

The Vision and Impact of Redeemed Christian Church of God and Cherubim and Seraphim Movement: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The paper is a comparative study of Redeemed Christian Church of God and Cherubim and Seraphim Movement as African indigenous movements. The work adopts a qualitative research design and relied on secondary method using comparative approach. It was found in the study that these indigenous Christian movements have their vision shaped by their founders. However, there are certain features that are common among them as well as notable differences. Both practiced Pentecostal theology and the place of Scriptures is central to both of them. While Redeemed Christian Church of God is said to have more social, political and economic impact on the people and the society Cherubim and Seraphim Movement gives more attention to the issue of spiritual liberation and deliverance from the forces of darkness. The Redeem Christian Church of God follows more strictly, the teaching of the Bible while Cherubim and Seraphim Society is syncretic. The paper recommends that, there is need for a comparative study of the teachings and practices of these indigenous movements. And there is need for these movements to develop a clear theology and doctrines that define them.

Keywords: Comparative Study, African Indigenous Movements, Pentecostal Theology, Spiritual Liberation, Syncretic Practices.

Introduction

To effectively make meaning out of the concept Indigenous Christian Movements we shall first of all take a look at the words indigenous and independent. Thus, indigenous refers to that which is traditional, aboriginal, or homemade. On the other hand, independent as a relative term connotes the act of freedom; that is not being under the influence or control of something or someone else. This is often seen in children seeking freedom from parents, wives from husbands and students from their teachers. The two terms explained above are fundamental to our understanding of the indigenous/ independent Christian movements. With reference to our point of discourse, the Indigenous Christian Movements are the churches that have developed in Africa devoid of external or foreign control. They are autonomous in terms of self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. They are therefore indigenous or Independent Churches because they are founded by Africans not by foreigners, under indigenous leadership and administration. More importantly, they marry African culture with Biblical teaching (Gbenda, 2019:16). The focus in this paper is to

make a comparative study of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and Cherubim and Seraphim Movement with the view of bringing out their similarities and difference.

Problem Statement

African indigenous Christian movements, such as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement, have emerged as significant entities within the broader landscape of African Christianity. These movements exhibit distinct theological orientations and ritual practices that reflect both indigenous African religious heritage and Christian doctrine. The RCCG, founded in Nigeria in 1952, has grown rapidly across Africa and beyond, emphasizing evangelical zeal and charismatic practices. In contrast, the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement, established in Nigeria in the late 19th century, blends traditional African spirituality with Pentecostal Christianity, incorporating rituals like dance and prophetic visions into its worship.

Despite their significant influence, there is a need for a comprehensive comparative analysis of the Redeemed Christian Church of God and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement as African indigenous Christian movements. This study seeks to elucidate their distinctive characteristics, beliefs, practices, and societal influences. By examining their origins, doctrinal teachings, and social orientations, as well as their interactions with governmental structures, the research aims to provide insights into how these movements have navigated and impacted the socio-religious landscape of Africa. Clarifying these aspects will contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of African Christianity and its complex interplay with indigenous spiritualities and state institutions.

Methodology of Study

The study adopts a qualitative research design and relied on secondary data. The comparative approach was used to analyze the similarities and differences between the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C&S). Data were collected from books, journals, articles, and other scholarly materials relevant to the topic. The data were then analyzed to draw out the significant findings of the study.

Empirical Review

Asonzeh (2020) explored the establishment of Redeemer's University and its socio-economic impact, focusing on how educational institutions linked to the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) contributed to societal development. The study highlighted the RCCG's institutional influence beyond religious practice, illustrating its role in educational advancement and community development. However, Asonzeh's study primarily emphasized a single institution and its immediate impacts, leaving a gap in understanding broader socio-cultural influences and comparative perspectives across different indigenous Christian movements. In contrast, this study aimed to fill this gap by conducting a comparative analysis not only of the RCCG but also the Cherubim and

Seraphim Movement, examining their respective visions, impacts, and interactions with cultural identities and practices in Tivland. By contrasting multiple movements and their societal impacts, the present study provided a comprehensive view of how indigenous Christian churches shaped local cultures and communities, thereby extending the scope beyond singular institutional impacts to broader socio-cultural implications.

Donald (2019) analyzed the organizational structure of the RCCG, emphasizing its hierarchical framework and administrative strategies for church growth. The study offered insights into how the RCCG's organizational model facilitated expansion and adaptation in various socio-cultural contexts. However, it focused predominantly on internal administrative dynamics without extensively comparing with other indigenous Christian movements or exploring their cultural and societal impacts. In contrast, the present study contributed by examining organizational structures and comparing them between the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. This comparative approach highlighted similarities and differences in how these movements organized and operated within Tivland and their interactions with mainstream denominations and external factors. By doing so, this study illuminated broader implications for the development and future of indigenous Christian churches in Tivland, offering a nuanced understanding of organizational dynamics within a comparative framework.

Fourchard (2018) provided a historical perspective on the development of the RCCG, tracing its evolution from its inception to its status as a prominent African Christian movement. The study offered a detailed account of key milestones and influential figures within the RCCG, shedding light on its growth trajectory and doctrinal shifts over time. However, the focus remained on the internal historical narrative of the RCCG without comparative analysis with other indigenous Christian movements.

In contrast, the present study aimed to expand on Fourchard's historical approach by conducting a comparative analysis between the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. By juxtaposing their historical trajectories and doctrinal developments within Tivland, this study provided a comparative framework that elucidated how these movements' historical contexts shaped their current practices and societal impacts. This comparative approach enhanced understanding not only of the individual histories but also of their broader implications for the cultural and religious dynamics in Tivland.

