin the moment when the first message is preached and continues through the planting, nurturing and witnessing of the church. Contextualisation guards against the imperialism of theology because the churches planted by missionary organizations can, in fact, achieve all the features of indigeneity and still never have the ownership of the members' own convictions; it is the spirit of missions today that all Christians be able to process, reflect upon and organize Biblical truth so that the book and truth become their own.⁸⁷ Contextualisation cultivates a mission-conscious church, when we say that contextualisation is mission centred, we are speaking of the incarnational aspect of the gospel, which means the good news is for every person. Contextualisation fosters the growth and multiplication of churches. Those churches that are not contextualised seem strange to the believers of that society. If people are to be won to Christ in any considerable numbers, they must be approached with the gospel on their own terms.⁸⁸

The need to make the gospel meaningful and efficacious is at the heart of contextualisation. It is only a gospel that is meaningfully communicated, understood and

⁸⁵ Interview held with Revd Pastor Prophetess Evangelist Elizabeth Titilayo Olojo Kosoko on 27th March 2012 at Mokola Ibadan.

⁸⁶ A.O. Dada, 2005. "Creative adaptation or magical manipulation : the use of Psalms in the healing process in Afro-Christian Churches of Yorubaland", *Obitun : Journal of Humanistic Studies*, vol.4 no1 pp36-47.

⁸⁷ D.A. Carson ed., 1995 .*Biblical Interpretation and the Church*. New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers

⁸⁸ D.J Hesselgrave, & E. Rommen. 1989. *Contextualisation: Meaning, Method and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House p.143-147.

internalised that can be effectual and produce result in individual and help to transform the community. If the gospel is to be understood, if it is to be received as something which communicates truth about real human situation, it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols that are meaningful to them.⁸⁹ For the gospel to be deeply rooted in Africa, especially in Ibadanland, it must be rooted in traditional cultures and values which create indigenous awareness. The church Ibadan (in Africa generally) is confronted with a great challenge of “de-Westernizing” the Gospel, in her own territory and for the sake of her own people, so that they may truly find themselves in Jesus Christ. Hence, it is mandatory for her to contextualise her faith for her own survival and to aid her involvement in healing ministry, preaching and teaching of the gospel and missions.

Contextualisation should affect our entire life. It should result from a life lived as Christians true to our cultures. The basic attitude is one of love and respect for one’s own cultural heritage. The expression in different areas of life will automatically follow. Areas where contextualisation can be effectively applied include language, Scriptural translation, evangelism and worship, thought patterns and communication style (for example, storytelling or use of indigenous music), initial selection, sequence, and emphasis of certain aspects of the gospel relevant to any culture. This is reflected in the different ways the early apostles shared the gospel with Jews versus the way they shared it with Gentiles, in terms of worship posture and expression in prayer, music or formal discourse, allowing for various forms. We need to be careful, however, that we do not overlook the delicate relationship between form and meaning. We should avoid accidentally encouraging a form or practice which is perceived by the worshiper or his unconverted contacts as having a meaning which is in conflict with Biblical truth. (for example certain kinds of music in African culture are related to evil practices.⁹⁰

Here, contextualisation is meant as the process of showing the Bible to be meaningful and relevant to the receiver in whatever culture or context he may be, in order that he may truly discover what the Bible has to say. To have effective communication of

⁸⁹ Leslie Newbigin, 2008. “Foolishness to the Greeks” in Paul Chilcote & Lacey C. Warner ed. *The study of Evangelism: Exploring a Missional practice of the Church*, Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans publishing company: 141.

⁹⁰ Paul Hiebert, 1985. *Cultural Anthropology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House p.

the Gospel in a cross-cultural setting can be challenging owing to differences in language and culture. Presenting the Gospel in a contextual way is opening up people's hearts, to make them respond to the message of salvation⁹¹.

McGavran is of the opinion that people should not be taken out of their culture to hear the gospel, but that they should hear the gospel within their culture, because the church basically multiplies within its culture.⁹² Indeed, contextualisation makes people to worship and hear the gospel within their culture meaningfully. Yet, contextualisation, and cultural and sub-cultural notions need to be challenged, biblical authority needs to be maintained, and gospel truth has to be communicated respectively.

Contextualisation is the best, ideal and acceptable way to carry out the mandate of our LORD Jesus Christ meaningfully today. His incarnation which shows how he humbled Himself to become a man born by woman in order to be relevant to our systems is a good example and form of contextualisation. This work therefore opines that contextualisation is making the culture relevant and yet faithful to the scripture; which will help to make the Christian faith speak to Africans in a language comprehensible to them. They are aware that by nature, the African wants to be actively involved in worship of the almighty God, rather than sitting in worship as a passive spectator; Africans love rhythm and music, and to dance and sing in a way meaningful to them. Contextualisation therefore, will help to employ all these means in order to bring Christianity home to fellow Africans within their cultural setting.

In other words, the urge is that Christianity should be expressed in relevant and appropriate indigenous African terms and channeled through meaningful cultural setting.

⁹¹ D. J. Hesselgrave & E. Rommen, *Contextualisation: Meaning, Method and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989

⁹² Donald A. McGavran, 1973. "Salvation Today", in Winter, Ralph (ed.) *The Evangelical Response to Bangkok*. Pasadena, California: William Carey Library p.

CHAPTER SIX

UTILISATION OF ISRAELITE CULTIC ELEMENTS AND PRACTICES IN ÒNÀ ÌWÀ MÍMÓ CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM CHURCH: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTEXTUALISATION

6.1 The origin, growth and development of Ònà Ìwà Mímó, Cherubim and Seraphim church

According to Baba Aladura, His Eminence Joseph Aderibigbe Ibikunle, the current spiritual Head of Ònà Ìwà Mímó C&S worldwide, Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim church started in Igboho between 1938 and 1940. It happened when the supreme founder was excommunicated from First Baptist Church Igboho and in obedience to God's instructions through the Holy Spirit.¹ Apostle Segun Philips said that it was on 12th December, 1938 that God revealed Himself in a mysterious way and spoke specifically to Baba Adeola to begin the Ònà Ìwà Mímó, Cherubim and Seraphim Church.² Because most of the early converts were only interested in getting spiritual help rather than in helping to ensure the consolidation of the church, there was no rapid development of the new church at inception. It was estimated that over ninety percent of his followers were the people cured of their diseases and infirmities. Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore, the leader and minister-in-charge of Ònà Ìwà Mímó New Jerusalem, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, confirmed that it was the spiritual problems and challenges he had that led him to look for Prophet Adeola in 1960, whom God used to provide solutions to his problems and lived with him for many years.³ The first two years of the church could be likened to the experience Moses had in the wilderness with the Israelites. Just as Moses would sit from morning till evening attending to the Israelites for their needs, so also did the supreme founder.

According to Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao, Chairman Ibadan Central District of Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim, Ibadan, the name God gave to the Church is Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim as revealed to the supreme founder, Baba Aladura Jacob Oke

¹ His Grace Baba Aladura J.A. Ibikunle. 27th, April, 2008. A welcome address presented on the occasion of the Pastoral visit of His Most Eminence A.O. Akinsanya the Supreme Head of C& S Unification Worldwide to Igboho, National Headquarters of Ònà Ìwà Mímó C&S Church of Nigeria and Overseas, Unpublished 1.

² Most Snr. Apostle Segun Philips, interview held on 7th May, 2012 at Ònà Ìwà Mímó Church, Awotan, Ibadan Ido Local Government

³ Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore, who is the leader and minister in charge of New Jerusalem, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, interview held with him on 18th July, 2012 at Idi- Seke Bodija Ibadan.

Adeola written in Isaiah 35: 8.⁴ Prophet Jacob Oke Adeola was not anointed by any man, never received training from man, nor served under any human beings; he received his anointing directly from heaven. The Supreme Founder claimed that his calling was just like Moses in the Old Testament. Turner opines that “in describing a church as founded by Africans, neither we nor the church concerned should overlook the fact that no man can ‘found’ a church except in so far as he is called and empowered by the Holy Spirit”.⁵ This opinion is very correct in relation to founding of the *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim church. Its establishment was not the result of human desire but a gift from God through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit which directed Prophet Jacob Oke Adeola to found the church.

6.2 The profile and call of Prophet Jacob Oke Adeola, the Supreme Founder of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim Nigeria and overseas

Prophet Jacob Oke Adeola was born in Igboho in 1902, the precise month is not known. His father was Pa Adejumobi Adeola who belonged to the highly esteemed hunting and warrior group and a respectful family known as Erinjakun-Alalu. His mother was Madam Subuola Ajoke Ogun. His parents were traditionalists to the core. Prophet Adeola was the third child and first son among the eight children of his parents. When his mother got pregnant, his father, as was the custom, consulted the Ifa oracle to know about the fate and destiny of the coming child. The Ifa priest made it known that the child to be born would not only be a son, but that he would also be a great and well-known figure. It was also predicted that ‘he would be a founder of a town’.⁶ His father was delighted that the child to be born would be a male child.

The child was named Okanlawon Ogundiya Oke but his early childhood was full of sickness. The traditional medicine often administered to him for the cure proved ineffective, most of the time. He normally got healed whenever he was treated with ordinary cold water. This became the magic wand for all manners of sickness. This confirms the earlier

⁴ Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao, Interview held on 30th April, 2012 at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim *Ijokodo/Agbaje*, Ibadan.

⁵ H.W. Turner, 1967. *The history of an African independent church: church of the Lord (Aladura)*. Oxford: Clarendon Press p. 15.

⁶ J. O. Adeola, 1988. *Ìtàn Ìgbé dide Wòlfi Jacob Oke Adeola : An autobiography of the Founder Prophet J.O. Adeola*, Ilorin : Oyínwolá Printing Works p. 8.

prediction about him that he would be a great child. When he had come of age, he started accompanying his father to farm because education had not been widely accepted in Igboho area. After a brief stay with his father in the farming profession, he left to establish his own little business. He was in this trading business when the white missionaries arrived at Igboho with the mind of propagating the Gospel and drawing people into the marvelous light of Jesus Christ. It was during this period that Prophet Adeola was Christianised with the name Jacob in 1923 in a Baptist church. He later became a Sunday school teacher. He also became the treasurer of one Baptist Church at Abeokuta before he received the call of God. In 1929, he married his first wife named Sarah Olatowon who, in 1930, gave birth to their first child named Grace Moradehun.

Baba Aladura Jacob Oke Adeola was one of the foundation members of the First Baptist Church, Igboho. As a trader, he traded in sheep and goats and clothing between Yoruba land and Ibariba land (now known as Borgu Division of Kwara State, Nigeria). He used to buy traditional beads, salt and a special type of cloth known as *aso ilékè* from Yoruba land for sale in Ibariba land.⁷ He would use the money realised to buy goats, sheep, and cows as well as shea butter cream and sell them at Abeokuta. Despite his thriving business, he still had time for prayer. He would go with few of his friends from one place to another to pray for the sick people. God used this practice to increase converted souls in the area. Among the people that got converted was one man called Tella, a native of Igbope in Oorelope Local Government, Oyo State, who was healed of his sickness through the prayers rendered by Prophet Jacob. He became a Christian after his recovery and got baptized as William.⁸

This singular act of praying for sick people with the majority receiving their healing and solutions to their problems got him into trouble with the church, which he belonged to. Somebody called Moses, who was one of the officers of the Baptist Church, reported Jacob to the Church authority, particularly Rev. Powell, who was the head of the Baptist Church at Igboho and its surroundings. He was accused of not following the rules and regulations of the Baptist church by going out to pray for the sick and seeing visions. This was frowned at

⁷ His Grace Baba Aladura J.A. Ibikunle, 27th , April, 2008, A welcome address presented on the occasion of the Pastoral visit of His Most Eminence A.O. Akinsanya the Supreme Head of C& S Unification Worldwide to Igboho, National Headquarters of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Church of Nigeria and Overseas, Unpublished.⁷

⁸ J. O. Adeola, 1988. *Ìtàn ìgbé dide, Wòlù Jacob Oke Adeola : an autobiography of the Founder Prophet J.O. Adeola*, Ilorin: Oyinwola Printing Works p.8.

by the church and he was consequently excommunicated by Reverend Powell. The excommunication did not go down well with members of this church, but there was nothing they could do about this discouraging decision.

Prophet Adeola was called on Monday 12th December, 1938, when the Spirit of God came upon him. Jacob, his wife and one of their children (Christianah Arinlade) went on a journey to Ibariba, now known as Borgu Division of Kwara State, in the North central of Nigeria, to buy goats and cows for resale at Abeokuta in the southern part as usual. After he had made necessary arrangements for the journey to transport these articles and materials to Abeokuta, he had an encounter with the Lord, which marked the turning point in his life and the beginning of the new commission. He fetched a bucket of water in order to take his bath. As he was about taking his bath, the hands of God fell on him mightily. The water he wanted to use at the bathroom was boiling highly like water on fire in the kitchen, yet when he dipped his hand in it, the water was not hot at all but was as cold as water inside a refrigerator. However, on removing his hand, the water became hot again. He took the water to the bathroom and as he was trying to take his bath, he heard a great and loud voice three times, through which God commanded him to leave cows, sheep, goats and go to a specific place God would show him. He was afraid and fell down. The voice came to him in different tongues, but its meaning was given in the Yoruba language. The voice from heaven goes thus: “*Wòlù mi, Wòlù mi, Wòlù Mi*” (My prophet, my prophet, my prophet). At this stage, he fell down and could not stand up for some time. The voice continued:

*Ìwọ kì yóò gbé ilẹ̀ yí mọ̀,
Mo búra fún ọ
Nítorípé láti ìgbá tí ati dá ọ
tí a sì ti bí ọ,
ní mo ti yàn ọ gégé bí wòlù Mi,
Nítorípé kì se nítorí àwọn
Àgùntàn ẹran wònyí ní mo
Se dá ọ, bikòse àwọn
Ènìyàn Mi ní mofì se àwọn àgùntàn rẹ.
Àwọn ènìyàn mí ní mo dá ọ fún
láti má a kójo,
Nítorínàà mo se ilé rí fún ọ pé,
Nínú àwọn ohun gbogbo tí o kójo
Wònyí ìwọ kì yóò mú ẹyọkan
Padà dé ilẹ̀ Yorùbá.*

You are not going to live in this land again
I assure you, that right from the time you were
Created in your mother's womb and given birth to,
I have chosen you as my prophet.
I did not create you as shepherd of these sheep,
but I created you as shepherd over my people
I created you so that you will be the leader of
My people because of this I'm assuring you
That you will not take any of these goods back to Yoruba land.

After a day's journey, he realized that he was unable to continue again. He asked for strength from God Almighty and his request was granted. He started behaving strangely to his employees (the herdsmen) and the livestock became uncontrollable. Soon, the herdsmen could not know his whereabouts and none of the animals could be found again, each having gone its own way. Representatives of the herdsmen were dispatched to Igboho to brief the relations on the developments.⁹

He later found himself inside a thick forest. A search party was dispatched by his family to the scene but they could locate neither Jacob Adeola nor any of the fleeing livestock. Incredibly, Oke Adeola was seeing members of the search party occasionally although he could not have contact with them. About twenty days later, the party saw a great fire burning in his front, back, left and right sides. Although the fire was about one mile from where he was staying, all the animals, even his wife, daughter and other people with him ran away because the situation was terrific. He made efforts to control and stop the animals from running away but he was unable because he was weak, unconscious and could not discern where he was anymore. He then heard God's voice that said 'put off your sandal because the land you are standing on is a holy land'. Since then, he never put on shoes till his death. God also commanded that razor must not touch his head.¹⁰

He was in the wilderness for eighty- three days without eating food or drinking water. Where he was, there were a lot of wild animals and birds but he was protected from them all. It was on the 83rd day that he heard God's voice again, which said 'My messenger, my messenger, my messenger, I called you for the salvation and well - being of the people

⁹ His Grace Baba Aladura J.A. Ibikunle, 27th, April, 2008, A welcome address presented on the occasion of the Pastoral visit of His Most Eminence A.O. Akinsanya the Supreme Head of C& S Unification Worldwide to Igboho, National Headquarters of *Ọ̀nà Ịwà Mímọ́* C&S Church of Nigeria and Overseas, Unpublished. p11

¹⁰ J. O. Adeola. 1988, *Ìtàn Ịgbé dide Wòlù Jacob Oke Adeola, : an autobiography of the Founder prophet J.O.Adeola*, Ilorin: Oyinwola Printing works. p.19.

and you will be the leader of my church which will be called Ona Iwa Mimo, Cherubim and Seraphim”.¹¹ Even when the voice of God ceased from talking to him, he still felt God’s presence because he went into a trance. It was then he began to realise that he was sent into this sinful world for the salvation of mankind. After he had spent four months in the wilderness, God then led him to Igboho town, Oorelope Local Government, Oyo State. Having had a vision on a commission (on his returning home) he started life according to divine directives but continued attending his First Baptist Church. It was at that moment that he started with powerful prayers for people and there were a lot of signs and wonders. His peculiar prayer band first operated within the church and had in its fold prayer warriors who believed healing could be done and difficult life problems solved through prayers. This belief in the sufficiency and efficacy of prayer in all things was strange to many of the members and so the group became detested and was virtually isolated. The missionary advisers from Saki recognized that Jacob Adeola was leading a different group from the Baptist doctrine and he was excommunicated.¹² Through that, he started gathering people in and around Igboho town. He left the church and established Ona-Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church, as directed by the Holy Spirit, one of the biggest churches in Oyo State with branches all over Nigeria and overseas. It was in 1938 that God gave the name of the Church as ‘Ona Iwa Mimo, Cherubim and Seraphim.’¹³

According to Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao, the chairman of Ibadan Central District of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim, the name of the church to be established by Supreme Founder Adeola was to be named Ona Iwa Mimo according to the Book of Isaiah 35 : 8 “*Òpópó kan yóò sí wà níbè, àti ònà kan, a ò sí má a pèé ní, Ònà Ìwà Mímó; aláìmó kì yóò kojá níbè, nitorí òhun ó wà pèlú wọn-----*”(And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those; the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein” KJV). He put himself and his ministry under Moses Tunolase Orimolade as his leader and also acknowledged Prophet

¹¹ J. O. Adeola. 1988. *Ìtàn Ìgbè dide Wólù Jacob Oke Adeola.: An autobiography of the Founder Prophet J.O. Adeola*, Ilorin: Oyinwola Printing Works. p.20.

¹² His Grace Baba Aladura J.A. Ibikunle, 27th , April, 2008, A welcome address presented on the occasion of the Pastoral visit of His Most Eminence A.O. Akinsanya the Supreme Head of C& S Unification Worldwide to Igboho, National Headquarters of *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Church of Nigeria and Overseas, Unpublished.p11.

¹³ His Grace Baba Aladura J.A. Ibikunle, 27th , April, 2008, A welcome address presented on the occasion of the Pastoral visit of His Most Eminence A.O. Akinsanya the Supreme Head of C& S Unification Worldwide to Igboho, National Headquarters of *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Church of Nigeria and Overseas, Unpublished.

Alfred Ajayi Akintobi, tagged a.k.a AgboJesu Magboyinbo, as a leader who started his ministry before him.¹⁴ Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore claimed that Prophet Adeola Jacob worked with Prophet Alfred Akintobi before he began his own ministry owing to varieties of gifts by God to individuals.¹⁵ Senior Supt. Apostle (Dr) I.O. Adeopa said AgboJesu Cherubim and Seraphim Church has something similar to Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim church, they are like twin brothers, especially his own church known as Oke Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Eternal Sacred Order in Ibadan.¹⁶ Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church was registered on the 4th September, 1984 with the name ‘*Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Nigeria and abroad.

The trustees that signed the register book were:

1. Samuel Olabode
2. Jacob Oyesiji
3. Matthew Ajibola
4. Samuel Adeniyi Ayeleke
5. Sunday Adeniyi Adeola
6. Emmanuel Ogundiya Odekunle

Brigadier Mohammed Magoro was the Minister of Internal Affairs when the church was registered, with Nigeria Government and the registration number 3118.

He died on the 15th January, 1976 but the Church continues to exist. The headquarters of the Church Conference is P. O. Box 15, Oorelope Local Government, Igboho, Oyo State.

According to Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Nigeria and Overseas 2012 Daily Bible Readings p. 89, the current members of the national executive council are as follows:

His Eminence Baba Aladura Joseph Aderibigbe Ibikunle (COM, JP)- President

Baba Aladura Abraham Oladele (JP)- Vice President

Special Apostle/ Prophet Jonathan Kola Olaniran- General Secretary

Senior Evang. E. A. Adetunji – Assistant Gen. Secretary.

¹⁴ Interview held on 30th , April 2012 at *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Ijokodo, Gbaremu with Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao.

¹⁵ Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore, who is the leader and minister- in- charge of New Jerusalem, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, interview held with him on 18th July, 2012 at *Idi- Seke Bodija* Ibadan IBNLG

¹⁶ Senior Supt. Apostle (Dr) I.O. Adeopa of *Òkè Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Eternal Sacred Order at Odo-Ona Ibadan, interview held within the church premises on 28th March 2012 at Odo Ona, Ibadan, Ibadan South West Local Government.

Apostle Joshua Ojekunle –Treasurer

Gen. Evang. Z.F. Olabintan- Gen. Fin. Secretary.

Snr. Evang. P.O. Olaifa – Asst. Fin. Secretary.

Evang. Bayo Adeola -Auditor General.

Special Apostle J.A. Lala (JP)-Evangelical Secretary

The Trustees are: Spec. Apostle S.A. Adeola, Spec. Apostle E.O. Odekunle (JP), Spec. Apos. S.A. Ayeleke. Gen. Queen Capt. (Dr.) Mary Ogunyooeye (COA, JP).

Other Members are: Gen. Leader Elikanah Oyewole (JP), Snr. Apos. Johnson Ogungbe, Spec. Apos. Prophet M. Olanrewaju (JP), Snr. Prophet Timothy Olugbade (JP), Evang. John Mobolaji, Brigade Commander in Chief, Chairperson of Good Women, Chairman of Leaders, Chairman of Youth Organization, Chairperson of Virgin Mary Band.

Ònà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim that began at Igboho has grown and spread to about fourteen states of Nigeria such as Oyo, Ogun, Kwara, Kogi, Benue, Niger, Kaduna, Plateau, Yola, Ondo and Osun. It has firm roots at Benin Republic, Ghana, U.S.A and other parts of the world. The church has national executive council meetings, conference meetings, district meetings, annual general conference, annual prophets/ prophetesses meetings, holy pilgrimage to mountain at Igboho (*Àjòdún Ori-oke Igboho*), *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Day (Way of Holiness Day) and youth week.¹⁷

This church has got reformed branches such as Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Onimajemu, church, Temile, Kishi, in Oke Ogun area of Oyo State Nigeria; Cherubim and Seraphim Overcomers Assembly, New *Ònà Ìwà Mímó*, New York, U.S.A; New *Ònà Ìwà Mímó Onímájè mú* Church Cherubim and Seraphim, New York, at 352A Beach 67th Street, Queens NY 11692, and a host of others.

6.3 History of Ibadanland and *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan

Ibadan is located in southwest of Nigeria, in the forest- grass land boundary. The name Ibadan is geographically derived because it was first known as “*Ilu Eba- Odan*”, that is, the town near the grass land or the city at the edge of the Savannah; with time, the name

¹⁷ Interview held on 30th April, 2012 at Orogun with the General Secretary Special Apostle/ Prophet Jonathan Kola Olaniran and Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church of Nigeria and Overseas, & 2012 Daily Bible Reading (*Bibéli Kikà Ojoojúmó Yorùbá* produced by the national headquarters at Igboho, Oyo-state Unpublished pp 88-107a.

was changed to *Ibadan*. Its central location and accessibility from the colonial capital city of Lagos were major considerations in the choice of Ibadan as the headquarters of the Western provinces, which later became Western Region of Nigeria. Ibadan was reputed to be the most populous city in Black Africa in the 1950s until it was overtaken by Lagos during the last two decades. The sustained growth of Ibadan over the years, from its sudden emergence about 1829 to become the largest urban centre in Nigeria as from about 1860, owes a lot to its location in the heart of the Yoruba ethnic territory, as well as to its location in relation to the older Yoruba city states of *Abéòkúta*, *Òyó*, *Ìjèbú-Òde* and *Ifè*¹⁸. The topography and drainage of Ibadan is another feature of its geography. The topography consists of hills, plains and river valleys. Prominent among the hills are *Mápó*, *Kúdeti*, *Agodi*, *Sápàti*, *Òkè-Aremò*, *Èlèyélé*, *Òkè Mókólá* and Oremeji ridges. Historically, the present Ibadan site is the third. The first was founded by an Ife hunter known as Lagelu (*Oro Apata Maja*), who settled at an area on Eleyele Hill. The second Ibadan, situated in a place not too far away from Eleyele Hill, near the northern part of The Polytechnic Ibadan.

The present site of Ibadan was developed at an area around *Bashorun Oluyle*'s compound known as *Ojà-Iba*. (This is *Ojà Bashorun* and not *Ojà -Oba*, King's market, because *Ibadan* did not have an Oba then. The ruler was known as Baale).¹⁹ It was settled in 1829 as a war camp by the groups of victorious soldiers from Ife, Ijebu and Oyo who had defeated the Owu Kingdom. The expansion of Ibadan to eastern Yorubaland in a bid to build an empire was seen mainly as an attempt to catch slaves.²⁰ Unfortunately the slave trade brought untold hardship and ravaging effects on them. The principal sponsors and carriers of slave trade were the British, French, Portuguese, Dutch and the Danes" Slave trade ravaged on, devastating West Africa and destroying not only human life but also property and virtues of Africa".²¹

The heterogeneous nature of the founders is considered an asset in the rapid growth of the city into its present size. By 1890, the city contained over 200,000 people and covered an area of about 41.3 sq. km. The making of Ibadan the headquarters of the old Western

¹⁸ O. Olaniran, 1997" The geography setting of Ibadan" Paper presented at a Seminar on Ibadan unpublished pp.3-4

¹⁹ S.O. Biobaku, 1965. *The Ègbá and their neighbours 1842-1872* London : Oxford University Press p.14

²⁰ William H. Clarke. 1972. (ed) J.A. Atanda *Travels and explorations in Yorubaland (1854-1858)*, Ibadan : Ibadan University press p.xxv.

²¹ T. Omotayo O. Fadeyi, 2010. *From obscurity to celebrity: a short history of Christianity in Ibadan and the Roots of S. David's Anglican Church Aroro Archdeaconry* , Ibadan : Salem Media (Nig.) Ltd. pp. 12- 14.

Region of Nigeria in 1946 became a catalyst for the subsequent rapid growth of the city. It is located in south-western Nigeria, 78 miles inland from Lagos and is a prominent transit point between the coastal region and the areas to the North. Its population was 2,550,593, according to 2006 census results, including 11 local government areas. The population of central *Ìbàdàn*, including five local government areas, was 1, 338 659, according to census results for 2006, covering an area of 128 km². The Ibadan people have their settlements in the city of Ibadan and surrounding farms and villages.

The city grew around a legendary baobab tree from which it derived its name. The system of promotion from compound head (*Mógàjí*) to the throne of *Olúbàdàn* is exclusive to the *Ìbàdàns*. With the introduction of chieftaincy institutions which gave birth to two lines of chieftaincy, namely: the Olubadan line of chieftaincy that consists 22 chiefs in order of seniority and headed by *Òrún Olúbàdàn* and the *Balogun* line consisting of about 23 chiefs with Balogun as the head; the *Olúbàdàn* is alternated by the most senior chief of each line, while the appointment of the chiefs is on by promotion, starting from *Mógàjí* on each line.²² The people were originally warriors and farmers but, in recent times, are gainfully employed in all areas of human endeavour. Ibadan had been the centre of administration of the old Western Region, Nigeria since the days of the British colonial rule. Parts of the city's ancient protective walls still stand to this day. The principal inhabitants of the city are the Yoruba people. Ibadan came into existence when *Lagelu*, the *Jagun* (commander-in-chief) of Ife and Yoruba's generalissimo, who left Ile Ife with a handful of his people to found his own city, *Èbá Òdàn*, which literally means 'between the forest and plains.

According to HRH Sir Isaac Babalola Akinyele, a late Olubadan, king of Ibadan (*Olu Ibadan* means Lord of Ibadan the first Ibadan was destroyed owing to an incident at an *egúngún* (masquerade) festival, when an *egúngún* was accidentally disrobed and derisively mocked by women and children in an open marketplace full of people. In *Yoruba* land, it was an abomination for women to look an 'egúngún' (masquerade) in the eye because the 'egúngúns' were considered to be the dead forefathers who returned to the earth each year to bless their progeny. When the news reached Sango, the then *Aláàfin* of *Òyó*, he commanded that *Èbá Òdàn* be destroyed for committing such abominable act. Lagelu was

²² Ibadan South Diocese .2003. *History of The Cathedral Church of St. David, Kudeti, Ibadan The Diocese of Ibadan South(Anglican Communion)*, Ibadan : Polygraphic Ventures Ltd. pp2-9

by then an old, frail man; he could not stop the destruction of his city, but he and some of his people survived the attack and fled to a nearby hill for sanctuary. On the hill, they survived by eating *Òro* fruit and snails. Later, they cultivated the land and made corn and millets into pap meals known as 'oori' or 'èkọ' (pap), which they ate with roasted snails. They improvised a bit by using the snail shells to drink the liquefied èkọ (pap). Ultimately, Lagelu and his people came down from the hill and founded another city called *Èbá Ọdàn*. The new city instantly grew prosperous and became a commercial nerve centre. Shortly afterwards, Lagelu passed to the great beyond, leaving behind a politically strong people and a very stable community.

