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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Old Testament Traditions in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria: Biblical Interpretations, Practices and Religious Identity

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ABSTRACT

The use of Old Testament traditions by African Indigenous Churches raises questions about biblical interpretation, history and the nature of indigenous Christian worship. This paper examines Old Testament use in the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church of Nigeria in terms of the use, biblical correlations, history and religious function of certain practices. Situated within the history of the Aladura movement, the study considers the role of biblical interpretation, prophetic traditions, the experiences of the movement's founders, and the religious and cultural context of indigenous Nigerian Christianity. Drawing on a historical approach, documentary analysis and relevant scholarly literature, the study examines practices such as anointing with oil, fasting and prayer, distinctive religious garments, and the use of sacred places. The analysis highlights the significance of the Old Testament narratives and concepts as frameworks for understanding and interpreting these practices within C&S religious life. It also distinguishes between identifiable biblical parallels and demonstrable historical evidence of direct borrowing, recognising that similarity alone cannot establish historical transmission. The study therefore argues that the relationship between the Old Testament traditions and C&S worship must be understood through the interaction of biblical interpretation, religious experience, and the historical development of indigenous Christianity, while acknowledging the limits of the available evidence in establishing the origins of particular practices. The paper contributes to Nigerian Church History by clarifying how Old Testament associations can inform the study of indigenous Christian worship without conflating biblical resemblance with proven historical influence.

Keywords: *Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Aladura movement, Old Testament practices, African Indigenous Churches, Nigerian Church History, biblical interpretation*

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1. Introduction

The founding of the Cherubim and Seraphim movement in 1925 in Lagos by Moses Orimolade Tunolase can be seen as the flourishing of one of the indigenous Christian movements in Nigeria, which tended to be characterized by prayer, prophecy, the practice of divine healing, fasting and spiritual experience (Peel, 1968; Omoyajowo, 1982). Much research on African Indigenous Churches has been directed towards understanding the historical context of their emergence as well as their articulation of religious authority and engagement with African cultural and religious contexts. Turner's historical work on the Church of the Lord (Aladura) provides a comparative perspective on the development of indigenous Christian institutions and their religious life. Ayegboyin and Ishola (1997) also situate African Indigenous Churches in a historical context of African Christianity. Peel's critical and historical work on the Aladura movement is highly relevant to the historical and social context of indigenous Christian movement development in Yorubaland. Moreover, studies of material religious culture and

documents of Cherubim and Seraphim – including hymns and tunes, sacred clothing and regalia, as well as consecrated church space – reinforce the importance of material practices and religious symbolism in the construction of church identity (Brennan, 2013; Renne, 2004, 2009).

This having been said, though the scholarship is sound and full of historical and ethnographic implications, the linkage of specific Old Testament traditions with specific C&S practices has not been paid attention to, and it deserves an analytical distinction. In essence, the work asks three questions: Does the practice have a biblical precedent? Does the practice have evidence that church members or church leaders explicitly believed the practice had biblical precedent? Does history show that church members or leaders intended that the practice was introduced because of a biblical precedent? These questions-interrelated, yet non-equivalent-must be carefully distinguished, for while a biblical precedent may help us know the spiritual value of a practice, historical evidence regarding the introduction of a practice may not establish when or why the practice was introduced.

This study examines a number of Old Testament related practices in the C&S church, by examining documentary sources and relevant literature in the historical research tradition. Rather than assuming that Old Testament similarities are equivalent indicators of Old Testament influence, it isolates similarities that can be identified and those that can be verified as evidence of a historical or interpretive connection. This study makes a twofold contribution: it applies the distinction between identifiable biblical parallels and verifiable historical borrowing to the study of C&S religious life, and it assesses what the available evidence can and cannot establish about the origins of particular practices. The analysis takes in practices such as anointing with oil, fasting and prayer, special garments and worship sites, recognizing a spectrum of potential variation between C&S branches and congregations.

The research is based on three main questions: (1) Which practices selected from the Cherubim and Seraphim practices have identifiable similarities within Old Testament texts? (2) What information from the present historical and scholarly sources could put forward a proven link between the practices and the biblical tradition as a matter of interpretation or tradition as a matter of history? (3) What can be learnt through these links in understanding biblical interpretation, religious experience and in shaping C&S religious identity? To address these questions, this article clarifies this complex relationship by exploring the historical and hermeneutical connections between Old Testament practices and C&S worship, even if not all Old Testament parallels constitute borrowing. It also enhances Nigerian Church History and the history of African Christianity by pointing out the arguments that could be made on the basis of the evidence at hand, as distinct from questions that might need future research into archives, oral history and ethnography.