Gbenda (2019) explored the phenomenon of indigenous and independent Christian movements across Africa, discussing their emergence, theological orientations, and societal impacts. The study highlighted the diversity and resilience of African indigenous Christianity, emphasizing its role in challenging and complementing mainstream denominations. However, Gbenda's focus was on a general overview rather than a detailed comparative analysis of specific movements like the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. In contrast, the present study contributed by focusing specifically on the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement within Tivland. By examining their theological orientations, societal impacts, and interactions with cultural practices, this study provided a focused comparative analysis that deepened understanding of how these movements

operated within local contexts. This comparative approach illuminated unique aspects of their contributions to Tivland's religious landscape, offering insights into their cultural relevance and implications for the broader development of indigenous Christian churches in Africa.

Marshall (2021) explored the legacy of Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi within the context of Nigerian Pentecostalism, focusing on his foundational role in establishing the RCCG. The study provided insights into Akindayomi's theological contributions and leadership style, highlighting his influence on the RCCG's doctrinal development and organizational structure. However, Marshall's study primarily centered on Akindayomi's personal legacy within the RCCG and did not extensively compare it with other indigenous Christian movements.

In contrast, the present study aimed to build upon Marshall's insights by conducting a comparative analysis between the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. By examining the legacies of their founders and their impacts within Tivland, this study provided a comparative framework that elucidated how these movements' foundational figures shaped their respective theological orientations and societal influences. This comparative approach deepened understanding of their contributions to religious dynamics in Tivland, offering insights into their enduring legacies and implications for contemporary indigenous Christian churches.

Glazier (1985) provided a comprehensive overview of the anthropology of religion, discussing theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches to studying religious phenomena cross-culturally. The handbook covered various aspects of religious practices, beliefs, and social dimensions, offering a broad foundation for understanding religious diversity and cultural dynamics. However, Glazier's work focused on general principles rather than specific case studies of indigenous Christian movements like the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. In contrast, the present study contributed by applying anthropological perspectives to the study of the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement within Tivland. By employing anthropological insights to analyze their rituals, beliefs, and societal impacts, this study provided a nuanced understanding of how these movements interacted with local cultures and influenced religious practices. This anthropological approach enriched the study's comparative framework, offering new perspectives on the cultural dynamics and religious syncretism within Tivland's indigenous Christian churches.

Anjorin (2001) presented a detailed history of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, exploring its origins, doctrinal developments, and socio-cultural impacts. The book provided insights into the church's emergence as a distinctive Christian movement in Nigeria, highlighting its syncretic blending of Christian and indigenous African spiritualities. However, Anjorin's focus was primarily on the internal historical narrative of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church without comparative analysis with other indigenous Christian movements like the RCCG. In contrast, the present study aimed to complement Anjorin's

historical account by conducting a comparative analysis between the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement and the RCCG within Tivland. By juxtaposing their historical trajectories, doctrinal teachings, and societal influences, this study provided a comparative framework that deepened understanding of their respective roles in shaping Tivland's religious landscape. This comparative approach illuminated unique aspects of their cultural adaptations and interactions with local traditions, offering insights into their broader implications for African indigenous Christianity.

Nimi (2020) examined the growth trajectory of the RCCG under the leadership of Enoch Adeboye, focusing on his strategic leadership style and the church's expansion both within Nigeria and globally. The study provided insights into Adeboye's influence on the RCCG's evangelical efforts, membership growth, and socio-religious engagements. However, Nimi's analysis centered primarily on the RCCG's internal dynamics and did not extensively compare it with other indigenous Christian movements. In contrast, the present study aimed to build upon Nimi's insights by conducting a comparative analysis between the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. By examining their growth strategies, membership dynamics, and socio-religious impacts within Tivland, this study provided a comparative framework that elucidated how these movements' leadership styles and organizational approaches shaped their respective influences. This comparative approach deepened understanding of their contributions to religious developments in Tivland, offering insights into their adaptive strategies and implications for indigenous Christian churches.

Rice (2018) discussed the expansion of African Pentecostal movements, highlighting their rapid growth and cultural impacts across the continent. The article provided an overview of Pentecostalism's influence on African religious landscapes, emphasizing its appeal to diverse socio-cultural contexts and its role in shaping contemporary African Christianity. However, Rice's analysis focused on Pentecostalism broadly and did not specifically delve into comparative studies between movements like the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. In contrast, the present study contributed by focusing on the specific contexts of the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement within Tivland. By analyzing their expansion strategies, cultural adaptations, and interactions with local traditions, this study provided a focused comparative analysis that enriched understanding of their distinct roles in shaping Tivland's religious dynamics. This comparative approach highlighted unique aspects of their growth trajectories and societal impacts, offering insights into their contributions to African Pentecostalism's diverse expressions.

Hood (1990) explored Afro-centric perspectives on God-talk, discussing how African cultures perceive and articulate divine realities distinct from Western theological frameworks. The book provided a critical examination of cultural appropriations in Christian discourse, highlighting the need for inclusive theological dialogues that respect African spiritual traditions. However, Hood's focus was on broader theological debates rather than specific case studies of indigenous Christian movements like the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement. In contrast, the present study aimed to complement Hood's

insights by applying Afro-centric perspectives to analyze the RCCG and the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement within Tivland. By examining their theological discourses, cultural adaptations, and implications for local spiritualities, this study provided a nuanced understanding of how these movements interacted with and shaped Tivland's religious landscapes. This Afro-centric approach enriched the study's comparative framework, offering new insights into the cultural dynamics and theological dialogues within African indigenous Christianity.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is a Pentecostal Megachurch and denomination in Lagos, Nigeria. Enoch Adeboye has been the General Overseer (most senior pastor) since 1981. The church in Lagos had an average church attendance of 50,000 in 2022 (Warren 2).

