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ALADURA IN THE CITY: EXPLORING HOW THE CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM NAVIGATES CITY DYNAMICS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper discusses how the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) navigates the complex city dynamics within the context of time and space and how both the church and the city shape and reshape one another in Nigeria. The C&S is a major brand of Aladura Christianity, which emerged as a prayer group and metamorphosed into major and countless number of minor strands of churches that bear the name "Cherubim and Seraphim" as prefix or suffix. The C&S navigates a diverse, competitive, and dynamic religious landscape where the changing city life of modernisation and globalisation influence how the church practices its faith. Such influence offers the church a wide range of opportunities and challenges in every city where it exists. Education, media technologies, social services, security challenge and economic depression are major indicators of how the church negotiates its relevance and visibility within the city. The paper posits that the interaction between the C&S and its cities of existence stimulates considerable resilience and positive impacts on the both sides.

Introduction

Religious institutions and their spiritual and social activities play a vital role in the growth of a city and its urban communities. Conversely, secular city life of modernism and globalization has inestimable influence on religious institutions and their activities. This paper is about how the cherubim and seraphim churches impact on cities where they are found and how same cities shape and reshape the churches and

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their religious activities. The cherubim and seraphim emerged as a small mobile religious group in Ikare-Akoko and provided spiritual solutions to the economic, social and health challenges of people who believed in Moses Orimolade's charismatic power. It is widely believed that the emergence of Aladura Christianity, particularly the Cherubim and Seraphim changed the religious landscape of Ikare Akoko its town of emergence and other cities and towns where it has spread to. The church is a brand of Christianity that blends Christian faith with African religious and cultural elements to produce a unique brand of Christianity with which it negotiates its relevance in the religiously diverse, competitive, and challenging space. Like other religious groups, the Cherubim and Seraphim is not insulated from the negative and encouraging impacts of the secular society. It has transformed its spiritual and social commodities including its administrative structure in order to remain relevant and sustain the attention and commitment of its members, and win more converts. However, the Cherubim and Seraphim churches, in the course of practicing their faith, face challenges and resistance. Breaking away with the past has always attracted mixed reactions from members. As a prophetic brand of Christianity, there is a strong insistence that the establishment of the mother church and her doctrine were in accordance to divine revelations. Hence, accommodating new ideas and practice or expunging the old should be premised on prophetic guidance. Within the context of change and resistance, the church has grown into major and countless strands, spread to different parts of Nigeria, and has become transnational.

Emergence and Spread

The emergence, early leadership tussle and consequent spread of the Cherubim and Seraphim have been extensively interrogated (Awojobi, 2021, pp.48-63; Ogunewu, Ayegboyin, Olayiwola, Agbaje, & Jesse, 2017, pp.8-10; Baiyewu, 2014, pp48-52; Omoyajowo, 1982, pp.3-89). However, the current trends in the growth, spread and resilience of the church need to be unraveled to enrich its historicity. The cherubim and seraphim began as a Christian body on the ninth of September, 1925. Moses Orimolade whose birth, growth and healing powers are shrouded in myth and mystery started his religious itinerary earlier than 1925 because he left his place of birth, Ikare-Akoko in 1915 on a missionary journey that took him to Lokoja, Zaria and Kano, and on his way back passed through Ilorin and Osogbo and finally arrived Lagos in 1924. The internal leadership crisis between Christiana Abiodun Akinsowon and Moses Orimolade within the church's first five years of existence led to a breakaway between the two groups, which subsequently marked the beginning of its proliferation. By 1933, the church had split into five major strands: the C&S Society headed by Christiana Abiodun Akinsowon, the Eternal Sacred Order of the C&S headed by Moses Orimolade, the Praying Band of C&S headed by Ezekiel Davies, the C&S Western Conference headed by one W. F. Sosan, and the Holy