The newly enthroned Olubadan made a friendly gesture to the Olówu of Òwu by allowing Olówu to marry his only daughter, *Nkan*. Coming from a war campaign one day, the raging *Odò Ọbà* (River *Ọbà*) would not allow Olowu and his army to cross until a human sacrifice was performed to appease the angry river. The chosen sacrifice was *Nkan*. The *Olúbàdàn* was infuriated at hearing of *Nkan's* death; he sent an emissary to inform the Alafin of Oyo. Yoruba kings and rulers, such as *Alake* of *Ègba*, *Agura ti Gbàgúrà*, *Ọ̀ni ti Ifẹ̀*, *Awùjalẹ̀ of Ijẹ̀bú* and others, formed a formidable coalition with *Eba'dan* against the powerful *Olowu of Owu*. After the defeat of *Owu*, most of the warriors that participated in the coalition refused to go back to their towns and cities. They began attacking the neighbouring towns and hamlets, and also marauded across *Èbá Ọdàn*, thereby making the indigenes fearful of them. Finally, they took over the political landscape of *Èbá Ọdàn* and changed its name to *Ibadan*, as it is known today. *Ibadan* grew into an impressive and sprawling urban centre so much that, by the end of 1829, *Ìbàdàn* dominated the *Yorùbá* region militarily, politically and economically. The military sanctuary expanded even further when refugees began arriving in large numbers from northern *Ọ̀yọ̀* following raids by Fulani warriors. After losing the northern portion of their region to the marauding Fulani's, many *Ọ̀yọ̀* indigenes retreated deeper into the *Ìbàdàn* environs. The *Fùlání* Caliphate attempted to expand further into the southern region of modern-day Nigeria, but was decisively defeated by the armies of *Ìbàdàn* in 1840. The *Ìbàdàn* area became a British Protectorate in 1893 after a treaty signed by *Fìjàbí*, the Baale of *Ibadan* with the British acting Governor of Lagos, George C. Denton and, by then, the population had swollen to 120,000. The British

developed the new colony to facilitate their commercial activities in the area, and Ibadan shortly grew into the major trading centre that it is today.²³

The British also developed the academic infrastructure of the city. The first university to be set up in Nigeria was the University of Ibadan (established as a college of the University of London when it was founded in 1948, and was later converted into an autonomous university in 1962). It has the distinction of being one of the premier educational institutions in Africa. The Polytechnic Ibadan was the first technical institute and is considered to be the best in Nigeria. There are also numerous primary schools and secondary schools located in the city. Other noteworthy institutions in the city include the University College Hospital, the first teaching hospital in Nigeria; Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria; and the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA).

Ìbàdàn and its environs, before the dissolution of Western Region, Nigeria was the home of the most sophisticated and liberal scientific and cultural community on the continent of Africa; as personified by the immortalized *Ìbàdàn* School. In 1853, the first Europeans to settle in *Ìbàdàn*, Reverend Hinderer and his wife, started *Ìbàdàn's* first Western schools. They built churches and schools and the first two-storey building in *Ibadan*, which can still be found today at Kudeti. The first pupils to attend an elementary school in *Ìbàdàn* were *Yéjídé* (female) and *Akínyelé* (male) - the two children of an *Ìbàdàn* high chief. Christianity entered *Ìbàdàn* through Revd. David Hinderer in 1853. In spite of the hindrances to the propagation of the gospel and problems of inter-tribal wars, and monopoly of trade *Ìbàdàn* mission was opened in 1853 amidst shouting of joy and jubilation. The work done by the Hinderers in Ibadan had a tremendous effect on the religious, social, and educational spheres of the people. They sowed the first seeds of Christianity, education, commerce and culture in Yorubaland. It was then that light, which is the mind of God, came over the land and the torches burnt brighter and brighter every day, burning out strife, sin, cruelty, disease, poverty, ignorance. Ibadan then became the centre of learning, commerce and culture.²⁴

²³ Kemi Morgan, (NA) Akinyele's outline History of Ibadan revised and enlarged, Part Two, Ibadan: The Caxton Press West Africa Limited pp.4 & 120.

²⁴ Kemi Morgan, Akinyele's outline History of Ibadan Revised and Enlarged, Part Two, Ibadan: The Caxton Press West Africa Limited pp.4 & 120.

The white missionaries from Europe and America gave what they had but what they had was not enough to make the gospel relevant to the people of Ibadan land. The kind of church growth then in Nigeria challenge the Yoruba to examine the extent to which Christians were proclaiming and living out the Good news of God's kingdom. The break away from mission churches, and the emergence of indigenous leadership and efforts among the natives made Christianity more relevant to the people. With the emergence of Indigenous Churches in Nigeria in the late 19th century, Nigeria, especially Ibadan land, experienced contextualisation of Christianity. This was followed by the rise of Aladura Movement in Yorubaland and Apostolic Movement, which provided the springboard for the emergence of Evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Nigeria. It was at a point in life that African Indigenous Church sprang up in Ibadan. Cherubim and Seraphim is one of its main denominations. It was Rev. Prophet (Dr.) David Okegbade Adigun Okesola (aka *Wòlì Ìbàdàn*) that was the first minister-in-charge (founder), spiritual and church leader of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan land.

6.4 Profile of Rev (Dr.) Prophet David Okegbade Adigun Okesola (aka *Wòlì Ìbàdàn*)

Rev. (Dr) Prophet David Okegbade Adigun Okesola was born in 1938 into family compound of *Ilé Òkè Onilù, Àgbonlẹ̀ Àrólù* in *Òkè- Ògùn* of *Ọ̀yọ́* State of Nigeria. His father was Shittu Akande Okesola, while his mother was *Asiawu Ajoro Mopelola*. He was born into Islamic religion and named Tiamiyu Adigun Okegbade according to Islamic rites and ceremonies. In an interview the researcher had with him and as confirmed by prophetess Olojo,²⁵ Prophet Okesola was a hunter who used to stay in the tick forest for a long period each time he was away to do what he knew to do best. One Muslim Cleric told him when he and his best friend went for inquiry from him that he saw him among the set of people wearing white garments in a place of worship but did not take it as a serious issue because, to him, he believed that it is a vision that cannot come to pass since he was then a Muslim and hunter. It was when he used to go for hunting and was unable to bring home any animal, which he started re-examining the message passed by this Muslim cleric.²⁶

²⁵ Interview held on March 28th, 2012 with Prophetess Olojo at Mokola hill, Ibadan

²⁶ Alhaji Raheem Alabi, Aare Onilu Oba Agbonle, 2009. *Ìtàn Ìgbésí Ayé Rev. Dr. Prophet. D.O.A. Okesola*, Hm Rusky Group, Ibadan. p.12.

Furthermore Abdulraheem said the moment Prophet Okesola heard that Christianity, Cherubim and Seraphim, had reached Oke –Ogun of Oyo State, around *Àgbonlè* in his home town, he created interest and used to go there to watch how they worshipped, conducted various services and whether they could solve his problem. Initially he was doing so to keep himself busy, and for entertainment. The moment he decided to stop going to this church, God almighty caught him and he was converted into Christianity and became one of the people in Cherubim and Seraphim Church. This brought to fulfillment the message given by the Muslim cleric. Rev. Prophet Okesola then changed his name from Tiamiyu to David: “*Lójó tí Àdìgún Òkesolá gbó pé wón gbé èsìn onígágbó kan wọ agbègbè ilú Àgbonlè tí a mọ sí Cherubim and Seraphim ni ó ti lọ máa íwo iran isé iránsé ní ilé ijòsin náà. Láìni idèná pa ẹnu palabiri tàbí ní ẹsẹ kannáà ni ó yí bírì láti darapọ mọ ijọ C & S yìi tó sì di ọmọ ijọ*”²⁷ (The day Adigun Okesola heard that a Christian group known as Cherubim and Seraphim entered his village known as Agbonle, he immediately decided to go and watch what the church looked like, but unexpectedly after a while he was caught by God’s spirit and became a member of the group)

His father Okesola Akande Shittu, did not cause trouble because of his son’s conversion into Christianity, but other Muslims adherents complained and frowned at this unacceptable action and condemn it. His father then told the angry people that “*Oun tí Ọlórún ad’édàà sọ pé ohun tí yóò se nì yẹn, òhun náà ni ó ti se yìi... àti wípé kò mú ijà wá rárá*” (there is no reason for quarrel or fight, what happened to my son is what God had destined that will happen in his life; therefore let us accept God’s wishes and destiny). After a while Prophet David Okegbade Okesola (Wolii Ibadan) secretly left Agbonle in the early hours of a particular day for Ibadan without informing his parents. It was secretly planned; he did not let anybody know except one younger brother whom he warned seriously not to leak the secret to anybody. The parents were worried for a long time searching and looking for their son. It was three years after, through the efforts and help of Elder Amos Olalere and Mr. Ogundayo Mobolaji that his parents knew that that David Okesola was at Ibadan. It was Ogundayo Mobolaji that led Alhaj Raheem Alabi to where prophet Okesola was residing then.

²⁷ Alhaji Raheem Alabi, Aare Onilu Oba Agbonle, 2009. *Ìtàn Ìgbésí Aye Rev. Dr. Prophet .D.O.A. Okesola*, Hm Rusky Group, Ibadan.p.12

6.4.1 His call and Ministry

One common remarkable feature in the formation or establishment of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, especially during the initial stage, is that the church was mostly established by individuals who had come to the supreme founder, Baba Aladura and Prophet Jacob Oke Adeola, to avail themselves of the immense power of God through healing of their ailments or getting solutions to their problems, as stated by Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore.²⁸ After they had been cured or empowered by the supreme founder and had embraced the doctrine of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó*, Cherubim and Seraphim, they became representatives of the founder in either their home towns or wherever the Holy Spirit directed them, just like it happened in the case of the first Evangelist and Minister in charge of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* in Ibadan land – Pastor Okesola David Okegbade (a. k.a Wolii Ibadan), and Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore.²⁹ After the divine call the new evangelists/ prophets or founders must undergo training under the supreme founder. Most of these men of God received divine call while others operated under the guidance of the Supreme Founder himself. Through this way, many churches were founded and administered before the death of the founder in 1976.

Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim emerged on Ibadan religious landscape and first established in Ibadan by Rev. (Dr.) Prophet Okesola Okegbade David, (a.k.a Wolii Ibadan), who was ordained into Church ministry on the 15th February, 1962. He started his ministry at Oranyan, Ibadan. His first boss was Pastor Samuel Ogunwole at Igbagbo Aladura Church. He had pastoral training for three years. He started his ministry at Temple of Christ but he was encouraged by his mentor, Baba Aladura Igboho, Prophet Jacob Oke Adeola, the Supreme Founder of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide, to start *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan, which he did. He first started at Mokola Hill in 1965 and later moved to where the church building is today at Mokola, behind Veterinary Medical Centre, Army Barrack Road, Mokola Ibadan. Prophet Okesola is regarded as the first evangelist who brought the gospel, liturgy, tradition and *Ọ̀nà*

²⁸ Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore, who is the leader and minister -in -charge of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S New Jerusalem, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, interview held with him on 18th July, 2012 at *Idi- Seke Bodija* Ibadan

²⁹ Prophet David Okesola a.k.a Wolii Ibadan interview held on January 20, 2009 within the church premises at Mokola and Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore who is the leader and minister in charge of New Jerusalem, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, interview held with him on 18th July, 2012 at *Idi- Seke Bodija* Ibadan

Ìwà Mímó branch of Cherubim and Seraphim to Ìbàdànland. He is not allowed to be called Founder since Prophet Adeola was the Supreme Founder and others cannot equate themselves with him. Therefore, the present worldwide leader is known as Supreme Head, while others, like Prophet Okesola, are addressed as ‘*Olùdarí Ìjọ tàbí Alákóso Ìjọ*’ (minister - in -charge). Apostle Segun Philips said any prophet or leader that establishes *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Church in any new ground or place all over the world is just minister- in- charge; he is not allowed to be called founder leader.³⁰

Most Gen. Apostle Jacob Bamimore, confirmed that he and Prophet John Olarewaju were with Prophet Okesola at Mokola before they began their own ministry at Bodija, Ibadan.³¹ Prophet Okesola was given various positions, titles, honours and awards within Cherubim and Seraphim Church. He was the one who initiated *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim on 10th April, 2004, in his home town Agbonle in Oke –Ogun area of Oyo State and ordained Evangelist Okesola Michael to be in charge. He died on 9th March, 2009 and was buried on 13th June, 2009. This researcher interviewed him on four different occasions, in relation to his work. The researcher also worshipped with members at Mokola Church and had participant observation on Sunday, 29th April, 2012 in the church. The wife of Pastor Okesola, Mother-in – Israel Abigail Okesola; his son, Evang. Wemimo Okesola; and officers of the church leading the church at Mokola now continue to keep the flag of the church at Mokola flying. Also at *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, the researcher worshipped with members on 8th August 2012. He also worshipped at *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara Rd. Ibadan (Ona Ara LG).

In Ibadan, the national headquarters groups *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim into two districts. The first is Moboluwaduro District, which comprises *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* No. 1 Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Army Barrack Rd. Mokola, Ibadan, established by Pastor Prophet Okesola Okegbade David as administrative sub head, other branches are *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* C&S, Mamu, Ibadan, *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim, Gàngánsì, Ibadan, and

³⁰ Most Snr. Apostle Segun Philips. the Vice Chairman of Ibadan Central Districts of Ona Iwa Mimo and the leader of Awotan Church known as Temple of Solution Spiritual Evangelical Ministry, Ataa Estate, Awotan Ibadan , Interview held on 7th, May 2012 at Awotan Ijokodo, Gbaremu and Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao, Interview held on 30th , April 2012 at Ijokodo, Gbaremu with Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao.

³¹ Most Gen. Apostle Bamimore who is the leader and minister in charge of New Jerusalem, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, interview held with him on 18th July, 2012 at *Idi- Seke Bodija* Ibadan.

Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim, Onigambari, Ibadan. The second district is Ibadan Central District, with its administrative sub-headquarters at New Jerusalem, *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S, Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan, established in 1982; and other branches are *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim, Ijokodo, established in 1973; *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó*, Cherubim and Seraphim, Sango, established in 1974; *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó*, and *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Awotan, *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church Eleyele; *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C& S Akingbile; *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Olosun; *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Orogun, Ibadan; and *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Gangansi Oritamerin.³²

The Districts officers are:

Moboluwaduro District-

Chairman - Apostle Samuel Oluwafunmilayo, Vice Chairman -Apostle S. Awujoola, Secretary -Evang. Mathew Awujoola, Asst. Secretary - Aladura Hezekiah Adesokan, Financial Secretary-Prophet Joseph Adedoyin, Treasurer - Snr. L/L E. Sofalobo, Auditor-Evangelical Secretary- Pastor M.A. Popoola, Public Relation Officer - Prophet Joshua Oladele, Patron –Baba Ijo Babawale, Matron- Mother- in –Israel Abigail Aremu.

Ibadan Central District-

Chairman - Pastor Prophet Adeolu Amao, Vice Chairman – Most Snr. Apostle Segun Philips, Secretary - Evang. Adetunji Williams, Financial Secretary - Aladura Elijah Akerele, Treasurer – Bro. Femi John Adebayo, Auditor - Pastor Jeremiah Ojubanire, Evangelical Secretary- Evang. Johnson Adubika, Good Woman Leader - Snr. Prophetess Foluke Olayode, General Supervisor - Snr. Apos. Prophet Moses Ayinla.

One of the major distinguishing features of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim is its liturgy. The members believe that the earth and all that dwell therein are God's and that all the faculties of man must be oriented toward the worship and praise of the supreme ruler. The religious forms that are peculiar to *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim are mainly services, ritual cleansing (holiness and purity), and sacred places and objects. Also included are the phenomena of dancing and clapping. The place of the Holy Spirit is very important to them. Starting with the supreme founder, Baba Aladura Prophet Adeola, the leaders are used to receiving orders from the Holy Spirit. Sometimes he might tell them to leave

³² *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim Church of Nigeria and Overseas 2012 Daily Bible Reading (Bibeli Kika Ojoojumo Yoruba produced by the national headquarters at Igboho, Oyo-State Unpublished pp 92-103.

whatever they are doing and embark on some journey. It was revealed that, on many occasions, some leaders were led out in the dead of the night by the Holy Spirit to intercept evil doers, where they had converged for their nocturnal meetings before embarking on their diabolical activities. It was reliably gathered that the Holy Spirit often carried Baba Aladura to the top of high hills. When he was not found on the hill-top, he used to be seen by the river-side or in a thick forest.³³

The work and leading of the Holy Spirit cannot be overlooked in the growth of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Churches because; through the divine guidance and obedience of the founding fathers the church recorded unprecedented growth in membership over a short period of time. Special Apostle S. A. Ayeleke, national secretary in the early 1990's confirmed that *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim had over 128 registered branches and many unregistered branches worldwide. As a result of this rapid development and increase in membership, the church formulated a way of guiding its members through a system of rules and regulation which was first published in 1969 and later reprinted in 1988. This constitution enumerates the code of conduct and obligations of members to the church as well as provides sanctions for erring members.³⁴

The Holy Spirit is construed as the teacher, comforter and true guardian who was sent from God as promised by Jesus Christ. *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim members and leaders in Ibadan land see the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as the "Divine Key" through visions, prophetic messages and dreams that unlock the gates of heaven for church leaders and members. That is why sacred preparations, various types of fasting, special prayers and rites are carried out as means of having communion with God, through which His Divine wishes, will, and mind would be made known through revelations.³⁵

Pastor Okesola David Okegbade (a.k.a. Wolii Ibadan) said that *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim's founder, leaders and members have the strong belief that it is by the gift and leading of the Holy Spirit, which come in the power of prophesying, seeing

³³ Interview with the first minister in charge in Ibadan Rev. (Dr.) Prophet Okesola David Okegbade on 25th May 2008 and 20th January 2009, at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim, No. 1, Mokola Ibadan.

³⁴ Senior Evangelist Badejo interview held on 25th May 2008 at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim church No.1 Mokola Ibadan.

³⁵ Senior Lady Leader Sofolabo of Ona *Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim Church Nigeria and Overseas Ibadan No. 1, Army Barrack Road Mokola Ibadan, interview held on 29th April, 2012 at Mokola and Revd Pastor Prophetess Evangelist Elizabeth Titilayo Olojo Kosoko interview held on 4th May 2012 at Cultural Centre area, Mokola, Ibadan.

visions and dreams with their interpretation and healing and praying that true Christians are known. He emphasised the importance of obeying the Holy Spirit and the Holy Bible, which is accepted as the Supreme Court of Appeal in all things and that the founding father St. Moses Orimolade said the “Book of Jesus” that is the Bible, must be read, and followed to all intents and purposes³⁶

Adenrele Adeola noted that *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó*, an arm of Cherubim and Seraphim, has an implicit belief in closeness of believers to God and in His preparedness to listen to their requests. She added that this belief stemmed from the concept of the Trinity-God, Son and Holy Spirit, all arising from the adherence to the words and teachings of the Holy Bible. To Cherubim and Seraphim members, the Bible was written by men through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they establish their practices on Biblical injunctions. They believe that they have been endowed with all spiritual blessings promised in the Holy Bible, that Jesus Christ did not come to erase the laws of Moses but to fulfil them; hence, there is no reason to condemn any part of the Bible as practised faithfully by *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan land.³⁷

6.5 Evolution and contextualisation of liturgy of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadan land

The impulse to give Christianity a fully African expression has been inhibited by the fear of appearing to conform to the foreigner’s image of a backward people; but now the movement is gaining impetus. The anxiety of earlier generation of African theologians to demonstrate the Christian orthodoxy of their traditional ideas has now taken a new dimension; it is now what those ideas can contribute to a Christian’s understanding and practice. Africans are naturally and incurably religious; their lifestyle has shown that their belief system is centered on worship. Even before the advent of Christianity, they had an organised way of worship, though not documented. They expressed the worship of God or gods in rituals, dance, singing, dressing, shrines, drumming, idioms and philosophy³⁸.

³⁶ G. O. Fakeye. NA. *The doctrine of Cherubim and Seraphim Church*,: Palmgrove Lagos, Diiprints Limited Unpublished p.vi.

³⁷ Adenrele M. Adeola. 1992, *Ona Iwa Mimo: An arm of Cherubim and Seraphim*, B. A. Project Department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan. Unpublished work, interview had with Apostle Segun Philips on 29th March, 2012 at Awotan, Apete in Ido L.G of Oyo state and interview held with Pastor Prophet Amao on 30th April, 2012 at Ijokodo, Agbaje

³⁸ John McManners, ed, 1990. *The Oxford illustrated history of Christianity*, Oxford : Oxford University Press.p.647

The idea of worship is not alien to Nigerians, especially the Yoruba before the advent of Christianity. By the start of the 19th century, Islam had spread widely in areas under Oyo control. In the 1840s, Christianity arrived, brought by the *Sàró* and the missions. The process accelerated with the imposition of colonial rule. By the 1952 census, more than four-fifths of the population of the Yoruba provinces were said to be either Christians or Muslims³⁹. In the process of diffusion in Yoruba society, Christianity and Islam have themselves been modified. The new religions share organisational similarities with the old cults; Yoruba rites of passage have been adapted to fit the new beliefs. At the level of doctrine, both Christianity and Islam emphasize elements which are also important in traditional religion. There are similarities also in the ways in which members of the three religious groups view the supernatural and their relations with it.

In the Yoruba cosmos on *Ọlórún*, there are two main ways in which Yoruba belief and the world religions have interacted. The first is syncretism, the blending of the new beliefs with the old. There have been syncretistic religious movements among the Yoruba reconciling the Bible with Ifa, or fitting Christ into the Yoruba pantheon but these are of minor importance. The second, and more usual, pattern is for those aspects of the world religions to be emphasised, which are mostly in line with traditional beliefs. Olorun becomes God or Allah, while *Èsù* can be identified with Satan. Christians can see witchcraft as the work of the devil, and continue to accept its reality, while the archangels take over the roles of the *orisa* (gods) as messengers of *Ọlórún* (*LORD*). The parallels extend to rituals. Passages of the Bible or the Koran can be used instead of Yoruba incantations, while Aladura prophecy and Islamic divination provide alternatives to *Ifá*. The Yoruba have succeeded in adapting the world religions to meet their needs, while at the same time retaining their own cultural identity to a remarkable extent. The traditional cults may have lost their power, their adherents and much of their vitality, but religious institutions and beliefs among the Yoruba still show many continuities with the past

The latter part of the 19th Century ushered in indigenisation of Christianity. This bold step has enlightened the Africans that Christians can worship God through Christ within African culture, like the Europeans. The group of people that took the bold step only

³⁹ J. D. Y. Peel, 1968. *Belief and doctrine in Aladura: a religious movement among the Yoruba*. London: Oxford University Press. p.294.

borrowed some elements from Christianity and incorporated them into their own religious structures; the African Indigenous Churches were founded by separation from the parent known as orthodox established church. The African Indigenous Churches (AIC) can be defined as autonomous church groups with an all - African membership and an all - African leadership. Some of them arose initially as breakaway from former mission churches and other African Indigenous Churches or as a result of individual initiative by a charismatic personality or leadership tussle. They often draw upon the beliefs and practices of a number of Christian groups. They draw their members indiscriminately from former Western mission churches, other AICs and also African traditional religions⁴⁰. They represent what Dickinson describes as: “a manifestation of Christianity consistent with their own unique historical experience, rooted more self-consciously in their own unique cultures and contributing to a richer worldwide interpretation of the Gospel”.⁴¹ Kalu describes them as “increasingly creative in their pneumatic emphasis in the use of the Bible, innovative gender ideology, African religion and culture”. Some scholars trace their origin to a charismatic figure; claim that they emerged as a response to their experience of the Holy Spirit and see them as part of the worldwide Pentecostal movement⁴².

There are varieties of African Indigenous Churches in Ibadanland and Africa generally; they differ in terms of their origins, the type of church they broke away from and why, the historical period in which they emerged, theology, church polity and ethos. Despite the apparent differences, there are certain common characteristics among AICs that make it possible to classify them⁴³. These churches are known as praying churches (Aladura) Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Church of the Lord Aladura, Christ Apostolic Church, The Apostolic Church, The Faith Tabernacle, Celestial Church of Christ, and Celica Church of Christ, which broke out of Celestial Church of Christ. They emerged between 1915 and 1963 and still continue to emerge. She came into existence in Western part of Nigeria early 1920's and spread like a wild fire throughout the length and breadth of the Yoruba speaking.

⁴⁰ Philomena Njeri Mwaura, 2005. “A spirituality of resistance and hope : African Instituted Churches’ response to poverty”, *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. xxxvii, June & Dec., : 67.

⁴¹ R.D.N. Dickinson, 1975. *To Set at Liberty the Oppressed*, Geneva: WCC .p 50.

⁴² O.U. kalu, 2000. *Power, poverty and prayer : the challenges of poverty and pluralism in African Christianity 1960-1996*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang. p.105

⁴³ Philomena Njeri Mwaura, “A spirituality of Resistance and Hope : African Instituted Churches’ Response to Poverty”, *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* Vol. xxxvii, June & Dec., 2005 : 67.

African Indigenous churches constitute a significant portion of Christianity in Africa and are a unique spirit in African Christianity. The Church is named *Aladura* churches (praying Churches) at the inception. The Aladuras are so called because of their fervent prayers, as well as long extempore praying sessions as directed by the Holy Spirit. Baba Aladura Orimolade Moses was called Aladura owing to what happened at Holy Trinity Ebute Ero, Lagos. According to Omoyajowo and Senior Superintendent Apostle D. Lawrence Bamikole, the founder/leader of Cherubim and Seraphim Church *Òkè Ìgbàlà, Mónàtán Ìbàdàn*, Archdeacon Ogunbiyi tried to harm Moses with charms but, as a vindication of Orimolade's inviolability, it was the Church warden who became the victim. He collapsed but Orimolade's prayers resuscitated him. As a consequence of this incident, Moses Orimolade was nicknamed *Bàbá Aládùrà* (the praying father) in Lagos. He was called *Bàbá Aládùrà* not as a title originally, but as a nickname before the Cherubim and Seraphim was organized.⁴⁴

Coker said that Orimolade left Holy Trinity parsonage because of his refusal to sell the water he always gave out for healing because the authority of the church then (Archdeacon Ogunbiyi) felt that Orimolade's blessed healing water should be a source of money generation for the church. He was uneasy about the overwhelming popularity the lame prophet was acquiring through efficacious prayers, thrilling sermons and sound Bible knowledge, his lack of formal education notwithstanding⁴⁵. The opposition and humiliation did not discourage him; he continued his open-air preaching in Lagos, stressing the need for absolute faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, the efficacy of prayers for healing purposes and the use of psalms. He was a man of faith, a charismatic leader, a highly spiritual yet humble man, and an ascetic and peace - loving shepherd.

The mode of worship of Aladura church involves drumming, dancing, clapping and jumping. The flamboyant dresses of some of them, particularly the white- robed and staff-carrying groups attract special attention everywhere. Mitchell divides the Aladura churches into two broad groups; Apostolic and spiritual. The largest of the apostolic churches is the

⁴⁴ Senior Superintendent Apostle D. Lawrence Bamikole, the founder/leader of Cherubim and Seraphim church Oke Igbala, Monatan Ibadan, Interview conducted on 28th February, 2012 and J. A. Omoyajowo, 1995.(ed.) *Makers of the church in Nigeria* Lagos : CSS Press, Lagos. p.127

⁴⁵ J. A. Omoyajowo, 1995.(ed.) *Makers of the church in Nigeria* Lagos : CSS Press, Lagos. p.127

Christ Apostolic, which, by 1958, had become the third largest church in Western Nigeria; while Cherubim and Seraphim is the largest of spiritual churches.

Smalley describes Indigenous Church as “a group of believers who live out their life, including their socialized Christian activity, in the patterns of the local society, and from any transformation of that society comes out of their felt needs under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures...”⁴⁶ This idea communicates that the church planting missionary must be willing to allow the indigenous church to have different manifestations of Christianity rather than export their denominational or personal patterns that are rooted in the missionary’s history and culture. Originally, Cherubim and Seraphim was a movement of prayer bands but, as at today, she has ritualistic form of worship and liturgy. There was a rift among them in 1928 and they divided into two factions and never came together again. It resulted in proliferation of various groups as churches ever since. There are now well over one hundred independent Cherubim and Seraphim churches. The largest of these, the direct descendant of Orimolade’s faction, has over 400 congregations of its own. Members and leaders of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nigeria and Overseas are taken to be among the direct descendants of Moses Orimolade.

6.5.1 Old pattern

Christianity came to Nigeria as a result of the emancipation of Cuba, Brazil, Jamaica, Tobago and the tobacco plantation of the new world, the United States of America. Sierra Leone is very important in the planting of Christianity in Nigeria.⁴⁷ Missionaries from the Western world came to Nigeria for propagation of the Gospel, and their policy created a conflict between cultures. In Yoruba land, two main prevailing conditions after the First World War served as immediate factors for the rise of Indigenous Church. These were the worldwide influenza epidemic and economic depression. This period was described “as protestant mission era from 1800-1950, the period of non-contextualisation and that majority of the missionaries believed that Western theology had eternal validity”⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ William A Smalley, 1978 *Cultural Implications of an Indigenous Church*. : Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library. P.498

⁴⁷ G. A. Oshitelu, 2010, *Christianity in West Africa up To 1914* : Ibadan Hope Publications p. 59

⁴⁸ Paul Hiebert, 1987. ‘Critical Contextualisation’ *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, vol. 11pp.104-112.