Founder of the Redeemed Christian Church of God

Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi, founder and first General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) was born in 1909 into the Akindayomi family in Ondo State, Nigeria. From early childhood, Josiah had inkling that he was different, for although he grew up in an environment where the worship of Ogun (the Yoruba divinity of iron and war) was prevalent he was aware of the existence of a greater power and yearned to know the true God who created the earth and everyone in it.

In his search for spiritual fulfillment, he joined the Cherubim and Seraphim (C & S) church in 1931. Akindayomi got married in 1941 and relocated to Lagos in the latter part of that year. In Lagos, he worshipped with the C & S Church. He was still with the church in 1947 when a zeal for a better service and a deeper experience with God prompted him to start the prayer fellowship later known as the Glory of God Fellowship that met at 9, WiHoughby Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos. Initially there were nine (9) members; however, the fellowship became so popular that it drew not only members of the church, but others from the neighborhood. By 1952 he left the C & S church and the fellowship he had started then grew into the RCCG. The name of the church was said to have been revealed to the founder in a vision. Allegedly the letters forming the name of the church appeared in the English alphabet to Akindayomi who could neither read nor write. Miraculously he was able to scribble down the individual letters which, when put together, read "The Redeemed Christian Church of God".

In this same vision God promised to take the church to the ends of the earth and declared that the Lord Jesus Christ would meet the church when he returned in glory. The Lord also established a covenant with Akindayomi similar to the Abrahamic covenant in the Bible, promising to meet all the needs of the church in wonderful ways if only members would serve Him faithfully and be obedient to His Word. RCCG was formed, based on this covenant, in 1952. The church continued to meet at 9, WiHoughby Street until they

acquired some land and relocated to their headquarters at 1 - 5 Redemption Way, Ebute-Metta, Lagos (formerly la Cemetery Street) and later the Redemption Camp. Today the church has become one of the fastest growing Pentecostal churches in the world. RCCG, has since grown from when Pastor Adeboye took charge, to over 14,000 parishes in Nigeria and branches in over a hundred countries. This was achievable through the GO's vision to establish a parish of the church within five minutes of every house on earth.

Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye, the General Overseer of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) was born on 2nd March 1942 at Ifewara in the present-day Osun State. Against all odds, he graduated from the University in 1967, at the age of 25. Between 1967 and 1975 he had added two more degrees, an M.Sc in Hydrodynamics and a Ph.D in Applied Mathematics. He later became a lecturer at the University of Lagos and Ilorin before he was called into full time ministry. Pastor Adeboye joined RCCG in 1973 and gave his life to Jesus on 29th of July 1973. Akindayomi died in 1980 at the age of 71 but not before naming Enoch Adejare Adeboye as his successor, following God's instructions. Thereafter Pastor Adeboye's appointment was formalized in 1981 and he has since been the General Overseer of the Church.

The Origin

The RCCG was founded in 1952 by Rev. Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi (1909-1980) following his involvement in other churches (Marshall 74). Reverend Akindayomi chose Enoch Adejare Adeboye as the next General Overseer. Adeboye was a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos and joined the church in 1973 (Nimi 57). Adeboye was initially hired as an interpreter to translate Afcindayomi's sermons from Yoruba to English. He was ordained a pastor of the church in 1975. His appointment as the leader (General Overseer) of the church was formalised by the posthumous reading of Akindayomi's scaled pronouncement. In 1990, the Redeemed Christian Church of God Bible School was founded (Fourchard 343). In 1981, Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye became the General Overseer of the Church. In 1983, the land for the Redemption Camp in Mowe was purchased. In 1988, a students' body known as the *Redeemed Christian Fellowship* (RCP) was established. It is the youth wing of the church, concentrated within tertiary institutions of learning in the country. In 1990, Christ the Redeemer's Friends Universal (CRFU), was established to-garner financial and human resources from the very wealthy in the society (Asonzeh, 2020: 93). In 2005, Redeemer's University was established. Andrew Rice (2018), writing in *The New York Times*, calls the RCCG "one of [Africa's] most vigorously expansionary religious movements, a homegrown Pentecostal denomination that is crusading to become a global faith" (6). The church's leaders preach "tha.tjn the future "In every household, there will be at least one member of Redeemed Christian Church of God in the whole world" (Rollins, 2022: 45). In 2008, it had 14,000 Churches and five million members in Nigeria, in 80 countries (Stephen, 2019: 12). The international church is structured in different areas throughout the world (Donald 2). The local churches are now grouped into regions, with 25 regions in Nigeria. It is also organised throughout most of the world. Notable special spiritual

programs are the Holy Ghost Service, which holds on the first Friday of every month in Nigeria. Others include the annual Holy Ghost Convention in August and the Holy Ghost Congress in December, both held in Nigeria, as well as others held abroad. In 2020, the main church in Lagos had 50,000 people (Warren, 2022: 23).

