



Changing faces in the Spirituality of Christ Apostolic Church

Author

**Oluwasanmi
Johnson
Olusola**

Affiliation:

Department
of Religious
Studies and
Philosophy
Redeemers
University
Ede
Osun State
Nigeria



Abstract

Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) is an African Indigenous Church (AIC) which was formally registered in 1947 but had been in existence since 1918 as a prayer group known as *Egbe Aladura* (Prayer Society) which metamorphosed into several other names over the years before 1947. The study aims to assess whether the contemporary CAC maintains the unique spirituality that distinguishes it from other AICs. The research adopts a historical-critical approach with a focus on spirituality, investigating the historical origins of faith and spirituality among selected founding Fathers of CAC in comparison to present-day practices, specifically within CAC in Babalola Region in Oyo state in CAC demographical spread. Data collection involved participant-observation methods, gathering first-hand information on doctrinal emphases and spiritual practices from past and current CAC members in Babalola Region. Questionnaires were administered to 535 selected members and ministers from different District Coordinating Councils (DCCs) and Zones, while interviews were conducted with five persons who are Pastors and leaders within Christ Apostolic Church. Secondary data sources such as literature reviews, church publications, magazines, dictionaries, learned journals, and online sources were consulted. Findings reveal a decline in adherence to early spiritual practices by contemporary CAC members compared to its inception. Moreover, clergy members have not



adequately addressed this deviation from traditional spirituality, indicating a decline in spiritual quality within the church community. To address this issue, it is recommended that comprehensive teachings grounded in biblical principles be provided for both current and new members rather than focusing solely on customs or rituals. In addition, the development of a national manual similar to existing Sunday school materials can assist in promoting spiritual growth.

Keywords: Christ Apostolic Church, Spirituality, Deterioration, Derailment, Babalola Region.

Co-Authors: Ogunbiyi David Oluwabukunmi; Babatunde A. Adedibu
Department of Christian Religious Studies and Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities

Introduction

Christ Apostolic Church since its inception as one of the foremost African Independent Churches has contributed significantly in the changing Nigeria's religioscape. The growth of movement is not limited to the Nigerian space but now transnational religious movement with presence in Western Europe and North America. Thus, CAC has been the focus of many sociological studies on doctrinal subscriptions, growth dynamics and a host of other areas of interest by scholars of religion. Interestingly, the study of religious movement like CAC has always been an intriguing topic due to the peculiar ritual, religious praxis and idiosyncrasies. However, the continued love and spirituality of the CAC leadership and adherents resonates in the timeless hymn that express love and devotion to the church. Hence the hymn writers, Dwight and Aaron Williams ¹ states that:

I love thy kingdom Lord, the house of thine Abode,
The church our blest Redeemer, Saved with his own
precious blood.
I love thy church O God! Her walls before thee stand.

It is pertinent to assert that the love and sacrifices of the founding fathers of the CAC took a cue from the early church movement with their penchant love and commitment to the missionary ideals and faith in the New Testament church. Hence, the hymn of Dwight and Aaron Williams saliently captures the love of the leadership of CAC to the service of God and humanity over the years. However, in today's society, there seems to be a growing disinterest in history and tradition,

¹The Broadman Hymnal. (1940). Hymn 196, Nashville: Broad man press



with some viewing it as irrelevant to our future. Nevertheless, understanding the historical background and spirituality of a church is essential for its growth and development. The Church is the body of Christ through which the kingdom of God now acts in this world and every Christian is a part of the body. It is a means by which the life of Christ is continued on earth². The church story is important in itself and influential in later history. It is important that it is usually not treated as a whole but is broken up into series of intensive findings. Tony Lane asserts that people that have no history is like a man without memory.³

The history of Christ Apostolic Church reveals a high level of spirituality at the beginning of the church. The Church progenitors' philosophy is "living and loving like Jesus"⁴. This high level of spirituality is seen in the early lyrics of the church. An example is: "Gbowo re lo gbobi re lo (2ce)Ma tesesimil'orun,Gbowo re lo, gbobi re lo" translated to mean: "Take away your money, Take away your gift (2ce); Don't implicate me; take away your money and take away your gift"⁵. This particular lyric revealed their spirituality as touching material blessing and mundane things and their heaven focused lifestyle.

The Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) has experienced significant growth over the years, spreading throughout Nigeria and even beyond its borders. Considered as one of the pioneers of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, CAC has a rich history rooted in spirituality. The early lyrics of worship songs in the church highlight their emphasis on heavenly blessings rather than material wealth. The founding Fathers of CAC notably Apostle Ayo Babalola, Pastor Oba I.B. Akinyele, Pastor D.O Odubanjo and Pastor Medaiyese exemplified deep spirituality through their humble lifestyles and dedication to God. Despite their notable charismatic gifts and influence, they left behind little or no material possessions but were respected for their pietistic lifestyle. Their lives serve as a testament to their commitment to obey God and live in accordance with the Biblical standard.⁶

However, contemporary members of CAC are increasingly aware of shallowness in their relationship with God and aspire to embody the spirituality displayed by their progenitors. Some perceive this discrepancy between early spirituality and modern practices as a

²Floyd, Y.F. (1964). *A new Testament history*. London: SCM Press.

³Lane,Tony (1986). *The Lion concise Book of Christian thought*. Sydney: Lion pub. Plc.

⁴Ray, M. (1988). *Spirituality at the Street level*. Marshall Pickering

⁵Olunlade P.O. ,Provost CINDICO. Interview conducted on 12/04/23

⁶Afolabi, S.O. (2015) *The contributions of youth organisations to the growth of Christ Apostolic church in south western Nigeria, 1943-2013*, Ph.D Thesis U.I



decline in spiritual quality within the church. This study aims to assess whether contemporary CAC maintains its unique spirituality that distinguished it from other denominations through a historical-critical analysis. Data was gathered through participant-observation methods, questionnaires administered to members and ministers from selected regions within Babalola Region District Coordinating Council (DCCS)/Zones, interviews with leaders of C.A.C., and secondary data sources such as literature reviews.

By examining differences between early spirituality of the founding fathers of CAC and present-day practices within Babalola region specifically, this research seeks to address observable dissonance in spirituality within the church community. It is hoped that this study will provide insights for members of CAC on how they can positively respond to these challenges while preserving the enviable legacy of early spirituality. Additionally, it will contribute to existing knowledge on the history of CAC while serving as a foundation for further research in this area.

The Theoretical Framework

This work is premised on Belief Bias. The theory of Belief Bias opined that people will tend to accept any and all conclusions that fit in with their systems of belief, without challenge or any deep consideration of what they are actually agreeing with. The reverse is also true, and people will tend to reject assertions that do not fit in with their belief systems, even though these statements may be perfectly logical and arguably possible. This is particularly true when people ignore the premises and focus solely on the conclusions being drawn. It is even truer of people who are not educated in logic and argumentation, as such people reason by experience and not at all by logic.

This theory is applicable to this work in that it explains the almost frictionless manner by which the new teachings on spirituality namely prayer, use of rain water for healing (divine healing) and some others was adopted by C.A.C. Founding Fathers. The teaching fits in seamlessly into their system of beliefs having been somehow disappointed by the inability of the CMS to provide a working solution to killing influenza epidemic.

Historical Background of Spirituality and Early Church Practices

The historical background of spirituality and early church practices provides valuable insights into the development of religious beliefs, rituals, and traditions. Understanding the origins of spirituality helps us to grasp the foundations upon which various religious movements



have been built. Ancient civilisations across different parts of the world displayed a strong inclination towards spiritual practices⁷. From ancient Mesopotamia to Egypt, Greece, and India, people sought connection with higher powers and engaged in rituals and ceremonies to appease or commune with deities. These early spiritual practices often involved sacrifices, prayers, divination, and worship in sacred spaces.