Flock of Christ headed by Major Abiodun Babatunde Lawrence. It was much later in 1941 that the northern conference of the C&S split to form C&S Movement Church. These groups have produced lots of splinter groups with the exception of Holy Flock of Christ which adopted a completely different name but has remained Aladura in belief, doctrine and practice. As at August 2011, aside the five major strands of the C&S, about fifty constituent churches have identified with the C&S Unification by registration, and countless number of splinter C&S churches have emerged (Baiyewu, 2014, p.49). Among the five major strands, the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement Church (CSMC) Ayo ni! is the most widely spread and mediatised, with one hundred and seven (107) district headquarters in Nigeria, USA, Canada, Europe and the United Kingdom (CSMC Lectionary, 2024, pp.10-31). The C&S Northern Conference (now CSMC) emerged in Kaduna in 1937 when a number of migrant members came together to worship at the residence of one Mrs Adebiyi (Mama Ondo) (CSMC 70th Anniversary programme of event, 2011, p.13). The C&S has become a transnational brand of Christianity, with African, Italian, Canadian, German, and United Kingdom presence and membership.

The City Dynamics

Cities are not identical and static. Cities evolve and change over time. Cities witness inflow and outflow of people and their different cultural baggage, knowledge, ideas, and experience. A city is a place where the existing culture, norms, values and codes encounter the new. Every day, new ways of doing things are being introduced through the interaction of people across cultures. The city dynamics in Nigeria presents a picture of changing elements that characterise urban environment. It involves cultural diversity, creativity, government regulations, population, technology of everything, competition, emerging physical and economic security challenges, norms, values, globalisation, religious diversity, education, science and technology, and social services, and how these forces shape and reshape the city and its dwellers over time.

Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

Nigeria is a country that is culturally pluralistic and diversified with about 619 ethnic groups (Alubo 2004, p.137; Blench & Dendo 2003, p.3). Ethnic and cultural diversity has been a major characteristic of Nigeria. The ethnic and cultural variations in humans in the city are structured along identity, which involves covariant perceptions of "us" and "them" as observable makers. The dynamics of ethnic and cultural identity involve changes in boundaries over time. Emphases have been on the management of such heritage for mutual coexistence, economic development, social integration, tourism, religious peace and tolerance, and how the diversities shape and reshape public policies for optimum advantage of citizens (Omotosho, Ihekuna, & Fakoya, 2020, pp.165-170; Ojie

& Ewhrudjakpor, 2017, pp.7-12; Deekor & Maekae, 2015, pp.249-253; Edewor, Aluko & Folarin, 2014, pp.70-75). The interplay of diverse ethnic groups, languages and cultures stimulate some accommodation, modification, and resistance in the church. The Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Tiv, Nupe, Gbagyi, Kanuri, Ijaw, Ibibio, Calabari, Berom, Fulani and other ethnic nationalities and their unique cultural heritages highlight the diversity, complexity, beliefs and ritual practices in the country. The indigenous beliefs and practices in the cultural elements of the people, Christianity, Islam and the oriental religions and their dynamism shape and reshape one another. Such diverse cultural terrain, though volatile at sudden times, requires the sensitivity and mutual strategies of religious missionaries. Onaiyekan (2010, p.2) aptly describes the religious landscape in Nigeria and wants us to note "the number of places of worship, the volume of holy noises that are emitted everywhere, the array of religious leaders with various titles and robes and the fervour with which we not only practice our faith but at times violently confront one another". The diversity of the religious landscape influences interchange of ideas. The C&S navigates the cultural dynamics in the city, accommodates or modifies new ways of doing things to sustain its relevance.

Competitive Landscape

Constitutional provision for religious freedom engenders unending formation of religious groups, religious plurality and diversity. Such religious terrain encourages competitions among religious groups for members, popularity and relevance. The liberty to practice any religion of one's interest and conviction and also carry out non-violent preaching is enshrined in the United Nations' Universal declaration of Human Rights on religious freedom as captured in articles 1, 2, 18-20, and 26; the declaration of the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation against all forms of discriminations against employees, particularly on religious ground as captured in article 1, section 1; the UNESCO declaration on the relevance of acquisition of education devoid of religious distinction, for the promotion of peace and security in article 1 sections 1 and 2; the African Union (AU) declaration on non-discrimination of rights and freedoms of religion in articles 2, 8 -11; and the Nigerian Constitution on freedom of thought, conscience, and religion in chapter iv, section 38, subsections 1-3 (Baiyewu, 2014, p.68). The competitive religious landscape encourages the cherubim and seraphim to constantly redefines itself. Such religious landscape is likened to the conventional secular marketplace. The religious marketplace in Nigeria, like the secular, is pluralistic and dynamic. The multiplicity of religious groups and the emerging new religious formations engender active proselytizing and constant renewal of strategies for competitive advantages. Nigeria's religious market structure is a platform for both intra and interreligious competitions. Religious groups claim to articulate and respond to varied needs of devotees (Koenig 1999, pp.97-104).