Development

Today, God is still doing powerful work through RCCG worldwide. The vision, which God dropped into the heart of an uneducated man, began to expand in the hands of the scholar. In 1981 there was an explosion of growth in the number of parishes. At the last count there were about 12,000 parishes of RCCG in Nigeria alone and RCCG is represented in 22 nations in Europe and the church has more than 15,000 parishes in over 100 countries. One prominent program of the church is the Holy Ghost Service, an all-night miracle service, held on the first Friday of every month at the Redemption Camp at Km 46, Lagos-Ibadan expressway. In view of the traffic jam at the monthly Holy Ghost services owing to population explosion, the church is now preparing to move to a new auditorium spanning about 10km x 1 Okm in order to accommodate the thronging crowd of worshippers. The Holy Ghost Service is now regularly held in not less than 6 nations of the world including London (Festival of Life), North America and Dubai. Daddy GO is married to Mummy GO Pastor (Mrs.) Folu Adeboye and her support in the missions, women, and children departments complement the efforts of her husband's ministry. They are blessed with four glorious children (Adeolu, Bolu, Dare and Leke) and many grandchildren.

Beliefs and Place of Scriptures

The Church believes that the entire Scripture, both Old and New Testament are written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit - (II Tim. 3:16-17). The official RCCG website outlines its beliefs in the Bible and the Holy Trinity, that the Devil exists, that God formed man in His image, in repentance, in cleansing from sins by God's grace, in sanctification, water baptism. Holy Spirit baptism, restitution and that God can heal without medicine (by His divine intervention e.g., through prayer).

Doctrines of Teachings of RCCG

All the Christian teachings and the Christian attitude of the Children of God are such as are established in the Holy Bible-II Tim. 3:10-15; II Peter 1:21; John 17:17; Ps. 119:105. The Church believes that the Bible is the written and revealed Will of God. Man's position to God, the way to obtain salvation, woe and destruction awaiting sinners that refuse to repent and everlasting joy that is kept for the born again souls. All the Bible teachings are holy, what the Bible reveals as the will of God are such that we should accept, and whatever God writes in the Bible and His Law are to remain unchangeable; for the Heavens and Earth may pass away but the Word of God stands forever. Deut. 4:22; Rev. 22:18, 19; Matt. 24:34-38.

About God: As revealed unto us by the Bible, The Church believe that there is only one God, Who is the Creator of both visible and invisible creatures -Gen. 1:1; Ps. 86:9-10; Is. 43:10-11; John 1:1-3. Only God will be in existence forever. Ez. 3:14; in God every creature receives life -John 5:26.

About Jesus Christ: The Church believes that He is the Son of God; Who took away our sins, and the Savior of the world. We also believe that Jesus is God and was born by Mary the Virgin. He is God revealed in the flesh. Through Him all things were created. John 1:1-14; John 14:9; Matt. 1:18-25, Is 9:6; Is 53:5-6. We believe in His death on the Cross, and resurrection, by which He brought redemption - Is. 53:4-10; I Pet. 2:24; John 10:11; Gal. 3:13, Matt. 20:28; 1 Cor. 15:3; Rom. 4:25; IT Cor. 5:14; Heb 2:9; Heb 9:26.

About The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit is the third Person in the Trinity. He has the same power, the same -glory with God the Father and God the Son - John 14:16-17; John 15:26; Matt 3:16; Acts 13:24. He is one with Father and the Son who is to be worshiped and served. Three Persons that become one are the source of blessings to all the living creatures in Heaven and on earth - Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; I John 1:5-7. The Holy Spirit has a great work to perform. He Teaches, He Speaks to men, and bears witness in us - Acts 16:6-7; He performs the work of regeneration for man- John 3:5-6.

The Gift of Prophecy

The Bible teaches us to abstain from all appearance of evil - I Thess. 5:22. "But follow after righteousness, faith, love, purging ourselves from unclean things so that we may be vessels unto honor, sanctified, and prepared unto every good work" - II Tim. 2:21-22. Therefore, we must not see our Church members in dancing halls, or cinema halls, reveling, for such things are works of the flesh. AH people doing such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God - Gal 5:19-21; I Peter 4:3-4; Prov 31:4-5; Rev. 1:5-6; Gen 19:30-38. Swearing and Cursing Forbidden All Christians should not swear or curse or blaspheme for we were not taught of Jesus in such a way. "Bless, and curse not" Rom. 12:14. Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, nor by the earth or any other swearing. But let your yes be yes, and No be No so that you do not run into condemnation - Matt. 5:34; James 5:12.

Laying of Hands and Anointing the Sick

The Church believe in the laying on of hands and anointing the sick on the head in the Name of the Lord and that prayer of faith shall save the person-James 5:14-16; Mark 16:17-18. But we do not use any other methods which are not according to Bible teaching such as sanctification of water for the sick to drink, or to perform special washing for the sick in the flowing river, the use of robe or garment, or to carry a small stick in the form of a cross ones person or the use of candles and such things. They are not Biblical. The order of our Lord is that we should heal the sick free of charge - Matt 10:8. We do not receive money or charge money before we offer prayer for anybody. All those using the above materials for healing shall perish with them -Mark 16:18; James 5:14; Matt 10:7-8; Mark 6:13.

Sacraments

The Church practiced three key sacraments; Baptism, Holy matrimony and The Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper.

Water Baptism

The Church believes in baptism by the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost -Matt. 28:19. The teaching is revealed in the New Testament and all Christians must obey this rule of the Lord - Acts 2:24; Acts 16:15; Acts 18:8; Acts 19:4-5. Every saved soul automatically qualifies for Water Baptism-Acts 8:29-39; 16:18-23. The Church believes that all members of this Church should receive immersion Water Baptism, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as believers who would not add to, or take out of the Word of God. Matt. 28:19. The Reason for Water Baptism Water Baptism stands for a sign and an example of two things.