The white missionaries even believed that converts who did not drink tea or wear European clothes could not be genuine Christians. They also taught the Africans to regard traditional customs and institutions with abhorrence. To this effect, their meaningful native names were described as 'heathenish' and they were given Europeans names which were meaningless to them. They became deluded with the idea that the less African they were the more Christian they became. It was even a difficult task, according to Lagos Weekly Record, to persuade an educated African that he was not a European. Orishatunke Faduma, a Sierra Leonian Yoruba, addressing the congress on Africa at Atlanta Georgia, noted that "That which distinguishes a heathen from a Christian is not moral character or allegiance to Christ, but outward dress. The stove-pipe hat, the feathered bonnet, the high- heeled shoes, the gloved hands, and all these under the burning tropical heat, make a man a Christian gentleman".⁴⁹ The Christian denominations which originated in Europe transported their particular traditions and cultures to Africa and, in a sense, forced them upon Africans, even the mere emergence of a white -settler Christianity made the emergence of black leadership very slow and took a longer period.⁵⁰

The Western missionaries came to Nigeria to impose their culture on the people because they were full of ethnocentric and imperialistic theology. Western culture was in conflict with Yoruba culture. There was no dynamic interaction between their Scripture and African culture. They came with pre-set agenda. This produced half - baked Christians, because the majority of those that became Christians did so because of respect for the white men. To become a Christian then one had to accept not only Christianity, but also Western cultural ways. Therefore, the Gospel was seen by the *Yorùbá* as a foreign Gospel and many rejected what they brought claiming that the religion was for the white men. Mbiti claim that "mission Christianity" failed to engage seriously with African culture. Quoting Mbiti to that effect, he said, "Mission Christianity was not from the start prepared to face a serious encounter with either traditional religions and philosophy or the modern changes taking

⁴⁹ E.A. Ayandele, 1966. K.O. Dike (ed.) *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-914, A Political and Social Analysis*, London: Longman, Green and Co. Ltd pp.242-246.

⁵⁰ John McManners ed, 1990. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.p.484.

place in Africa. The church here now finds itself in the situation of trying to exist without a theology."⁵¹

Consequently the African looked for a culturally appropriate expression of Christian faith that addressed the questions raised by African society and tradition in such areas as principles of interpretation of the Bible, polygamy, family life, the spirit world, and communal life. He felt that all these should be given serious attention so that the valuable concepts of African culture would be strengthened by his newly-found faith. Indeed, most of the white men believed that the inspiration or charismatic gifts among Africans were of evil spirit. They rejected her beliefs and practices clamming that there is nothing good in her culture on which the Christian missionaries can build. Therefore, every aspect of their culture had to be destroyed before Christianity can be built up. They believed that Africans, that is the black race, were not fertile enough to produce their own ideas.⁵² According to Dada, the use of traditional African music was not permitted in and outside the church because missionaries regarded everything in African culture as *pagan, fetish, and devilish*, and therefore unsuitable for the church⁵³.

Most of the white men opined that the inspiration or charismatic gifts among Africans were of evil spirit. They claimed that Africans were of inferior quality and could not provide ministerial leadership. The Africans "therefore denounce Western Christianity or white Christ because they see this as tied up with the colonialism and neo-colonialism that have created ghastly realities of hunger, unemployment, repression, racism and violence in the third world."⁵⁴

This wrong notion made African Christians to be unable to express the deepest level of their being in worship as they did in traditional or indigenous worship. From the nineties onwards educated Africans came to venerate their customs and institutions, and the Nigerian cultural heritage became the touchstone by which the white man's doing were assessed. It

⁵¹ John S. Mbiti, quoted by Kato, 1985 "Theological Anemia in Africa," in *Biblical Christianity in Africa*, Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press. p. 11.

⁵² H. O. Atansuyi, 2004, *Paper Presentation on the Gospel and Culture from the perspective of African Instituted churches* p10 (Unpublished).

⁵³ A. O. Dada, 2010. Cultural Adaptation or christo- paganism: An Evangelical Reflection on Contextualization in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June, 2010. : 166.

⁵⁴ Akin Omoyajowo, 1982. *Cherubim and Seraphim, The History of an African Independent Church*, Lagos: NOK Publishing Lagos p.7.

was then for the first time the word ‘imperialism’ appeared in the local press and was used in the cultural sense, and a cultural interpretation was given to the Darwinian Theory.

They claimed that Christianity brought to Africa then was taken to be White man’s religion in action; hence Christianity was only another word for exploitation and British rule and the economic exploitation of the country were seen as the effects of missionary activity.⁵⁵ There was enlightenment through the nationalists like Dr Nnamadi Azikwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Herbert Macaulay, and Mojola Agbebi. There was double resistance, cultural and religious, to Westernization and colonial imperialism at the point that Nigerians realized the implications. The nationalistic and cultural movement of the late nineteenth century brought a lot of awareness to the Nigerian Christians; the awareness brought a lot of positive changes into the worship life of African Christians. Cultural nationalists sought to discover the pure milk of the Gospel and give it characteristics of the Nigerian situation.

Although at the time the enlightenment of doing it in African way and resisting Westernization, which disguised itself as Christianity, started some refused to see anything wrong in the Western system of leading the church but some people saw the need to do away with the Western leadership and they started what could be called indigenisation, which is not free from Western traits and syncretism, which came out of their action because they married two opposite things, what Isaiah called “unholy mixture of Christian meanings with pagan forms”.⁵⁶ While acknowledging the great efforts of the Missionaries in the area of evangelism, education and health care in the early 19th century. There is need to point out that they ignored the African cultures in their mode of worship, practices and relationship. The emergence of colonialism with its belief in the superiority of Western cultures led to the rise of nationalism. Nationalism is another form of the enthusiasm of the Africans, at a particular time in her history. The desire to run one’s own country came into mind of people then, and became a national desire, especially if the existing overlords are men not only of another race but even another colour with pre-set agenda. But the nationalism that found expression in the Lagos newspapers was such a virulent form that it lessened one’s optimism about the country’s future. They believed the need for Nigerian

⁵⁵ E. A. Ayandele, 1966. K.O. Dike (ed.) *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-914, A Political and Social Analysis*, London: Longman, Green and Co. Ltd pp.242 & 261.

⁵⁶ E.S. Isaiah, 2007. *Course Outline and Notes on Contextualisation of Theology Part 1 and 2 (Gospel and Culture or Doing Theology)*, Bethany International University ,Singapore,(Unpublished)

nationalism since nationalism was the only weapon by which the British could be driven out of the country, through which she would have self – government.⁵⁷

Western missionaries did not impart the cross-cultural missionary vision to the churches established by them. The Western missionaries' movements were associated with colonialism and imperialism in many parts of Africa. This was regarded as a threat to national identity and native cultures.⁵⁸ Many nations in the third world became independent from colonial rule in the period between 1940 -1960. The spirit of nationalism identified the native non-Christian religions with national culture and patriotism and regarded Christianity as a product of colonialism. It was that which produced a compelling zeal on the part of national Christians and churches to accept responsibility for evangelizing their own people which help them to be aware of their international responsibilities. They then placed restrictions on the entry of Western missionaries into numerous countries. It was around then through the leading of the Holy Spirit that the Cherubim and Seraphim Church started.

As European colonialism continued to extend its grip on the continent, Africans began noticing glaring contradictions in its programme. For example they perceived that the goal of Westernization could only lead to alienation⁵⁹.

The approach by the foreign missions was largely negative. The general tendency by them was to condemn African things completely and to paint the picture of a dark continent. The missionaries had no respect for the Africans' way of life, their religion or culture. There were series of examples of illustrations of such negative attitudes, for example the Capuchin missionary in Congo, said "On my way, I found numbers of idols which I threw into the fire. The owner of these idols....seemed very annoyed. To calm him down by humiliating him, I let him know that if he persisted in anger, I should see that he himself is burnt with his idols".⁶⁰

Different sources revealed many more negative comments. These negative attitudes characterized the missionary work of the foreign Western missionaries. It was evangelism that had no regard for the peoples' culture and religion. The missionaries were too simply

⁵⁷ Vernon, Bartlett. 1953, *Struggle For Africa*, H. Wolf, Press New York. p.104-106

⁵⁸ Alexander Campbell, 1954. *The heart of Africa*, New York Alfred A. Knops Inc. p.442

⁵⁹ Brooke James, 1987. *Tribalism versus Modernism: At Death, a Showdown*, The New York Times, Feb,25,1987 : 98.

⁶⁰ Hasting Adrian, 1966. *Church and mission in modern Africa*. New York: Fordham University Press p.59

convinced of the enormous superiority of the European West and came unconsciously, but naturally, as bearers not only of the Christian message, but also of Westernisation. In the comments of Amissah,

he spoke of Africa as throwing away the shackles of old domination and entering upon a new life of hope, dignity and confidence in a world still dominated by economic forces and frustrated by racial tensions' and looking forward to the discovery of a new basis for a truly enriching, useful and satisfying life⁶¹. He was expressing widespread opinion among the leaders of modern African Christians.

Omoyajowo points out the feelings and comments of African nationalists: "We are, therefore, little surprised that the Christianity imbibed by the Africans from these foreign missionaries was veneer and in most cases superficial and hypocritical. It was these weaknesses that the African group of Churches and after them, the African indigenous Churches exploited in establishing their Churches."⁶² It did not take the numerous African nationalists time to see Christianity as aiding or being in close alliance with the white power structures that have enslaved them. It is only from this perspective that we can understand Basil Moore's view:

In South Africa the Christian Church has probably been one of the most powerful instruments in making possible the political oppression of the black people. While the white colonists were busy with the process of robbing the people of their land and their independence, the churches were busy however, unconsciously, undermining the will of the people to resist. This was done in a number of subtle and not so subtle ways.⁶³

Although some of the established Orthodox Church authorities seemingly appreciated their zeal for spiritual development and excellence, they could not accommodate their new practices. Hence, they had to excommunicate them or force them to take the painful decision to break with the church. Prior to 1960, the Aladura Churches were derided. Describing the relationship of the churches with the Cherubim and Seraphim, Peel writes, "There had been hostility to Seraphim members from the early years, and a body of opinion, in the synod of

⁶¹ S.A. Amissah, quoting John McManners, ed. 1990. *The Oxford illustrated history of Christianity* Oxford : Oxford University Press.p.487

⁶² Akin, Omoyajowo, 1982. *Cherubim and Seraphim. : the history of an African Independent Church*. Lagos: NOK Publishing. p10.

⁶³ Moore Basil (ed.), 1973. *Black Theology*, London: C. Hurst & co. p.55.

Lagos Diocese wanted to expel them from the churches”.⁶⁴ This caused some hostility between mission churches and leaders of the Cherubim and Seraphim society. The mere fact that founders of the Aladura churches formed praying bands within the mission churches made them to be seen as betrayers. When the atmosphere was not conducive to staying since their activities were seen as unorthodox by the mission Western established Church authorities they got separated. After the expulsion from their mission – oriented churches, the pioneers of the Aladura movements were forced to consolidate and form viable organizations. They had to state their doctrines and streamline their practices. Africans give a special character and local colour to their beliefs, religious observances and practices, language, psychological reactions and more generally their behaviours. No doubt, they still have many good, rich and useable vehicles in their culture that will help to communicate the Gospel appropriately.

This work subscribes to the idea that the missionaries came with zeal using all they had and knew to be right to spread the Gospel, they offered the water of life to Africans from a foreign cup, but those were not the best for the people in Ibadan land to break their mind set and power of the devil. It can only make them nominal Christians having two worlds and their world views never change. However, the mission made reasonable and considerable impact on the society in some areas and paved the way for the later successes of the Church.

6.5.2 Divine revelation

The Cherubim and Seraphim Church is the oldest of the African instituted independent churches in Western Nigeria. It is believed to be instituted by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in a man called Baba Aladura Moses Tunolase Orimolade who began preaching after he had been dramatically healed from illness and had had divine revelations. It was the first step taken by him, which led to the establishment of the Cherubim and Seraphim. Before he started his ministry, he received a vision in which he was asked to take and use some water from a nearby flowing stream. This church developed out of a praying band within the Christian Missionary Society, after a young girl, Abiodun Akinsowon, had seen visions in Lagos in 1925. Moses Orimolade and Abiodun Akinsowon were the

⁶⁴ J.D.Y. Peel, 1968. *Belief and doctrine in Aladura: a religious movement among the Yoruba*. London: Oxford University Press pp.121-141

founders of the band which separated from the C.M.S and.⁶⁵ The church was first named, The Seraphim Society (*Egbé Séráfù*) by revelation at the beginning in 1925 while Cherub (*Kérúbù*) was added through revelation in May 1926 . One common thing with them is that prayer is the focal point of all doctrines and practices. The said prayers were extempore and as directed by the Holy Spirit. Much prominence is given to spiritual development and participatory priesthood. Spiritual power (*agbára*) is much valued and sought after through prayers and fasting .They rely on divine guidance through vision, dreams and prophecy. Most of them believe in the efficacy of the holy water as a cure for illness and protection from evil influences.

The Holy Spirit is regarded as taking over or possessing an individual. When such occurs there will be visible signs that indicate such state. Even Prophet Adeola Jacob, the Supreme Founder of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim Church established the church under the leading and directives of the Holy Spirit, Special Apostle Prophet Jonathan Kola Olaniran, General Secretary of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide and Most Snr. Apostle Amao, Chairman of Ibadan Central Districts of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* noted that the name of the church was given to the supreme founder by the Lord God through the Holy Spirit as recorded in Isaiah 35 : 8.⁶⁶

In Cherubim and Seraphim, the prophets, prophetesses, visioners or gifted individuals within the church who are susceptible to trance or other forms of altered consciousness are known as *elémìí* (the Holy Spirit possessed). The one possessed by the Holy Spirit often becomes frenzied or makes staggering movements, may be shaking and perspiring profusely or sometimes violently rolling on the floor and uttering both coherent and unintelligible sounds. Dada states that at such a time the subject is no longer percipient about what happens around him or her, neither does he or she have any sensational feelings.⁶⁷ And during this period it is a usual practice for the subject to bring messages of comfort, victory, warning, edification, direction or guidance from the LORD. At times,

⁶⁵ Olarewaju, I. O, 2007. *History of the Indigenous Churches in West Africa*, : Ibadan Unpublished pp 30-32.

⁶⁶ Special Apostle Prophet Jonathan Kola Olaniran General Secretary of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Worldwide and Apostle Amao Interview conducted on 30th April, 2012 at Ijokodo Agbaje.

⁶⁷ A. O. Dada, 2010. Cultural Adaptation or christo- paganism: an evangelical reflection on contextualization in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June, 2010. : 166

inquiries are also made on any matter from the possessed. The possessed may be in this state for hours, days or even weeks.⁶⁸

6.5.3 The desire for total independence from Western established churches

African indigenous churches developed out of discontent with European mission organisation, known as Orthodox - established church, in order to meet some of the perceived needs of African Christians which were not being met within the mission - established churches. Many of the founders of these Cherubim and Seraphim movements were ardent lay members of their former churches, but they wanted freedom because, to them, the mission churches were too westernised. Many other factors contributed to their emergence, namely: the formation of evangelical and prayer groups within the Orthodox churches, the spontaneous divine call of lay members in the Church and successful revival campaigns organised individually and corporately by the called ones.

Some of the remote and immediate causes of desire have total independence include : conflict of leadership between the white missionaries and the black pastors; the missionaries' neglect of the organisation of the Africans, that is, their customs, institutions and many other things that are African; and the tyranny of the rule of the missionaries and their attitude toward polygamy, freedom of ritualism, which often deteriorates into magical system of sacrifice and ceremony whereby they will be free to give God what He wants in order to get from Him what they want".⁶⁹

God has not only ordained culture, but He is also at work in the various cultures and endeavours to transform and bring them closer to His reality and ideal. Kraft and Hesselgrave opine that we need to understand the culture we find ourselves in and work in the cultural framework with a view to transforming the people and culture with God.⁷⁰ 'Possessio' is action that takes place without human agency. It happens through supernatural intervention. It is the Holy Spirit who brings about changes in peoples life.

⁶⁸ Prophetess Olojo, Apostle Segun Phillips confirmed this, because the researcher even met a lady at *Ona Iwa Mimo* C&S Awotan who was in trance (*Ó wo inú èmi*) for 7 days, at Mokola it was a male who was in spirit for 14days

⁶⁹ H.O. Atansuyi, 2004. *Paper Presentation on the Gospel and Culture from the perspective of African Instituted Churches*, Unpublished p.8

⁷⁰ Charles H. Kraft, 1999, *Culture, Worldview and Contextualisation*, in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library. p. 385 and Hesselgrave 1989 p.60.

The best approach to the Gospel is contextualisation. It helps to guard against imperialism of theology, gives access to scope in training in the Holy Spirit through which we will be able to hear God for the ideal action and decisions at all times. Contextualised theology will help us to cultivate a mission - conscious church which will make every believer in the church a productive believer. It will lead to incarnation witness; multidimensional Gospel to meet multi-dimensional needs of the people. It will remove ethnocentrism from us and help us to use all cultural elements that are consistent with the Gospel. This is called “usable vehicles” which is usually 70%, while judging with love those that are not harmonious because some of that 30% can still be renewable.⁷¹

In the process of articulating Christian teachings, the African Indigenous Churches often look to historical examples of theologising for methods and models, realising that Western theology reflects the thought patterns, existential situation, and general orientation of the West that seeks to speak to the situation of Western Church. As Choan-Seng explains, “theology transplanted into other historical and cultural contexts... must be tested, no theology can claim absolute or universal authority. It is not a matter of competition between theologies but the necessity of judging each theology’s merit and usefulness in a particular cultural situation”.⁷² Western ‘definitive answers’ do not automatically fit the African situation because African church develops its theology through an interaction between Scripture and its most pressing questions. That the church interacts with the world does not lessen her value or taint God’s universal truth. In fact, it is the proper use of God’s Word, which helps to discern what is good or bad, right or wrong in a culture. Therefore, the methods and models of the West cannot just be carried over to any land. African church has realized that it is essential to have its own theology because a maturing church must be theologically responsible.

An absolute uniform theology is impossible in a world-wide church. Even standard theologies must be re-evaluated by each generation. This is because as the church in each culture and locality sets down the tenets of the Christian faith both for its own understanding and as a part of its witness and worship, it contributes to a fuller and more complete understanding of the faith. The wishes and steps taken by African churches to be

⁷¹ Isaiah Sundhir. 2007. Lecture note at Bethany International University Singapore. Unpublished.

⁷² Choan-Seng Song, 1979. “New frontiers of theology in Asia : ten theological theses”, *The South East Asia Journal of Theology*, vol.20, no 1 1979.p.14.

independent were a right step in the right direction, since African Indigenous Church sees itself as an integral part of the African community, not as an outpost of Western Christianity or as a separate entity living alongside African cultures; it wants to participate fully in the affairs of culture and society.

6.5.4 Worship and prayer

The essence of religion is in worship. It is believe that worship is central to any religious faith. The word “worship” literally means “worth-ship” and it is derived from an Anglo-Saxon ‘*weorthscipe*’ meaning honour and in actual sense, it denotes the worthiness of an individual to receive special honour in accordance with that worth. The issue of worship boarded on worthiness and value.⁷³ Cherubim and Seraphim can be described as a peep into Christianity. It is a sect holding faith in the working power of God’s Spirit, healing, and praying as applied to Jewish and African way of doing things. Members of the church believe in unseen or supernatural forces through which they hoped to fight something that appears to be against their interest. The concept of soul salvation is the central issue in Cherubim and Seraphim and not existential salvation. Salvation means basically health or safety from disaster, fear, hunger, and meaningless life; which are always interrupted with cosmic conflict.⁷⁴

In African Instituted Churches, confession of faith and worship are not essentially different from what obtains in other Christian denominations, only that they proclaim that "God is Spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). In their worship, they hold "faith" as primary, while "method" is secondary. As Africans, they want to inculcate within their members an awareness of God and recognition of the full human potential spirituality. In their worship, they witness not only to the idea of God, but also to God Himself as morally and redeemably active amidst the movement of events. Their worship and liturgy are structured in such a way that is not foreign to the Africans members of the Church who often describe their form of Christianity as “this new

⁷³ C. P. Price and L. Weil, 1979. *Liturgy for Living*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Publisher. Pp13-14.

⁷⁴ G.O. Fakeye, NA. *The doctrine of Cherubim and Seraphim Church*,: Palmgrove Lagos, Diiprints Limited Unpublished p. 24.

way of worship”, and so it is, for the church has woven much of the ordinary stuff of life into a rich and varied tapestry with its own characteristic patterns⁷⁵.

The Aladura charismatic worship can be attributed to the biblical passage that the disciples should "encourage one another and build one another up, ...addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" (I Thess. 5:11 and Eph. 5:19). They think that the original method of worship is deduced from Acts of the Apostles: meeting in houses, exhorting and inspiring each other in the faith; and seeking mystical union with the Lord. In this worship, the following elements can be identified: praises in hymns, songs and in psalms; free and spontaneous utterances of prayers, reading passages from the Bible for exhortation; thanksgiving/personal testimony; and exhortation to guide the believers. *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim take prayer as the heart and centre of all religions, which is the potent agency for obtaining the power to live a religious life. To them, it is the specific remedy for religious weakness. The church constitution reveals that the faith of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* cherubim and seraphim church hangs on prayer because it is the focal point of all her doctrines and practices. The church believes that without prayer they cannot find God, because prayer is the means by which they can seek and find God. A non-praying member is considered to be only religious. Prayer is the only potent weapon against the devil. One of the objectives of the church is “to seek God’s aid and guidance, world peace, human comfort for all its members through combined prayers”.⁷⁶ Before a member’s prayer can be answered, there must be faith, confession of sins before prayer, cleansing and purity, love, kindness, devotion, perseverance and spiritual discipline. Since the church believes in absolute efficacy of prayers, every member is expected to pray at least five times a day (that is 6a.m, 9a.m, 12p.m, 3 p. m and 6p.m. Members are expected to come to the ‘prayer house’ for prayer and worship. There is congregational public worship, where they have united prayer for all people; the service is being led by an officer known as church leader, which is different from minister – in - charge⁷⁷.

⁷⁵ H. W. Turner, 1967. *African Independent Church the life and faith of the church of the Lord (Aladura)* Oxford: Clarendon press. p. 101.

⁷⁶ *Constitution of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church*, Ibadan : Oke Modern Press p.5.

⁷⁷ Church leader Aladura Dada Olowookere interview held on 17th April, 2012 at Bodija Iso Pako, Ibadan church leader at Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG.

In *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Churches, the congregation sits or assembles in a way different from other churches. The seating arrangement in the church is such that women sit in a place distinct or separate from where men are seated. This separation of genders in religious worship centres is common to both Jewish and Yoruba cultures. This is an aspect of the influence of culture on religion. African Instituted Churches go to God at any time and whenever the need arises. The belief is naturally carried from their primitive mode of worship, which is now reformed with Biblical support. There are evidences that show them worshipping God at any time and in any place according to the natural phenomena that are prevailing at that particular time. On occasions like meal times, waking up in the morning, illness, barrenness, searching for lost articles or animals and various undertakings may call for an act of worship. It may take the form of prayer or invocation. The worshippers devote themselves to God with prayer and praise, spoken not only by the lips, but also in a great variety of bodily movements. Prayers are said with great enthusiasm and confidence because they believe Jesus Christ will answer their prayers.

The procedure of saying prayers resembles the traditional routine, in that they believe that the course of getting what one wants is like following a systematic order. For example, they have the Psalms to overcome their adversaries. Prophetess Olojo and Apostle Segun Philips emphasized the importance of Psalms at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim, that one may be asked to read Psalms by the Holy Spirit thirty five, seven or three times at mid-night or 12 noon and to appear naked as one reads the psalm and make specific pronouncements such as holy names *jah*....⁷⁸ The leaders and members lay strong emphasis on prayer and fasting. Their approach to prayers cannot be separated from the method used by Israelites religious practices and similar to African traditional religion. It is because prayer occupies the core of their spirituality and worship that they are called Aladura (the praying ones). Both Jesus Christ and his early disciples laid emphasis on the efficacy of prayers for many purposes. God is believed to be especially near in the Temple or church building, and evil powers cannot so easily attack one there. It is therefore a place where members spend the night if they are seeking a special revelation or spiritual strength or to be free from battles with the enemies. Special groups or individuals may have a message that

⁷⁸ Interview held with Rev. Prophetess Olojo at Mokola hill and Apostle Segun Philips of *Ona Iwa Mimo* Temple of Solution Spiritual Evangelical Ministry, Ataa Estate Awotan respectively on 7th May 2012.

he should sleep there for so many nights or for a specific period to strengthen themselves and the church, and for spiritual struggles at the hours of prayer in order to receive solutions to their problems.

Through prayers, the church releases its members from bondage and drives out demons from those that are possessed. According to Jesus Christ, this cannot be done except by fasting and prayer. These churches practice the above by using prayer to accomplish natural and supernatural results. For example, a man or woman who has been declared hopeless by a medical officer because of various illnesses is healed by means of faith in Jesus Christ by taking instructions from the Holy Spirit, simply by believing in drinking consecrated water and olive oil by anointing or any instruction given by the Holy Spirit. The power of healing is one of the charismatic gifts spoken of by Saint Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 12:9). The church also has special prayers and worship in sacred land, mountain or wilderness (*Iju*) where members and leaders go to for special prayers, Apostle Bankole said, “*Iju ni ibi tí a ti ngbàdùrà. Ó ti fẹ̀ sù mi, Ó ye kí Ọlórùn ti dá wa lóhùn àdùrà wa, ibiti Ọlórùn ti ndá wa lóhùn àkànse àdùrà to ti fẹ̀ sù wa là ngbé dé bẹ̀, tàbí Ó ti jẹ̀ tí èyí fi fara sin fún mi, kí ló fáá tó fi rí báyiì Ọlórùn*” (wilderness is a place where prophets, prophetess, church leaders and members can investigate difficult and persistence problems and for receiving answers or solutions to problems or the conditions that we are confused of).⁷⁹

They are aware of the importance of language since it is the medium of assuming the weight of a culture and meaningful understanding. They seem to insist on a cultural revival through the use of native dialects/languages. Some of the leaders at Ona Iwa Mimo C&S said – *Àwọn àdùrà gbàkangbì, àwọn àdùrà kán wà tó nilò káfi àyájó àti àkànlò èdè ti inu Bibèlì fi pè/ fi gbà, tí osó/ àjẹ̀ kò gbọ̀ lóyìnbó.* (There are some special kinds of prayer; they are some forms of prayer that we need indigenous native /biblical incantations, which witches and wizards do not understand in English). This is saying using deep dialectical cultural Yoruba language just like Jesus Christ used Aramaic at crucial situations, ‘*Ephphatha*’ in Mk 7 : 34 “*Eloi Eloi, lama sabac-thani*” on the cross at Calvary in Mk 15 :

⁷⁹ On 28th February, 2012 Interview conducted in the church premises at Monatan with Senior Superintendent Apostle Dr. Lawrence Bamikole J.P. of The Eternal Sacred Order C & S Oke Igbala , AgboJesu Branch, Monatan Road, Ibadan, Lagelu Local Government and Apostle Segun Philips inside the church building at Awotan *Ona Iwa Mimo* C&S. on 7th May, 2012 Ido LG.

34 and Paul the Apostle used his native language. They claimed that this makes our worship at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim relevant, meaningful and acceptable to God. Acts 21: 39-22.⁸⁰ In Aramaic, *Ephphatha* could be תפתח or תפתח and in Greek, the Aramaic is written εφφαθα. This could be from the Aramaic '*ethpthah*', the passive imperative of the verb '*pthah*', 'to open', since the 'th' could assimilate in western Aramaic. The guttural 'h' was often omitted in Greek transcriptions in the Septuagint and was also softened in Galilean speech.⁸¹

Some scholars claim that it is generally agreed that the historical Jesus primarily spoke Aramaic, perhaps along with some Hebrew and Greek but Allen avers that there is some debate as to the degree.⁸² Where he lived was primarily Aramaic-speaking, although Greek was widely spoken in the major cities of the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Antioch and Alexandria. Jesus Christ might have also known enough Hebrew to discuss the Hebrew Bible, and he might have known Koine Greek through commerce in nearby Sepphoris. Aramaic, as a Semitic language, a common language of the Eastern Mediterranean during and after the Neo-Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, and Achaemenid Empires (722 BC – 330 BC). Aramaic remained a common language of the region in the 1st century AD, despite the subsequent Macedonian-Greek (331 BC) and Roman (63 BC) invasions. Indeed, in spite of the increasing importance of Greek, the use of Aramaic was also expanding, and it would eventually be entirely dominant among Jews both in the Holy Land and elsewhere in the Middle East around 200 AD.⁸³ It remained so until the Arab conquest in the 7th century.

Even Jesus Christ and his disciples spoke a Galilean dialect clearly distinguishable from that of Jerusalem. Most of the apostles from the Galilee region also spoke Aramaic. The message of Christianity spread (primarily among Jewish Aramaic-speaking enclaves) throughout Roman Judaea, Roman Syria and Roman Mesopotamia, and even beyond the

⁸⁰ Interview held on 29th April, 2012 with Special Apostle prophet (Dr) Jonathan Kola Olaniran, National General Secretary of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S worldwide at Orogun Ibadan and Interview held on 8th August, 2012 Rev. Ap. Mother Prophet M. B. Abass Inspiration of God Church Int'l C & S Imisi Oluwa Spiritual Gospel Church of Christ, Agbaje. IBNLG.

⁸¹ Fredrick E. Greenspahn, 2003. An introduction to Aramaic. P.25 and Fitzmyer, Joseph A. 1979. A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays. P.12) and Davies, William D. and Dale C. Allison. 1997. Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew. Volume III. p.624.

⁸² Allen C. Myers, ed. 1987. "Aramaic". *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans. p. 72. Nevertheless, the towns of Nazareth and Capernaum in Galilee, where Jesus Christ lived, used Aramaic as native/local language.