In the context of Christianity, the early church played a significant role in shaping its spirituality. The teachings and actions of Jesus Christ laid the foundation for a distinct form of spirituality centred around love, compassion, forgiveness, and service to others. The early Christian communities developed their own rituals such as baptism and Eucharist (communion) as means to express their faith. During this period, prayer was considered an essential component of spiritual life. Early Christians emphasised personal prayer as well as communal prayer gatherings⁸.

Throughout history, various movements within Christianity have placed different emphasis on spirituality. The mystics sought direct experiences with God through intense prayer and meditation while emphasising inner transformation over external observances. The Protestant Reformation led by figures like Martin Luther saw a shift towards individualistic piety grounded in personal faith rather than reliance on rites performed by clergy.

Christianity is essentially a historical religion for the central doctrine of the Incarnation situated God at the heart of human history. Historically, spirituality was not distinguished from religiousness until the rise of secularism in this century, and a popular disillusionment with religious institutions as a hindrance to personal experiences of the sacred⁹. In the past few decades, interest in spirituality has greatly increased. At the same time, there has been a drop in public confidence in religion and religious leadership¹⁰. Consequently, spirituality has begun to acquire distinct meanings and connotations.

⁷Koenig, H. G. MD (2008). *Religion, Spirituality and Health Research and Clinical Applications*. Retrieved 12 september, 2017 <http://www.nacsio.org>.

⁸Miller, W. R. and Martin, J. E. (1988). *Spirituality and behavioral psychology: Toward integration*. In *Behavior therapy and religion: Integrating spiritual and behavioral approaches to change*, edited by W. R. Miller and J. E. Martin, 13-23. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

⁹Turner, R. P., D. Lukoff, R. T. Barnhouse and F. G. Lu. (1995). *Religious or spiritual problem: A culturally sensitive diagnostic category in the DSM-IV*. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 183: 435-44.

¹⁰Roof, W. C. (1993). *A generation of seekers: The spiritual journeys of the baby boom generation*. San Francisco: Harper.



With regard to religiousness, social scientific research has traditionally adopted either a substantive or functional approach.¹¹

Pargament argued that the substantive approach focuses on the beliefs, emotions, practices, and relationships of individuals in relation to a higher power or divine being. In the past, definitions of religiousness were broad and encompassed a wide range of elements, including beliefs, emotions, practices, and experiences.¹² These definitions focused on the sacred and the function that religiousness served in dealing with fundamental existential problems. However, as spirituality has become differentiated from religiousness, recent definitions of religiousness have become narrower and less inclusive.

Spirituality is now commonly regarded as an individual phenomenon associated with personal transcendence, super conscious sensitivity, and meaningfulness. It is seen as having a positive connotation through its association with personal experiences of the transcendent. On the other hand, religiousness is often described narrowly as formally structured and identified with religious institutions and prescribed theology and rituals. There has been a shift in how both terms are evaluated as well. Spirituality is seen positively while some view religiousness as a hindrance to spiritual experiences.¹³

The conceptualizations of religiousness and spirituality by researchers have not all caught up with these changes in popular understanding. There is ongoing debate among theorists and researchers about how to define these terms more precisely. There have been significant changes in the religious and spiritual landscape in recent history, leading to different conceptualizations of religiousness and spirituality among scholars.

Very little attention, however, has been paid to the ways the general public defines the terms. Apart from a handful of studies which have explored the meanings that individual believers attribute to religiousness and spirituality as noted by Philip¹⁴ and Roof.¹⁵ Previous

¹¹Pargament, K. I. 1997. *The psychology of religion and coping*. New York: Guilford Press 1996.

What is the difference between religiousness and spirituality? Symposium conducted at the meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Canada.

¹²ibid

¹³Ray, M. (1988). *Spirituality at the street level*. Marshall Pickering)

¹⁴Sheldrake, P. (2007). *A brief History of Spirituality*. USA: Blackwell publishing.

¹⁵Roof, W. C. (1993). *A generation of seekers: The spiritual journeys of the baby boomgeneration*. San Francisco: Harper.

research has addressed how individual believers think about distinguish the terms.¹⁶ Moreover, few investigations have considered whether self-evaluations of religiousness and spirituality are associated with distinctive demographic, religion/spiritual, and psychosocial factors.