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Such claim of response inspires and sustains considerable participation and commitment of devotees. Aside response to social, economic, political and mental strains, which religious groups emphatically claim to offer solutions to, the plurality of the religious market offers a wide range of choice options. The plurality of churches and the desire to obtain spiritual satisfaction from whoever can offer it encourage multiple membership and participation. Traditional religions, Christianity, Islam and their countless number of splinter groups and sects are active actors in the competitive religious landscape. The competitive landscape also plays host to indigenous Ogboni Secret Society, the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity, the Ancient Mystical Order of Rosae Crucis (AMORC), and the Oriental religions, but these are not as socially visible as the churches and mosques. The presence of cultic groups is often acknowledged in the condemnations that are expressed about them and some social crises that tend to implicate them. Other competitors are the Oriental religious groups. The competition among various major and minor strands of the various religions shows considerable mutual relationship and networking. Latent rivalry and sudden violence are characteristics of a multi-religious and competitive environment where religious organisations compete for members and relevance. In its competitive strategies, the C&S reorganised its organisational structure and created an umbrella body that accommodates all the major and minor strands and registered those groups that identified with the body. The schismatic tendency of the church, the need to foster unity among different strands, and the need to stem the tide of the unwholesome practices of some prophets and individual members stimulated the establishment of the Cherubim and Seraphim Unification (CSU), which started in 1929 as an attempt to foster peace and unity between Moses Orimolade and other sections of the C&S. This attempt gradually metamorphosed into bigger unification when further attempts were made in 1931, 1965, 1972 and 1986 (Baiyewu, 2014, pp.82-84). In response to the competition for popularity and membership that dominate the religious landscape, the C&S constantly rebrands its spiritual commodities and social services for optimum competitive advantage.

Emerging Security Challenges

The emerging security challenges shape the spirituality and security consciousness of the church. Religious differences that exist among various religious groups, the extreme position of some sects, and letters of threat that emanate from some faceless armed groups have contributed to the volatility and risks that abound on the religious landscape. Increasing occurrence of banditry, kidnap cases for ransom and rituals, and unemployment and general economic hardship have collectively heightened the security challenges that confront the C&S. The church is a registered member of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Organisation of African Independent Churches (OAIC), Search for Common Grounds (SCG) and other inter-faith organisations. Registered

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religious associations provide umbrellas and platforms for inter and intra-religious and denominational networking for mutual share of religious platforms and peaceful coexistence of members regardless of their doctrinal differences. Yet, there are latent and violent conflicts among various religious groups. The relative peace and sudden times of violence continuously shape the conduct of the church and its members in the course of their religious activities. The relative frost on the religious landscape has compelled the C&S to always avoid religiously volatile areas in their cities of existence. Street processions during weekly evangelism, Easter and Christmas seasons have been restricted to communities that are relatively peaceful and safe within the city. Contrary to the church's faith belief that 'the lord watches over His own', the church employs the services of registered security firms to watch over its premises day and night in the city. The use of the CCTV at entrances and other strategic locations in the church premises highlights the C&S's shift from the spiritual to the digitised security in the city.