2. Literature Review

Literature Review

Existing works on the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church and the broader Aladura movement provide an important historical and conceptual foundation for understanding the relationship between Old Testament traditions and indigenous Christian worship in Nigeria. These studies examine the emergence and development of the Aladura churches, the institutional consolidation of African Indigenous Churches (AICs), and the ways religious communities establish spiritual and political authority and construct collective identities. Building on this scholarship, the present review focuses on a more specific concern: the extent to which Old Testament imagery and traditions inform particular C&S beliefs and practices, and the nature of the evidence available to substantiate such connections.

Peel's (1968) study of prayer-centred Yoruba Christian movements remains a significant contribution to the historical understanding of the Aladura tradition, although its scope extends beyond the C&S Church. Omoyajowo (1982), on the other hand, provides the most comprehensive historical account of the C&S Church, while Ayegboyin and Ishola (1997) examine the African Indigenous Churches within the broader context of indigenous Christian expression in Nigeria. Collectively, these works illuminate the emergence and development of the C&S Church within Nigerian Christianity. Nevertheless, the present study takes a more specific approach: it examines how particular Old Testament texts and images may connect to C&S identity and religious practice, while also assessing the evidence supporting established accounts of the movement's origins.

Hackett's (1987) edited volume, *New Religious Movements in Nigeria*, provides a useful framework for understanding the diversity, development, and innovative character of new religious movements in Nigeria. Amadi's contribution to the volume examines continuity and adaptation within the Aladura movement, with particular attention to Prophet Wobo and his followers in south-eastern Nigeria. The study is relevant to the present inquiry in two respects. First, it illustrates how religious movements negotiate inherited traditions while adapting to particular social and religious circumstances. Second, it cautions against assuming that practices or beliefs resembling biblical traditions must necessarily have originated through direct borrowing from biblical sources. This distinction is methodologically important because similarities between religious practices and biblical accounts do not, on their own, establish historical or textual derivation.

Studies of C&S material culture and religious expression offer further insight into how the movement constructs and communicates its religious identity. Renne (2004) investigates sacred clothing and religious authority in south-western Nigeria, drawing attention to the significance of garments associated with dreams and visions. Her subsequent study (Renne, 2009) examines consecrated garments and sacred sites within C&S diaspora communities. Brennan (2013), in a related but distinct contribution, explores sacred song as a medium through which collective historical memory is preserved and communicated. These studies demonstrate that material and expressive forms such as garments, sacred spaces, and music are not merely peripheral features of religious life; they serve as important channels for communicating religious meanings, legitimising authority, and sustaining collective identity. Their findings are particularly relevant to the present study's consideration of sacred garments, consecrated sites, and the religious interpretation of spiritual experiences.

Adogame's research broadens the study of Aladura beliefs and practices by examining their expression beyond the Nigerian context. His investigation of Aladura churches in the diaspora (Adogame, 2004) explores their beliefs, religious practices, and forms of self-representation within European settings. The study contributes to discussions of religious innovation and adaptation by demonstrating the importance of examining religious practices in relation to their particular historical and cultural environments. However, given its primary focus on diaspora communities, the work is more appropriately employed as comparative material than as direct historical evidence for the origins of practices among C&S congregations in Nigeria.

Taken together, these studies provide historical, sociological, and material-cultural perspectives on the development of the Aladura movement and the character of C&S religious experience. The present article extends this body of scholarship by examining selected Old Testament passages relating to angelic imagery, prayer and fasting, anointing, consecration, and sacred garments. Its central contribution is not to presume that these practices derive directly from particular biblical traditions, but to critically investigate the nature and strength of the evidence for such relationships. An important distinction must therefore be maintained: the church's corporate name establishes a demonstrable connection with biblical angelic imagery, whereas the association of other religious practices with specific Old Testament passages requires further interpretive and historical substantiation. Distinguishing institutional affiliation from biblical analogy, and both from unverified claims about historical origins, provides a more cautious and defensible basis for examining the relationship between Old Testament traditions and C&S identity and practice.