The spirituality of the early church exhibited in purity of life, love, and courage three centuries after the death of Christ that Constantine gave official recognition to the importance of Christianity in the state by calling and presiding over the council of Nicaea standing and dying for their faith made such an impact on the pagan society of imperial Rome that it was only .¹⁷

Interestingly, works on the CAC founding fathers are not left out. Authors like Oshun¹⁸, Alokani,¹⁹ AbiOlowe²⁰ and others have written quite a sizeable number of books on these CAC fathers. The aforementioned scholars publications were reviewed and employed to evaluate the spirituality of the CAC founding fathers. It however discovered that no serious attempt has been made to compare the spirituality of these CAC Fathers with the present generation of CAC. This then create a vacuum this work intends to fill.

A Brief History of Christ Apostolic Church

The Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) originated from a religious movement in Nigeria's old western region. It started with a dream by Pa Ali, the sexton of St. Saviour's Anglican Church, in 1918. The dream led to the formation of a prayer team within the church, supported by clergy and members. During one of their prayer meetings, they received instructions to stop using medications. When an influenza epidemic forced churches to close down, the prayer group prayed against the epidemic in front of their closed church. Miss Sophia Odunlami received divine messages regarding bathing with rainwater and instructions against consulting herbalists or using medicine.²¹ D.O.

¹⁴Ingersoll, R. E. 1994. Spirituality, religion, and counseling: Dimensions and relationships. *Counseling and Values* 38: 98-111.

¹⁷Earl E. Carns, (1981). *Christianity through the Centuries*. Michigan :Zondervan publishing House.

¹⁸Oshun C.O. (2012). *David Odubanjo, Legendary pioneer of Faith Tabernacle and Apostolic Movement in Nigeria*. Lagos: pierce watershed.

¹⁹Alokani A. (1991), *The Christ Apostolic church 1928-1988*.Nigeria: Ibukun Ibunkunola Printers

²⁰Olowe, A, (2007). *Great Revivals Great Revivalist*. Omega Publishers, U.S.A.

²¹Ademakinwa J.A. (1971).*History of Christ Apostolic Church, The faith of our Fathers*. Lagos: The Battle Cry Christian Ministry.



Odubanjo returned from Warri as an evangelist for divine healing based on his beliefs from Faith Tabernacle teachings²².

The group took on the name "Precious Stone" in 1920 after it was revealed through a dream. The names given before settling for Christ Apostolic Church were Faith Tabernacle, Nigeria, Nigerian Apostolic Church (NAC), United Apostolic Church (UAC) which conflicted with United African Company trading company thus changed again. On December 22nd, 1941 at General Executive Council meeting, the proposed name Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) was adopted officially during April 1942 convention held at Efon-Alaaye.²³This unique spirituality is attributed to merging spiritual movements led by Pastors Esinsinade Odubanjo; visioneers like Pa Ali, Miss Sophia; revivalists like Babalola, Orekoya, Babajide ;and devoted Christians like Pastors Akinyele and Medaiyese among others.²⁴

Spirituality of Selected C.A.C. Founding Fathers

CAC was established in the 1930s to meet the spiritual needs of people and address societal issues. Through prayer, fasting, predictions, visions, and teaching of the word of God, CAC. evangelists/prophets provided solutions to problems like diseases, poverty, spiritual captivity, and sin. The church had a significant impact on society in Nigeria's southwest region. However, over time, CAC has undergone changes as circumstances evolve.

Spirituality of Pastor (Oba) I.B Akinyele (1882 – 1964)

Isaac Babalola Akinyele, born in 1882, was a devout Christian from a young age. He held various positions in the Anglican Church and worked in secular roles, such as a customs officer and a court judge. Despite the temptations of corruption and bribery, he remained steadfast in his integrity and refused to engage in unethical practices. Akinyele used his positions of influence to fight against corruption and spread the gospel. He believed that committed Christians should take up secular posts to demonstrate honesty and combat societal vices. His exemplary behaviour earned him recognition and accolades, including awards from the British Monarch for his integrity and leadership qualities.