Emerging Media Technologies

The nexus between media technologies and the C&S highlights a paradigm shift and a response to modernisation and globalisation of everything. As a paradigm shift, the church has moved away from street-walk preaching, which characterised the church's evangelism strategy in the early years of its formation. The C&S like other religious groups appropriates televangelism and the social media particularly the Facebook. Live streaming of special social events of the church, special revival services, and Sunday worship points to the church's response to the influence of the emerging media technologies. The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, which forced religious groups to shut down worship centres stimulated the quick response to the use of media technologies. This marked the beginning of the C&S's aggressive approach to mediatising worship and spiritual commodities. Adedibu, Akindolie & Olujobi (2022, pp.5-6), drawing on the COVID-19 experience of churches and mosques, state that religious groups resorted to the appropriation of media technologies and the social media, as a paradigm shift that did not exclude the C&S and other African independent churches. C&S major and minor strands use print media in their weekly and special church services. Pamphlets and programme of events are printed and distributed to members and visitors. The use of radio and television jingles is common among the different strands of the C&S. Live streaming of special church events is common in the major strands of the C&S. The CSMC, Surulere, Lagos has a recording studio. It was established by its late general leader Gabriel Fakeye. Gabriel Fakeye's *Edidi Iye* 'seal of Life' has been a favourite religious programme aired to listeners of FM radio stations in Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, and Kwara states (Baiyewu, 2014, pp.247-249). Posters and billboards are commonly in use. Most of the prints carry the images of renowned song ministers, prophets, and preachers. The posters and billboards also carry

the intents of the church for the special events. The C&S's use of the media technologies has helped to globalise its brand of Christianity. The global exposure has in turn opened the church to more foreign influence in the mediatisation of its gospel outreach. Media technologies help the C&S to avoid some physical encounters that can result to physical violence in religiously volatile city communities.

Leadership and Gender Paradigm

The leadership and female participation in church rituals in C&S churches present a picture of a gradual change in patriarchal dominance of church leadership and spiritual activities. Although such patriarchal hegemony has been broken at the emergence of some charismatic female church founders, the acceptance and rejection of females' occupation of some leadership positions and their participation in church rituals have remained issues of strong debates. There are arguments that concern the purity or otherwise of female members during their monthly period. Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic religions in their sacred texts and verbal affirmations emphasized gender constructions and toxic statements of female impurity that often raise aggressive argument and shame. The exclusion of women from religious rituals and public spheres during their "red flag days" is borne out of patriarchal hegemony and value placed on females and their menstruation cycle, which is being gradually demystified in the C&S churches. Some studies have revealed that human purity is not tied to sexuality alone; the toxic statements about the impurity or purity of women are a valuation made from a patriarchal or feministic perspective and that a woman's body is not what purity culture suggests it is, rather human purity should be reduced to its genital dimension while salvation should be reduced to the purification of sexual desire (Kamat & Tharakan, 2021, pp.261-266; Crut, 2021, pp117-126). The belief in the church is that the menstrual flow is a spiritual pollutant and neutralizer and that when a female is observing her monthly flow, her contact and participation in church rituals neutralize the efficacy of prayers and other sanctified tangibles and also sends away the presence of angels. However, there are arguments that the monthly flow itself is not impure, but it being tagged profane is to encourage personal hygiene among the female folk in the church. Others allude to biblical sanctions against menstrual issues in Leviticus 11:1-15:33. Yet there are allusions to the influence of the religio-cultural matrix of the church's emergence where females observing their monthly flow are believed to be spiritually impure (Ajayi, 2020, pp.32-41; Ray, 1993, pp.267-288). The church's position on women impurity and the guilt and shame, which their monthly flow attracts subsists in the church. The level of female observance of the church guideline on menstrual flow remains to be measured because it is a personal matter to the women. The contribution of women to the growth and spread of Aladura Christianity, particularly the C&S in the areas of church planting and in Good Women Fellowship (GWF)

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cannot be overemphasized (Abodunrin & Kolawole, 2017, pp.160-162; Jegede & Komolafe-Johnson, 2021, pp.203-205). However, the C&S church has remained firm in its rejection of women heading a church. There are C&S churches founded by charismatic women. Such women are allowed to retain the founder status and are not ordained as the leader-in-charge. They are not allowed to say the 'grace'. There are no paid prophetesses in the C&S, it is an exclusive preserve of the prophets. This is partly due to impurity or patriarchal hegemony. The role of women in the home and other supportive responsibilities are critical factors for their exemption from being ordained as paid prophets who are constantly transferred from one church to another. However, the role of women in church welfare, their participation in respective cells within the church towards women welfare, youth counselling and fund raising is inestimable. Educated women in different professions are encouraged to serve in relevant administrative positions. Formal education of women in their professional fields of endeavour has great influence on the administrative dynamics of the church.