⁸³ http://en-wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_of_Jesus cite note-sb-2 retrieved on 26th September 2012 at 1.45am.

empire into Kerala, India in Aramaic (or Syriac; Aram is the Hebrew word for Syria). Jesus was born in Bethlehem, lived briefly in Egypt and grew up in Galilee. For over a half-millennium, the primary language for the region was Aramaic, stemming from the Neo-Assyrian Empire's invasion of the Northern Kingdom (722 BC) and the Babylonian captivity of the Kingdom of Judah (586 BC). This became a western-Aramaic dialect, a version of standard Aramaic (which had originally been the language of Damascus), and a number of Hebrew words and some Hebrew-inspired grammar were often mixed into Jewish usage. However, for some Jews, Hebrew remained a primary colloquial language, until the 3rd century AD. Specifically, in the 1st century AD, Aramaic was already dominant in the regions of Samaria and Galilee, where Jesus came from, but a late form of spoken Hebrew, Rabbinic Hebrew, was still used as a vernacular in Judaea, especially in the rural areas, outside of Jerusalem. Nearly all of the Hebrew Bible was written in Biblical Hebrew, including books throughout the Second Temple Period, and some Deuterocanonical books like Ben Sira and First Maccabees, making it probable that most literate Jews knew the Jewish scriptures in Hebrew (especially as Hebrew and Aramaic are fairly cognate, even some parts of the Hebrew Bible are written in Biblical Aramaic and the *square-script* was originally Aramaic, artifacts of the classical period (during the period of the First Temple) such as the Siloam inscription and Lachish ostraca, being written in the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet). There were also the Targums, Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible, though scholars debate how widely these were circulated in the 1st century in Israel, possibly only in specialized circumstances.⁸⁴

Sacred elements in Israelite cultic activities include the use of consecrated water, candles and oil to encounter God's power. Similarly, in OIMC&S, priests, prophets, prophetesses, the sick and private properties are anointed with oil for ordination, consecration, healing for the sick and protection for members. Consecrated water is sprinkled on residential, business and worship premises for protection and purification (Gen. 35: 2-4) while candle is used to enhance access into the supersensible realms. (Ex. 40: 9-15; Lev.14:15-16). The operation of faith healing in the African Instituted Churches, especially *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* C&S is very simple. With faith, the sick are brought to the elders of the

⁸⁴ http://en-wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_of_Jesus cite note-sb-2 retrieved on 26th September 2012 5.45pm and Allen C. Myers, ed. 1987. "Aramaic". *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans. pp. 72 -78.

church, providing themselves with water, olive oil and candle sticks (if necessary). The Elders read psalms or biblical passages and anoint the sick with oil (James 5:13-15). The application of consecrated olive oil in healing along with prayers has been in practice since the apostolic age. Saint Paul also used his aprons and handkerchiefs as objects of faith healing - contact to heal the sick at distance (Acts 19:12).

The bathing and/or drinking of holy water, like the oil, is a means of communicating healing power unto the patient. Consecration of water for healing is a divine covenant between the founder and God. That is, whenever members raise their voices up on water, through Jesus Christ, to sanctify it, the prayer will be accepted in faith. We have precedents in the Bible about the symbolic significance of water. Prophet Elisha asked Namaan to bathe in river Jordan seven times (2 Kgs 5), Simeon Peter once said "Can anyone object to my baptizing them with water, now that they have received the Holy Spirit"? (Act 10:47). Philip said to the Ethiopian Eunuch "if you believe with all your heart, you can be baptized. And he answered, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God..." and they both went down into the water. In fact, Jesus Christ said man must be born of water and spirit. The above excerpts suggest that the water would have been sanctified by God. On this basis, the African Instituted Churches practice the use of sanctified water for multifarious purposes today. Water in cans and containers are prayed over by church founders and leaders and then administered by individuals as the need arises. River or water bath (*iwè Odò tàbí omi iyàsótò nínú ilégbèé*) is taken to be a command." *Àse ni ọ̀rọ̀ náà, àse ti igbàanì kò sí mò lónù ìdarísí èmí àti oun tì wòn rí kà. Bí a ti gbàá lówọ̀ wọn bèyeni kí ẹ̀ máa seé sùgbọ̀n iyàtò ti wọ̀ inú rẹ̀, nítorí ifẹ̀ inú ẹ̀ni.*⁸⁵ (These words are commandments but the commandments of the old are not taken seriously today, and the leading of the Holy Spirit and the written Words (Scriptures) are no more handle or obey appropriately, because of self satisfaction and desire for worldly things).

The use of water, candle and olive oil was revealed to the founder, St. Moses Orimolade Tunolase during a powerful prayer session. The white candle is a symbol of the light that illuminates the throne of the Almighty and is used to enhance supersensible

⁸⁵ Wednesday 28th March, 2012 at Odo-Ona Snr. Superintendent Apostle (Dr) I. O. Adeopa (Baale Onigbagbo Oluyole Local Government, Ibadan, Eternal Sacred Order of C & S Oke Iwa Mimo Odo Ona Elewe, Challenge , and Rev. Dr Mother Adeopa (IBSW LG)

world.⁸⁶ Apostle Solomon Awujoola claimed that the Supreme Founder Prophet Adeola several times used special consecrated and dedicated water in big bowls in a special location inside the Church to heal numerous souls.⁸⁷ At *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S No.1 Mokola, Prophet Olojo, Lady Leader E. Sofolabo, Evang. Wemimo Okesola, Mother-in-law - Israel Abigail Okesola said that Prophet David Okesola used to bless water specially to be used in bathing children within the church premises in order to ward off sudden death and that this special water helped to avert a lot of evil occurrences within the congregation.⁸⁸ Prophetess Ayeni asserted that she had used such special water at home to provide solution for a lady who had had delay in getting marriage partners and that after using such special water to bathe for seven days; the lady got a husband within a short time.⁸⁹ Supt. Apostle Oladiti gave his own personal experience on how God used the special river bath to save his life from sudden death, after the Holy Spirit had instructed him through a prophet to have special river bath.⁹⁰

St. Moses Orimolade Tunolase was healed by using the sanctified water of river *Àringiyá* as commanded by an angel, according to *Màmá Àgbà, Idán-Àringiyá*, the first daughter of *Orimolade's* mother.⁹¹ Water occupies a central place in the customs of the African people. The people believe that water is very powerful. When two people disagree and curse each other, water is used as part of the materials for settling the quarrel. Such water is put inside a bowl and each of the disputing party is expected to take a handful into his mouth and spit it out before saying "the curse has become water" that is null and void. With faith in God, all the curses at the time of the quarrel are believed to be ineffective. When a baby is born, water is the first substance that is sprinkled on it; this is also a way of congratulating the mother. If anyone faints from suffocation, water would be poured on him to revive him. No one makes an enemy of water. This is why elders call water "*awáyé mátèè*" (object which cannot be ridiculed). From the above, we may conclude that the

⁸⁶ G. O. Fakeye, NA *The Doctrine of Cherubim and Seraphim Church*, Palmgrove Lagos, Diiprints Limited Unpublished p.9.

⁸⁷ Apostle Solomon Awujoola Interview held on 7th August 2012 within the church premises at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara Rd. Ibadan(ONA ARA LG

⁸⁸ Interview held on 29th April, 2012 within the church premises at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Nig and Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan(IBNLG)

⁸⁹ Prophetess V. B. Ayeni within the church premises on 15th May 2012 at Sacred C&S Olorunsogo Agbowo, Ibadan IBNLG

⁹⁰ Interview held with Supt. Apostle Prophet Sunday Oladiti on 18th April 2012 at C&S District Headquarters, Oje Olokun IBNELG

⁹¹ Olu H. Atansuyi, 1988. *God of Orimolade*. Lagos: Helphebah & Beulah Ltd. p. 25.

Aladuras' use of water as adjournment of faith for healing does not really reject Jesus Christ, nor does it reject His glory and power since, He is, in fact, the eternal living water.

When the Holy Order of C&S was first established, it was expected that a 'Prayerist' (a vessel of God and the battle axe for God) must be prepared to work for God at any time. This specially prepared people make the prayers of the church to be efficacious, miraculously healing most diseases which orthodox medicine could not cure. Usually, it takes between three to four years after baptism before ordination as a prayer warrior. Within that period, the member would be trained in the various ways of praying.⁹² There are also private prayers, especially for a person in trouble, which are sometimes very long and are said in typical conversational manner. Every petition is answered by a loud 'Amen'. This is akin to the traditional way of supplicating the deity. Certain objectives that accompany the speedy efficacy of prayer are sacred words (like *Iyè* - life, Hossanah, Hallelujah) from which the power that gives efficacy to prayers. The appointment of prophets, prophetess and other workers shall be made by the Executive Council or by the District Council.

There are five categories of prayer warriors: The first is the prayer warriors prepared to be ever ready to help members and non-members of the church to solve their problems and difficulties with prayers. Healing Prayer Warriors /Band are the category of those that are endowed with spiritual healing power. The band comprises men and women of inspired minds in prayer, administration, and conduct of orders of service. Worship Prayer Warriors are the group of people trained to pray and officiate before and during church services. Evangelical Prayer Warriors are the people that accompany pastors and evangelists for open air revival services and crusades. Prayerists Endowed with Divine Wisdom are the group of people spiritually endowed with supernatural wisdom. Among them are some prophets, prophetesses, church officials and visionaries⁹³. The Choristers' Band is to render melodious songs and lead the church in hymn for the enhancement of rhythm during church or revival services and for the glory of God. The Good Women are women that have dedicated their resources to the glory of God and the uplift of the less- privileged. *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* C&S Brigade is the security arm of the church.

⁹² G.O. Fakeye, NA. *The doctrine of Cherubim and Seraphim Church*,: Palmgrove Lagos, Diiprints Limited .p. 9.

⁹³ M.A. Adeola, 1992. *Ona Iwa Mimo: an arm of Cherubim and Seraphim*. B.A. Project. Department of Religious Studies. University of Ibadan pp.87-90 and G. O. Fakeye. *The doctrine of Cherubim and Seraphim Church*, : Palmgrove Lagos, Diiprints Limited p10-11

6.5.5 Patterns, procedure and policies of evangelism

In the process of contextualising the faith in Cherubim and Seraphim, Africa traditional elements and rituals have been adapted to make the faith meaningful in the African context. In spite of the splintering tendencies in Cherubim and Seraphim, all groups adhere to virtually the same beliefs and practices. In her effort to contextualise, it seems that the church has syncretistic elements, combining traditional and Christian beliefs in order to make the members feel very much at home, which is evident in a number of their practices. Members and leaders of the sect believe, as it is in traditional African practice, that human destiny is regulated or modified by spiritual agencies. Exorcism is a common practice at Cherubim and Seraphim as in the traditional religion because most of the church leaders cast out demons and evil spirits, especially when people are being oppressed by demonic forces or when people believe that they are bewitched. The leaders claim to have conscious knowledge of the evil spirits which sow the seeds of discomfort, set afloat ill-luck, diseases, and induce bareness, sterility and the like.⁹⁴

Holy water, olive oil and candles were three elements or materials used by Moses Orimolade and Supreme Founder, Baba Jacob Adeola. The use of candle, olive oil and water was revealed to the founder, Moses Tunolase Orimolade during a powerful prayer session. The candle is a symbol of the light that illuminates the throne of the Almighty; they use only white candles. Baba Aladura Oyesiji asserted that the use of candles in worship is connected with the erection of a lampstand with seven branches described in Ex. 22: 31-37 and the seven golden lampstands of Revelation 1: 12-13. The order for their use is believed to have come from the Supreme Founder Jacob Adeola. And Rev. Prophet Okesola David noted that it was Orimolade Tunolase that brought the idea of usage of white candles into Cherubim and Seraphim to represent the light of Christ, which they believe will chase away evil spirit. That is why Holy Spirit usually recommends candles to be lit so as to chase away evil spirits that trouble believers even in their dreams. It is believed that one candle

⁹⁴ I. O. Olarewaju, 2007. *History of the Indigenous Churches in West Africa*, at Samonda, Ibadan Unpublished p.34

represents one God and three represent the Trinity. Five symbolizes the five wounds inflicted on Jesus during His passion; Seven candles signify the seven powers of God.⁹⁵

Holy water is sanctified water through prayers for drinking, bathing and other spiritual uses. Members usually bring bottles and kegs of water to church for consecration. The leader will stretch his rod or staff on them to consecrate all of them put in one place together, before members take them home for bathing and drinking for healing and protection. Water is power and also a living thing; hence it is being used for special healing because of the power of the spirit of God in it. During services this holy water is sprinkled on the people as a visible sign of sanctification just as Moses sprinkled the children of Israel with water. Palm fronds are also used occasionally. The water may be drunk in the course of ritual. Apostle Awujoola Solomon noted that, when Supreme Founder was alive he used to have special prayer days for the troubled, oppressed and sick people. He would bless water in a big earthen pot, would use palm fronds to sprinkle the water on them and they would receive healing and deliverance⁹⁶. Olive oil is used for sanctification and anointing oil, for healing, solution to delay in getting marriage partners, child bearing, and promotion in place of work and so on.⁹⁷

The church lays great emphasis on evangelism in accordance with Jesus' statement and commission in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8. It holds the second injunction as very evident that preaching the Gospel to all around us and beyond is a divine directive given to all committed Christians. It sees it as a duty to engage in evangelism through preaching in churches, public places, radio and television and through publications.⁹⁸

Ònà Ìwà Mímó C&S formulate and execute policies through her National officers during annual general conference and general meeting. All members of the national executive council, all district chairmen, all district Vice chairmen and district secretaries are eligible to attend and participate in such meetings. There shall hold a National Annual General

⁹⁵ M. A. Adeola, 1992. Ona Iwa Mimo: an arm of Cherubim and Seraphim. B.A. Project. Department of Religious Studies. University of Ibadan p.65 and Interview held with Prophet Pastor David Okesola, at Ona Iwa Mimo C&S No. 1 Mokola church premises on January 18th 2008

⁹⁶ Apostle Awujoola Solomon, Vice Chairman of Moboluwaduro District Ibadan and Minister in charge of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara Rd. Ibadan. ONA ARA LG interview held in Church premises on 7th August 2012

⁹⁷ G. O. Fakeye, NA *The Doctrine of Cherubim and Seraphim Church*, : Palmgrove Lagos, Diiprints Limited Unpublished p. 9.

⁹⁸ *The Constitution of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim church (Rules and Regulation Governing the Church*, Ibadan: Oke Modern press p5.

Conference under the chairmanship of the President or Deputy President at such time and place as the National Executive Council may decide. New local Parishes can be established only with the permission, approval and participation of the relevant District Council and even New Districts can only be created on the approval of the National Executive Council.⁹⁹ It is only members who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour that are qualified to be baptized after fulfilling other requirements as may be prescribed from time to time by the National Executive Council and baptism shall be by immersion.¹⁰⁰ Most of the Africa Indigenous churches, especially Ona Iwa Mimo C&S in Ibadan, evangelize for the following reasons:

- (a) To make the gospel relevant to the African culture
- (b) To express the gospel in African language and thought form
- (c) To enhance discipleship and proclaim the universal gospel message for the salvation of people and the consequent making of disciples
- (e) To enable work as Christian militants; the Aladura are a challenge to other churches which fail in their responsibility

Evangelism is another way in which the churches carry on African cultures. Their evangelical pattern is after Jesus Christ who did it daily. The founding father who was a roving evangelist carried out his evangelism in a simple way such that the ordinary man could understand him. Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Churches preach against sin in all its forms and they call on every one to repent. They teach that God is ever merciful and loving; He forgives people if they repent. Repentance, to the Aladura, means acknowledgement and being sorry for sins committed and wholehearted turning to God, choosing the God-way and departing from iniquity. Through their spoken public addresses and writings, the Aladura are growing to become creators of national religious and social ideals, critics and inspirers of public policies, denunciators of social wrongs, and preachers of every loftier conception of God. One could learn from the pattern of their evangelism and doctrine and their ability to present God in a way the Africans or Yoruba in Ibadan land can understand.

⁹⁹ *The Constitution of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church (Rules and regulation Governing the Church)*, Ibadan: Oke Modern press pp.14-20.

¹⁰⁰ *The constitution of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church (Rules and regulation Governing the Church)*, Ibadan: Oke Modern press pp.33-34

6.6 Use of Israelite cultic practices and elements in contextual process in *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim Ibadan

Context analysis is a process of analyzing a specific context. Any work done on contextualisation needs to be done in a particular context. This process of analysing is to discover both the visible and invisible factors shaping society as they manifest themselves in the local context. This discovery will make the proclamation of the Gospel relevant and effective. According to Karecki, “Context analysis explores the historical dimension of society as well as social, political and economic structures, and cultural make-up”¹⁰¹. Since contextualisation deals with the reflection on the interaction of the text as the Word of God and the context as specific human situation in obedience to Christ and His Mission the world,¹⁰² an exploration of any given context will facilitate reflection on the interaction of the text and the context. Such approach to the communication of the Gospel in Ibadan land among members of *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim will yield positive results. No message or Liturgy can be considered contextual while it is still in a foreign form or in an expatriate missionary form. Therefore, if any liturgy and practices are to be understood in Ibadan land, there is the need for church founders, leaders and preachers of the Word to make deliberate effort to present it in languages and forms that are meaningful to the people. For the context of the Holy Bible to make sense in any culture it has to be adapted to where it makes sense culturally. Newbigin observes that if the Gospel is to be understood, it should be received as something which communicates truth about the real human situation¹⁰³.

Church founders and leaders in Africa, especially in Ibadan land, ought to be looking for a way in which the Yoruba would be comfortable with the gospel and able to express their Christianity in the context of their culture. There is need to devote time and energy to this pursuit, because it will engender better Christian understanding of what the indigenous church should be and the positive result that will come out of this practice. If liturgy and worship in churches is to make sense, it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols which are meaningful to them.

¹⁰¹ M. Karecki, 2000. *Intercultural Christians Communication. Study guide for CGM310* – T. Pretoria: University of South Africa p.16

¹⁰² B. J. Nicholls, 1987. *Doing Theology in Context. Evangelical Review of Theology* 11 (2): 101 – 106

¹⁰³ L .Newbigin, 1989. *Christ and Cultures, Scottish Journal of Theology* 31: 1-22 Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. and Newbigin, L. 1989. *The Gospel in a pluralistic society*. Grand Rapid: Eerdmans p.141.

Unfortunately, some symbols that have been used in communicating the Gospel are foreign and irrelevant. While a lot of caution should be exercised in taking from indigenous churches, one should not be too quick to condemn everything about them. They should be appreciated for taking the bold step to be independent and do something about contextualising the Gospel and meeting people's need for healing, solutions to spiritual problems, and so on. It is this concern that the Archbishop, Metropolitan and Primate of all Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion, The Most Revd. Nicholas D. Okoh has when, in his pastoral letter delivered to the Standing Committee meeting of the Church of Nigeria(Anglican Communion) held between 1st and 5th March 2011, at Owerri, he said "we believe that an important need is for Nigerian Anglican to worship the Nigerian way and we are looking into practical ways in which this can be addressed in particular with local churches" He added that the time has come to worship in Nigerian ways and receive freedom from white men domination and slavery¹⁰⁴. Bosch avers that the Biblical text is not only "out there", waiting to be interpreted; the text "becomes" as we engage with it. Interpreting a text is not only literary exercise; it is also a social, economic, and political exercise. Therefore, all theology; political theory, sociology, and so on, are by nature contextual.¹⁰⁵

It is therefore, necessary to make the Gospel message, worship and liturgy applicable and relevant to the recipient culture. Hesselgrave and Rommen note that contextualisation means "to present the supracultural message of the Gospel in culturally relevant terms." This means avoiding both the enforcement of the expatriate missionary's own cultural heritage and the "syncretistic inclusion of the elements from the receptor culture which would alter or eliminate aspects of the message upon which the integrity of the Gospel depends"¹⁰⁶. Christians in Ibadan need to hear the message preached in the indigenous language (Yorùbá) it is then, just like Luzbetak, avers that there will be a dynamic church that conveys to her members truly Christian meaning, functions within its society in such a way that in the name of Christ it plugs into the felt needs of that society, and produces within it an impact for

¹⁰⁴ J. O. Akinfenwa, quoting Nicholas Okoh, 2011, *Immanuel*, Bishop's Charge Delivered to the First session of the Twentieth Synod at Cathedral of St. James the Great, Oke- Bola, Ibadan on 29th April, 2011.

¹⁰⁵ D .J. Bosch, 1991 *Transforming mission, paradigm shift in theology of mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis p423.

¹⁰⁶ David J. Hesselgrave. Edward Rommen. 1989. *Contextualisation: Meanings, Methods and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. p.1.

Christ equivalent to that which the first - century Church produced in its society and couched in cultural forms that are as nearly indigenous as possible.¹⁰⁷

In discussing cultural form and symbols Hesselgrave , says that the Christian message which comes from the “Bible Culture” comes to the “missionary culture” and then the expatriate missionary or church leaders in turn goes to the biblical text and interpretes it “in the light of the language and forms of the context it is presented”¹⁰⁸. The church in Ibadan land needs this type of contextualisation if their worship, pattern and gospel message will be relevant. Among many African Christians, the gospel seems not to be effective because the message of the gospel is not properly internalised by the people today. Likewise the missionaries that brought the gospel to Africa, especially Yoruba land, were, to some extent, culpable for not incorporating the socio- cultural contexts of the native converts in their presentation of the gospel”¹⁰⁹. Examining the gospel and liturgy brought by the Westerners this work avers that Africans were excluded from their existential context and the result of this is a gospel that failed to address the totality of the people’s experience. Indeed, it looks like civilized slavery.

Imasogie avers that a vacuum was created and that this vacuum made most Africans in mission churches to pledge a superficial allegiance to “God” of the Whiteman, who, in his thinking, does not understand his situation. “Africans accept this God only intellectually, thus giving the impression that he thereby denies the God whom he existentially recognise as the foundation of his traditional beliefs and practices”.¹¹⁰ This shows that there was superficial acceptance of Christianity with no proper integration of the gospel and liturgy as revealed by the Holy Bible within the cultural contexts; it has negative impact on Africans. Hence the gospel among many Africans Christians seems not to be effective. This is seen in the double life some Christians are living. For example, some will attend church in the morning and attend the traditional shrine or visit *ifá* diviners in the evening. The early missionaries were insensitive to the indigenous culture; because they presented theology that the acceptance of Christianity necessarily demands total rejection of African cultural and

¹⁰⁷ L, Luzbetak, 1988. The Church and cultures. Maryknoll: Orbis p.79.

¹⁰⁸ D. J. Hesselgrave, 1999. The role of culture in communication : *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, ed. by R. D. Winter and S. C. Hawthorne. Pasadena: William Carey library: 392-396.

¹⁰⁹ A.O. Dada, Cultural Adaptation or christo- paganism: an evangelical reflection on contextualization in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June ,2010. P 146

¹¹⁰ O. Imasogie, 1993.*Guidelines for Christian Theology in Africa*, Achimota: Africa Christian Press. P 69.

religious heritage and the adoption of the culture of the missionary without question or criticism. It is in view of this that the contextualisation of the Christian faith in Africa has been extensively advocated.

Although the missionaries gave what they had, such as education, health care systems and gospel, what they gave and the mode of operation were not enough to make the Africans faith, worship and Christian life to be solid and permanently acceptable to God. Church leaders need to communicate the biblical message in the language and forms that will make it understandable to the hearers and readers in recipient cultures. Engel shows Christ in New Testament as the classic example of contextualisation of God's message without compromise. He states that, by means of the incarnation, God perfectly contextualised His communication. Through this incarnation, He met His target culture where it was, and as it was, in the man Christ Jesus, His sinless Son¹¹¹. Beaver asserts that "the incarnation is the ultimate paradigm of the translation of the Text into context" His birth in the form of a human being was a perfect example of contextualisation. His preaching and teaching buttress this. For example when Christ communicated the Gospel to the Samaritan woman and to Nicodemus he used an approach that made the Gospel meaningful to both of them. Christ took a contextual approach to ministry. He showed genuine respect for person's background and mindset by tailoring the Gospel appropriately. Christ is the supreme Model¹¹².

The African people read several passages of the Bible literally and are more comfortable with the Biblical concepts of exorcism, faith healing, rain-making and rain-stopping than the missionaries were. The disregard of the missionaries for the Biblical liberty apparent on the pages of the scriptures degenerated into clashes and conflicts between the missionaries and the African leadership in the Anglican Church. The leaders of the church under study incorporate the cultural value of some African religious practices. They use these practices to contextualise the Christian faith by incorporating some of these African religious practices into Christian faith. Rituals, rites and sacrifices that are peculiar

¹¹¹ R. W. Engel, 1983. Contextualisation in Mission: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal. *Grace Theological Journal* 4 (1): 90 – 120.

¹¹² R. P. Beaver, 1987. The history of mission strategy, *Perspective of the world Christian Movement*. Edited by R.D. Winter and S. C. Hawthorne: Pasadena: William Carey Library: 101, 241-252.

to traditional religion are replaced with biblical injunctions, such as fasting, special prayer sessions, usage of Psalms, sacred places, petitions, ritual cleansing and so on.

The belief of members of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim churches in Ibadan is that they have reasons to worship in African ways that will help them to worship in ways and manners that will make worship meaningful and acceptable to their God. Therefore, they contextualise. They have evolved and inculcated in themselves an awareness of destiny, recognition of the full human potential and an awakening to the possibility of perfected human beings. They believe that faith proclaimed by the Gospel is not a solitary thing. The aim of God is not simply that we rejoice in Him. He also wants to show mankind, especially Africans, how great it is to rejoice with one another in Him. To enjoy God by oneself is great, but to enjoy God in company of others is far greater.

Ona Iwa Mimo members and leaders strongly believe that the Christian faith which the Gospel proclaims is fine but should be indigenised. They believe that Africans, especially the Yoruba, need a kind of contextualisation that is holistic, biblical, and incarnate, and conscientising evangelism, alert to the current historical and cultural moment in each place where the church is called to witness the Gospel. Apostle Laniran said *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* has officers like *Aladura* group known as ‘prayerist’ who lead special prayer sessions for the chronic and seriously sick people. He said “*tí àìsàn bá le tán Aládúrà ló máa bójútó wọ̀n*”. Church leader directs the service in each church, not necessarily the church minister-in-charge; evangelist trained for evangelism; prophets prophecy and deliver God’s messages; *Alore* are youths, male and female, that are being used by the Holy Spirit in each church; Apostles are leaders of the church; Lady Leader and Mother-in-Israel are for female officers. Prophets and prophetesses are members specially called by God that have received training for not less than three months. Plans are on now to change the duration of the training into 3 years, in order for all of them at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim to be able to read and interpret the Bible in native language. Districts churches are being empowered by the national executive headquarters. Nobody can just establish any branch of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim Church without taken permission first from the

various district the location belong to and *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* headquarters at Igboho in Oke-Ogun Area of Oyo- State.¹¹³

Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó Cherubim and Seraphim use only white candle as directed by the Holy Spirit candles (1, or 3, 7, 21) and only white garments. Members and leaders are not allowed to wear shoes inside the church building because it is a holy land which must not be desecrated. They claimed that life of holiness and consecration will shield members against the onslaught of the enemy. According to Senior Apostle Adeopa, whenever they had joint service with other groups in other churches under the umbrella of Organisation African Indigenous Churches who may enter the sanctuary with shoes, it is mandatory to rededicate the church building because it has been defiled¹¹⁴. The main Israelite cultic elements that feature in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* liturgical practices are: ritual cleansing, scapegoatism and sacred preparation. Ritual cleansing involves rituals and ceremonial cleanliness for individuals by the prophets. For Example, ritual rite is carried out for a man or woman who finds it difficult to get marriageable partners and ladies who are forbidden to enter the Church after child delivery and during monthly menstruation. The researcher during participatory observation saw women that sat outside the church buildings because they were menstruating.

Vicarious victim (scapegoatism) involves burial of plantain stem and sacrifice of a he-goat in place of someone who ought to die, tagged '*fẹ̀mírẹ̀mí*' (life- for - life). Some of the church leaders in Cherubim and Seraphim believe that it is what you have that you will use to redeem lives; it is within the Law of Moses, and Jesus Christ did not come to erase the law rather He has come to fulfill it. Some may use duck and sheep which they claim has the same blood as that of mankind, cock, goat and cow, are also used, depending on the leading of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁵ They believe that, just like the sins of Israel were symbolically transferred to the goat which was then led into the wilderness never to return, likewise the sick person's untimely deaths will be transferred to the goat chosen and presented by lot to be the scapegoat or vicarious victim for sacrifice and will never return. But some of these leaders claim that, at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Churches owing to

¹¹³ Interview held on 29th April, 2012 with Special Apostle Prophet (Dr.) Jonathan Kola Olaniran General Secretary of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria and Overseas and minister in charge of *Ona Iwa Mimo*, C&S Orogun Ibadan. Akinyele LG.

¹¹⁴ Snr. Supr. Apostle (Dr.) I. O. Adeopa interview held on 28th March, 2012, The Eternal Sacred Order C&S *Oke Iwa Mimo, Odo- Ona Ibadan*. Ibadan South West LG.

¹¹⁵ Senior Superintendent Apostle (Dr.) Lawrence Bamikole interview held within church premises on 28th February, 2012, The Eternal Sacred Order C&S *Oke Igbala Agbo Jesu* Branch Monatan Ibadan. Lagelu LG.

enlightenment, education and teachings of the Bible, scapegoatism is now being practised in different ways. Senior Apostle Laniran and Apostle Segun Phillips asserted that most of the prophets and church leaders are no more killing animals but are using water, psalms and prayers to redeem the dying person. Apostle Phillips quoted Psalm 68: 23 to buttress the rite of scapegoatism and added that “*a máa òfí èmí ra èmí ní*”, (we give life for life) but they must receive specific instructions from the Holy Spirit of what to do, how to do it and when to carry it out.¹¹⁶

Sacred preparations are done in sacred spaces by selected leaders to receive special power, undertake spiritual activities under the overwhelming presence of angelic forces. Pastor Okesola (*Wolii Ibadan*) said that *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church has ‘*Ijù*’, or ‘*Ilẹ̀ àánú*’ where they can hide without anybody disturbing them and where they will receive special prayers. There is also *Ìgbélé* for either seven, three or two days or more, depending on the instruction of the Holy Spirit. This place is where they receive special power to counter the power of the enemy and evil. They engage in communication with benevolent forces to ward off evil¹¹⁷. The researcher saw a lady in one of the churches sleeping on the floor of the church building, and the minister in charge told the researcher that that day (29 April, 2012) was the seventh day since she had been under the power of the Holy Spirit that she would come down on the seventh day, after receiving prophecy from God for the church and individuals¹¹⁸ (which means between Thursday 22nd April and Thursday 29th April, 2012 she was under the control of God’s power, receiving prophecy from God).