1. It is an outward sign, an example of a true repentance of a sinner from his or her sins. Acts 2:38; Acts 22:6
2. Anybody who is baptized is joined with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection - Rom. 6:1-23; Col. 2:113. Therefore, anybody baptized is dead to the world and the evils thereof -Gal. 6:14.

All born-again souls should ask for the Holy Spirit from above, as the Apostles were ordered to wait in Jerusalem until they were filled from above. It is the promise of the Father. It is God's gift which He gives to those who obey Him-Luke 24:49; John 4:14-26; Acts 1:4-5; Acts 5:32; Acts 8:14-17. It is God's promise unto those who are far and all whom the Lord shall call - Acts 2:38-39. Any Christian who receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit must speak in tongues-Acts 2:4; Acts 10:34-36; Acts 19:2-6.

Holy Matrimony

Marriage is honorable in all - Heb. 13:4. Therefore all members who wish to marry could do so in the church. They are not to follow the worldly patten with drumming and dancing, drunkenness or wear clothes that:30-31; I John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2. The Word of God teaches us that monogamy has been the order since the beginning of the Law of Christ. Divorce is permissible only when a life partner has committed adultery. Even then, neither of the two should be married to a new partner while both are yet alive -Matt 5:31-32, 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3; Mai. 2:13-16; Gen. 2:18: Matt.19:4-6.

Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper

It is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ shortly before His death. He commanded atl Christians to gather together regularly to share the bread and wine till He comes back again -Luke 22:17-20; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; I Cor. 10:18, 21; Acts 2:42; 20:7: 1 Cor. 11:23-30.

Social Orientation

The Redeemed Christian Church of God has some programmes that show the social 'orientation of the Church. Through their schools, social teaching and social intervention programmes which have empowered many. The Redeemed Christian Church of God has schools and hospitals, orphanages and other business centers that employed a good number of people. Redeemers University employs both academic and non-academic staff as well as their Nursery/Primary and secondary schools. The Church has contributed immensely on the issue of job creation and thus reducing the rate of unemployment in the country. Also, members of The Redeemed Christian Church of God who are in key positions and those who are employers of labours are encourage to give jobs to their members and influence their appointments in their companies and offices.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God has a programme that is targeted towards helping the poor and vulnerable members of the society. They have homes for the motherless and the fatherless and visitation to hospitals, the poor and orphanages with relief materials like clothing, food items, soap/detergents to help alleviate the condition of the poor.

Church/State Relationship

It is observed that the Church leadership is apolitical in partisan politics of the country. However, the Nigerian political leaders (both Christians and Muslims) are seen visiting and seeking the blessings and prayers of Pastor Adeboye. The former President Olusegun Obasanjo was a regular visitor to the Camp, most especially when the Holy Ghost programme is held. After the Presidential election in 1999, Obasanjo invited some Pastors to the Presidential Villa in Abuja for prayers. The invitation was extended to Pastor Adeboye, and which he honoured.

In preparation for the 2011 General elections, Muhammad Buhari, a Muslim, also visited Adeboye at the camp. He was accompanied by his Vice-Presidential candidate, Pastor Tunde Bakare with the aim of soliciting for his cooperation and prayers. In fact, President Jonathan Goodluck kept a vigil at the Camp in 2010 to as to seek the blessing and prayer of Pastor Adeboye (Nimi, 2020:57). The camp has become a regular prayer venue for seeking political victory for Nigerian politicians. It is necessary to note that, he has not made any policy statement on partisan involvement in politics, however, he is always praying for the stability and peace in the country and he always encourage his members to register and exercise their franchise during elections.

Cherubim and Seraphim Movement

The Cherubim and Seraphim church probably got its name from the Cherubim and Seraphim angels, which identifies it as another Abrahamic religion, just like the Christianity, Islam and Judaism religions. They identify themselves as Christians, but behave unlike other Christian denominations. The movement was founded in the year 1925 by Moses Orimoladc Tunolase. They are also known as the ESOCS which is interpreted as the Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church.

Origin of Cherubim and Seraphim Movement

The Cherubim and Seraphim movement church, also known as the C&S, is a church denomination in Nigeria that was founded by Moses Orimolade Tunolase in 1925. Orimolade received considerable media attention when he claimed to have healed a girl, Christina Abiodun Akinsowon, from a long-term trance in which she could neither speak nor hear. After the healing event Orimolade Tunolase and Abiodun Akinsowon teamed up, as father and adopted daughter, and offered their services to heal and pray for people.

The Cherubim and Seraphim group claims to have dreams and visions that facilitate the connection of God and humanity. In 1925, they said that Jesus Christ had directed them to name their circle of followers seraphim, after an angel they claimed to have seen in their dreams. Two years later, they added "Cherubim" to the name of their church, making their congregation the Cherubim and Seraphim (Hood, 1994: 22).

Several years after the creation of the Cherubim and Seraphim, different denominations following in its traditions broke off and formed new churches. The Church of Aladura, which began in 1930 under the lead of Josiah Oshitelu, was one of the churches that began under "similarly spectacular circumstances" as the Cherubim and Seraphim (Glazier, 1985: 7). By the 1940s, the Aladura movement church had begun to spread throughout the world. from places in Africa to other English speaking countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom.