²²Afolabi S.O. (2015) *The contributions of youth organisations to the growth of Christ Apostolic church in south western Nigeria, 1943-2013*, Ph.D Thesis U.I

²³Alokan, A.O. (1991), *The Christ Apostolic church 1928-1988*.Nigeria: Ibukun Ibunkunola Printers

²⁴Oshun, C.O. (1983). "Pentecostal Perspectives of Christ Apostolic Church" in Orita, *Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol.15



Isaac Babalola Akinyele's spirituality extended beyond his involvement in the Anglican Church and his secular roles. He anonymously funded several churches before joining the Faith Tabernacle, showing his belief in making all resources available to God with humility. He also donated his own lands to the church, including the site of the National headquarters of CAC. Akinyele fully embraced the holiness and evangelical teachings of the Faith Tabernacle in 1925, adopting their strict monogamy stance on marriage. Despite difficulties, he remained committed to being monogamous until his death. This commitment was shared by other founding leaders and members of Faith Tabernacle

Ogunranti in support of this submission wrote

“Our fathers who were originally polygamists decided to do away with the other wives in appreciation and acceptance of the new doctrine.....My father gave up polygamy and lived the remaining part of his life as a man of one wife; I.B. Akinyele settled into a man one wife all through his life”²⁵.

Commenting on the spirituality of patriarch Akinyele, Oshun wrote:

Judging by the mounting pressure on Isaac Akinyele, to be carried away by the lure of power and the allurements of office as was common among his contemporaries, the patriarch chose the path of apostolic faith, apostolic simplicity, apostolic witness, apostolic fellowship, apostolic purity, and apostolic humility. It was always his intention to exude Christ likeness in his conduct and life. Thus, he was able to shun the temptations of pride of life, pride of grace and pride of race. Rather he identified with the poor and lowly. He was benevolent, considerate and empathetic. He ran a dormitory for boys. He paid the school fees of numerous indigent students. He was their role model. He invested heavily in human capital development.²⁶

²⁵Ogunranti, A. (1980). *A paper presented to the young men League*, Ebute Meta.

²⁶Oshun, C.O. (1983). “Pentecostal Perspectives of Christ Apostolic Church” in *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol.15



Spirituality of Apostle J.A. Babalola

He was born on the 25th April, 1904 at Igbo Niyun, Odo – Owa to devout Christians of Anglican Church, David and Martha TalabiRotimi²⁷. His spirituality started early in life . Just before his conception, Olusheye²⁸ reported that an Angel appeared to his Mother, Mrs.MarthaTalabiRotimi in form of an elderly man in white robe. The angel told her to be humble and submissive to her husband, and that she would be blessed with a male child whom the Lord God of heaven would use to bless many all over the world. When Babalola was to be named according to Yoruba tradition, his father, David Rotimi, easily hunted for a fat animal used for his naming ceremony. It was said that this was an indication that the baby must be special. As a baby, Martha revealed that Babalola usually cried tirelessly with a sharp voice.

At a young age, Isaac Babalola Akinyele displayed his faith and commitment to God. At the age of 7, he refused to consume meat that had been offered as a sacrifice to idols, leading his grandmother to convert to Christianity. He was known for his generosity and willingness to help others. Akinyele possessed a strong spiritual power that was evident in his fervent prayers and fasting practices. He would pray for hours on end, sometimes fasting without food or drink for 40 days at a time. Prayer and fasting were integral parts of his mission and he dedicated significant time each day to prayer.

The praying prowess of Babalola is attested by Pastor D.K Olukoya, the most accomplished author on Prayer with this word of his in the dedication to his book titled "Prayer Rain".