Material Culture Dynamics

In the C&S churches, beliefs are expressed in verbal and non-verbal ways. Materializing beliefs is a pattern of feeling expressed in religious performances, objects, and spaces (Morgan, 2010, p. xiv). Images, objects, colours, performances, spaces, ranks and robes are ways through which beliefs are made visible and touchable in the C&S. These are demonstrated in worship and other ritual activities. The iconography of robes according to ranks, colours of the robes, candle and other sacred objects, metal and wooden staff, the crucifix, natural and manufactured ritual objects, and performances highlight the material culture of the C&S. The sea-side and hill-top victory and fortune rituals and prayers, the ritual use of palm fronds, white and colour sash, banana trunks, well, stream, waterfall, dew, spring, and cocoa-nut waters remain marked features of the materiality of the C&S beliefs. The materiality of belief is heightened in the consecration of garment and sash of varying colours for healing, protection, and fortune. Members read aesthetics, spiritual and moral meanings into the material culture of the church. Not all members share in the material belief of the church. The materiality of belief is seen as a deviation from the belief of the founder who only prayed over water and oil for healing, and as an influence from traditional and other religions. The materiality of the house of prayer has advanced over time. The modernity in the city has great influence on the church building and its interior. The architectural design of some C&S churches in the city are an architectural masterpiece. The beautiful architectural design of some churches and the use of high-tech materials in their interior and exterior decorations reveal a great deal of global influence and transformation. Increase in membership of the church encourages the construction of bigger and beautiful prayer houses. Swingewood (1998, p.138)

emphasizes the culture of innovation that is borne out of rational, critical thinking or empirical knowledge that challenges tradition and stimulates new designs and materials put into church buildings. Ever-changing, dynamic nature of human society, the growing new knowledge and culture, and the tendency in humans to reject or modify the old to meet the current reality influence change in human society and particularly how the C&S churches transform their sacred places and the materialization of their beliefs. Some C&S churches are an epitome of modern, sophisticated architecture while some 'mercy grounds' have been renovated and the wall raised to about six feet to provide security and privacy to people who are undergoing "spiritual incubation". Members emphasize that God does not dwell in a filthy place, hence mercy grounds should be beautified and kept clean. The interior of churches is beautified with colourful images of Jesus Christ, his disciples, angels, biblical patriarchs and matriarchs, and biblical short verses and imageries that teach morals, humility, honesty, purity, and reward. Images attract people's attention, stimulate curiosity and offers hope, happiness, strength and reassuring future. Such promises make images all but irresistible, empowering them to shape human experience in ways that are often almost invisible (Morgan, 2010, p.2). The images and biblical messages convey the beliefs of the church to the visitors. The decorative imageries contribute to character formation of the children of members, and possess the capacity of regenerating the moral virtues of adult members and visitors to the church (Baiyewu, 2014, p. 276). The spiritual and aesthetics of cloth and clothing point to the materiality of the beliefs of the C&S. Ranks in the C&S are structured from the lowest *Aladura* prayerist to the highest in Baba Aladura. Each rank has a peculiar robe, pattern, and colour that highlight the aesthetics of the rank and robe in the church. The colour symbolism in the C&S carries aesthetic and spiritual values. Studies on cloth and clothing reveal the universal belief in the spiritual and social properties of cloth and clothing (Hermkens 2010; Schneider 2006; Renne 1995). The use of white garment as a uniform of worship is modelled after the founder of the C&S Moses Orimolade who was always in a white flowing garment. Members of 'The Praying Band', a cell within the church during the life and time of the founder were the first set of members to wear white flowing garment as uniform during the 1927 anniversary of the church (Baiyewu, 2014, p.279; Omoyajowo, 1982, pp.163-164). Members attribute divine instruction to colour symbolism in the patterns of robes in the church. However, number symbolism and the import of natural and manufactured items in special prayers for protection, mercy, fortune and healing have remained a controversy in the church. There are arguments that the founder started with water and prayers and that the use of some tangibles is a later development. There are arguments that the ritual items and colours are in accordance to divine instruction. Other arguments are that the church emerged in a Yoruba religio-cultural environment and gained acceptance across the geographical spread of Nigeria where it