Life of the Founder

The founder, Moses Orimolade Tunolase was born in 1879, into the quarters of the royal family of Omoba Ode Sodi of Okorun quarters, in Ikare, Nigeria. Records show that Orimolade's life began strangely (Glazier, 1985: 8). His mother, Madam Odijoro, said that when she was pregnant, she went to the farm to cut some firewood on a particular day. When she was ready to leave, she realized she could not lift the firewood she had cut. Suddenly, she heard a voice telling her the easiest way to lift all of the firewood. She looked around but could not find anyone. Then, the voice said, "Do not be frightened, I am the child in your womb. Follow my advice and be on your way." She claimed to have been able to lift the firewood with the help of the unknown voice.

When he was born, his parents had mixed feelings. They were excited about the new addition to their family, but were also embarrassed because of the strange circumstances that surrounded his birth. According to records, "The new child stood up right after his birth and walked around the delivery place" (Anjorin, 2001: 45). The midwife that helped with his delivery held him down forcefully to stop him from walking. Members of the Cherubim and Seraphim believe that the force of the midwife, in addition to some incantations made by his herbalist father to calm him down on the day he was born, led to Orimolade's "prolonged paralysis". Because his father could no longer bear the embarrassment surrounding his son's birth, he asked Orimolade and his mother to leave his house for good, after which he

planned to commit suicide, but was discouraged by family members. Family members claimed that it was not hard to tell that he had a little time left to live.

Not long after Orimolade and his mother left his father's house. Orimolade sent a message to his father, telling him to go to a nearby hill (now known by the Cherubim and Seraphim in Ikare as calvary) to ask for forgiveness for his sins. People claim that the message through Orimolade's father into completes depression, which caused him to become ill. He requested that his wife be close to him on his sickbed, and he blessed her the way an elderly Yoruba man about to die would. Days after his death, he was buried honorably.

Books claim that one night, Orimolade was in a church singing some songs of praises. Astonished by the voices, the minister, who thought they were the voices of the choir, went over to the church to ask them why they were using the church without his permission. However, upon his arrival, he found that it was just a boy, about 5 years old, singing as though he was a group of choristers. Amazed by this, the minister decided that the church should employ Orimolade to teach them spiritual songs.

After Orimolade left the church, he continued to spread the word around Nigeria, preaching in Benin, Delta, Kwara, Niger and finally Lagos, where he died in 1933. Days before his death, historians mentioned that an "emblem appeared in the sky, so that many stars dropped off the sky" (Anjorin, 2001: 9). Before his death, he prophesied that the Cherubim and Seraphim was going to spread worldwide, this prophecy has actually come to pass because the church is now known worldwide and has different branches under it (Tovey, 2020:63).

Theological Teaching

The Cherubim and Seraphim lacks a systematic theology as well as the production of literature, the following are some of its belief system. Members:

1. Belief in the God head
2. Unity in the trinity that is three persons in one God. God the Father was active from Genesis - Malachi, God the Son from Matthew - Jude and God the Holy Spirit, from early church - Revelation.
3. They lay emphasis on the Holy Spirit
4. They belief in angels that is, archangels and the band of cherubim/seraphim in heaven.
5. They acknowledge Baptism by immersion/holy communion as sacraments or ordinances.
6. They belief in prophecies, vision and dreams.
7. They speak in tongues, use holy things like candles, incense and scarified water.

The Place of Scriptures

The Cherubim and Seraphim movement relied on the Holy Scriptures for their belief system and practice. They have an unshaken faith in the Bible. Their teaching and practices are claimed to originate from the Scriptures thus the place of Scriptures is central to the

movement. The Order therefore believes in the Holy Bible as the word of God and in salvation through Jesus Christ and in the Trinity in unity, the use of incense, purification by prayer and fasting and resurrection of the dead.

Festivals

The Cherubim and Seraphim movement celebrate the following festivals peculiar to it:

- i. Rama Gilead - An annual event celebrated on the 25th November, which commemorates the time Christ was taken to the temple.
- ii. Celestial vision day-June 18th
- iii. Seraphim day - September, 9th
- iv. Cherubim day - November. 14th

Worship Practices

The Cherubim and Seraphim Church base most of their worship methods and objects of worship on the New Testament of the Bible, particularly the Book of Revelation. The objects they use include candles, to represent light, backed with Revelation 3:1-3. The use of the candles also represent God as when God revealed Himself to mankind (the Israelites) on Mount Sinai as a fire, to Moses in the bush in a form of fire and many other instances when God revealed Himself and showed His power through fire.; rods, as a sign of authority, from .Revelation 2:26-27; incense, which they believe drives away evil spirits and creates a holy and serene atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to take preeminence, from Malachi 1:11 and Revelations 5:8.8:4; and they ring bells not only as a sign of victory but also for musical purposes. Again, before any service is commenced, the most senior elder rings the bell three times. This is known as "Call To Worship). As the name suggests, it is used to call people around the Church premises to join in prayers. It is again believed that, the bell calls on the Heavenly Creatures to assist us in our prayers. They wear white garments as a form of uniform, and they believe that garments such as these should be the dress of the faithful, because they were what Christ wore during his suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection.

The Cherubim and Seraphim have special prayers for sick people, which are used as a form of faith healing. These prayers are led by the leaders of the church, while the sick person kneels in the middle of a circle, if they are able. During such prayers, the leader reads some selected Psalms and other Bible passages that corresponds with the situation of the sick person and the prayers going to be offered and summarizes the prayer. Each prayer is recited once or thrice, and at times recited up to seven times, depending on the seriousness of the illness. In some instances, the sick people are made to sleep in the temple for the number of days within which prayers and supplications will be made for them. The Cherubim and Seraphim believe in the use of water and oil. They believe that water has a type of healing power, because of the strength of baptism and the spirit of God that dwells within it. They also believe in the use of consecrated oil, because it is backed by the bible in James 5:14-15.