'This book, Prayer Rain, is dedicated to late Apostle Joseph Ayo Babalola, a minister of God, who understood the power of prayer. He was a man mightily used by God to ignite the fire of the first Christian revival in this country (Nigeria) in the nineteen thirties. Brother Joseph Ayo and his team of aggressive prayer warriors entered forbidden forests, silenced demon that demanded worship, paralysed deeply rooted, anti – gospel activities. Sometimes beginning from the highest places, they emptied

²⁷Olumakin,D. (2012). *Heroes and Heroines* (Florin, Divine Gimee Print

²⁸Olusheye, E.H.L.(1983). *Saint Joseph Ayo Babalola (1904-1959)*.Ibadan: The Christians overcomers publishers

hospitals by the healing power of the Lord Jesus Christ, rendered witch doctors jobless, and they started the first indigenous Holy Ghost filled church in Nigeria. So far – and we stand to be corrected – none has equalled, let alone surpassed this humble Brother in the field of aggressive evangelism in this country.²⁹

Babalola also found great joy in studying the law of the Lord Day and night. He was so used to reading Psalm 1 – 150 that he read most of them offhand. He lived a very humble life and free from the love of money. Even though he had the opportunity to be wealthy, he refused to accumulate money for himself. At his death, only £23 was found in his hand bag and that was all he had. No house or heritable wears³⁰. Apostle Babalola's humanity, generosity and endurance are attested to by these words of E.H.L Olusheye, a former President of CAC worldwide:

He shared the only room he had with all his Christian visitors; for this reason there was never a permanent bed in the room. There was only one permanent book – shelf in the room. He always used a camp bed in the room; when a visitor came, he always vacated the camp bed for a mat on the floor. He was so humble that he was never known to have rejected pieces of advice or suggestion, from all classes of the men of God around him.³¹

It was reported that Babalola had great love for orphans and indigent people. He said at times Babalola's concern for these people received priority consideration over the needs of his biological children as regards the payment of school fees, provision of school materials, cloths and health care. Alokun submitted that this practice was in consonance with Babalola's life policy of giving service in the order of God first, others second and self last.

The author further reported that he sponsored 47 people as his sons and daughter in school and apprenticeships and that he sponsored the wedding ceremonies of several people under his ministry.

²⁹Olukoya, D. K. (1999), *The Prayer Rain*. Lagos: A Publication of MFM

³⁰Alokun A. (1991), *The Christ Apostolic church 1928-1988*. Nigeira: Ibukun Ibunkunola Printers

³¹Olusheye, E.H.L. (1983). *Saint Joseph Ayo Babalola (1904-1959)*. Ibadan: The Christians overcomers publishers



The Changing faces in Early and Contemporary CAC Spirituality

To many people, history has never been an interesting subject. Such people have forgotten the proverb that say, "Those who do not know history are doomed to repeat it".³² The current General Superintendent of C.A.C. said, "The failure to understand church history has resulted in some of the most devastating and unnecessary mistakes made by the modern church".³³ At this point using selected parameters, the early spirituality of Christ Apostolic Church will be compared to what obtains now and deductions will be made.

A) Acquisition of Wealth and Contentment with Money

The teaching of the church on wealth acquisition was very clear. The church was against ungodly acquisition of wealth. It teaches that members should be contented with whatever God provided and that only the daily provision is what God is under must to give. Alokannarrated a teaching of Babalola on this:

Joseph Babalola narrated a vision of how an emancipated and hungry cow managed to enter a big garden full of different types of food crops. The cow voraciously ate the crops until its size made going out of the garden impossible. It had to wait there until it excreted all the food it had eaten. He then told his hearers that anyone who acquired wealth through foul means would surely lose such ill-gotten wealth.³⁴

He further expresses concern over the current state of ministers in the CAC church who prioritize money over souls. Unlike early leaders like Babalola and Akinyele, who focused on preaching and winning souls for Christ, many modern ministers use miracles and spiritual gifting as a means to enrich themselves. The author also criticizes the trend of church planters claiming ownership of their churches instead of remaining loyal to CAC authorities and upholding its doctrines. Materialism has infiltrated the church, with both laymen ministers pursuing wealth and possessions in undesirable ways. This focus on material gain has led to prayer meetings being motivated by money, rather than spiritual growth. Church anniversaries have become opportunities for acquiring cash, rather than focusing on saving souls.