The constitution of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim church, (section 3 number v page 5) indicates that one of her principles and objectives is to administer spiritual healing. Spiritual healing is one of the major tasks that are being carried out regularly at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church of Nigeria and Overseas, in order to restore lost

¹¹⁶ Interview held on 29 April, 2012 with Special Apostle Prophet (Dr.) Jonathan Kola Olaniran General Secretary of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria and Overseas and minister in charge of *Ona Iwa Mimo*, C&S Orogun Ibadan. Akinyele LG and Apostle Segun Philips interview held on 29th March, 2012 within the church premises at Ona Iwa Mimo Temple of Solution Spiritual Evangelical Ministry. Awotan, Ibadan, Ido LG.

¹¹⁷ Interview held within church premises with General Apostle Rev. (Dr.) Pastor Okegbade Adigun Okesola (a.k.a. Wolii Ibadan) First Leader & minister-in-charge in Ibadan for *Ona Iwa Mimo* C&S at *Ona Iwa Mimo* C&S church of Nigeria and Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan. Ibadan North LG on 20 January, 2009

¹¹⁸ Interview held on 29 April, 2012 with Apostle Segun Philips at Ido LG.

joy, good health, deliverance from demonic bondage and to save lives.¹¹⁹ Prepared consecrated water is used for special healing; sprinkled on residential, business and worship premises for protection and purification. Prophetess Ayeni made reference to a lady who experienced this rite through special prayer and fasting who had been having special sacred dedicated water bath for seven days. The outcome was that she met a handsome pastor man to whom she is happily married now.¹²⁰ Mother-in-Israel Okesola also said Pastor Okesola used to consecrate water for special healing and to wave sudden death from members. She gave example of how he used to bless special water in a big bowl and use it for special bath for children in Mokola Church, which had prevented various sudden deaths.¹²¹ A Prophetess that has her church around Mokola Hill said that, in obedience to the instruction of the Holy Spirit, all members of her church had had special bath early in the morning at *Dandaru* River around April 2012. Another Senior Apostle in Oje Olokun, Ibadan narrated the personal experience he had and averred that it was the special river-bath that he had in obedience to the Holy Spirit that keeps him alive. Apostle Awujoola made reference to the special water often prepared by the Supreme Founder during his ministry and how Prophet Adeola would fast and pray specially on bowls of water for seven days and such special, dedicated water were being used to heal the sick and deliver those in bondage from the power of the evil forces.¹²²

These churches use the following elements: water, olive oil, salt, palm leaves, candles and wine. The use of foot-wears is forbidden inside the church building and sacred spaces within the church environment. They do not carry corpses into the temple. They also make holy inquiries for all members of the church on matters affecting their lives. They observe three types of fasting: dry, white and ordinary. The usage of these Israelite cultic elements and practices does not mean that members have no faith in Jesus Christ who shed his blood for humans. What it means is that healing can also be achieved by consecration of

¹¹⁹ Constitution of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim church (Rules and Regulation Governing the Church), Ibadan : Oke Modern Press p.5

¹²⁰ Prophetess V. B. Ayeni on 5th May, 2012 at the church premises Sacred C&S Olorunsogo Agbowo, Ibadan North LG.

¹²¹ Interview held on 29th April 2012 within church premises with Mother in Israel Abigail Okesola Wife of the First Leader of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S church in Ibadan Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Ona Iwa Mimo C&S church of Nigeria and Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan. Ibadan North LG

¹²² Interview held with Apostle Solomon Awujoola on 7th August, 2012 within the church premises at Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara rd. Ibadan, Ona Ara LG

water, olive oil, honey, salt and wine in sacred places through sacred preparations. They believe that these practices among them are being done in the light of the holy writ and teachings. References are made to Prophet Elisha who healed Namaan, commander of the army of the king of Syria, in II Kgs. 5: 1-9, and Jesus Christ who healed a man born blind with mud in Jn. 9: 6.

According to Pastor Okesola (*a.k.a Wolii Ibadan*), the founder of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan, their members doggedly believe in the leading of the Holy Spirit, in accordance to what we have in the Old Testament. Whatever He tells them is what they will do. He made reference to somebody who had been severely sick with serious headache for many months and he was brought to him in his church for healing. When he was praying for the sick person, God, through the Holy Spirit, instructed him to ask the man who was sick to go and hit his head on a specific tree in the church premises thrice. Immediately the man obeyed this instruction he received instant healing but this tree withered immediately and dried up.¹²³ General Apostle Laniran emphasized the importance of Holy Spirit in the practice, worship, liturgy and administration of the church. He even mentioned an incident when a Prophet known as prophet Madan disobeyed Holy Spirit and had sudden death.¹²⁴

6.7 The Holy Bible as medium of contextualisation in Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan

The word “Bible” is from the Greek *biblos, βιβλος* meaning a book. It is a library of sixty-six books bound together in one volume which contains all subjects of human experience, such as histories, worship, poems, essays, letters, dramas, law, mathematics, surveys, music, songs, science, soldiery and so on but all are of different ages and qualities. The books of the Bible were written and preserved through the ages under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. It is known as “the Book of the Books”.¹²⁵ The main books of the Old Testament are known as “The law and the Prophets”, meaning the

¹²³ Interview with the first Minister in charge of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and seraphim in Ibadan land Prophet David Okesola a.k.a Wolii Ibadan on 28th May 2008 at the church premises of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Mokola Ibadan Ibadan North LG.

¹²⁴ Interview held on 30th April, 2012 with Special Apostle Prophet (Dr.) Jonathan Kola Olaniran General Secretary of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria and Overseas and minister in charge of Ona Iwa Mimo, C&S Orogun Ibadan. Akinyele LG.

¹²⁵ J. L. Akeredolu, 1972. *A Churchman's manual*: Ibadan, Daystar Press. pp.27-29.

commandments given by God to Moses and God's messages to man through the Israelite prophets. The New Testament books form the second and concluding portion of the sacred writings, which embody the divine revelation communicated to man in the line of Jewish history. The aim of the Bible is to convey to man God's relationship to the world, and his dealings with man by gradual revelation with its final consummation in the supreme manifestation of himself in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lind states that Old Testament speaks of the universal mission of the God of Israel "not merely in a few texts here and there but throughout its total message from Genesis to Malachi" and that "the entire Old Testament is profitable for the Church to understand its place in Yahweh's mission and its task of contextualisation".¹²⁶ The Cherubim and Seraphim claim to have taken their doctrine and practices from the Old Testament. No doubt, Yahweh gave instructions on how to worship Him to Israelites, from where the cultic elements and practices came in. For example, God initiated the production of candles in (Ex. 25 : 31–40), the holy altar (Ex. 20: 21), going to specific and particular mountain and wearing holy garments (Exodus 3 : 5), burnt offering or sacrifice (Ex. 29 : 15).

Jesus Christ is taken to be the classic example of contextualisation of God's message without compromise. Through the means of incarnation, God perfectly contextualised His communication to the world. The writers of the New Testament were masters of communication, because they used comparable terms to convey the content of the message from the Old Testament so that the message would be meaningful to the audience of their time. This is what 'ethnolinguists' call the "principle of dynamic equivalence".¹²⁷ Hesselgrave and Rommen observe that the Gospel writers also show amazing examples of Contextualisation: each of the four Gospels reflects the cultural orientation of its author and is clearly addressed to a particular audience. Matthew's Jewish orientation is reflected in his emphasis on Messianic prophecy, kingship, divine titles of Jesus, and Aramaisms that characterise his Jewish-Greek language. While Luke, on the other hand reflects a distinctly

¹²⁶ M .C. Lind, 1982. Refocusing theological education to mission: the Old Testament and contextualisation. *Missiology: An International Review* (2): 141-160.

¹²⁷ E. S. Isaiah, 2000. Contextualisation, a Course Reader, Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University , Singapore. Unpublished p.85.

Hellenistic mindset. Since Luke was Greek and wrote to Greeks he contextualised by reflecting a Hellenistic mindset expressed in Koine Greek.¹²⁸

During the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, He was taken to be a “Great teacher”. He taught the multitudes that came from everywhere to sit on the hillside or seashore just to hear his fascinating teaching. His appealing messages were full of stories and examples of how people should apply God's Word to their lives and cultures. He related His messages to the simplest elements of the people's lives in a way that produced incredible change.¹²⁹

The implication and examples of the process of contextualisation are seen in the life of the New Testament Church, in the Book of Acts of the Apostles and the epistles. F. E. Engel gives the incident of the Day of Pentecost and the miraculous gift of tongues as a good example of Contextualisation.¹³⁰ The incident illustrates the principle that people need to hear the gospel in their own language. God contextualised the Gospel by allowing those who spoke in tongues to communicate the Gospel in as many as fifteen different languages. Paul and Barnabas exhibited cross-cultural communication skills when they took the Gospel to a mixed audience of Israelites and Gentile proselytes in Antioch of Pisidia. Even at Iconium they contextualised the Gospel with considerable effectiveness (Acts 14:15).

The early Jerusalem Church was comprised of the Jewish Christians who continued to follow the customs of Moses and even the second context was a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. The decision the Church made in Acts at the Jerusalem council was one that demonstrated the Church's effort at contextualisation; because the decision was applicable to both Jewish and Gentile members of the Church. No doubt Christians in Yoruba land especially in Ibadan are in need of contextualisation, having Gospel, liturgy, and worship that are being communicated as contextualised word for them. There are some features that are shared between Israelites religious practices in the Scripture and *Ònà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan to justify their practices and make their faith relevant.

The theologians in the 16th century believed that the Christian faith was based on eternal, unalterable truth, which has been stated in its final form valid at all times and

¹²⁸ David J. Hesselgrave, Edward Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: Meanings, Methods and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House p.8.

¹²⁹ www.PreachIt.org. by David Church assessed and retrieved on 4th September 2012 @ 2pm.

¹³⁰ R. W. Engel, 1983. Contextualisation in Mission: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal. *Grace Theological Journal* 4 (1): 90p.94.

settings and through the missionaries who translated it into their languages and indigenised it in their cultures. It is true that we cannot move away from the objective authority of the Scriptures because God the Holy Spirit controlled the processes of revelation. The Scripture has an authority that precedes and transcends our subjective experience of it. St. Augustine notes that, evangelicals believe that “what Scripture says God says”. The Bible manifests rationality, perspicuity, and unity as correlates of its inspiration.”¹³¹

Evangelicals hold the Bible to be normative and the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct. The Louvain Report states that by the authority of the Bible “we mean that it makes the Word of God audible and is therefore able to lead men to faith”.¹³² The Cherubim and Seraphim members claim to have taken their doctrine and practices from Bible especially from the Old Testament, no doubt Yahweh gave instructions on how to worship Him to Israelites, when and where this believe, the cultic elements and practices came in. For example, God initiated the production of candles in Exodus 25 : 31 - 40, the holy Altar in Exodus 20: 21ff, going to specific and Particular Mountain and Holy Garments in Exodus 3 : 5, burnt offering or sacrifice in Exodus 29 : 15ff ,all these according to a school of taught were meant for ancient Israel and seems not to be relevant to *Yorùbá* context today.

Jesus Christ never asked any Gentile or Samaritan to convert to Judaism, rather but to just believe in Him and worship God in spirit and truth. Massey avers that, "Christ-centeredness has less to do with religion, and everything to do with Jesus Christ."¹³³ The Bible calls for the Church to serve in a community she is situated. The Church needs to work on its missionary dimension within the walls of the local congregation by being open to outsiders, welcoming visitors, equipping the Saints for services, caring for the needy within and outside the Church. Contextualisation was part of Christian mission and there are a lot of evidence of it in both Old and New Testaments. Engel opines that contextualisation began in the Old Testament, the moment Adam first experienced personhood. When God who is infinite created Adam who was finite, He contextualised his message as an infinite God to communicate in “finite” ways. The God of all wisdom communicated in ways which

¹³¹ David, J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation meanings, methods and models*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company p.56.

¹³² The authority of the Bible” The Louvain Report In *Ecumenical Review* October 1971 p.434.

¹³³ J. Massey, 2004. "Misunderstanding C5: His Ways are not Our Orthodoxy." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*:300.

the limited Adam could understand. God dealt with Abraham according to his cultural context.¹³⁴

Darrell avers that, “Contextualisation attempts to communicate the Gospel in word and deed to establish the church in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context, presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people’s deepest needs and penetrates their world view, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain within their culture”.¹³⁵ According to Orebiyi and Dairo, Contextualisation is demanded by the “tension” that exists between the external relevance and the historical particularity of the scripture. It is a process which seeks to communicate the Biblical message to the people in their own context, using illustrations, examples, symbols and language that will make the message relevant to the people in every race, tribe and culture.¹³⁶

Charles Kraft states that contextualisation of Christianity is part and parcel of the New Testament record. This is the process that apostles were involved in as they took the Christian message that had come to them in the Aramaic language and culture and communicated it to those who spoke Greek.¹³⁷ The supra-cultural message, that is, the Christian message, is communicated appropriately; contextualisation is both the process of making the message culturally relevant and the socio-cultural process which occurs in both the sending and receiving cultures. There is a common message, revealed by God, in the written scripture, expressed in cultural terms and received in cultural terms, which is universally normative in the Christian experience. A school of thought believed that a biblical understanding of the Gospel entails an exclusivist approach toward other religions. This buttresses the significance of the Bible in an ideal contextualisation. Africa’s encounter with the Bible dates back to the time of the Ethiopian Eunuch- Acts 8: 20. However, it was the Western missionaries who, in the 18th and 19th centuries A.D., that made the Biblical text a popular document in the socio-religious space of the Africans. The starting point of contextualisation must be the Word of God. The early African Christians received the Bible

¹³⁴ R. W. Engel, 1983. “Contextualisation in Mission: A Biblical and Theological Appraisal”. *Grace Theological Journal* 4 (1): 90 – 120.

¹³⁵ Darrell L. Whiteman, 1997. Contextualisation: The Theory, the Gap, the Challenge, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research—January 1997* : 2

¹³⁶ O. Orebiyi and A.O. Dairo, 2000. *Contextualisation and Exegesis Ile –Ife* : Amat Printing and Publishing Company pp.5-8

¹³⁷ Charles H. Kraft, 1979. *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.p.389.

with awe, because the written text, symbolized enormous power when the Christian missionaries, who were the kith and kin of those that colonized Africa, introduced it to the continent but alienated it from its basic teaching and message. The alienation of the people from the message of the Bible can be justified in the light of Africa's oral culture¹³⁸.

One of the ways the reading of the Bible has been contextualised in Africa is what Adamo calls "the Bible as Power approach". This is an "existential" and "reflective" approach to the interpretation of the Bible. The Bible is used as means of protection, healing, and success. This approach is popular in the African Indigenous Churches just like the way is being practiced in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim globally.¹³⁹ There is Biblical basis for contextualisation. While the word "contextualise" does not appear in the Bible, the purpose and concept of contextualisation are present. God intended the plan of salvation for the whole world, not only for the Jews or for the Christian Church, but also for every culture, tribe or nation. Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Hence Bible-based and Holy Spirit-led contextualisation is a requirement for true, appropriate, and meaningful worship and evangelical mission today. The purpose is to show the Word which became flesh dwell among us. The Old Testament is very largely the record of the struggle against the syncretistic tendency of the Baalisation of Yahweh worship which continued from the patriarchs until the exile.¹⁴⁰

In both the Old and New Testaments, the idea of revealing God and His message to the entire world is a recurring theme. When God called Abraham to leave his homeland, he promised to make of him a great nation, to bless him and make his name great. God declared, "By you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves" (Gen. 12:3). When he changed his name, he said, "No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:5). Through Abraham, God intended to reveal himself to the world. In the time of the kings, God planned to reveal himself to other nations through the prosperity and righteousness of his chosen people: "I will give you as a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the

¹³⁸ J. S. Ukpong, 2003 "Inculturation as Decolonisation of the Bible in Africa" in S. O. Abogunrin, et al.(eds) *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan : Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies 2003, 53

¹³⁹ David T. Adamo, 2004. *Decolonising African Biblical Studies*, Abraka, Nigeria: Delta State University pp. 24-26.

¹⁴⁰ E.S. Isaiah, 2000 *Contextualisation, a Course Reader*, Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University , Singapore. Unpublished p.122.

end of the earth” (Is. 49:6). In the New Testament, Jesus Christ made it clear to his disciples that the target of the gospel commission is the whole world: "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). God recruited Paul the Apostle to his work force to help him to realize his goal and plan. Jesus Christ told Ananias, concerning Paul: "He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel..." (Acts 9 :16). Contextualised practices like contextualised theologies must be bible- based. They must not condemn any word written in the Bible, especially Law of Moses. The sacred elements and practices of Israel in C&S are from the information found and gathered from the Bible. The church believes that God does not go back on His words hence God’s written words are very significant to them, taken seriously wholly and none of His words can be discarded or thrown away at *Ọnà Ìwà Mímó* Churches. The work of the Holy Spirit plays a prominent role in all their actions in liturgy, worship, practices, and so on.¹⁴¹

Bible-based Contextualisation will produce ideal and appropriate contextualisation in various cultures. Contextualisation has to do with how the gospel revealed in the Scripture authentically comes to life in each new cultural, social, religious and historical setting. Every church in every particular place and time must learn to do theology in a way that makes sense to its audience while challenging it at the deepest level.¹⁴² Therefore, contextualisation must be Bible- based because the Bible is the norm and final authority. The cultural context of the biblical revelation should be understood and respected. It should not be reduced to the same level of other cultural contexts as God used the cultural and historical context of the Bible as a vehicle for revelation.

Contextualisation is more than a change in music, dress codes and furniture. Changes are not made because something works somewhere else, in another church, in another city. A desire to be contextual is driven by a passion to make disciples among all peoples and, therefore, requires an understanding of language, values, societal rhythms, and world views. The process of contextualisation must therefore involve thorough knowledge

¹⁴¹ Pastor David Okesola 12th April 2008 at Mokola, Apostle Segun Philip at Awotan on 7th May 2012, Prophetess Olojo on 27th March 2012 at Mokola Hill, Apostle Abass, interview held on 18th June 2012 at Agbaje Ijokodo Ibadan a leader at Cherubim and Seraphim Imisi Oluwa.

¹⁴² John Kallon, 2006, *Contextualisation of Christianity in Africa: A Case Study of the Kpelle Tribe in Liberia*, Book Surge Publishing plc, Indiana University, p148 and http://www.goggle.com.ng/searchgbs_metadata_r&c retrieved on 12th March, 2012.

of both the historico-cultural contexts of the Christian message and the given culture. This must include not only knowledge of the explicit meanings of cultural forms and symbols, but also the implicit theological assumptions upon which they rest.

In the process of contextualisation, the content of the gospel message does not change in different situations. One illustration is Jesus' explanation of the teachings of the law in his Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus Christ used the formula "You have heard that it was said to the men of old... But I say to you". In the first half of the formula, Jesus referred to the previous understanding of the law, while in the second part; He explained the same law in his present situation. For example, in Matthew 5:21, Jesus mentioned the law against murder which had been interpreted in the legal context of the past. Moving beyond the mere legal interpretation of the past, Jesus Christ explained the moral and ethical aspects of the same command. However, Jesus did not abrogate the law. The same message was presented differently to meet different situations. Other examples include Matthew 5:27, 31, 33, 38, 43. While these examples happened in the same culture, they illustrate how the content of the message is retained in different situations.

This work pointed to the example of Paul's cross-cultural ministry as an illustration of appropriate contextualisation. For St. Paul, the most important thing is the proclamation of the meaningful and relevant gospel message. He wisely made a distinction between the unchanging content of the gospel message and cultural variables. He used the native language in Ephesus, which made those that wanted to stone him to drop the wicked action by dropping the stones in their hands (Acts 21 : 39-22 : 1ff). Thus, Paul the apostle could say, "I have become all things to all men, that I might all by means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings." (1Cor. 9:22, 23) Following the examples of Jesus and Paul, anyone attempting to contextualise the gospel message in Africa should keep the content of the gospel message intact. But the ways the gospel may be expressed may vary. The cultural context to which the message would be proclaimed should not be the final authority in determining the limits of the gospel message. The process of Bible-based contextualisation can be done by an individual and by the Church as a community. The religious and cultural diversity of Africa is overwhelming because no single method can adequately encompass the challenge of contextualisation.

Since culture is the manifestation of the world view of the people, a model of contextualisation making use of the world view is proposed. In addition, the contemporary needs of various cultures must be addressed. As we contextualise we must not compromise in any form nor change the Gospel because our worship should be unto the LORD God. The ultimate goal of contextualised missionary and worship in various assemblies is to “present the supracultural message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms”. One can avoid the perception of the communicator’s own cultural heritage as an integral element of the gospel and the syncretistic inclusion of elements from the receptor culture which would alter or eliminate aspects of the message upon which the integrity of the Gospel depends. Therefore, to do ideal contextualisation Christians must understand and hold on to not only their own enculturation, but also the customs, languages, and belief systems of other worlds.¹⁴³

Ideal Biblical contextualisation will make the people change; they will be committed and have direct access to God without looking for any intermediary. It will change every aspect of people’s lives and they will be Christ-like in all things at all times and in all places. Ideal contextualisation is a critical one; it will help to avoid the foreignness of a Gospel dressed in Western clothes that occurred during colonialism because the Gospel message will be communicated in ways the people will understand. It will also help to break the mindset of the people, since ideal contextualisation will help to present a Gospel that is able to break the power of the devil in their hearts. It avoids the ethnocentrism of monocultural approach by taking cultural differences seriously and affirming the good in all cultures. It affirms the right of Christians in every context to be free from Western domination and gives right and opportunity to every community of believers to develop its own theology. It must be contemporary, spontaneous, needs-oriented, practical, flexible and non- absolute.

Most founders, leaders, prophets and members of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim have implicit trust and confidence in the already established Word of God, they put their anchor in the written Word of God which tells that through the victory of the cross, the devil is defeated and is stripped of all his authority. Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao, Chairman of Ibadan Central District of *Ona Iwa Mimo C & S* and leader of Ijokodo branch

¹⁴³ David J. Hesselgrave, Edward Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: meanings, methods and models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. p.8.

of *Ona Iwa Mimo C & S Church* emphatically spoke on the importance of the Holy Bible. He quoted Psalm 138: 2 to show that the word is lifted high above all things. Also he claimed that “Christians must obey and practicalise the Law of Moses to letters because Jesus Christ said He came not to destroy the Laws and prophets but for its fulfillment”. He used Hebrews 10 : 28-29 as reference. He added that “*pé a kò gbọdọ gan ọfin Mósè nítorí síse ètùtù ni Jésù Krísti paré, kò pa ọfin Mósè àti wòlì rẹ*”, (we must not despise the Law of Moses because it’s only offering sacrifice that Jesus Christ abolished, not the Law and prophets) that teaches us not to despise the law of Moses but to support his assertion. He even itemized the significance of Old Testament claiming as that it empowers and shows the mighty power of God, the warnings and implication of sins or living a sinful life. He added that the New Testament is the fulfilment of Old Testament.¹⁴⁴ Even the constitution of *Ọ̀nà Íwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim reveals that one of the objectives for which the church was founded is to worship Almighty God in accordance with the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Bible.¹⁴⁵

The Holy Bible is relevant to all ages, cultures, and peoples; but its communication must be contextualised in order for it to be experienced as the living message of God. If the gospel is to be understood and meaningful, contextualisation must be true to the complete authority and unadulterated message of the Holy Bible. It must also be related to the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of the recipients. The scripture can be understood in its own terms. We must be faithful to the Scripture but must be relevant to the cultural context at specific times and places. The Scripture offers models for the ideal contextualisation process. For anybody to be faithful to the scripture and relevant to the culture, such person must maintain the inseparable but distinct work of the creator and saviour and not allow the distinction between creation and redemption to be blurred as it happens in some contextualised theologies, and which produce confusion.

In contextualising it is a mandatory to be faithful to the scripture and insist on God’s activity in the incarnation, the death and the resurrection of Christ and at the same time be relevant to the culture in specific times and places. The message must be incarnated, that is

¹⁴⁴ Prophet Pastor Adeolu Amao Chairman of Ibadan Central District of Ona Iwa Mimo C & S and leader of Ijokodo branch of Ona Iwa Mimo C & S Gbaremu Agbaje Ijokodo interview conducted on 30th April 2012, at church premises.

¹⁴⁵ The constitution of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Church (Rules and Regulation Governing the Church, Unpublished p.5.

Christ will be incarnated into man's culture. The message must be Christ-centered because Christ is above culture. Revelation must not be confused with Biblical culture. The message should be decoded from old format and encoded into the new situation. Authentic contextualisation recognizes the alienation of man in culture.

The process of theologising is a one-way process in which culture, which is the product of people created by God and yet alienated from God is judged. That which is contrary to God's word is to be reviewed to see whether any of such can be renewed and not just condemned or destroyed instantly. Any aspect of the old culture that is true to God's Word is to be recreated. For instance, contextualisation can take place in the area of liturgy; dressing; language; church service; music and musical instruments, such as drum, supplementing the organ and the piano with indigenous instruments like drums of different types (*gangan*/ talking drums, *Ìyá -Ìlù*, *emele*, and so on) and other useful drums. In Yorubaland, the talking drum is considered sacred, and drumming is spiritual and used for religious purposes because it gives inspiration and leading of the Spirit. Prophets interpreting dreams and visions in a similar way to, that of the "*Alfas*" (Muslim clerics) and "*Babaláwo*" (Herbalist)

God the Holy Spirit guides in such a way that Biblical theology is applied to specific historical and cultural contexts. For example Martin Luther's treatment of justification by faith was solely needed by the medieval church. John Wesley's emphasis on the experiences of the love and grace of God spoke to the deepest needs of the oppressed classes in eighteenth century in England. These same theological emphases are needed today, but they will be contextualised differently.¹⁴⁶ Culture must be put under the testing authority of the absolute truth of the scriptures, Cultures must be taken seriously. Before we can have a meaningful contextualisation one must hold high value of any culture to which one is going to communicate the Good news and reach out in cross-cultural mission.¹⁴⁷

6.8 The weaknesses and wrong conception of contextualisation in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́*

Some scholars believe that at the most fundamental level of African culture, there was a philosophy as to the real meaning and purpose of life, which was essentially

¹⁴⁶ David J. Hesselgrave, Edward Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: Meanings, Methods and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House p. 58.

¹⁴⁷ McGavran, Donald, 1974. *The Clash between Christianity and Cultures*. Washington, DC: Canon press. pp.51-78

incompatible with Christian faith. It was at such instance, that there had to be a radical break with traditional belief and practices, in favour of the Gospel itself, not Western theology. Any convert to Christianity of whatever culture had to make such a choice, because the Gospel ultimately transcends and challenges all cultures, whereas domestication of the Gospel vitiates its essential integrity. Kato asserts that we face the fundamental choice; and asks whether we should betray scriptural principles of God and His dealing with man at the altar of any regional theology. In this sense, Kato certainly holds the Gospel to be cultural. His position, however, does not negate the need for suitable cultural articulations of it because he favours African expression of Christian faith. But if words such as "Gospel" and "Christianity" are to be used in anything approaching a univocal sense across cultures, there must be some unchanging core of meaning, whatever the culture in which they find expression¹⁴⁸.

Perhaps the most frequent criticism focuses on an alleged surrender to a Western theological agenda over and against a distinctively African approach to worship of God in Africa, especially in Ibadan land. Worshipping in a meaningful and relevant ways caused the demand for contextualisation. Oduyoye's assessment avers that, "The rejection of the African worldview by an African, shows how successful the Christian missions were in alienating Africans from their 'Africanness.'" indeed it is representative in both content and tone.¹⁴⁹ What is principally in view in these criticisms is the view of some scholars on negative evaluation of African traditional religion and consequent rejection of any substantive role for it in the formulation of an African Christian theology.

This position is seen by the critics as a rejection of African culture, which would ipso facto eliminate all possibility of an African theology at anything but a superficial level. However, Kato recognizes the importance of contextualisation for the well-being of the African church and believes that it does not imply compromising any of the theological principles. His approach ensures that mainstream African evangelism and mode of worship should not become entrenched in an obscurantist and contextually irrelevant fundamentalism. Certainly Kato's understanding of contextualisation reflects his time.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Byang Kato, 1975. *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*, Kisumu, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House. p.16.

¹⁴⁹ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, 1986. *Hearing and knowing: theological reflections on Christianity in Africa*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. p.62.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Bowers, 1980. "Evangelical theology in Africa: Byang Kato's legacy," *Trinity Journal*, n. s., 1 : 85

Nevertheless, Kato's book and articles remain exemplary in at least two respects. First, his intention is truly to contextualise the Gospel for Africans. He addresses African issues, and most of what he wrote was published in Africa. In contrast, Parratt has noted "the tendency of some African scholars to write and publish with a Western, rather than an African, audience in mind they want to publish their work exclusively in the West and with an eye to the plaudits of Western academics rather than to the usefulness of their work to the African church."¹⁵¹

Second, Kato's theological activity aimed at a much broader African readership than just the theological cognoscenti. He avoided the trap that besets much Western theology, that of academic theologians producing works of scholarship for one another that are inaccessible to outsiders. Kato says, "I am fully in favour of the ever-abiding gospel being expressed within the context of Africa, for Africans to understand."¹⁵² His concern was for the church and the fulfilment of its calling in the world, rather than the approbation of the academy¹⁵³.