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encountered converts with backgrounds in ethnic and oriental religious beliefs. Aside different religio-cultural influence, members' interest in and contact with mystical books developed the tendency of combining different mystical principles in solving their clients' existential problems. Modernity and the dynamics of city life has compelled the church to shift from its use of wooden staff, seats, local musical instruments, pulpit and offertory pouches to the modern. The staff of different sizes and shapes are made of brass, copper, bronze, silver, or gold. Beautiful high quality plastic chairs and tables, modern offertory pouches, metal and electric candle-stand, glass lecterns and marble pulpit of architectural masterpiece reveal the church's response to the dynamics of city life. The introduction of talking drums in to the percussion aspect of the church choir group reveals the dynamism in the church's song ministration.

Economic Dynamics

The C&S over the years, busies itself with soul winning for Christ and providing spiritual and social solutions to the existential problems of members and visitors to the church. The C&S provides a safe haven for solution seekers from different ethnic, social, economic and religio-cultural backgrounds. Aspiration for prosperity, fortune, fertility, healing, and protection of life and property are critical indicators that shape the patronage of the church and how it redefines its spirituality and social programmes. In its response to the emerging economic depression, hardship, inflationary trends, unemployment, underemployment and their consequent effects on family and general human well-being, the C&S appropriates sacred space and time, prophecy, prayer, rituals, sacred words and names, and social welfare package to solve people's problems and negotiate its relevance in a competitive and dynamic city. The construction and appropriation of sacred space in the C&S reveals the church's belief in the workings of the holy spirit, its favourite space, the purity of its favourite space, and the potency of prayers offered on such sacred grounds. Places are set apart, constructed, sanctified and used to carry out fortune, protection, and healing rituals. Study on sacred space explains that the space we live in is heterogeneous, polarized into the sacred with its mystico-religious sanctity and profane with its secularity and impurity, that sacred space has international, national, regional, community and individual categories, that a space can be sacralised, desacralised, and resacralised over time, and that part of our "lived space" can be structured into two: the sacred as a consecrated or revered historical space while the profane is the impure, secular space (Bachmann-Medick, Kugele, & Stornig, 2021, pp. 156-163; Jackson & Henrie, 2009, pp.94-105; Shiner, 1972, 426-432). Drawing on Eliade's explanation of the sacred and the profane, Baiyewu (2014, p.161) explains that the religious person experiences a sacred space as a contact point "where religious humans have access to the gods, a symbolically highest point closer to heaven or underworld". In the C&S, a mercy ground, hill-top and

other places are set apart, constructed, and sacralised according to divine instruction (Baiyewu, 2014, pp.162-164). As a special space where humans encounter the holy spirit and its workings, members believe that ritual, prayers and the sanctification of some tangibles attain their highest potency and unfailing result. The church uses such a sacred platform as a miracle ground where the existential problems of members and solution seekers are solved. Although there are strings of regulations attached to the use of a sacred space, it is a ground where prophets and prophetesses, and tongue speakers display their spiritual gifts to unpack the myriads of problems of members and visitors and where ritual recipes are revealed as solutions. Liquids and other tangibles are sanctified and packaged for solution seekers to take home and use according to divine instruction. In the C&S, a sacred space is a special ground for effective "spiritual incubation". On divine instruction, a solution seeker spends a number of hours or days on a mercy ground, praying and fasting while a prophet or prophetess gives a guide on other rituals. Members believe that the hours or days on the sacred ground shield the individual from spiritual pollutants that can neutralise the rituals for fortune, healing and protection. On request, special funds are raised for the needy. The highly privileged in the C&S are sources of the church's human and social capital with which it responds to the city dynamics that affect members and visitors.