³²George Santayana. *Culture and Religion*, July 2018. <https://bigthink.com>

³³C.A.C. (2017). *Pastor Conference Manual, 2017*. Lagos: C.A.C. printing Press.

³⁴Alokan A. (1991), *The Christ Apostolic church 1928-1988*. Nigeira: Ibukun Ibunkunola Printers



This article argues that this shift in priorities is detrimental to the spiritual health of the church.

b) Training of Church Workers

This is one practice of the church that reveals its spirituality. At the beginning of the church, training of church workers was mandatory. Every would-be worker in the church received training for stipulated minimum period before assuming duty in the church. The training system then was called "Tuule" (in-house training, tutelage or spiritual internship). It is the church nomenclature for discipleship.³⁵

"Tuule" is a ministerial concept in the early days of C.A.C. It has to do with a specific period in a minister's life when he has to first of all receive training under an established minister of God, before launching out for ministerial assignment. It has to do with tutelage, discipleship, mentorship, service and servant hood. Most of the ministers that had experienced it turned out to be better minister. It is mini-theological or Bible training school. It was meant to guide the upcoming ministers against doctrinal errors. It also helped to guide against character default.

Tuule has helped the church to raise seasoned, disciplined and cultured men of God. "Tuuleship" include full church membership, organized discipleship programme and enhanced training for the ministry, via Bible College, Seminaries and Theological institution. It is never archaic as some would want us to believe. We will always need it for better personal development³⁶. Examples of tuule include Esinsinade/ Odunlami, Medaiyese/Babalola, and Babalola/ Orekoya, Ajiloye, Omotoso.

It is a known fact that tuule is no longer popular among young ministers in C.A.C. They detest it like a plague. This explains why the majority of present day Pastors in the church are planters. It has been discovered that some of them never serve under anybody.

C) Obedience to God's Word

Obedience to God was the hall mark of the teaching of the early C.A.C. and their degree of compliance has been generally rated to be total and complete. This evident in the manner in which they obeyed seemingly unnatural and difficult instruction from God. In an

³⁵C.A.C. (2016) Sunday School Teachers Manual, *Discipleship Lessons from the Old Testament*. Lagos: CAC printing press Ltd.

³⁶C.A.C. (2016) Sunday School Teachers Manual, *Discipleship Lessons from the Old Testament*. Lagos: CAC printing press Ltd.

oral interview with Pastor Olunlade (formal, Provost CINDICO), He gave an example of how Pastor Babajide, C.A.C. second General Evangelist left his newly wedded wife on the morning following their wedding at Ilesa and came to Ibadan on the instruction of God to plant a church at Idi Arere in Ibadan. The church so planted is C.A.C. Oke –Irapada, Sakapena, Idi Arere, Ibadan now a DCC Headquarters.³⁷

The manner in which the C.A.C founding members responded to the instruction on monogamy and stopping of medication and rely totally on prayer only is a testimony to their unalloyed obedience. The situation has however changed. There are reports that some of the Pastors in CAC are serial monogamist. They had concubines at every station they are posted to serve. Also it is observed that there is a general disobedience to the doctrine of the church especially the doctrines that guide members' dressing. There are Pastors' wives who use jewelleryes and other cosmetic." Thus says the Lord" is now being contested unlike before.³⁸

d) Preaching the True Word of God

Early CAC was known to be preaching the true word of God. The early fathers preached undiluted word of God that led to people giving their lives to Christ in hundreds. Today the gospel message has been modernised and adulterated. The focus of contemporary preacher in the church is now money and physical comfort . Messages on salvation, repentance, forgiveness, sanctification, holiness, persecution soul winning, and rapture are now scarce on the pulpits. Today, a reasonable percentage of CAC ministers hardly preached against sin, hence we have many carnal and immature Christians in many churches.