Looking at the way some of the minister-in-charge, prophets, prophetesses and members operate in African Indigenous Churches, especially the group known as 'pápá Njò' or 'Omo Ogun Sòkalè' in Cherubim and Seraphim churches, who in the name of freedom from Western imperialism have wrong concepts of contextualisation, there is need to be watchful of what they do, how they worship and their liturgy put in place in the name of contextualisation. The way such group practice contextualisation has not enhanced but engendered holistic conversion, yet it has appropriated an aspect of culture, leaving out others. Beliefs, ideas and elements in the traditional religion are often appropriated in the process of contextualisation of the Christian faith in Africa, without seriously engaging the essence of the faith. Kato says "there was phenomenon of peoples in cultures borrowing elements from Christianity and incorporating them into their own (African) religious structures."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ John Parratt, 1995. *Reinventing Christianity: African Christian theology today* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

¹⁵² Byang Kato, 1976. *African cultural revolution and the Christian faith* Jos, Nigeria: Challenge Publications, p. 54.

¹⁵³ Kwame Bediako, 1992. *Theology and Identity: the Impact of culture on Christian thought in the second century and modern Africa*, Oxford: Regnum Books. p. 412.

¹⁵⁴ Kato quoted by Sundhir Isaiah, *Contextualisation, a course reader*, Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University, Singapore 2000:340 Unpublished.

This is saying that they do not totally abandon their former religion or all that they once believed, but married two parallel lines. Ideal contextualisation must be faithful to the Scripture and at the same time relevant to the culture, having dynamic interaction between the word revealed in the Scripture and culture. This will help to achieve maximum relevance of the truth for specific times and places. The attempt to reconcile diverse or conflicting beliefs or religious practices into a unified system in the name of contextualisation is syncretism. The word syncretism is derived from a Greek word that means to mix together, to unite one thing to another and did not have negative meaning in the ancient time.¹⁵⁵ But now, syncretism is defined as the mixing of different religious beliefs and systems. It was generally accepted at the World Council of Churches 1975 Assembly at Nairobi that the term syncretism should have a negative connotation, not minding the opinion of some scholars who argued in support of a “Christ- centered syncretism¹⁵⁶”.

Contextualising of traditional animistic beliefs with the practice of Christianity in an attempt to practise contextualisation is syncretism. Any attempt at contextualising theology runs the risk of syncretism and yet any theological system which does not attempt to be contextualised runs the greater risk of irrelevance. There are concerns in contextualising such as the attempt to use Christian terms to express animistic or cargo cultic ideas, and the role of the agent of contextualisation, such as founders, leaders, prophetesses and so on in *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim. As in New Testament times the risk of being a Judaizer is always present. A Judaizer held on to the Hebrew forms of religion and tried to make them fit into the new emerging forms based on the revelation of Jesus Christ. The kind of contextualisation made by the Judaizers is found in Acts 15. It indicates that the Judaizers concept of salvation included a contextualisation of the Christian message with the Hebrew religion. This was unacceptable to the Apostle Paul in the first century. This kind of contextualisation remains unacceptable. "The greatest risk of syncretism today as in Jesus' days comes not from those who are attempting to discover ways of expressing Christianity in non-Western cultures, though there is a great risk there. It comes, rather, from those who

¹⁵⁵ Tokuboh Adeyemo, 2006,. *Africa Bible commentary*, WorldAlive Publishers limited, Nairobi Kenya p. 900

¹⁵⁶ Bruce J. Nicholls, 1976, *Contextualisation: A Theology of Gospel and culture*, Illinois, U.S.A & The Paternoster press, Exeter, England p.7.

try, like the Pharisees and Judaizers, to preserve the foreign expressions of God's message.¹⁵⁷

Culture is not static; it can influence or be influenced. Improvement in cultures has given birth to human civilization over the years and Cherubim and Seraphim has the feeling that she must not be static or remain foreign in worshipping her God hence she contextualises Israelite sacred cult practices, especially those that are similar to *Yorùbá* worldviews. The words commonly used in connection with the study of world views are cosmogony - the science of the origin of earth; and cosmology; which deals with the various theories of how the world is ordered, organized and managed. World view originated from two Greek terms, *cosmos* meaning universe, and *novos*, meaning generation. Tokunboh says a people's world view has helped to explain why things, people and the environment are the way they are. It is also the source and authority base of belief systems and cultures which, in turn, shape values and guide customs, behaviours and practices.¹⁵⁸

This work opines that if care is not taken an unhealthy phobia of syncretism can creep in through contextualisation the moment the world view remains the same. Evangelicals must not allow their fear of syncretism to prevent them from contextualising their faith to allow for meaningful local expression of her faith. Nevertheless, the researcher feels that such contextualisation must be accompanied by a firm stand for the absolutes or cores of the gospel message because we need to guard rigorously against any form of Christo-paganism. The contemporary concern to contextualise the scripture, in a specific culture has raised the problem of syncretism in a new way.

The Willow Bank Report stated: "As the church seeks to express its life in local cultural forms, it soon has to face problem of cultural elements that either are evil or have evil associations. How should the church react to these? Elements which are intrinsically false or evil clearly cannot be assimilated into Christianity without a lapse into syncretism. This is a danger for all churches in all cultures."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Charles Kraft, 1979. *Christianity and culture*, Mary knoll, NY : Orbis Books. p. 36.

¹⁵⁸ Tokuboh Adeyemo, 2009. *Africa's enigma and leadership solutions*, Nairobi : WorldAlive Publishers limited, p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Bruce J. Nicholls, 1976. *Contextualisation: a theology of Gospel and culture*, Illinois, & The Paternoster press, Exeter p.29

There is nothing wrong theologically and missiologically with integrating culture and the gospel as long as the finality and supremacy of Jesus Christ alone as LORD and saviour are not sacrificed at the altar of multicultural and religious relativism. Early proponents of contextualisation tend to overemphasize it, swinging the practice from one extreme of non-contextualisation to the other liberal extreme of “uncritical contextualisation.” The latter can lead to many other problems. For example, it can easily overlook the fact that sin is found not only in individuals but also within the institutions of society and in cultural ideologies. The denial of absolutes and of truth also runs against the gospel as a self-evident and divinely affirmed truth. Consequently, as Hiebert, Shaw, and Tiénou say, “An uncritical incorporation of old beliefs and practices into the life of the church opens the door to syncretism of all kinds as well as to cultural and philosophical relativism, which destroys all truth and authority.”¹⁶⁰

In the name of independence from Western imperialism and domination some people have wrong conceptions of contextualization, which is the reason for having people borrowing elements from Christianity and incorporating them into their own African or Yoruba religious structures. They do not totally abandoned their former religion or all that they once believed but married two parallel lines, which is not ideal. Hence, contextualisation, in the African context has not enhanced and engendered holistic conversion. It has only appropriated an aspect of culture, leaving out the others. Most times, the kind of Christian faith that comes out of such exercise will be sterile, since Christ has not pervasively penetrated and become part of African value system and world view. This may be the reason why African Christians often return to the traditional shrine, despite the fact they had taken on a veneer of Christianity; they still fall back to the old belief systems in crisis situations. This action is an indictment of the state of contextualisation of Christianity in Africa.¹⁶¹

Syncretism as a dynamic principle may be intentional or it may be an unconscious movement of assimilation. But there is need for bold and creative attempts to utilize cultural forms that can be baptized into Christ without denying the gospel. There are two types of

¹⁶⁰ Paul Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiénou. 1999. *Understanding folk religion: a Christian response to popular beliefs and practices*. Grand Rapids: Baker.p.21

¹⁶¹ A. O. Dada, 2010 Cultural adaptation or christo- paganism: an evangelical reflection on contextualisation in Africa, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*, XLII/ 1, June,2010. : 155

syncretistic dangers in contemporary debate of Gospel and culture; they are cultural and theological. Cultural syncretism takes two forms. It may result from an enthusiastic attempt to translate the Christian faith by uncritically applying the symbols and religious practices of the receptor culture, resulting in a fusion of Christian and traditional beliefs and practices. The contemporary example of cultural syncretism is the unconscious identification of biblical Christianity with “the African way of life”. The second form of cultural syncretism is more aggressive and self-conscious. It is the spirit of the Westerners or Pharisees who sought to force their cultural forms of religious conviction on their converts. Its modern form is often seen in mission - founded churches, which enforce ecclesiastical structures. This must be the reason why Christianity of Western mission churches, in the eyes of non-Christian neighbours, carries the image of a foreign religion in Ibadanland.

Theological syncretism goes to the very heart of culture for it is the joining together of concepts and images at the depths of world view and cosmology, and of moral and ethical values. This is more destructive than cultural syncretism though, in fact it is more reflective than cultural syncretism. This type of syncretism is generally the concern of theologians and philosophers. Some scholars even refer to the seeds of syncretism being sown in the departments of comparative religion in universities in Africa. Most of these scholars have misinterpreted and misunderstood the African concepts and views. This work disagrees with Kato who opines that the cover design of *Oríta* (a Yorùbá word meaning a junction), the name of the journal of Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, which symbolizes Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion as sowing seeds of syncretism in the departments of Comparative religion in universities in Africa.¹⁶²

There is need to be vigilant of what Kato called “mixing of elements of two religious systems to the point where at least one, if not both, off the systems loses basic structure and identity”, which may be found in practices that are not consistent with the Scripture such as Sacred preparation known as “*ètò Sísè*“, visiting sacred places known as “*Ijù*“, sacrifices, scapegoatism called “*Fifi èmí ra èmí*”. Spiritual healing with African traditional methods a

¹⁶² Bruce J. Nicholls, *Contextualisation: a theology of gospel and culture*, Illinois, U.S.A & The Paternoster press, Exeter, England p. 30.

times may open doors for having wrong concepts in efforts of contextualising liturgy, worship and Gospel presentation.¹⁶³

Christians should be watchful and distance themselves from whatever action and practices that can mislead brethren out of faith in Christ, because of its close collaboration with divination, and African traditional religion which is forbidden in the Holy Writ.¹⁶⁴ Any form of religion in which elements from more than one original religious tradition are combined denotes syncretism. Therefore Christians must be careful of what they practise or do in the name of contextualisation; especially the group of Christians who are having mistakes of identity because they believe that there are many ways that lead to where Jesus Christ is. Their leaders fail to discern what is right according to the teaching of God's word but these leaders give room for liberal Christianity. Okot P'Bitek, an anthropologist, says "syncretism is not only in matters of pagan religious festivities but also in pagan immoral practices."¹⁶⁵

African theology is a "theology based on the biblical faith of Africans, and speaks to the African soul".¹⁶⁶ Now is the time to contextualise correctly and faithful to the Scripture and still be relevant to the culture. It is not enough to Africanise Christianity. African Christianity must discover what it means to be true Christians. Now is the time to change and start on a new platform, practising ideal contextualisation, because we are dealing with God's mission not our mission, Christ is for culture, in culture and transformer of culture. The message and practices should be Bible based and Christ-centered.

Since Lausanne, evangelicals have used the word contextualisation in many ways, creating to this day controversies which have had wide expressions in the literature, teaching and different missionary philosophies and methodologies. Nicholls was one of the first to try and bring sense out of the confusion in his classic WEF book (*Contextualisation: A Theology of Gospel and Culture*). He showed that the original TEF term was based on a world view not consistent with Evangelical convictions, criticizing what he called

¹⁶³ Kato quoted by Isaiah, E. S, 2000 *Contextualisation, a Course Reader*, and Compiled for the private use of Bethany International University, Singapore p.144. and Isaiah, E,S, 2007, *Contextualisation of Theology Part 1 and 2 (Gospel and Culture or Doing Theology)*, Bethany International University, Singapore, Unpublished.

¹⁶⁴ Cook, Robert, 2000. "Alternative and complementary theologies: the Case of cosmic energy with special reference to Chi." *Studies in World Christianity* 6.2 (2000): 175-189.

¹⁶⁵ Okot P'Bitek : 1219

¹⁶⁶ In an International conference of AACC 1969, held in Nairobi.

“existential contextualisation” that had no objective ground and could be manipulated according to experience and culture¹⁶⁷.

The evangelicals view contextualisation of the gospel with suspicion, because they feel it may undermine the fundamental essence of the gospel and has not engendered genuine conversion exemplified in godly character and Christ-like nature. They also feel it may lead to the substitution of the truths of the gospel with human traditions and culture.¹⁶⁸ According to Atansuyi, “members of Africans indigenous churches strongly believe that the Christian faith which the Gospel proclaims is fine, but should be indigenized and contextualised in an holistic, Biblical, incarnate and conscientising evangelism, that alerts to the current historical and cultural moment in each place where the church is called to witness the Gospel”.¹⁶⁹ They claim to be indigenous, going native and free from Western influence; unfortunately, the indigenization is not done properly. Some of their practices do not allow any change in their world views. They do not contextualise correctly their liturgy, theology, culture and methodology. The revealed words of the Scripture do not interact with the revealed word in the African culture. They only borrowed certain aspects of Christianity and married them with African traditional practices. They do not allow dynamic equivalent in their practices.¹⁷⁰

Kato observes that African culture owes no positive value for evangelical witness. Therefore, it should be discarded in matters that have to do with faith and practice in the context of the Christian. He is not, however, opposed to a specifically African expression of Christian faith. If he distanced himself from the expression "African theology," it was because of the ambiguities that he felt surrounded it at the time. But he emphatically approved the concern to formulate a Christian theology for Africa: "That Africans have a unique contribution to make to theological debates is undeniable."¹⁷¹ He shared the concern of Mbiti and others that "mission Christianity" had failed to engage seriously with African culture, quoting Mbiti to that effect: "Mission Christianity was not from the start prepared to face a serious encounter with either traditional religions and philosophy or the modern

¹⁶⁷ Bruce J. Nicholls, 1976, *Contextualisation: A Theology of Gospel and culture*, Illinois, & The Paternoster press, Exeter.

¹⁶⁸ Tite Tienou, 1990. *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa*, Achimota: African Christian Press. P. 9.

¹⁶⁹ Atansuyi 2004 :95

¹⁷⁰ Sundhir Isaiah, 2007. *Contextualization*, Bethany International University, Singapore unpublished.

¹⁷¹ Byang Kato, 1985 "Theological Anemia in Africa," in *Biblical Christianity in Africa* (Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, p. 11.

changes taking place in Africa. The church here now finds itself in the situation of trying to exist without a theology.¹⁷²

Consequently he looked for a culturally appropriate expression of Christian faith that addressed the questions raised by African society and tradition: "such areas as principles of interpretation, polygamy, family life, the spirit world, and communal life should be given serious attention".¹⁷³ Nevertheless, Kato believed that at the most fundamental level of African culture we have a philosophy "as to the real meaning and purpose of life that was essentially incompatible with Christian faith"¹⁷⁴. If words such as "Gospel" and "Christianity" are to be used in anything approaching a univocal sense across cultures, there must necessarily be some unchanging core of meaning, whatever the culture in which they find expression.¹⁷⁵

Omoyajowo avers that "The prophet is all-important in these churches. They are less opposed to the use of traditional medicine/African Juju, and polygamy is allowed. In Cherubim and Seraphim movement there are some similarities between their practice and traditional religion".¹⁷⁶ The leaders believe that words are thought to have an inherent power of their own, and the recitation of holy names or passages from the psalms as magical formulae is common. Some prophets prepare charms using written verses from the Bible in the same way as some Muslim clerics use the Koran. Furthermore, some of their practices are similar to that of traditional beliefs in explaining misfortune. The emphasis given to combating witchcraft is an obvious example. Aladura prophets also have a reputation for being able to deal with "àbikú" meaning born- and- die-early spirits¹⁷⁷, and the extensive use of holy water and the exclusion of menstruating women from entering church building are both reminiscent of traditional practices in Yorubaland.

¹⁷² John S. Mbiti, 1985. quoted by Kato, Byang Kato, "Theological Anemia in Africa," in *Biblical Christianity in Africa* Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, p. 11

¹⁷³ Byang Kato, Black Theology and African theology," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 1 (October 1977): 45.

¹⁷⁴ Byang Kato, 1976 *African Cultural Revolution and the Christian faith* (Jos, Nigeria: Challenge Publications, p. 30

¹⁷⁵ J.D.Y Peel, 1968. *Belief and doctrine in Aladura: a religious movement among the Yoruba*. London: Oxford University Press p. 98.

¹⁷⁶ Akin Omoyajowo, 1982. *Cherubim and Seraphim, The History of an African Independent Church*, NOK Publishing Lagos p.6.

¹⁷⁷ Robert Cameron. Mitchell, 1970. "Religious Protest and Social Change: The Origins of the Aladura Movement in Western Nigeria." In *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, eds. R. I. Rothberg and A. A. Mazrui, 458-96. New York: Oxford University Press p. 344

The long-haired prophets of the spiritual churches wearing special robes, the congregational processions through the streets, and the houses of prayers with their singing and dancing are among the most distinctive features of present-day Yoruba religious life. Thousands of African Independent Churches, with the emphasis on healing, ecstatic behaviour, and exorcism, began to spring up throughout African continent and there was little the established churches could do about it.¹⁷⁸ Their ways of life, as reflected in some of their beliefs, usage and practices that are not fully consistent with the Scripture, such as sacred preparation known as “*ètò Síse*”, sacrifices, scapegoatism (called “*Fífi èmí ra èmí*”, spiritual healing with African traditional medicine and so on are regarded as syncretism. This opens doors for having wrong concepts in her efforts to contextualize her liturgy, gospel message and presentation, because religious practices have much impact on the life of her members and community of believers in African context.

However, there are some specific areas of worship that show the ideal practice of contextualisation because the church has contextualised in the area of music, using local drums and traditional dancing. Her worship is good when it comes to singing and dancing but it is not enough to Africanise Christianity. African Christianity, especially Cherubim and Seraphim Church movement, must review her stand and get involved in ideal contextualisation. Yet, her actions at times show that she does not receive Christ in her heads, hearts and souls; she does not allow Jesus Christ to become the integral part of her world views.

The forms of service used by the Aladura are largely based on Anglican models,¹⁷⁹ but they have been supplemented by special forms for founder’s day services, the feasts of the archangels, and annual pilgrimages to sacred hills, an idea which is similar to Yoruba traditional religion because hill festivals are common in Yoruba traditional religion: the best-known are the annual festivals in *Ìbàdàn* and *Abeokuta*¹⁸⁰. Generally, the Cherubim and Seraphim lay much emphasis on ritual rather than the real Gospel, using fasting and prayer to achieve visions. They attach much importance to spiritual power (*agbára*), through

¹⁷⁸ Kato quoted from E.S. Isaiah 2000, *Contextualisation, a Course Reader*, compiled for the private use of Bethany International University, Singapore p.340

¹⁷⁹ H. W. Turner, 1967. *African independent church II. The life and faith of the church of the Lord (Aladura)*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press .

¹⁸⁰ Akin Omoyajowo, 1978, *The Aladura Churches in Nigeria since Independence in Christianity in Independent Africa Education*, U. I. Press, Ibadan. p.26

archangels and angels and the Holy Spirit. Each of the spirits has a clearly defined role in mediating between man and God, and their feasts are among the most important church occasions. The Cherubim and Seraphim practices are parallel with the Yoruba tradition but her main concern is spiritual power, regarding disasters as the work of the witches and wizards and enemies, because they are still keeping in tune with the African traditional belief. Like Africans, these churches believe that the divinities or witches must be appeased to avert disasters or to seek special favours. Therefore, they practice some of the acts of African traditional religion such as sacrifices, scapegoatism, and so on. Some of her leaders do not wrap Jesus Christ with African tradition and give it to people as ideal package. She is advocating tradition in her practices and belief as more important and not proclaiming neither Jesus Christ nor allowing the Lordship of Jesus Christ; hence, no transformation in her culture. Her actions seem that, she has not receive Christ in her heads, hearts and souls hence never allow Jesus Christ to become the integral part of her world views. Some people see the Bible as a foreign text to African imagination; hence, their call for the rewriting of the Bible. These people believe that the Bible, as it is, does not adequately meet the needs or represent the aspirations of Africans.¹⁸¹ This idea is not right, since contextualisation is an imperative task with extensive possibilities for positive transformation and change. Therefore, a holistic mechanism should be put in place by the Church's leadership to prevent the abuse of Contextualisation and exploitation of adherents.

6.9 The benefits and relevance of contextualisation to Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadan land

God has not only ordained culture, but also is at work in the various cultures and endeavours to transform and bring them ever closer to His reality and ideal. David Hesselgrave says "We need to understand the culture we could find ourselves and work in the cultural framework with a view to transforming the people and culture with God".¹⁸² Authentic contextualisation recognizes the alienation of man in culture.

¹⁸¹ Canaan S. Banana, 1993. "The Case for a new Bible" in Isabel Mukonyora, James L. Cox & Frans J. Verstraelen Eds. *Rewriting The Bible : The Real Issues* Harare : Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe, 1993 : 30

¹⁸² David J. Hesselgrave, & Edward Rommen, 1989. *Contextualisation: Meanings, Methods and Models*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House 1989 p. 60.

Culture must be put under the testing authority of the absolute truth of the Scriptures. At the same time cultures must be taken seriously. Before one can have a meaningful critical contextualisation one must hold high any culture to be communicated with especially the usable vehicles in any culture.¹⁸³ The need to make the gospel meaningful and efficacious is at the heart of contextualisation. Therefore, if the gospel is to be understood, and be received as something which communicates truth about real human situation in every given context, then it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols that are meaningful to them. It is only a gospel that is meaningfully communicated, understood and internalised that can be effectual, and have positive result in individual and produce transformation in any community. Apostle Bamimore buttressed this view, he said “*isẹ ijósín lóyìnbó ní ilẹ̀ Ìbàdàn kò ran ẹ̀nítí kò gbóyìnbó lówó olóri ijọ tó ńsọ Òyìnbó ńsẹ́ fún ara tikalára rẹ̀ ni, ó sì ńfẹ̀sẹ̀ ara rẹ̀ m̀lẹ̀ nì*” (that any church leader who conducts worship and Bible teaching in foreign language (English) in Ibadanland is preaching or speaking to himself, he or she is just equipping himself or herself but has no value for Christians in Ibadan who are not learned, this is because such Christians in Ibadan will not understand him correctly and accordingly).¹⁸⁴ This is saying that when the water of life is offered in our own cup, indigenous form, then it will have much impact on the people of Ibadan. The Christocentric character of the Christian faith must not be negotiated in the process of contextualisation, no advocacy of a gospel of accommodation. Christ remains the centre and heart of the gospel; hence the communication of the gospel in Ibadanland should not become relativized.

Contextualisation of the Gospel message helps to protect lives and keep the church alive in her duties and response to Holy Spirit appropriately. The traditional ideas contextualised are often utilized in understanding and expressing key and fundamental concepts of the Christian faith. In the indigenous churches in Ibadan, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that develops from the traditional religious understanding lays more emphasis on incarnational pneumatology. The churches believe that the Holy Spirit is sent from God into the world to accomplish specific purposes of God Almighty. Hence, the Holy Spirit is taken

¹⁸³ Donald McGavran, 1974. *The clash between Christianity and cultures*. Washington, DC: Canon press. Pp.51-78.

¹⁸⁴ Most Snr. Apostle Jacob Bamimore interview held on 18th July 2012 at Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. Ibadan North LG.

to be the source of inspiration and power that enables the founders and leaders –prophets, prophetesses of these churches to perform mighty miracles and be guided appropriately. It helps to guard against imperialism of theology; and gives them scope in training in the power of the Holy Spirit through which founders, leaders and members are able to hear God for ideal action and decisions at all times. They claimed that contextualisation help them to do things correctly, rightly and appropriately and that obedience to the Holy Spirit grants them the grace to live long, be victorious and makes them to enter heaven not through white men’s culture.

Special Apostle Prophet Jonathan Kola Laniran, the General Secretary of *Ọ̀nà Ịwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide and head of Orogun branch of Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim, noted that Prophet Madan of Iseyin who was asked not to leave the mountain but disobeyed the Spirit of God and travelled to Igboho but died on the way in a motor accident. He would have escaped that sudden death if he had obeyed the Holy Spirit.¹⁸⁵ Superintendent Apostle Sunday Oladiti also said he was still alive because he obeyed the instruction of the Holy Spirit sent through the prophet, when he was asked to go and have water bath in a flowing river, with the instruction that he must use nine new sponges for nine times. By the time he was using the seventh sponge a usual mysterious incident happened which he could not explain till today.¹⁸⁶

Furthermore, contextualised theology helps to cultivate or plant a mission - conscious church which will make every believer in the church a productive believer. It will lead to incarnation witness, multidimensional Gospel to meet multi-dimensional needs of the people. It removes ethnocentric and helps to use all cultural elements that are consistent with the Gospel. This is what Isaiah term as “usable vehicles” in every culture which is usually 70%, of culture, yet the remaining 30% that are not harmonious in every culture are renewable if handled with love.¹⁸⁷ In the process of contextualising the faith, Yoruba traditional elements and rituals have been adapted by Indigenous Churches to make the faith meaningful in the African context. The belief of leaders and members of *Ọ̀nà Ịwà Mímó*

¹⁸⁵ Special Apostle Prophet Jonathan Kola Laniran the General Secretary of *Ona Iwa Mimo C & S* Worldwide and head of Orogun branch of *Ona Iwa Mimo C & S*, interview held on 30th April 2012.

¹⁸⁶ Superintendent Apostle Sunday Oladiti secretary to C & S Sacred Church, Oje Olokun District Church council Ibadan, interview held on 18th April, 2012.

¹⁸⁷ Sundhir Isaiah, 2007. *Course Outline and Notes on Contextualisation of Theology Part 1 and 2 (Gospel and Culture or Doing Theology)*, Bethany International University, Singapore, Unpublished p.9.

Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadan is that they have reasons to worship in African ways that will help them to worship in ways and manners that will make worship meaningful and acceptable to their God.

Ritual cleansing involves rituals and ceremonial cleansing for individual by the prophets. For example, ritual rite is performed by a man who finds it difficult to get marriageable partner and ladies who are forbidden to enter the Church after child delivery and during monthly menstruation. Vicarious victim (Scapegoatism) involves sacrifice of he-goat or usage of specific psalms and consecrated holy water and anointing oil in place of someone who ought to die, tagged '*Fèmirèmi*' (life for life). Sacred preparations are practised in sacred spaces by selected leaders to receive special power, undertake spiritual activities under the overwhelming presence of angelic forces. They use consecrated oil for special healing. Seventeen leaders and 263 members (85.7%) attributed the contextualisation of cultic practices in the liturgical activities of *Ọ̀nà Iwà Mímọ* to the similarities between Israelite and Yoruba world views. They claimed that contextualising their faith helped them to be conscious of evil spirits which sow the seeds of discomfort, set afloat ill-luck, induce barrenness, and the like into people's lives. A total of 254 members (82.7%) believed that their manifestation hinged on the fact that they are useful resources for transmitting religious ideas. And saw these practices as means of making Christianity culturally relevant and meaningful to them without destroying its ever-abiding message.

Two hundred ninety people (94.5%) also agreed that these practices are seen as not means to an end, affirming that Christ is the ultimate, and offering psychological relief to worshippers because they provide a point of contact between the physical and mental aspects of belief. Likewise, a large proportion of the respondents agreed that these practices are integral part of healing process, which help in addressing the problem of chronic diseases, misfortune, warding off evil forces and preventing untimely death. Water is used to symbolically cleanse a person from every evil aura that is causing sickness and misfortune. Therefore, ritual baths are prescribed for people (members and non-members) experiencing one problem or the other. The leaders, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, make use of running water or water in an enclosure sanctified with special prayers by using some portions of the scriptures recited and read on them for healing process.

They claimed that it helps rapid growth and constant increase in membership. Most church leaders and ministers asserted that it was the act of contextualisation that made a lot of rich and influential people to become members of Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, because it helped to resolve their spiritual problems. It is not an overstatement to say that the contextualisation of Israelites sacred elements and practices in Indigenous churches has enhanced their phenomenal growth in the contemporary world today. Abogunrin acknowledges the place of these elements, in spite of criticism against them, in the growth of the Indigenous churches in Nigeria:

Nevertheless, it is mainly through these churches, in spite of the above problem, that Christianity is making its strongest impact on Africa today. On the part of Mission Churches there is need for a change in their evangelical vocabulary as used in the West to take into account the prevailing situation in Africa. The gospel in the New Testament was never preached in a vacuum quite unrelated to the environment. That was why it was able to turn its environment up-side -down.¹⁸⁸

These churches also agreed that these practices are seen as means to an end, affirming that Jesus Christ is the ultimate. The Israelite sacred cult practices offer psychological relief to worshippers because they provide a point of contact between the physical and the mental aspects of belief. They believe firmly that God knows everyone's situation and needs; hence he uses special prophets in Ona Iwa Mimo to deliver messages to the congregation during various services, families, and individuals on how to resolve every spiritual problem in the local or native language they can understand. That asserted that without these special prophets and prophetess many people would have perished or have had untimely death. Founders, church leaders and members averred that traditional background has also enriched the conception and understanding of Christ in the indigenous churches. Their songs, prayers, and reflections have often come up with a deep understanding of Christ that emanated from the influence of their culture and social structure. There are elements of Israelite religion in the practices of some Indigenous Churches, like *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadanland. These elements were transmitted through the Old Testament and other extra - canonical texts. This work has shown that it is evident that

¹⁸⁸ S.O. Abogunrin, 1986. The Total Adequacy of Christ in The African Context *Ogbomoso Journal of Theology* January 1986.

the contextualisation of the gospel is an inevitable task because the founders and leaders of these churches want a church that will in ethos and theology be biblical, relevant and familiar to Africans, but the Christocentric essence and character of the Christian message must not be compromised.

Contextualisation of liturgy, the gospel, worship and practices in Ibadan land by Christians, especially Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, ought not to be exclusivist in outlook because it seems that total to ouster of Western influences in African Christianity is impossible; neither can we dismiss its influence on the life of the church in Africa. Contextualisation must go beyond Africanization in the garb of Christianity. However, caution should be exercised in the process of contextualising the faith because the moment this practice are seen as adequate in themselves, then one is not far from idolatry or syncretism. It has to be noted that grace is the mother and nurse of holiness, and not the apologist of sin.