3. Methodology

The study adopts qualitative historical and documentary research approach to evaluate the influence of Old Testament traditions on the doctrines and practices of the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church in Nigeria. It also draws on academic works on the history of the C&S Church and the broader Aladura movement, relevant biblical passages, and publications on the C&S centenary website, especially its historical chronology and declaration of doctrines and core values. Sources were chosen for their relevance to the C&S Church's historical, religious, and biblical positions. Emphasis was given to scholarly works on the C&S Church and the Aladura movement, biblical passages relevant to the practices discussed, and institutional resources documenting their history and doctrines. Sources were ranked by their relevance and evidence, being categorized as scholarly, institutional, or biblical. The

work does not involve either archival work or interviews, but is based solely on published material and scholarship; limitations are imposed in the form of conclusions which are based on what these sources imply.

4. Historical Background: The Emergence and Development of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria

The rise of the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church is best understood within the broader growth of Aladura Christianity among the Yoruba of south-western Nigeria. Aladura, literally "the owners of prayer," designates a stream of Christianity distinguished by fervent prayer, prophecy, divine healing, fasting, and the expectation of direct divine intervention in personal and communal life. These emphases set the Aladura churches apart from the mission churches of colonial Nigeria and gave rise to enduring indigenised forms of Christian practice (Peel, 1968; Turner, 1967). The movement's beginnings are conventionally traced to Lagos in 1925 and to two figures whose ministries converged there. Moses Orimolade Tunolase, an itinerant preacher already known for his prayer ministry, is identified as the principal founder, while Christiana Abiodun Akinsowon (later Christiana Abiodun Emmanuel) is remembered for a prolonged visionary trance said to have occurred during a Corpus Christi procession in June 1925. Orimolade's involvement with Abiodun's experience and the prayer band that formed around it marked the organisational birth of the society (Omoyajowo, 1982). The name Seraphim was adopted in 1925 and Cherubim added in 1926, binding the young movement's identity to the angelic imagery of biblical literature. That the founders reached for these names is historically significant, but it establishes a symbolic affinity rather than proving that every ritual the church later developed was drawn directly from Old Testament precedent. However, the movement did not remain a single body. The parting of Orimolade and Abiodun around 1929 is widely regarded as a defining episode, inaugurating the distinct institutional traditions that today make up the wider C&S family (Omoyajowo, 1982; Aluko, 2021). This fragmentation carries a methodological lesson for the present study: practices and interpretations documented in one branch cannot be assumed to hold for every congregation, and claims about "the C&S Church" must be read with that internal diversity in mind.

5. Historical and Religious Factors Influencing the Adoption of Old Testament Traditions

5.1 Prophetic Experience and Religious Interpretation

Prophetic experience lies close to the centre of C&S religious life. The movement's founding narratives turn on visions, trances, and the sense of direct divine guidance, and these accounts continue to shape how the church understands its origins and the authority of its leaders (Omoyajowo, 1982; Peel, 1968). Such narratives are indispensable for grasping the church's self-understanding, yet the historian must keep them distinct from independent documentary evidence, since a community's retrospective account of its own beginnings is shaped as much by present identity as by past fact. Thus, the church's own historical accounts link its formative period to episodes of fasting, prayer, and sought-after revelation, and they explicitly connect its angelic names to scripture, relating the Seraphim to Isaiah's throne vision (Isaiah 6:1–7) and the Cherubim to the Old Testament imagery of the divine throne and the guardians of sacred space (Omoyajowo, 1982). What is notable here is that the scriptural association is not merely inferred by outside observers from thematic resemblance; it is asserted within the church's own tradition. This strengthens the case that Old Testament imagery is constitutive of C&S identity. Even so, because these are retrospective theological accounts, they cannot fix the precise circumstances in which the names were first used, nor establish that a particular text was the original cause of a practice rather than its later justification. Prophetic experience and biblical interpretation are therefore central to the C&S account of its beginnings, but the available evidence links the movement to prophetic practice and to Old Testament tradition in general without demonstrating that its whole ritual repertoire issued from a single scriptural source.