e) Prevailing Prayer and Miracle

In the past, people would seek healing and deliverance at CAC, but now other denominations are gaining more recognition in this regard. The early generation of CAC leaders prioritised prayer and fasting, often retreating to mountains to encounter God and His power. However, many of these mountains have now become money-making ventures. The founding fathers had a daily prayer schedule and would withdraw from the crowd for personal intercession or spiritual renewal. Babalola was known to pray on various mountains like Oke-segun, Oke-Anu, Oke-Iyanu, and Epinmi. The author observed that the way prayers are conducted in the church today is not

³⁷Olunlade P.O. ,Provost CINDICO. Interview conducted on 12/04/23

³⁸Oloruntoba Z.K. DCCSuperintendent and Financial scretary, Babalola Region. Interview conducted on 15/04/23



comparable to how it was in the days of the founding fathers. Many Prayer Mountains were originally meant for private prayer and spiritual edification rather than commercial purposes.

Olowe opines that Apostle Babalola believed that, praying on the mountain is where one can better fellowship with the Lord, receive power, and renew strength. During Apostle Babalola's missionary journeys, he was always retreating to a mountain to pray. When Babalola was called in 1928, he retreated to pray on a mountain at Ipetu – Ijesa.³⁹ That was the first mountain on which he prayed to receive divine guidance for his ministry, but today, this is not one of the popular mountains consecrated for prayer.

Today however, people establish and go to Prayer Mountain not for spiritual blessing but physical, mundane blessings. This work is not attempting to say physical blessing are not important but that when members of CAC are obsessed with material blessing over their spirituality then their Christianity might be questionable. From the hindsight, the founding fathers of CAC patterned their spirituality in the light of the early church movement at the birth of Christianity which seemingly is incomparable to the cravings for material blessings neglecting their soulish prosperity. It thus, implies that the spirituality of CAC adherents have changed due to noticeable changes in the emphases of prayer from pietistic living, grace to live above sin and obedience to the word of God. Hence, this article argues for a call back to Bethel (Gen 35:14) for the leaders of CAC and their adherents to reignite the passion for service and put on the gaze of eschatology once again, since this temporal world will end one day according to the Biblical world-view in the book of Revelation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study recognised the challenges faced by CAC in maintaining its early spirituality in the face of global trends towards materialism and compromise within contemporary Christianity. While there are still members who uphold the values of prayerfulness, obedience to God's word and other spirituality identities of the church, there are a larger percentage who for many reasons believes these spirituality identity is longer practicable. Therefore, there is an urgent need for CAC leadership to address the observed cold attitude to the church's spiritual identities and work towards revitalizing and preserving the church unique spiritual heritage.

³⁹Olowe A., (2007). *Great Revival –Great Revivalist*. Texas: Omega Publishers.



This research provides valuable insights for members of CAC, as well as scholars studying church history and spirituality, by shedding light on the potential decline in spiritual quality within a prominent Nigerian church. It serves as a call to action for CAC leadership to re-evaluate their practices and ensure that they stay true to their foundational principles while adapting to present-day challenges. Further research can build upon this study by exploring potential solutions to address these issues and revive the spirituality of contemporary CAC.

Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of how historical context shapes present-day expressions of faith within religious communities and emphasises the importance of preserving spiritual legacies for future generations.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this work, the following are recommended:

1. The church authority should recognise the fact that the church is deteriorating spiritually and that there is need for urgent action on their part.
2. Every old and new member of CAC Should be made to undertake a series of lectures on the basic doctrines and Tenets of the church. The manual for this should be national just like the Sunday school manual.
3. The church authority should come up with a policy that discourage individual church planting and encourage established churches/ assemblies to go into church planting. The authority should also be ready to finance or at least help financially, the newly planted churches. This will curb the activities of those church planters whose activities are inimical to the spirituality of the church.
4. Those who feel that the church spirituality is obsolete or too high should leave peacefully instead of staying but doing contrary.
5. The process of selection of candidate for ordination should be more thorough. Those who recommend wayward candidate should be punish or sanction.

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