There are problems with contextualisation of faith among African Indigenous Churches in this contemporary world, especially in Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan. In the rush to contextualise, some may attempt to lessen the demands of the gospel or sacrifice Biblical truth to make the gospel or church more acceptable to people in Ibadanland. This may lead to syncretism. Therefore, there is the need to limit the use of contextualisation to those means and methods which are in harmony with the Word of God, the final authority. Scripture must be the final judge of every culture, as founders, minister - in - charge, leaders (prophets and prophetesses), and members may not always understand the meaning behind forms which they either allow or disallow in the church.

The best people to decide what is appropriate are well-taught believers with adequate and appropriate training who can speak to their own cultures accordingly. Some theologians, argue that the method of interpretation used by evangelicals is often dictated by their cultural mindset, produce new theologies based on different hermeneutical systems -- all in the name of contextualisation (such as "Black Theology" or "Liberation Theology.") Our hermeneutics should be 'grammatico-historical' interpretation of Scripture; which states that the meaning of any Scripture is defined by the intent of the author, which, in turn, can only be determined by the language he used and the historical context in which he wrote. While there can be only one meaning, there may be numerous applications.

General Conclusion, Evaluation and Recommendations

General Conclusion

This study shows that the Israelites were heavily influenced by the Canaanites; even Israelite culture was largely Canaanite in nature. The Israelites borrowed art, architecture and music from their Canaanite neighbours but refused to extend their art to images of Yahwism in obedience to Exodus 20: 4-5 - ethical Decalogue. Israelites, like her neighbours of that period, thought and practised worship purely in terms of ritual or cult. They have the believe that Israel must worship God at specific holy or sacred places through the use of definite holy objects, following some specific God-given rules, with the help of certain holy men of God, working under God's Spirit.

The cultic practices in worship as recorded in the Old Testament were a divine revelation given by God to Moses and some other leaders in Israel, although the ritual act and sacrifices were limited in scope and purpose, their spiritual value at that time was pedagogical, teaching Israel about the right way to approach a holy and eternal God. The laws in the life of the Israelite then were intended to point to the one who would give them righteousness by faith since they had no merit in God's sight by works of flesh and laws but only through the finished work of Christ on the cross.

There have been different efforts aimed at contextualising the Christian faith in Africa and particularly in Ibadan land. This has been actively carried out by the churches variously referred to as the African Indigenous or Instituted Churches. They adopted the religious activities of Israel and extensively introduced African elements into the liturgy of the church in Africa. These attempts have focused mainly on issues bordering on liturgy and the reading and interpretation of Biblical texts. The common grounds between *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim and some aspects of Israelite cultic practices helped to contextually ground the Christian faith effectively in Ibadan.

This work opines that the results of ideal contextualisation helped to produce positive changes; made Christians in Africa to be committed and have direct access to God without looking for any intermediary. It affects every aspect of people's lives in all things at all times and places. The correct contextualisation is a critical one; but it will help to avoid spreading a gospel dressed in Western clothes, as the contextualised gospel will be

communicated in ways the people will understand. It also helped to change the mindset of the people, since ideal contextualisation will help to present a gospel that is able to break the power of the devil in their hearts. It avoids the ethnocentrism of monocultural approach by taking cultural differences seriously and affirming the good in all cultures. It affirms the right of Christians in every context to be free from Western domination. It also gives the opportunity to every community of believers to develop its own theology. It must be contemporary, spontaneous, needs-oriented, practical, flexible and non-absolute. Any method employed to understand the text of the Scripture as it was originally meant to be understood (hermeneutics) must give priority to the text itself.

In contextualisation, cultural and sub-cultural notions need to be challenged, biblical authority needs to be maintained, and the truth has to be communicated. Thus, contextualisation is a necessary tool and clear gospel proclamation is the goal. We must not confuse the two. For contextualisation to be evangelically meaningful, it must creatively engage the traditional culture because there can be no de-culturized gospel since the gospel itself evolved and flourished in different cultural backgrounds. And for the gospel to be truly and deeply rooted in Africa, particularly Ibadanland, it must be rooted in traditional culture and values which create indigenous awareness.

What is poorly communicated is not easily comprehended. It seems that the White missionaries did not teach the value of God in African cultural context. This created a shallow knowledge of Christianity among the Africans. Indeed, Western civilization overshadowed Christianity, and was mistaken for it. Although the missionaries gave what they had, they were biased and had wrong conceptions in condemning wholly Africans' culture. If, at the beginning, anyone or group had enough vision to suggest that, while accepting Christianity as a way of life, Nigerians, especially the Yoruba, did not need to throw away what was good and valuable in their own culture, things would have been better and yielded positive results. This is because, in every culture, there is what is described as 'usable vehicles in every culture'. This is the time to correct the mistakes of the early missionaries who in presenting the Gospel, first discredited the African culture instead of undertaking the double operation of undressing Christianity from the foreign culture and dressing it in indigenous culture with both process taking place simultaneously; since Christianity cannot exist without a dress.

This work is of the opinion that the liturgy, and the way of worship we introduce in Ibadan should be relevant to our community in a concrete situation, active participation is important in worship not the domination of rules and rites, hence the Holy Spirit of God must be given liberty as it operates at Cherubim and Seraphim especially at *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Church. Africans must be careful against Western-imported principles and methods in our liturgy, practice and worship, which often do not suit Africans or *Yoruba* way of doing things. The time has now come when Africans must experience Christ in their own cultural tradition. The Word must become flesh and dwell in Africa, among Africans, in an African context. This work is not advocating that African culture must be revived in the sense of bringing back all the traditional religious rites, practices and rituals such as we see at formally organized cultural and traditional displays at local, national and international levels. We have also not said that African Christianity must have no contact with other cultures. What this work is saying is that the absolute foreignness of the African Christian Church as it was brought by the foreign missionaries must be removed, and that the Church must be transformed into a dynamic and saving way of life whose seeds germinate in African soil and whose roots can hold firmly, anchoring the Church as it seeks to play its part in making God's will done on earth as it is done in heaven.

In contextualising the Christian faith, it is expedient not to advocate gospel of accommodation, a gospel that seeks to find common platforms for all adherents of various or different faiths. The Christocentric character of the Christian faith must not be negotiated in the process of contextualisation, because the only antidote for man's predicaments in life is Jesus Christ. His sacrifice or the bloodshed on the cross of Calvary is the only acceptable sacrifice that can atone for sin and bring healing. Jesus Christ must remain in the centre and the heart of every liturgy, practice, worship and gospel proclaimed. Contextualisation in Africa, Ibadanland in particular, must be critical, comprehensive and holistically transformative in character, as transformation remains the essence of the Christian faith. This work will help to re-examine critically what is called "existential contextualisation" that had no objective ground and could be manipulated according to experience and culture.

The study makes the following recommendations:

The church in the twenty-first century needs to be proactively engaged in contextualisation. But the church must understand, recognize and appreciate the values of African and Yoruba

cultures irrespective of the class and race. Every cultural group, like the Yoruba in Ibadanland, has some enduring values. It is the duty of the church to discover this and bring to fullness all the riches that God has hidden in creation and history. Every being encounters Christianity in cultures. No one ever meets universal Christianity in itself but we only meet Christianity in a local form, that means a historically, culturally conditioned form. We need not fear this; when God became man, he became a historically, culturally conditioned man in a particular time and place.

There is nothing wrong in having local forms of Christianity, provided we remember that they are local and not putting such above Jesus Christ. Hence, the task of contextualising is imperative and inevitable. While Christians globally should be one according to the prayers of Jesus Christ in John 17 and the admonition of St. Paul that we have "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all," (Eph. 4 : 4,6), yet it must not be forgotten that worshippers come from various cultures. The gospel's message must not only be proclaimed to the people of diverse cultures. It must also address the realities of the cultural context and needs of the people. Yet, the contextualisation of the gospel message must take the Word of God as the basis and final authority in its task.

The critical Bible-based contextualisation is the most appropriate method for the Yoruba Christians Church today. Indeed, *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim Church takes the Bible as the sole means of contextualisation. But there is need to test all the words, actions and motives against the Scripture because the Bible alone ought to be the highest authority in matters of life and faith to do and follow. Ways that are not based on the Scripture should be avoided.

The approach of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímọ́* Cherubim and Seraphim Church must involve thorough knowledge of the gospel's message and the given cultural context. The use of the worldview of the African culture can serve as a bridge in communicating the gospel message to the people of Ibadan. Awareness of the African values will be helpful in transmitting the gospel in the diverse African cultures. But, culture must be put under the testing authority of the absolute truth of the Word of God. Likewise, cultures are to be taken seriously, because of the need for mankind to create rich cultures, and to glorify God therein. As it does the task, it must be sure that it is incarnated in the life of the members of the Church. Since the Biblical message is a prepared message for a people, the Gospel must be presented in a

language the recipients can understand. The Church must make sure that her worship and liturgy are relevant to the culture of the community. She would have to incarnate in the community by interacting with the community with a view to appreciating the importance of the cultural dynamics in the process of relating the biblical message to the life of the people.

There is need to identify the elements of the culture that will make it easier for the communicator to be understood but Cultural elements which are compatible with Scriptural norms are to be retained, while those which run contrary to the norm must be either discarded or modified to reflect Biblical truths. No doubt, God has already prepared all the people on earth to hear the Gospel; the preparation has been done through general revelation and special revelation. In order to make liturgy, worship and preaching of the gospel meaningful and relevant to any group of people, they have to be carried out within the context of the people in symbols and language they will understand. In other words, whether it be teaching, preaching, evangelizing, helping or living the life, worship/liturgy must be undertaken in ways the people concerned will be able to understand and appreciate the gospel communicated in culturally relevant forms.

In order to be effective and alive in her life, liturgy and worship in Ibadan land, the church needs to respect, preserve, and dedicate to the glory of God any Israelite sacred cult practices and elements that is valuable in the culture and institutions of Ibadan land. This will make her preserve full allegiance to the eternal, cosmic, the only saviour and unchanging Christ. This work holds that the purpose of Christianity is to fulfill and not to destroy; to make free, and not to enslave. In the attempt of the church to contextualise, by making effort to meet the challenges of contemporary culture, she must make sure the basis of her preaching, teaching and worship is good news about the Lord Jesus Christ. She must dismiss or avoid any attempt and actions to water down the message of Jesus Christ because, without the Lordship of Jesus Christ, there is no good news. She should be a church who knows and lives in the watchful consciousness of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and Christ must be the pre-eminent in all things. She must have unflinching faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ in her conscious preservation of the faith. Therefore, for anybody to be faithful to the Scripture and relevant to the culture, such person must maintain the inseparable but distinct work of the creator and saviour.

There are numerous groups of Cherubim and Seraphim Churches because people want power, position, fame, earthly power and worldly things. This thesis observed that the founder, ministers- in- charge, church leaders, members of Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, especially in *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim church, need to re-appraise the issue of unification in liturgy, worship and practices and create room for balanced appropriate training, and re-training with readiness and availability of leaders to make them available for such training. This will prevent the abuse of these practices by some leaders and members in the name of contextualisation, especially by church leadership, prophets and prophetess who have no training and mentors; who misleads followers and misrepresent Cherubim and Seraphim Church.

Therefore, it is imperative for scholars to conduct more research and enlighten founders, ministers- in- charge, church leaders and members of Cherubim and Seraphim Church and non- members to take the issue of unification more seriously because the independence and freedom is being misused at times. Take for example, the negative effects of a group known as '*Ọmọ Ogun Sòkalẹ̀' tàbí 'Pápá Njọ'*'. These are the leaders, Prophets and Prophetess in Cherubim and Seraphim Churches who are without training, not stable in a particular church, but who are always on the move; they go to any level to mislead followers and misrepresent Cherubim and Seraphim Church : "*àwọn tí kò ní training, bẹ̀ẹ̀ni wọn kò dúró nínú ijọ kan pátó, tí nwọ́n dàbí èpò tó nba C&S lójú jẹ, wọn nlo èbùn àti agbára wọn láti se iká láti ba ti enikejì jẹ nípa lílo oògùn àbáláyé ti ibílẹ̀* (they are into negative syncretism in the name of contextualising the faith; they are like weed that destroy Cherubim and Seraphim church; they even use black candles to do harm in carrying out sacred preparation.

Israelite cultic activities, manifesting as curative baths, symbolic death transfer and sacred elements confirming the patterning of *Ọ̀nà Ìwà Mímó* Cherubim and Seraphim Church after Old Testament, have been effectively utilised in the church to contextually ground their brand of Christian faith. These practices have helped in addressing the problems of chronic diseases; ward off untimely death, misfortune and made worship meaningful to members, yet there is need for caution in order to utilize these practices effectively.

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APPENDIX 1

STRUCTURED QUESTIONS FOR ORAL INTERVIEW

- Q1 What are your views on the idea of contextualisation (making your worship relevant to your culture) of some Israelite sacred cultic practices in your church?
- Q2. Do the respondents accept the existence of Israelite sacred cultic practices as media of contextualisation in their churches?
- Q3. Why do the respondents practice ritual cleansing and make sacred preparations?
- Q4 Have you been subjected to any cleansing rites and spiritual practices with the mind of contextualizing your faith in your church?
- Q5. What is the view of the respondents about the blood of Jesus Christ as the only power to redeem?
- Q6. Are there special benefits that the respondents derive from contextualising their worship and liturgy using sacred places like mercy land (*ile aanu*), wilderness (*iju*) or power house (*ile Agbara*)?
- Q7. What is the view of the respondents about scapegoatism (vicarious victim) and Jesus Christ as the only saviour and healer?
- Q 8 Why does Cherubim and Seraphim Church Ona Iwa Mimo contextualises some aspects of Israelite cultic rituals, elements and practices in her liturgy?

APPENDIX II

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

ISRAELITE SACRED CULTIC ELEMENTS AND PRACTICES IN SELECTED
CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM CHURCHES (ONA-IWA MIMO) IN IBADANLAND

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information for the purpose of conducting a research study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) programme under the auspices of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan. This questionnaire is to be completed by our respondents whom we have selected in trust and confidence that they will assist us in our effort to collect reliable data. The study and its findings are meant exclusively for academic purpose and the confidentiality of the information to be supplied is guaranteed. The pieces of information supplied and collected will be held and treated in strict confidence. Thus, your cooperation towards the success of this research will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Adagbada, C. O. (Ven.)

RESEARCH DESIGN

SECTION A: RESPONDENT’S PERSONAL DATA

Please tick the appropriate

Name: Optional

Sex: (Tick) Male: () Female ()

Age: 20 – 30 () 31 – 50 () 51-69 () 70 and above ()

Marital Status: Married () Single ()

Educational Background: Primary Education () J S C E () S S C E ()

DIPLOMA/NCE, B. A. / B. Sc () M. A. /M Sc. () Ph. D /D.D ()

Membership of C& S: Yes () No ()

If member of C&S what is your Group/Status in the Church: Ordinary member () Choir () Group Leader () Church Founder Leader () Clergy ()

Describe your membership in the church: (a) Birth () (b) Marriage () (c) Circumstance ()

For how long have you been attending this Church? Under 1 - 5 years () 6 -10 years () 11 and above years

Section B

Respondent’s reaction to research statement on an assessment of Contextualisation of Selected Israelite Sacred Elements and Practices in Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Churches, in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Key: A- Agree D –Disagree N – No comment

Instruction: Please indicate your enquiries from the three options

S/N	Research Statements	A	D	N
1	Contextualisation of some Israelite sacred cultic practices and the act of making the liturgy, practice and worship of <i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> C&S Church relevant to your culture is a good Idea			
2	Animal sacrifices are required for healing, protection, remission of sins and salvation of humankind.			
3	The sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have significance to salvation of souls in Cherubim and Seraphim Church.			
4	<i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim churches practice river bath, scapegoatism/ animal sacrifices, sacred preparation, ritual cleansing(not allowing women during menstruation to enter church building for worship			
5	Christians can be redeemed through other means apart from the blood of Jesus Christ.			

6	Leaders and members of C&S derive a lot of benefits from the use of mercy land (<i>ile aanu</i>) and sacred preparation (<i>Eto sise, Igbele</i>)			
7	The scripture that says Christians should ask for everything in prayer ‘in the mighty name of Jesus Christ alone is acceptable to Cherubim and Seraphim Church			
8	Contextualisation by <i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim Church of some aspects of Israelite rituals, elements and practices in her liturgy enriches Christianity in Africa and Ibadan in particular.			
9	Israelite Sacred Cultic practices and elements in the liturgy, social and psychological lives of members of <i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim Churches in Ibadan help to provide solution to their spiritual problems.			
10	Jesus Christ is superior and above every culture			
11	There are other mediators between humankind and God Almighty apart from Jesus Christ that can protect and take humankind to Eternal Home			
12	There are other powers and names apart from the Name of Jesus Christ that can heal, save and redeem humankind			
13	Holy Spirit is the controller and Chief Director of leaders and members of <i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan			
14	Contextualisation is a suitable way of making the gospel relevant to the culture and faithful to the scripture in <i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim church in Ibadan.			
15	Leaders and members of <i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim Church enjoy some other benefits apart from solving spiritual problems from the selected Israelite sacred cultic elements and Practices appropriated in their liturgy, social and psychological lives.			

APPENDIX III
REFERENCES

A. PRIMARY SOURCES: LIST AND PARTICULAR OF INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

S/N	NAMES	STATUS	AGE	ADDRESSES	DATE
1	Abass M. B. (Snr. Rev. Ap. Mother Prophet)	Spiritual Mother in Charge	50	Inspiration of God Church Int'l C & S Imisi Oluwa Spiritual Gospel Church of Christ , Agbaje. IBNLG	8/5/2012
2.	Abass S. A. (Apostle)	Church admin	50	Inspiration of God Church Int'l C&S Imisi Oluwa Spiritual Gospel Church of Christ , Agbaje. IBNLG	8/5/2012
3.	Adebanjo M.O.(Revd. Prince)	Church Leader and Minister In Charge, Former Chairman OAIC of Oyo-State	70	Christ Gospel of Peace Aladura(Inc) Alalubosa Area, Ibadan IB. SOUTH WEST LOCAL GOVT.	8/8/2012
4	Adekola David (Snr. Evangelist)	Church Leader	52	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan.IB NLG	5/8/2012
5	Adekunle Joseph O. (Rev)	1ST Vice Chairman Oyo State OAIC Ibadan, Chairman CAN Ona Ara LG & Minister In Charge	Adult	God Loving Church International, Ifelodun Olunloyo. ONA ARA LOCAL GOVT	7/8/2012
6	Ademiluyi R.A. (Most Superior Evangelist Prince)	Chairman O.A.I.C Oyo –State chapter	59	EGBEDA LOCAL GOVT.	8/8/2012
7.	Adeopa (Rev. Mother (Dr.))	Church Leader	62	The Eternal Sacred Order C&S Oke Iwa Mimo, Odo Ona , Ibadan ,IB SWLG	28/3/2012
8.	Adeopa I .O (Snr. Supr. Apostle) (Dr)	Founder Leader	70+	The Eternal Sacred Order C&S Oke Iwa Mimo, Odo-Ona Ibadan. IBSWLG	28/3/2012
9.	Adepoju A. Kehinde (Evangelist)	Church Secretary	32	Inspiration of God Church Int'l C&S Imisi Oluwa Spiritual Gospel Church of Christ, Agbaje.	8/5/2012
10	Adetunji Williams (Evangelist	Church Leader &	44	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New	5/8/2012

	Aladura)	Secretary Ibadan Central District of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Ibadan.		Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan.IBNLG	
11.	Adeyemo T.A. (Rev. Dr)	Church Leader	58	Heart of Christ Church, Oki CHAIRMAN C.A.N EGBEDA LOCAL GOVERNMENT	28/7/2012
12.	Afolabi (Lady Leader)	Senior Lady Leader	Adult	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria & Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan	29/4/2012
13	Ajayi Abiodun Ezekiel (Apostle)	Clergy	66	Sacred Cherubim and Seraphim Church Koloko, Ibadan. IB.NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVT.	20/06/2012
14	Ajirire (Sp. Apostle)	Church leader	63	C&S Okeseni IBNELG	22/8/2012
15	Akinmoladun Ayo (Apostle Dr.)	Church leader	Adult	C&S Okeseni IBNELG	22/8/2012
16	Akinosun Ezekiel Sunday (Evangelist)	Church leader	Adult	C&S Movement Liberty, Oke Ado Ibadan. IB.SOUTH WEST L.G	10/01/2013
17	Akinwale Kola (Most Special Apostle)	General Secretary OAIC OYO- STATE	45	IB.NORTH LOCAL GOVT.	8/8/2012
18	Alatise D. I. (Rev. Apostle Mother)	Church Leader	58	Christ Life Mission Church Aladura, Odo Ona Elewe OLUYOLE L.G. Ibadan	23/5/2012
19	Alatise Malchus (Snr. Pastor)	Senior Pastor/ Church Leader	52	Christ Life Mission Church, Aladura, Odo- Ona Elewe	23/5/2012
20	Alatise, J A. (Prophet (Dr.) (JP)	Founder , Church Leader, Chairman OLUYOLE LOCAL GOVT	71	Christ Life Mission Church Aladura, Odo Ona Elewe OLUYOLE L.G. Ibadan	23/5/2012
21	Amao Adeolu (Pastor Prophet)	Minister in Charge, Leader and Chairman Ibadan Central District of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Ibadan	37	Cherubim and Seraphim Ona Iwa Mimo Ijokodo, Ibadan IBNLG	30/4/2012 20/5/2012
22	Atilade Magnus Adeyemi	Zonal Chairman for OAIC South	69	Gospel Baptist church of Nigeria &Overseas	16/2/2012

		West Zone of Nigeria		(Indigenous)	
23	Awujoola Marian (Lady Leader)	Women Leader	56	Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara Rd. Ibadan	7/8/2012
24	Awujoola Matthew (Evangelist)	Leader & Secretary of Moboluwaduro District of Ona Iwa Mimo in Ibadan land	35	Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara Rd. Ibadan ONA RAA LOCAL GOV'T	7/8/2012
25	Awujoola Solomon (Apostle)	Minister in Charge and Vice Chairman Moboluwaduro District of Ona Iwa Mimo in Ibadan land	68	Ona Iwa Mimo Cherubim and Seraphim Nig. & Overseas Gangansi Orita Merin Paara Rd. Ibadan. ONA ARA LOCAL GOV'T.	7/8/2012
26	Ayeni V. B. (Prophetess)	Founder Leader	67	Sacred C&S Olorunsogo Agbowo, Ibadan IBNLG	15/5/2012
27	Bamikole Lawrence (Senior Superintendent Apostle (Dr.) JP	Founder and Church Leader	88	The Eternal Sacred Order C&S Oke Igbala Agbo Jesu Branch Monatan Ibadan. LAGELU LG	28/02/2012
28	Bamimore Abigail (Aladura)	Church women Leader	57	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG	5/8/2012
29	Bamimore Jacob (Most Shr. Apostle.)	Minister in Charge & Church Leader	75	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG	18/7/2012
30	Bamimore Jumoke (Miss)	Choir Member	20	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG	5/8/2012
31	Bosede A.O. (Apostle)	Senior Apostle	68	Sacred C&S Gosheni Parish, Mokola, Ibadan	18/4/2012
32	Dada E.O. (Supt. Apostle)	Leader & Member	65	The Sacred C&S Oje Olokun Atipe Ibadan, IB.NORTH EAST L.G	14/7/2012
33	Dada Olowookere (Aladura)	Church Leader	30	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG	17/4/2012
34	Daramola (Evangelist)	Secretary	Adult	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria & Overseas, No 1,	29/4/2012

				Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan IBNLG	
35	Idowu R.O. (Rev)	Minister in Charge	70	Power of Praise Bible Church, Sango Ibadan IBNLG	30/7/2012
36	Kolade Oladele (Prophet)	Church prophet	28	Inspiration of God Church Int'l C &S Imisi Oluwa Spiritual Gospel Church of Christ , Agbaje.	8/5/2012
37	Majekodunmi Gabriel (Sp. Snr)	Provincial Chairman	70	Eternal Sacred Order C&S IB.NESLG	15/7/2012
38	Makanju Abayomi (Apostle)	clergy	65	Cherubim & Seraphim Ori Oke Kosehunti Ikolaba, Ibadan	2/8/2012
39	Miss Olanrewaju Kehinde (Miss)	Choir Leader	21	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG	5/8/2012
40	Morakinyo F. (Prophetess)	member	53	C&S Olorunsogo, Agbowo, Ibadan. IBNLG	15/5/2012
41	Ogundeji (Bishop)	OAIC LEADER IN OYO STATE	64	Soul Rescue Apostolic Church, Ring Road, Ibadan IBSW	8/8/2012
42	Ojubamire Jeremiah (Pastor)	Church Leader	45	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S New Jerusalem Ilupeju Bodija, Ibadan. IBNLG	5/8/2012
43	Okesola Abigail (Mother in Israel)	Wife of the First Leader of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S church in Ibadan.	65	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria & Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan. IBNLG	29/4/2012
44	Okesola Okegbade Adigun- Wolii Ibadan (General Apostle Rev. (Dr.) Pastor)	1ST Leader & Minister in Charge in Ibadan Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Church	70	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S church of Nigeria and Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan. IBNLG	28/5/2008 2/6/2008 20/1/2009
45	Okesola Wemimo (Evangelist)	Clergy/ Church leader	31+	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nig and Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan	29/4/2012
46	Oladiti Sunday (Supt.Apostle Prophet)	clergy	64	District Headquarters, Oje Olokun IB. NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVT.	18/4/2012
47	Olaiya M. O.(General Apostle)	Clergy/Church leader	38	Independence Cherubim and Seraphim Church Koseunti, Ikolaba, Ibadan	2/8/2012

48	Olaniran Jonathan Kola (Special Apostle Prophet (Dr.))	General Secretary of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria and Overseas.	70+	Ona Iwa Mimo, C&S Orogun Ibadan. AKINYELE LOCAL GOVT.	29/4/2012
49	Olojo Kosoko Titilayo (Revd Pastor Prophetess Evangelist)	Church Leader and Minister in Charge	56	Former prophetess at Ona Iwa Mimo C&S NO 1 Mokola , now Founder of C&S Shilo Temple of Christ Church Mokola Hill. IBNLG	27/3/2012 04/05/2012
50	Oluyoola Joshua AjagunJesu (Snr. Supr. Apostle)	Senior Apostle & Church Founder	77	C&S Mount Zion, Agbala Jehovah Nissi, Akintobi Olodo, Ibadan, LAGELU LG	20/7/2012
51	Omikunle B. (The Ven.)	C.A.N Chairman Ibadan SOUTH EAST LG	64	IB.SOUTH EAST LOCAL GOVT	8/8/2012
52	Onanuga (Snr. Prophetess)	Prophetess	51	Christ Life Mission Church, Aladura, Odo- Ona Elewe	23/5/2012
53	Oni G. (Prophet)	Member	42	C&S Church Araromi Parish, Odo Ona, IBADAN SOUTH WEST LG	18/5/2012
54	Oniyide David Bisi (Apostle)	Clergy	62	Sacred C&S Church, Oluwa Joba Oke Igbala Parish, Ojokondo, Agbowo, Ibadan	3/8/2012
55	Ore Ofe P.O (Snr Apostle Prophet)	Minister in Charge and Leader	31	Ona Iwa Mimo Onimajemu C&S Church Ore-Ofe Olorun Orisun Ayo Sango IBNLG	30/7/2012
56	Oyeleke Abigail Omoyinola (Rev)	Group Leader	42	Cherubim & Seraphim Ori Oke Kosehunti Ikolaba, Ibadan IBNLG	2/8/2012
57	Philips Segun (Most Snr. Apostle)	Vice Chairman Ibadan Central District of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Ibadan Church Leader & Minister in Charge	Adult	Ona Iwa Mimo Temple of Solution Spiritual Evangelical Ministry. Awotan, Ibadan, IDO LG	29/3/2012 & 7/05/2012
58	Raji Odunola (Revd Ap. Mother/ Prophetess (JP))	Chairperson Women and Children Dept, OAIC South West	48	Sacred C&S Church, Oluwa Joba Oke Igbala Parish, Ojokondo, Agbowo, Ibadan	12/6/2012

		Zone			
59	Rojaiye M. B. (Revd. (Dr.))	CAN Chairman IDO LG, Former 1ST Vice Chairman of OAIC of Oyo – State and Minister in charge	58	Christal Light Church, Ido. IDO LOCAL GOVT.	8/8/2012
60	Ronke Femi Adekojo (Miss)	member	25	Cherubim & Seraphim Ori Oke Kosehunti Ikolaba, Ibadan	2/8/2012
61	Sofolabo E. (Snr. Lady Leader)	Lady Leader & Treasurer Moboluwaduro District, Ibadan of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Ibadan	62	Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Nigeria & Overseas, No 1, Army Barrack Rd, Mokola, Ibadan. IBNLG	29/4/2012
62	Yinka Ayegbusi (Lady Evangelist)	Church Evangelist	49	Christ Life Mission Church, Aladura, Odo- Ona Elewe, Ib. OLUYOLE LG	23/ 5 /2012

APPENDIX IV

Demographic Data of Questionnaire Respondents

The demographic data is presented in tables below:

This section of this work presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents of the study.

Table 1.1: Gender, Age and Marital Status Distribution of the Respondents

Variable	Freq.	Percent age
GENDER		
Male	124	40.4
Female	190	55.4
No Indication	13	4.2
Total	327	100.0
AGE BRACKET (in years)		
20-30	77	25.1
31-50	115	30.9
51-69	86	28.0
70 and above	47	15.3
No Indication	02	.7
Total	327	100.0
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	202	65.8
Single	103	27.0
No Indication	22	7.2
Total	327	100.0

The data collected shows that 327 respondents participated in this study, out of which 55% were female, 40% were male and 5% failed to indicate their gender. This implies that both sexes are adequately represented in the study. Hence the findings cannot be described as to be gender biased.

The table also reveals that 25% of the respondents were between 20 and 30 years of age, 31% were between 31 and 50 years, 28% were between 51 and 69 years and 15% were either 70 or above years old. Only 1% failed to indicate their age bracket.