5.2 Biblical Authority and the Centrality of Prayer

Prayer is the defining practice of the wider Aladura tradition, and Peel's (1968) foundational study documents the weight placed on prayer, healing, and spiritual intervention in the movements from which the C&S Church emerged. This context explains why Old Testament narratives of supplication,

repentance, and fasting resonate so readily with C&S worship. Passages such as Moses' fast in Exodus 34:28 and the communal fast of Nineveh in Jonah 3:5–10 furnish rich comparative material for interpreting the theological meaning of fasting and corporate petition. Adamo's (2020) analysis of how Yoruba Christians read the Psalms is instructive here. He shows that texts such as Psalm 8 are appropriated as instruments of protection, healing, and success, so that the Old Testament functions less as a historical record than as a living source of spiritual power. This hermeneutic of scripture read for present efficacy illuminates how biblical prayer traditions are taken up in Aladura and C&S practice. The resemblance between biblical and C&S fasting nevertheless remains comparative rather than genealogical. To show that a congregation adopted a particular observance because of a specific passage, one would need evidence that its leaders or members explicitly made that connection, whether in sermons, prayer manuals, or testimony.

5.3 Indigenous Christianity and the Nigerian Religious Context

The C&S Church took shape within the larger history of indigenous Christianity in Nigeria. The Aladura churches foregrounded prayer, healing, prophecy, and spiritual experience in response to the religious anxieties of their time, and in doing so fashioned a Christianity answerable to Yoruba concerns (Peel, 1968; Adogame, 2004). This setting helps explain how biblical traditions could be absorbed and reworked within indigenous worship, with practices of prayer, consecration, healing, and the handling of sacred objects articulated in biblical language while also drawing on local religious experience and institutional memory. It would be reductive, however, to read the adoption of Old Testament traditions simply as a nativist reaction against mission Christianity, or as the unmediated survival of pre-Christian culture. The historical reality is one of several interacting influences, among them Christian teaching, prophetic testimony, local circumstance, and the decisions of individual leaders, whose relative weight has to be established from the evidence rather than assumed in advance.

5.4 Biblical Symbolism and Church Identity

Biblical symbolism is woven through the names and material culture of the C&S Church. The cherubim of the Old Testament guard the ark and signal the divine presence, while the seraphim appear in Isaiah's heavenly vision proclaiming the holiness of God (Exodus 25:18–22; 1 Kings 6:23–28; Isaiah 6:1–7). Scholarship on the movement's expressive forms shows how this symbolism is carried beyond nomenclature into lived practice. Brennan's (2013) study of C&S hymnody demonstrates that music is a principal vehicle for forming and transmitting the movement's historical consciousness, while Renne's (2004, 2009) work on sacred garments and consecrated space shows how material objects communicate religious identity and authority. These studies make a strong case that biblical symbolism is a resource through which C&S communities express and interpret who they are. They do not, however, establish that every symbolic act derives from an Old Testament prototype. A clear line must be held between what the church's practices resemble in the biblical text and the historical process by which those practices actually came to be.

5.5 Church Leadership and Institutional Development

Leadership and organisational change bear directly on how C&S practices are preserved and transmitted. As the movement expanded and split into distinct branches, congregations retained, reinterpreted, or modified their customs according to their own histories and structures (Omoyajowo, 1982; Aluko, 2022). Leaders have shaped patterns of worship, explained the meaning of particular rites, and mediated the interpretation of scripture, yet attributing a specific Old Testament practice to the initiative of a named leader requires documentary or testimonial evidence rather than inference. The internal diversity of C&S institutions is especially consequential. Aluko's (2021, 2022) studies of the Cherubim and Seraphim Unification Church of Nigeria illuminate the history, beliefs, and organisation of that particular body, but their findings should not be extrapolated to the movement as a whole. Only comparative research across congregations can distinguish traditions that are widely shared from those tied to a single institutional lineage.

6. Old Testament Traditions and Their Practice in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria

6.1 Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting are defining features of the Aladura tradition and recur throughout C&S religious life (Peel, 1968; Aluko, 2021). Old Testament narratives supply the obvious comparative frame. Moses' forty-day fast (Exodus 34:28) and the penitential fast of Nineveh (Jonah 3:5–10) model fasting as supplication, repentance, and covenantal commitment. Ademiluka's (2023) examination of Aladura healing and ritual practice shows how such biblical motifs are drawn into contemporary observance, even as he questions how closely the resulting rituals correspond to their scriptural warrants. The existence of these parallels does not by itself prove borrowing. Establishing that a congregation adopted a particular form of fasting from a specific text would require evidence that its members articulated that link themselves. C&S prayer and fasting are best read, then, against both the broad Aladura inheritance and the particular interpretations voiced within individual C&S communities.