The Cherubim and Seraphim also have special ceremonies/anniversaries, such as Holy Michael's Anniversary, which takes place on September 29 of every year. This event is used to thank God for all the victories He grants them as Holy Michael fights the battles of the faithful. It again used to acknowledge the presence of Holy Michael and his work among the Christian folks. On this day, they have a church service in which they read two lessons from the bible, from Daniel 12 and Revelations 12. Holy Gabriel's Anniversary is another special ceremony, observed on the third Thursday in August. The Anniversary of Cherubim Band is celebrated on the last Thursday in May and the Cherubim and Seraphim wear special dresses for this sermon. They also celebrate the Anniversary of Seraphim Band, which takes place on September 9 every year to commemorate the day the society was named in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1925. This event is also held throughout all the branches of the Church, throughout the world. On the first Friday in November, they fast throughout the day to observe the Repentant Meeting Day. They also celebrate a Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem, which takes place on the first Sunday in July. It is a day set aside for prayers for peace.

The Cherubim and Seraphim have church services throughout the week. They have special services on Sunday. On Mondays, they meet for prayers for Visioneers, Dreamers and all spiritual workers for spiritual power. On Tuesdays, they have Bible Class at 6 pm. On Wednesdays, the women meet to pray from 9am to 3pm and later in the night, the men meet to pray from 12am. On Thursdays, they have what they call "Mid-week Full Service" at 6pm. At 6 pm on Fridays, they have "Protection Mark/Sealing Service. Finally, on Saturdays, a vigil is observed from midnight until 2am.

Beliefs

Its first and primary work is that of prayer and preaching of the gospel. It believes in the curative effect of prayer for all afflictions, spiritual and temporal, but condemns and abhors the use of charms or fetish witchcraft or sorcery of any kind and all heathenish sacrifices and practices. It is not averse to the judicious use of curative herbs, the engagement of qualified medical practitioners or doctors or the use of patent medicines or other drugs. It endorses and practices the sanctification of water by prayer and the effect of such consecrated water for every purpose.

The ESOC&S is a Spiritual Christian Movement with membership in the Christian Association of Nigeria. Membership is open to people of all races, ages and to both sexes. Members are required to wear prayer robes at all times for worship. All members are priests and may be called upon at any time to perform religious rites appropriate for their age and sex. Ordination and promotion are based on performance and promotion of the activities of the holy order, attendance at religious ceremonies and availability for religious duties. Shoes are not allowed in the house of prayer. Female members and non-members must cover their heads and may not enter the worship area during their monthly periods. Tithes and offerings are used for bills, worship articles and welfare of the order. The Holy Order has no paid priesthood. The church currently has about 10 million members that worship in

about 1500 branches all over the world including the United Kingdom and the United States.

Social Orientation

The movement believes in doing social works like visitation to the poor, sick persons, and orphanages. Orimolade claimed his calling was to go about preaching the gospel of the Lord and heal the sick. However, he felt overwhelmed by the ridicule he received from the people of Ikare because of his disability. So, he decided to pray, and he asked for God to manifest himself. Records say that in reply to his prayer, an angel appeared to him in his dreams, presenting him with a rod, which they claimed signified a "rod of victory", an insignia which represented a "power of prayer and power of speaking", and a crown which stood for "all honor and multi-respect of every individual to bow before him to receive blessing". After Orimolade woke up, he knew his prayer had been answered. He ordered his mother to wash him, and from then on the gospel of Jesus Christ was his sole purpose (Tovey, 2020:3)

Sacraments

The Church has seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, penitence, eucharist, marriage, ordination and anointing or unction. The Cherubim and Seraphim operate the "Fivefold ministry": Apostleship, Evangelism, Pastoral, Prophetic, and Teaching ministries.

Theology

The movement lacked a well-developed theology however, recently much effort is deployed to systematise the theology of the Church and its understanding of the faith. Cherubim and Seraphim is neither a religious nor an "angel worshipping church" as referred to by people. Rather, the "Cherubim and Seraphim" is a Pente-charismatic and dynamic apostolic ministry. Cherubim and Seraphim Church is not only a Pentecostal but also Charismatic in nature. The name signified the "redeemed"¹ who had experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

In the account of the Fall of man (In the Garden of Eden), Cherubim are represented as guarding "the way to the Tree of Life". Put clearly, God's glory (Cherub) took over. To modern Christians, this connotes that man can no longer eat out of the tree of Life (Christ) by works unless by righteousness in Christ Jesus; the Holy Spirit (Rev.2: 1-7). Adam & Eve were replaced with the Cherub (God's Glory) to protect the Word (Tree of Life Jn.1: 1-5).

On the other hand, Seraph signifies the Baptism of the Holy Spirit; the fire of God. which Jsaiah experienced (Fsa.6: 1-. From this text, one can observe that the Seraph announced the forgiveness of Isaiah sins. One of the Seraphim touched Isaiah's mouth with a live coal and pronounced his forgiveness (Isa.6: 6-7). It is unlikely that an angel can solely pardon sin. as this is not just their ministry! When the glory of God touches us, we become baptized in the Holy Spirit, which accompanies forgiveness for newness (Transformation). This scene

repeated itself; one of the accusations charged against Jesus: They said, "who is He to say your sin is forgiven" (Lk.2: 3-7).