It is also shown that 66% of the respondents were married, 27% were single and 7% failed to indicate their marital status. The pie charts below captures this information graphically:

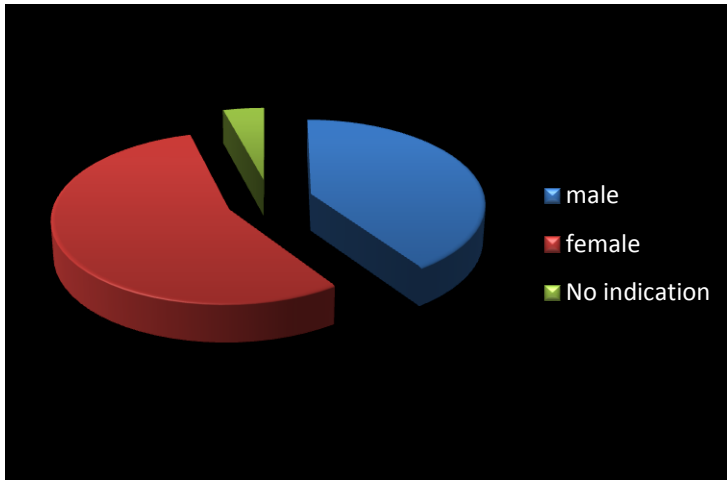


Fig. 1. 1: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

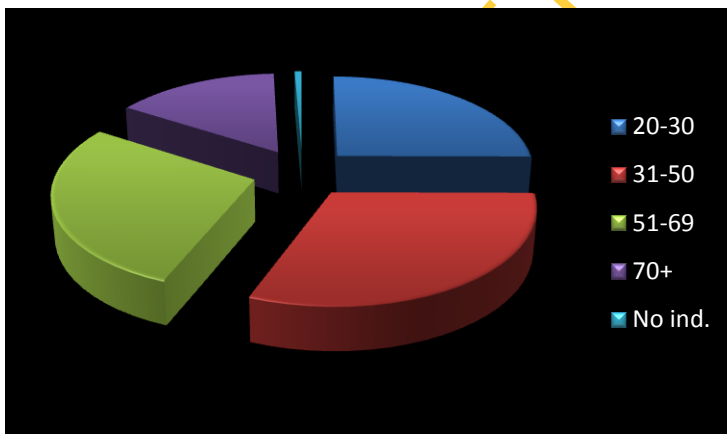


Fig. 1.2: Age Distribution of the Respondents

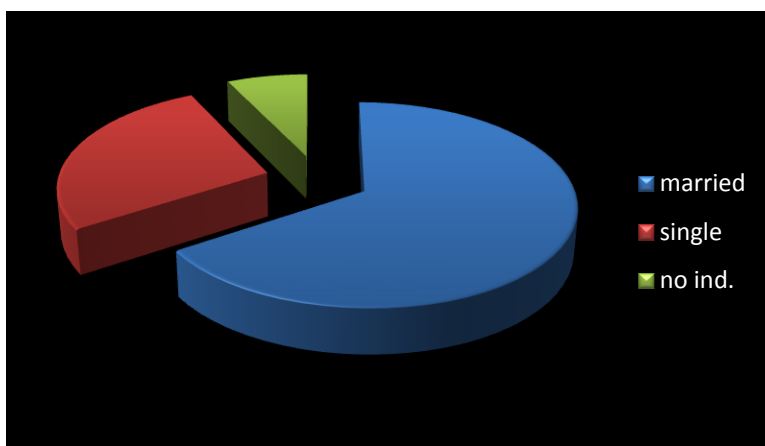


Fig. 1.3: Distribution of Respondents based on Marital Status

Table 1.2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Educational Qualification, Religion and Group Status

Variable	Freq.	Percentage
EDUC. QUALIFICATION		
Pry school	40	13.0
JSS	62	20.2
SSS	115	37.5
DIPLOMA/NCE/BA/BSC	86	21.5
Masters	7	2.3
No Indication	17	5.5
Total	327	100.0
RELIGION		
Christian	318	97.1
No Indication	9	2.9
Total	327	100.0
GROUP STATUS		
Ordinary Member	93	30.3
Choir	73	23.8
Group Leader	88	28.7
Church founder	17	2.3
Clergy/ Minister in Charge	30	9.8
No Indication	26	5.2
Total	327	100.0

Among the respondents, 13% had primary education qualification, 20% had junior secondary, 38% had senior secondary, 22% had higher education qualification less than masters and 2% had Masters Degree. 6% failed to indicate their educational qualification. It

is also shown in the table that almost all the respondents were Christians (97%), but only one person failed to indicate his/her religion.

The analysis of the status of the respondents in their various churches shows that 30% were just ordinary church members, 24% were choir, 29% were group leaders, 2% were church founders and 10% were part of the clergy and minister- in- charge in the churches. But 5% of them failed to indicate their group status. The pie charts below presents this information graphically.

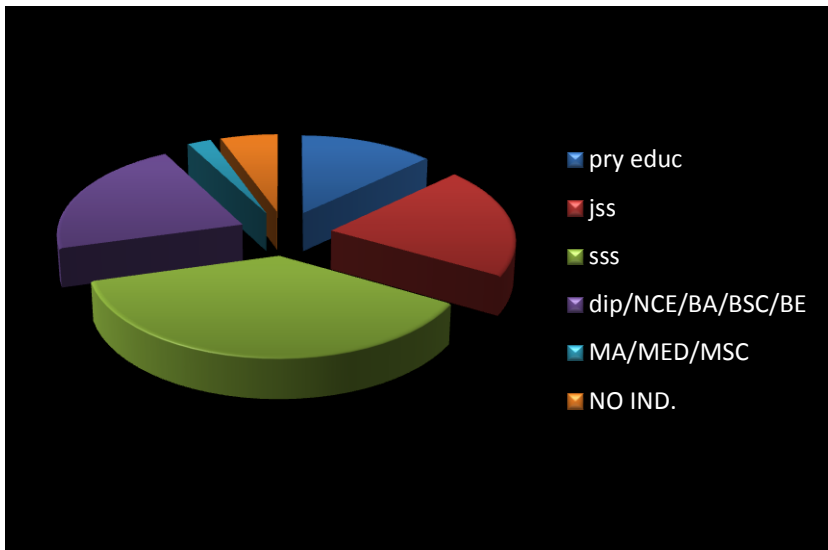


Fig. 1.4: Distribution of the Respondents Based on their Academic Qualification

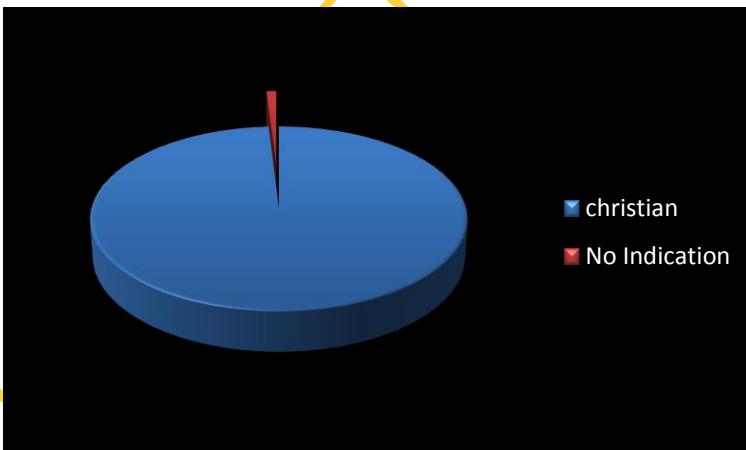


Fig. 1.5: Distribution of the Respondents Based on Religion

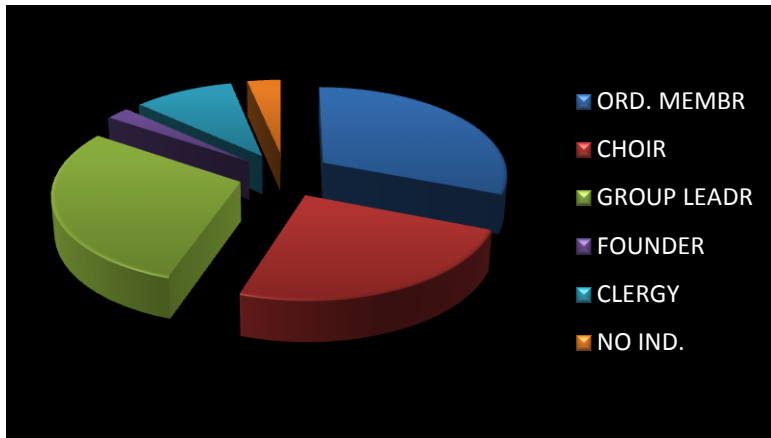


Fig. 1.6: Distribution of the Respondents Based on Group Status

Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question 1: Do the respondents accept the existence of Israelite sacred cultic practices as media of contextualisation in their churches?

Table 2.1: View of the Respondents about Existence of Israelite Sacred Cultic Practices as Media of Contextualisation in their Churches

S/N	ITEMS	OPTION	FREQ.	%
1	Are you a Christian/ member of C&S?	Yes	325	99.3
		No	-	0.0
2	How long have you been attending this church?	1-5yrs	48	15.6
		6-10yrs	106	34.5
		11yrs and above	151	49.2
		No Indication	2	0.7
3	Contextualisation of some Israelites practices and the act of making the liturgy, practice and worship of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Church relevant to your culture is a good idea.	It is good for our worship because it makes our worship meaningful and relevant to our culture	124	33.9
		Christianity should be patterned after the Bible's doctrine of Christ	146	47.6
		It is good and useful	39	12.7
		Our church does not have interest	1	0.3
		We are strictly Bible church		

		these days.	6	2.0
		I do not have the idea of this	3	1.0
		No response	8	2.6
4	Do you agree that cherubim and Seraphim Churches Ona Iwa Mimo contextualise some aspects of Israelites sacred elements and practices in her liturgy?	Agree	303	95.4
		No response	14	4.6
5	Israelite sacred cultic practices and elements in the liturgy, social and psychological lives of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S Churches in Ibadan help to provide solutions to their spiritual problems and offer psychological relief to worshippers.	Agree	290	94.5
		I don't know	17	5.5

Almost all the respondents were members of C&S and Christians (99%) and that the majority had been attending their churches for over 10 years (49%); 35% of them had been attending their churches between 6 to 10 years; and only 16% had been in their churches for less than 6 years. This shows that 84% of the respondents have been attending their churches for over 5 years; hence, they should be familiar with all the church practices.

The table also reveals the view of the respondents about contextualisation of some Israelite practices in their churches. A total 34% felt it is good for their worship; 13% felt it is good and useful; 48% felt Christianity should be patterned after the bible doctrine of Christ; 0.3% felt his/her church is not interested, and 2% claimed that their church is strictly Bible church these days. But it is shown in the table that 95% of the respondents agreed that C&S Church *Ona Iwa Mimo* contextualise some of Israelite sacred rituals, elements and practices in her liturgy; and 95% believed that these practices solve some of their spiritual problems and therefore offer psychological relief to worshippers because they provide a point of contact between the physical and mental aspects of belief. From this, it can be interred that the majority of the respondents believed in contextualisation of some Israelite practices in their churches. Therefore, the respondents accepted the existence of Israelite sacred cultic practices as media of contextualisation in their churches. The chart below presents this information in graphic.

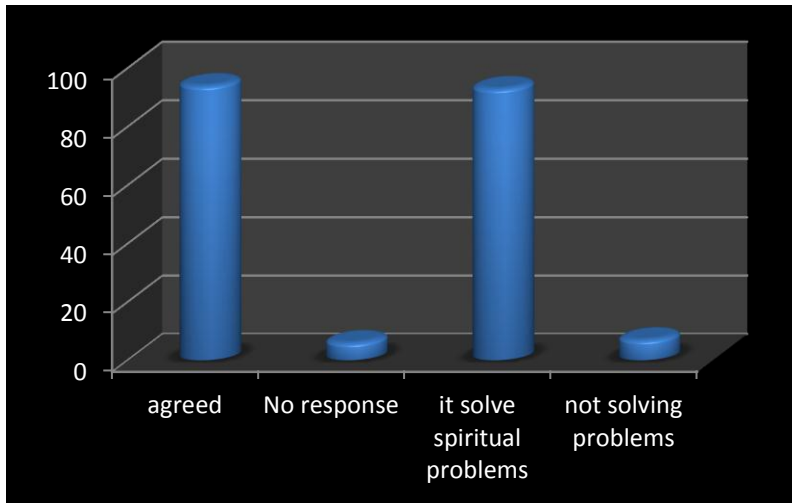


Fig. 2.2: Acceptance of Existence of Israelite Sacred Cultic Practices as Media of Contextualization in *Ona Iwa Mimo* Cherubim and Seraphim Churches

Research Question 2: Why do the respondents practise ritual cleansing and make sacred preparations?

Table 3. 1: Reasons for Practicing Ritual Cleansing and make Sacred Preparations

S/N	ITEMS	OPTION	FREQ.	%
1	Have you been subjected to any cleansing rites and spiritual practices with the mind of contextualising your faith in your church?	Yes	77	18.6
		No	248	80.8
		No response	2	.7
2	If yes, do you believe and agree with this practice?	Agree	49	16.0
		Disagree	103	33.6
		No response	155	50.5
3	Do you agree and support the act of making the liturgy, practice and worship of your church relevant to your culture?	Agree	153	43.3
		Disagree	164	53.4
		No response	10	3.3
4	If yes, give reasons to support this idea	It helps members and leaders to pray according to their local language	93	22.3
		It is biblical, acceptable to us and it enriches Christianity in Africa and Ibadan land	36	15.5
		No response	178	58.0

Table 3.1 reveals that about 19% of the respondents had been subjected to cleansing rites and spiritual practices; about 16% of them believed and agreed with the practices and 51% failed to respond; 43.3% of the respondents supported the act of making the liturgy, practice and worship of their churches relevant to their culture. The reasons given for this are - ‘everybody is praying according to his /her native language’ (30%); ‘it is biblical and acceptable to us because it enriches Christianity in Africa and Ibadan, (15.5%); while 58% of the respondents did not give any reason. These reasons are presented in a chart below.

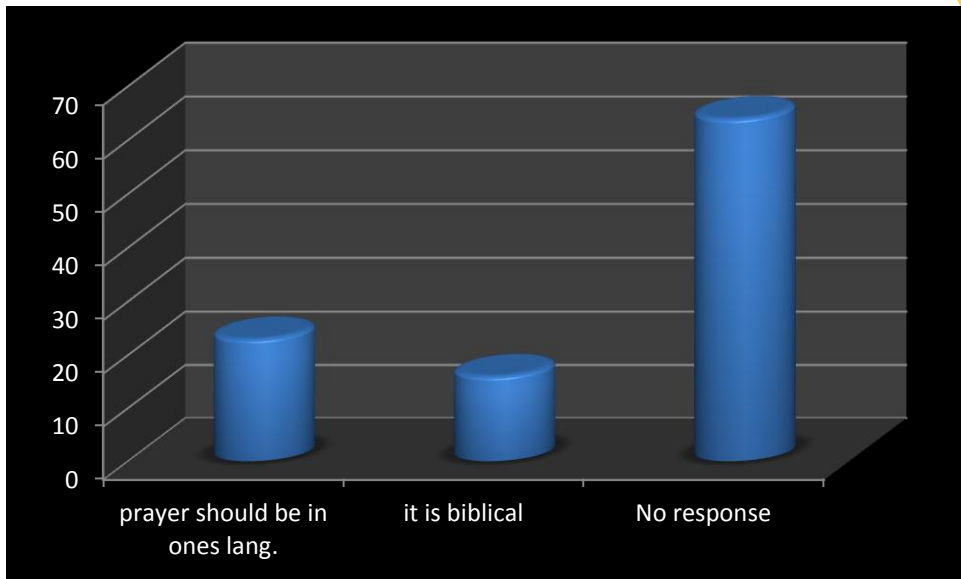


Fig. 3. 1 Reasons for Ritual Cleansing and Sacred Preparation

Research Question 3: What is the view of the respondents about using animal sacrifice for scapegoatism and the blood of Jesus Christ as the only power to redeem?

Table 4.1: Views of the Respondents about Animal Sacrifice

S/N	ITEMS	OPTION	FREQ.	%
1	Animal sacrifices are required for healing, protection, remission of sins and salvation of humankind in C&S.	Agree	-	0.0
		Disagree	293	95.4
		No response	34	4.6
2	The sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ have significance to salvation of souls in Cherubim and Seraphim church.	Agree	279	90.9
		Disagree	14	4.6
		No response	14	4.6
3	<i>Ona Iwa Mimo</i> Cherubim and Seraphim Churches practice river	Women are not allow during menstruation to enter?		

	bath, scapegoatism, animal sacrifices, sacred preparation, ritual cleansing.	ago' church building because they are unclean and can hinder prayers and angelic forces to be in attendance during worship. We do it according to the leading of the Holy Spirit for protection	24	7.9
		We follow the Old Testament	105	34.2
		The church building /sacred place are Holy, clean, and sacred for prayer and "eto sise ati igbele'.	98	31.9
		No response	169	55.0
			26	8.5
4	Christians can be redeemed only by the blood of Jesus Christ?	Yes	293	95.4
		No	-	0.0
		No response	14	4.6

Table 4.1 shows that the respondents claimed that they do not believe in animal sacrifice (95%), They also believed that Jesus Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection have significance to human salvation (91%); but 5% believed otherwise. The respondents claimed that Cherubim and Seraphim churches practice river and sacred water bath, scapegoatism, sacred preparation and so on because of the following reasons: the place of worship is holy and sacred for prayer and because sacred preparation('eto sise and Igbele') will protect and secure members from untimely death (55%); the churches follow the Old Testament (32%); it is according to the leading of Holy Spirit (34%) and women are not allowed during their menstruation period (8%). Most of them agreed that Christians can be redeemed only by the blood of Jesus Christ (95%). Nevertheless, some of the church leaders and members asserted that the sacrifice of animals is rarely carried out today except when the instruction is specifically given by God through the Holy Spirit. Owing to enlightenment, education, teachings and understanding of the Scripture they now use mainly selected Psalms and

consecrated sacred water for scapegoatism/vicarious victim (*femiremi*), healing and deliverance instead of killing or sacrificing animals.

Research Question 4: Are there special benefits that the respondents derive from contextualising their worship and liturgy using sacred places like mercy land (*Ile aanu*) or power house?

Table 5.1: Benefits of Contextualizing Worship and Sacred Places

S/N	ITEMS	OPTION	FREQ.	%
1	Leaders and members of C&S derive a lot of benefits from the use of mercy land (<i>ile aanu</i>) and sacred preparation (<i>eto ise Igbele</i>)?	Agree because is the ideal time for prayer, healing and deliverance from power of the wicked spiritual forces like witches and wizards	26	8.5
		Mercy land gives room for concentration during prayer, pray with understanding and helps to receive instant answer to prayers	254	82.7
		Helps us to pray appropriately, and to receive messages from God through the Holy Spirit	24	7.8
		No response	3	1.3
2	The scripture that says Christians should ask for everything in prayer 'in the mighty name of Jesus Christ alone' is acceptable to Cherubim and Seraphim Church.	Agree	290	94.5
		No Response	17	5.5

Table 5.1 reveals that the benefits derived from contextualising and the practices of sacred places are as follows: the place is used for prayer, healing and deliverance (8.5%), it gives room for concentration during prayer, praying with understanding and receives instant answer to prayers (82.7%) and helps to pray appropriately, hear and receiving messages from God through the Holy Spirit (7.8%). Also 95% of the respondents accepted the scripture that says Christians should ask for everything in prayer in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Figure 5.1 presents the reasons :

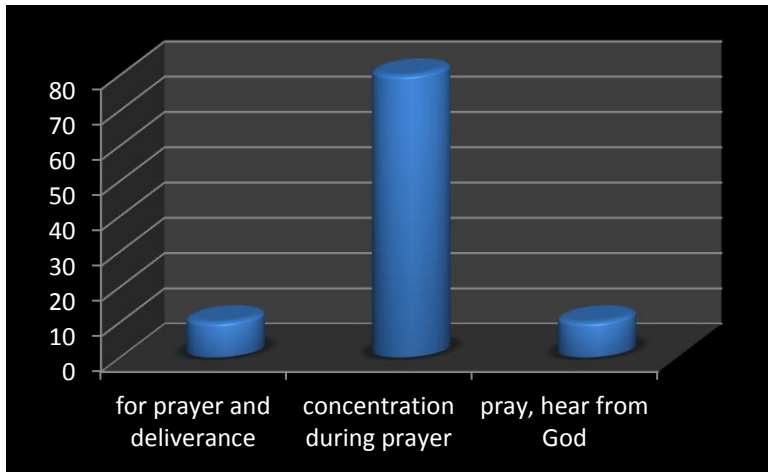


Fig. 5.1: Benefits of contextualisation and practices of sacred places

Research Question 5: What is the view of the respondents about Jesus Christ as the only saviour and healer?

Table 6.1: Views of the Respondents about Jesus Christ

S/N	ITEMS	OPTION	FREQ.	%
1	Jesus Christ is superior and above every culture.	Agree	293	95.4
		No response	14	4.6
2	Who is Jesus Christ to you?	Redeemer and saviour	66	21.5
		Teacher	25	8.1
		All of the above	202	65.8
		No response	14	4.6
4	Holy Spirit is the controller and Chief Director of Ona Iwa Mimo C&S in Ibadan	Agree	294	89.3
		No response	33	10.7
5	What is the relevance and significance of the Holy Spirit in the lives of members of your church?	The Holy Spirit is our teacher and leader	3	1.0
		The Holy Spirit makes us grow and assist us to understand the word of God	90	29.3
		as spelt out in the Bible	142	46.3
		is part of our lives	25	8.1
		because He is our guidance	18	5.9
		No response	29	9.4

6	There are no other powers and names apart from the name of Jesus Christ that can heal, save and redeem humankind	Agree	263	85.7
		Disagree	30	9.8
		No response	14	4.6
7	Who is the superior leader in your Church?	Jesus Christ	293	95.4
		No response	14	4.6
8	There are other mediators between humankind and God Almighty apart from Jesus Christ that can protect and grant us Eternal life	Agree	99	32.2
		Disagree	194	63.2
		No response	14	4.6

Table 6.1 shows that most of the respondents (95%) accepted the superiority of Jesus Christ to every culture; 66% claimed Jesus Christ is everything to them; 22% claimed that He is their redeemer and 8% claimed that He is their teacher. Only 89% believed in the Holy Spirit and 86% believed that there is no other power or name apart from Jesus Christ while 10% do not believe. A total of 95% believed that Jesus Christ is the superior leader in their churches. Also 32% accepted other mediators between them and God Almighty apart from Jesus Christ while 63% and not accept other mediators. From all these, it is clear that most of the respondents accepted Jesus Christ as their only saviour; only about 30% had other saviours. Figure 5.1 presents this information in a bar chart.

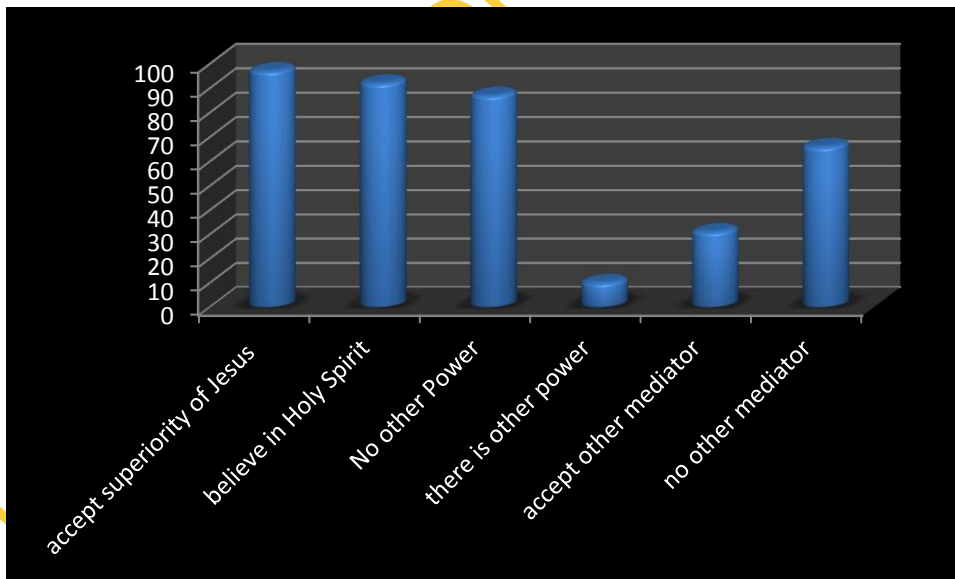


Fig. 6.1: View of the Respondents about Jesus Christ

APPENDIX V



**THE REV. PROPHET (DR.) DAVID ADIGUN OKESOLA (AKA WOLII IBADAN)
THE FIRST MINISTER IN CHARGE OF ONA IWA MIMO C & S, IN IBADANLAND**



AT MOKOLA THE ABOVE SIGNBOARD IS SHOWING THE DIRECTION TO THE 1ST CHURCH BUILDING OF ONA IWA MIMO CHERUBIM & SERAPHIM CHURCH IN IBADANLAND.

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SACRED SPACE WITH SACRED ELEMENTS: CONSECRATED WATER, OIL, CANDLE, HOLY BIBLE AND SPECIAL POLE MARKED WITH CROSS WITH FLAG AT PAARA GANGASI, ORITAMERIN, IBADAN.

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SPECIAL WATER FOR RITUAL CLEANSING AT ODO ONA ELEWE IN IBADAN

UNIVERSITY OF



THE ATTACHED SMALL BUILDING (*EHIN AGO*) IS MEANT FOR WOMEN HAVING MENSTRUATION OR AFTER CHILD DELIVERY WHO ARE UNCLEAN TO ENTER THE MAIN CHURCH BUILDING.

UNIVERSITY



THESE WOMEN WERE UNDERGOING SPECIAL PRAYER SESSIONS IN ONE OF THE ONA IWA MIMO C&S CHURCHES IN IBADAN

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A SPECIAL EVANGELIST CONDUCTING SPECIAL PRAYER SESSIONS, WHO IS NOW IN CHARGE OF ONA IWA MIMO CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM NO 1 MOKOLA IBADAN AFTER THE DEMISE OF THE 1ST MINISTER IN CHARGE IN IBADANLAND



THESE WOMEN WERE UNDERGOING SPECIAL PRAYER SESSIONS IN ONE OF THE ONA IWA MIMO C&S CHURCHES IN IBADAN

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MEMBERS DANCING AT ONE OF THE ONA IWA MIMO C&S CHURCHES IN IBADAN

UNIVERSITI



SPECIAL SACRED CONSECRATED WATER FOR HEALING, DELIVERANCE AND PROTECTION IN A SPECIAL LOCATION IN A SACRED PLACE OF C&S CHURCH

UNIVERSITY



AT SOUTH WEST OF NIGERIA SPECIAL PROGRAMME OF ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN INDEGENOUS CHURCH HELD AT IBADAN

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AT WESTERN WALL FORMERLY KNOWN AS WAILING WALL WHERE THE RABBI ARE BUSY HAVING SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR THE NATION ISAREL AND PILGRIMS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD DISPLAYED AND INSERTED THEIR PRAYER REQUESTS



AT WESTERN WALL FORMERLY KNOWN AS WAILING WALL WHERE THE RABBI WERE BUSY HAVING SPECIAL PRAYERS FOR ISRAEL AND PILGRIMS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD DISPLAYED AND INSERTED THEIR PRAYER REQUESTS



A RABBI NAMED MORDECAI HAMAN AT WESTERN WALL IN JERUSALEM PHOTO TAKEN ON 13TH DECEMBER 2010.

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A RABBI NAMED MORDECAI HAMAN AND THE RESEARCHER (ADAGBADA CORNELIUS) AT WESTERN WALL IN JERUSALEM PHOTO TAKEN ON 13 DECEMBER 2010.



ACCLAIMED POOL OF SILOAM WHERE A GREAT MULTITUDE OF IMPOTENT FOLK,
OF BLIND IN ISRAEL WAITED FOR THE MOVING WATER FOR HEALING OF THE FIRST
PESRON THAT ENTERED INTO THE POOL AFTER ANGELS MUST HAVE TROUBLED
THE WATER (JOHN 5 : 1-10)



THE RESEARCHER AT THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE STANDING BY THE ACCLAIMED TREE WHERE JESUS CHRIST WAS HAVING AGONIZED PRAYERS BEFORE HIS ARREST.



THE ACCLAIMED BURNING BUSH AT THE FOOT OF MT. SINAI IN EGYPT PHOTOGRAPH
TAKEN IN DECEMBER 2010 BY THE RESEARCHER-ADAGBADA CORNELIUS

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AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE ACCLAIMED MOUNTAIN WHERE JESUS CHRIST FASTED AND PRAYED FOR FORTY DAYS AND NIGHTS NOW LOCATED IN HILL SIDE OF JERICHO.

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The Synagogue Church



לפי המסורת, כאן היה בית הכנסת שבו דרש ישוע ביום שבת בפני המתפללים (לוקס 4:16).
מהמאה ה-12 ואילך מדווחים עולי רגל על כנסייה שניצבה באתר. האתר והכנסייה הסמוכה (שנוסדה ב-1887), שייכים לקהילה היוונית קתולית.

حسب التقليد، هنا كان الكنيس حيث وعظ يسوع للمصلين
يوم السبت (لوقا ٤:١٦)
منذ القرن الثاني عشر، أشار الحجاج في تقاريرهم
الى كنيسة كانت في الموقع.
الموقع والكنيسة المجاورة (المبنية سنة ١٨٨٧).
هما من ملكية الروم الملكيين الكاثوليك.

According to the tradition, the Nazareth Synagogue where Jesus preached (Luke 4:16) stood on this spot. From the late twelfth century onwards, pilgrims reported visiting a church on the site. Adjacent to the Synagogue Church, is the parish church of Nazareth's (built on 1887) Greek Catholic community.

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