6.2 Anointing Oil, Consecrated Water and Other Sacred Objects

The use of anointing oil, incense, and water consecrated through prayer is well attested in C&S worship (Aluko, 2021). Akindolie's (2024) study of "holy water" among Aladura churches in south-western Nigeria documents the ritual praxis surrounding consecrated water in particular detail, tracing both its liturgical meaning and its wider social and economic significance. This scholarship establishes that such objects are integral to C&S devotional life, though it does not trace them to a fixed Old Testament source. The biblical texts on anointing and consecration, notably the preparation of the holy anointing oil in Exodus 30:22–30, provide a scriptural backdrop against which these practices can be read. But the documentary record supports no more than this: that anointing oil, incense, and prayer-consecrated water are reported features of C&S worship whose specific scriptural derivation remains unproven. The resemblance clarifies meaning; it does not settle origin.

6.3 Sacred Garments and Religious Identity

Sacred dress is among the most visible expressions of religious identity and spiritual authority in the C&S Church. Renne (2004) examines religious clothing in south-western Nigeria, recording accounts in which garments worn by leaders are associated with heavenly beings encountered in dreams and visions, and she traces the meanings attached to the white prayer gown within these communities. Prophetic dream experience, on this evidence, is a primary framework through which C&S garments are commissioned and invested with significance. Her later study (Renne, 2009) of consecrated garments and spaces in diaspora C&S congregations shows further how such material objects sustain religious identity and maintain ties to Nigeria. The priestly vestments of Exodus 28 and 39 offer a biblical point of comparison for these garments, and the names and colours of C&S dress clearly evoke a scriptural idiom. However, Renne's findings caution against reading the garments as straightforward reproductions of Israelite priestly attire. Their meaning is generated at least as much by prophetic experience, religious authority and congregational history as by any biblical template. Sacred garments are thus more than emblems of affiliation. They are tangible carriers of religious experience, spiritual power, and communal belonging, and their biblical resonance is best interpreted alongside the prophetic and historical contexts that give them meaning.

6.4 Sacred Spaces and Places of Prayer

Sacred spaces mark the boundary between ordinary and consecrated ground and focus the communal life of worship. Renne (2009) analyses such spaces in diaspora C&S contexts, showing how they anchor religious identity and sustain connection to the Nigerian homeland. Old Testament depictions of places associated with divine presence and consecration offer interpretive comparison, but the mere existence of sacred space in both settings implies no historical line from ancient Israelite practice to modern Nigerian Christianity. Claims that a particular mountain or site carries spiritual significance should be grounded in evidence of its actual use by the community in question, and their meaning is best read through local tradition and the understandings of worshippers themselves.

6.5 Biblical Names, Angelic Imagery and Worship

The very name of the C&S Church announces a biblical, angelic self-identification. As noted, Seraphim was adopted in 1925 and Cherubim a year later (Omoyajowo, 1982). The cherubim appear in the Old Testament as guardians of the divine presence (Exodus 25:18–22; 1 Kings 6:23–28), and the seraphim in Isaiah's vision of heavenly worship (Isaiah 6:1–7); these texts supply the imagery to which the church's name points. That imagery is reinforced through the movement's material culture and hymnody. Brennan (2013) shows how hymns carry a sense of sacred history, while Renne (2004, 2009) traces how garments and the imagery of the heavenly court express religious identity. Together they make a compelling case for the centrality of biblical symbolism to C&S self-understanding. Whether every element of worship derives historically from these specific descriptions of cherubim and seraphim is a separate question from whether the names were deliberately chosen, and the two should not be conflated.

6.6 Healing, Purification, and Religious Observance

Healing is a central motif in the history of the Aladura movement and is indispensable to any scholarly account of C&S practice (Peel, 1968). Renne (2004) further examines the links between garments, sacredness, and healing in specific C&S settings, and Ademiluka (2023) offers a sustained study of Aladura healing ritual, situating it in relation to biblical models of cure. The Old Testament supplies analogues. Naaman's cleansing in 2 Kings 5 binds healing to prophetic instruction and ritual act, while Leviticus 14 prescribes rites of purification. These texts illuminate the biblical horizon within which healing and purification can be understood, without proving that C&S healing originated in them. A full historical account would need to attend to three things together: the language practitioners themselves use, the biblical texts they invoke, and the way particular practices developed within individual congregations. A further distinction is essential. Documenting that a healing rite is performed is not the same as verifying that a cure occurred, since testimony evidences the experience and conviction of the worshipper rather than independently confirming the reported outcome.