Cherubim and Seraphim are not angels, as many have erroneously believed. From bible standpoint, they are symbolic figures representing certain characteristics of the Glory of God. In other words, the Cherubim are pictorial similitude, or representation of God's divine inherent nature. Also, the Seraph is another symbolic creature signifying the likeness of God's Glory. Seraphim means "consuming fire" manifesting expressively as the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and God as a consuming fire (Heb.12: 25-29). We can only have access to God through the fire of the Holy Spirit, which produces holiness. That was what Isaiah experienced to become a redeemed prophet of God. (Gen.3: 24, Eze.10: 2, Jer.23: 9, Rev. 19: 15, Jer.5: 14 Jn.15: 3-4, Lk.3: 16, Rev.2: 7).

Worship

In order for the members to have a true feel of unification, some liturgical practices have been put together to accommodate all and sundry. Having in mind that there are so many types or branches of the C&S Church, these branches all have their own practices that distinguished them from another. With this knowledge, a new liturgical practice is imminent. Below are the various liturgical practices, which are brought together for the oneness, and the purpose of conveying the unification process.

The use of White Garment: C & S Church is a church known to put on garment for their various functions. This particular garment usage has given them the unique quality that renders them as an Aladura Church. The many factions of C&S church all put on garments, be it red, yellow, blue, and white. However, in order to have a unifying garment, the use of just White garment was agreed upon. No other colour is allowed in the unification church. This use of only white garment for functions has really put a unifying trait in the services and functions of the unification church.

The use of English Language: the use of vernacular is encouraged but English Language is used a means of interpretation (Jando, 2020: 70).

The use of White Girdle and Cap for the female: In line with the use of just white garments, the use of just white girdle which is being worn around the waist is also encouraged by all. For the ladies, theirs is together with a white cap.

The removal of shoes in the service centre: This is another unique feature of the C&S Church. The unification party is upholding the removal of shoes since it is one of the qualities that differentiate the church from every other church. It is not permitted for any member or outsider to put on shoes anytime they are on the worship centre.

The reading of some psalms like Psalms 19, 24, 51, 91 etc: The C&S Church is a church known to make use of the book of Psalms in their various services and practices. The unification drive never forgoes these practices as they imbibe the reading of psalms in their various services and functions. The reading of Psalms 51, 19 and 24 during their opening services on Sundays. Also, the reading of Psalm 30 alone for the midweek services on Wednesdays.

Some other practices that serve as unification are as follows: Fasting, clapping, dancing, testimonies, singing of hymns, and so on.

Generally, the church holds its weekly services on Sundays and Wednesdays, and sometimes on Fridays, for vigil (most especially, every second Friday of the month).

Church/State Relationship

It is observed that the Church leadership is apolitical in partisan politics of the country. However, members can participate in politics and political parties and their leaders are free to visit them. It is necessary to note that, he has not made any policy statement on partisan involvement in politics, however, he is always praying for the stability and peace in the country and he always encourage his members to register and exercise their franchise during elections.

Comparison between Redeemed Christian Church of God and Cherubim and Seraphim Movement

There are some similarities and differences between these African Independent Churches (AICs) some of which are highlighted below:

Similarities

There are a number of similarities between Redeemed Christian Church of God and Cherubim and Seraphim Movement.

- i. Both of them are indigenous African Churches and self-propagating and are run by the General Overseers unlike the mainline Churches.
- ii. Also, both of them built their doctrines and teaching on the Scriptures, the Holy Bible.
- iii. They all practiced Pentecostal mode of worship and theology, they have a similar liberation theology. Both have social teachings that forbid polygamy and homosexual relationships.
- iv. The sacrament of baptism and Lord's Supper is common to all of them.

Table 1: Differences

| RCCG | C&S Movement |
|--|--|
| Founded by Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi | It was founded by Moses Orimolade Tunolase |
| More inclined to social works | Cherubim & Seraphim concentrates more on angels and prayers against evil world |
| Redeemed Christian Church of God encourages her members to participate in politics, social and economic activities thus more open to politicians | Cherubim & Seraphim has less programmes for political, social and economic development |

| | |
|--|--|
| Redeemed Christian Church of God has not limited herself to the spiritual works but are also involved educational, political economic and human development of the membership and the society. The Church established hospitals, schools and other businesses that provided employment to many | Cherubim & Seraphim has less impact on the social, economic and educational development in the country |
| Redeemed Christian Church of God is more inclined to following the Scriptures in the culture of the Jewish | Cherubim & Seraphim movement encourages the use of African culture and traditional practices thus more syncretic |
| Redeemed Christian Church of God observed only three sacraments, baptism, holy matrimony and Lord's Supper | Cherubim & Seraphim movement has seven sacraments |
| Redeemed Christian Church of God is more developed in terms of spread and memberships | Cherubim & Seraphim movement is not well developed and it cannot be found in parts of the country |

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- i. There is need for a comparative study of the teachings and practices of these indigenous movements,
- ii. There is need for these movements to develop a clear theology and doctrines that define them.

Conclusion

Redeemed Christian Church of God and Cherubim and Seraphim Movement are both African Indigenous Movements with some common traits and characteristics. Even though their founders had different visions, certain features make them similar. Both practiced Pentecostal theology and the place of Scriptures is central to both of them. While Redeemed Christian Church of God is said to have more social, political and economic impact on the people and the society Cherubim and Seraphim Movement gives more attention to the issue of spiritual liberation and deliverance from the forces of darkness. The Redeem Christian Church of God follows more strictly, the teaching of the Bible while Cherubim and Seraphim Society is syncretic.

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