Emerging Educational Needs

In the first four decades of its formation, the C&S preoccupied itself with wining souls for Christ and spiritual healing of the existential problems of people. The response of the C&S to education and national development began towards the end of the 1960s. Studies reveal Christian missions' dominance of African education, particularly in Nigeria where, as far back as 1942, about 97% of Nigeria's student population was enrolled in Christian missionary schools; the systematic evangelisation through the use of western education as an indispensable tool; mission schools for human capital development; and the contributions of various Christian missions to the educational development of Nigeria (Asadu, 2021,pp.4-7; Ajayi, 2006, pp.34-48; Berman, 1974, pp. 527-538). The CSMC established C&S College, Ilorin in 1969 to join other Christian bodies in providing formal education to the citizenry. The church established the C&S College to provide "basic secondary education to its youths who form the human capital that the church needs for its continuity" (Baiyewu, 2014, p.141). The Jos district of the CSMC established C&S primary school in November 4, 1995 while the college section was established in 1998. Every district headquarters of the CSMC runs primary and secondary schools in their respective cities of existence. The Cherubim and Seraphim Unification (CSU) the umbrella association of all strands of the C&S is stepping up its efforts to establish Orimolade University and has secured a large expanse of land in Omu-Aran area of Kwara state

(Baiyewu, 2014, p.142). The C&S is also responding to the theological education and vocational and technical training for skill acquisition.

Demographic dynamics

The demography of the C&S is largely shaped by the predominant tribe in the city of its emergence. However, the spread of the church to different parts of Nigeria reshaped the ethnic composition and social status of the church. The transformation of the C&S from the local to a transnational church has further changed its demography, from a Yoruba Aladura religion to a brand of Christianity that commands multi-ethnic membership. Studies reveal that social visibility and demographic data reflect Yoruba dominance of the C&S population and a gradual multi-ethnic membership (Baiyewu, 2014, 306-320; Mitchell, 1970, pp.386-387; Peel, 1969, p.194; Turner, 1967, 15-17). The presence of the C&S in cosmopolitan and mega cities and the demography of the cities influence the ethnic and racial compositions and social status of its members. The early members of the C&S were largely drawn from various church denominations, Islam, traditional religion and other religious groups. As a composite Christianity, the C&S, where ever it registers its presence, absolves solution seekers from different ethnic and religio-cultural backgrounds into its fold. Through marriage and procreation, membership of the church that was purely of converts from different religions and church denominations gradually changed. The church's tolerance of polygamy and cross-cultural marriage steps up the demographic dynamics in the church. The membership transformation does not foreclose strands of converts from other church denominations (Baiyewu, 2014, pp. 308-310). Contrary to previous study that Aladura churches including the C&S were populated by solution seekers who had little education and were mostly artisans and traders, over the years, the contribution of Christian mission bodies to educational development of Nigeria has stepped up members' access to primary, secondary and tertiary education, impacting positively in the increasing level of literacy, cultural, social, and economic capital, and by extension increasing number of highly skilled professionals and well-travelled, educated and experienced leaders in the church (Baiyewu, 2014, pp.311-313; Mitchell 1970, p.409; Peel, 1968, p.196; Turner, 1967, p.19). Educational opportunities in the city have great influence on the increasing literacy level, cultural, social, and economic capital of members. This, to a great extent, helps the C&S to navigate the city competitive landscape and transform itself to a transnational brand of Aladura Christianity.

Conclusion

The Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) is a white garment Aladura church that began in Nigeria and has become a transnational brand of Christianity. As one of the major streams of Aladura Christianity, the C&S has metamorphosed into major and countless number of

minor strands in and outside Nigeria. In every city of its existence where the religious landscape is diverse and competitive, the C&S redefines itself as it navigates the city dynamics. Globalization and modernization of everything shape and reshape every aspect of the city. In response to the city dynamics, the C&S draws strength in modernity and responsiveness to negotiate its relevance, impact and social visibility. Education, media technologies, security challenge, gender paradigm, material culture, economic wants and the church demography are indicators of how the C&S navigates the dynamic and competitive religious landscape in every city of its existence.

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