7. The Significance of Old Testament Traditions in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria

7.1 Biblical Interpretation and Religious Authority

The links between Old Testament tradition and C&S practice point to a distinctive mode of interpreting religious experience through biblical language and imagery. The church's own historical and theological accounts place scripture at the heart of its identity, relating the naming of the church to a season of fasting and prayer and connecting the cherubim and seraphim to Genesis 3:24 and Isaiah 6:1–7 (Omoyajowo, 1982). This interpretive posture is characteristic of the wider Aladura world, in which prayer, healing, and prophecy structure religious life (Peel, 1968), and it resembles the appropriation of the Old Testament as a source of present power that Adamo (2020) identifies in Yoruba Christian reading more generally. A consistent pattern emerges from the evidence. The church's explicit scriptural self-identification is clearest in the case of its name, while the biblical grounding of other practices, such as anointing, sacred objects, and garments, is asserted more loosely. Biblical analogy can explain the meaning a practice carries without proving that it was borrowed from the Old Testament. A fuller reconstruction would require sources the present study could not access, among them early sermons, prayer books, liturgies, church constitutions, and oral histories capable of showing when and how particular verses became attached to particular practices, and whether their meaning shifted over time. In the absence of such materials, the warranted conclusion is a measured one. Old Testament tradition plainly belongs to the biblical vocabulary of C&S identity and worship, but the historical origin of each individual practice cannot always be traced to a single scriptural source.

7.2 The Formation of Church Identity

Biblical imagery is fundamental to the institutional self-definition of the C&S Church. Its name invokes the cherubim who signify the divine presence (Exodus 25:18–22; 1 Kings 6:23–28) and the seraphim of Isaiah's heavenly worship (Isaiah 6:1–7), and the church's own tradition presents this biblical vocabulary as integral to its history (Omoyajowo, 1982). Identity is communicated, too, through material culture, music, and sacred space. Renne (2004, 2009) shows how consecrated dress and space

signal belonging, theological authority, and religious experience, while Brennan (2013) demonstrates how hymnody transmits historical memory, allowing analysis to move beyond the name over the church door to the religious message its practices convey.

Taken together, these sources show that C&S identity is articulated through biblical naming, material practice, music, and the ordering of sacred space. They should not, however, be read as evidence of one uniform historical process or as direct adaptations of Old Testament models. The claim to explicit biblical association is strongest for the church's name, whereas the studies of garments, spaces, and hymnody reveal other, and more varied, ways in which identity is expressed and interpreted, ways whose meanings may well differ from one branch to another.

7.3 Spirituality, Prayer, and Divine Presence

Prayer and fasting, so central to the Aladura inheritance (Peel, 1968), offer a natural focus for understanding C&S worship, and the Old Testament traditions of petition, fasting, and repentance provide a comparative frame for interpreting it. For the worshipper, these practices may signify dependence on God, an act of penitence, or a means of moving God to act, and Ademiluka's (2023) analysis shows how such meanings are enacted in Aladura ritual. The significance of these practices cannot be read off biblical resemblance alone. It must be reconstructed from how C&S practitioners themselves describe their worship and from whether they invoke particular texts, recognising that worship has been shaped at once by scripture, oral tradition, institutional history, and shared experience.

8. Conclusion

This study finds that the clearest documented connection between Old Testament tradition and the Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Nigeria lies in the church's association of its name and identity with the biblical cherubim and seraphim (Omoyajowo, 1982). It further identifies prayer and fasting, anointing oil and consecrated water, sacred garments and spaces, and healing as salient dimensions of C&S religious life. Scholarship on hymnody, dress, consecrated space, and ritual water demonstrates the importance of biblical symbolism and material culture in the expression of identity (Brennan, 2013; Renne, 2004, 2009; Akindolie, 2024), and the Aladura tradition supplies the wider context for the church's emphasis on prayer, healing, and prophetic experience (Peel, 1968; Ademiluka, 2023). The available evidence does not, however, establish that these practices were adopted directly from specific Old Testament passages. Biblical parallels indicate relationships of meaning and interpretation; they do not, on their own, demonstrate historical origin. Practices and interpretations also vary across C&S branches and congregations, so generalisation must be guarded. Further research drawing on church archives, early liturgical materials, sermons, and oral histories would clarify when particular practices emerged and how their meanings developed, and would allow the cautious conclusions offered here to be tested against the documentary record.

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