

THE CHALLENGES OF SYNCRETISM WITH REFERENCES TO WORSHIP AT SACRED PLACES OF CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN YORUBA LAND

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the challenges of syncretism in the activities of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) in their designated sacred places in Yoruba land. Evidences of syncretism in CAC have been established in the writings of many researchers, but attention has not been given to the happenings at the sacred places of CAC. These sacred places have been idolized and uncritically accepted as the best place to visit in search of miracles and answer to prayers. Most of the practices in these sacred places are not scriptural, and in most cases similar to the practices in Traditional religion. This study was conducted in Yoruba land, specifically, in the states of Osun, Ekiti, and Kwara, where the five sacred places (Mountains, and Rivers) investigated are located. Most of the contemporary members of CAC believe that the mountains, and rivers, particularly the ones that are connected to Apostle Ayodele Babalola in life and death, now consecrated for prayer, and known as Ori Oke, have sacred virtues, and that his spirit is present there as well as his power; even though he was dead, he still communicates with people. This same notion is carried to his graveside at Efon Alaye, and also to the place that is dedicated as a memorial of his call at Ikeji Arakeji.

Explorative and qualitative approaches were used. Data were collected through questionnaire, which were administered to persons in the five Ori Oke under study. Also used was structured interview with the authority in charge of the various Ori Oke and the CAC principal Officers. In addition, the researcher was present at all the Ori Oke to observe and participate in all their activities.

Findings showed that the deification of Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola, by some writers has led to the idolization of the places in some part of Yoruba land that are associated with his life and death. The proprietors of the various Ori Oke have overly emphasized the supernaturalism rather than tourism nature of the places. In line with the Yoruba worldview, CAC members' activities in these places have the semblance of African Traditional Religions, (ATR) and amounts to syncretism. This tendency has grossly negates the commitment to anti 'Traditional Religious Practices' of Joseph Ayodele Babalola, and indeed, the church.

The study concludes that it becomes necessary for CAC authority to use the instruments of Sunday school, and other educational agencies of CAC, to re-orientate the members regarding the practice of Christianity without recourse to ATR. Most important is the needs to develop all

the Ori Oke into full tourist centers that will attract tourists from far and near, this will not only eradicate syncretism but will also generate funds for the mission.

Keywords: *Christ Apostolic Church, Joseph Ayodele Babalola, Ori Oke, Sacred Places, Syncretism.*

1.1introduction

Nigerians generally, and the Yoruba people in particular, like every other African, has been described as very inherently and deeply religious. Religion permeates every part of the life of the African person (Ashiegbu and Achunike 2014:5). The Yoruba people take worship into their day-to-day life. Ogunade (2010) quoted in Odejobi (2014) states that “virtually all their daily activities are done with the consciousness of the ever – watching eyes of the invisible presence of the ancestors, spirits, divinities, and of course Olodumare.” (Odejobi, 2014:585) According to Awolalu (1981) the features of Yoruba religion as expressed in the form of ceremonies and rites, include:

Silent meditation, praying, prostration, invoking and hailing the spirits of the objects of worship, dancing, clapping, making offerings and sacrifices, sounding the bell or gong, drumming and singing, as determined by the situation. This may be private, by an individual in any convenient place; or it may be collective or corporate. The important thing is that it must be done in reverence and in an appropriate conduct and mood, to achieve the desired result (Awolalu, 1981, as cited in Odejobi, 2014:585)

Some of these features are found in the *Aladura Churches* in Yoruba land, including CAC. Omotoye (2015) states: “The Churches emphasized some features which are relevant and valued by the Yoruba people such as, prophecy, healing, prayer, vision, dreams, and the use of sacred objects. These features are found in African milieu. It made the Africans to feel more involved and alive in worship, as they clapped and danced”. (Omotoye, 2015:15) However, it is this same natural propensity that is responsible for the prevalent various forms of syncretism in Christ Apostolic Church, manifested through the members’ various credulous activities at Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola’s memorial mountains, streams, his graveside, and monuments in certain places in Yoruba land.

Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), from inception is known to be a movement that is solely dependent upon the power of God in prayer for healing and deliverance from all evils and problems. It has been in the forefront of campaigning against African Traditional Religion (ATR). The church also condemns going to the traditional medicine men or doctors for solutions to any form of problems. CAC believes that praying in faith only to God will cater for every need of the Christian. This absolute reliance on prayer for everything earned the church the appellation: 'Egbe Aladura' (The Prayer Group).

Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola, the first General Evangelist of CAC, in order to avoid disturbances, would retire to secluded places, including mountaintops, to pray. This eventually led to the earmarking of certain places exclusively for prayers in CAC. The places so designated are known as 'Ile Agbara Adura' (Power House) or "Ori Oke" (Mountaintop). "Ori Oke" (Mountaintop) is the general name for any place where one can pray and fellowship with his God in CAC, whereas such places could be a building, a compound, or a hilltop.

Similarly, water therapy, based on the divine order reportedly given to the Apostle, is a major aspect of the faith life of CAC members. In lieu of medicine, Apostle Ayodele Babalola blessed water for the healing of members. For the same reason, he sanctified a number of rivers in the cities under study. Many CAC members still go to these rivers to drink and bath for healing, and for deliverance from all forms of problems. Other places the CAC members go for prayers include his mausoleum at Efon Alaye, and also the monument constructed as a memorial of his call at Ikeji Arakeji. The CAC authority built these to commemorate the immutable work, the priceless love and selfless service to mankind and evangelization of Late Apostle Ayodele Babalola.

Most of the contemporary members of CAC believe that the mountains, particularly, the ones, on top of which the apostle went to pray in his lifetime, and the various rivers that he blessed when he was alive, have sacred virtues. A good number of the members believe that the spirit of the Apostle is present there as well as his power, and that, even though he was dead, he still

communicates with people. This same notion is carried to his graveside at Efon Alaye, and the monument constructed as a memorial of his call at Ikeji Arakeji.

Some pastors and prophets are found of advertising to their members the unparalleled power of God that purportedly resides on the Babalola's mountains, blessed rivers, his graveside, and at the place of his call. In some cases, members pay money to the prophets for taking them on spiritual pilgrimage to those places, if they could afford to go along with them, or pay the prophets for going there on their behalf.

Meanwhile, the contemporary activities of the CAC members in these memorial places have the semblance of African Traditional Religions, (ATR) and amounts to syncretism. This tendency has grossly negates the commitment to anti 'Traditional Religious Practices' of Joseph Ayodele Babalola, and indeed, the church.

1.2 Operational Definitions of Terms

Memorial places: Memorial places as used in this study are places that are preserved and maintained for the perpetual remembrance of Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola. They include certain mountains (hills) Rivers, his Mausoleum, and the place of his call to the Christian Service.

Ori Oke (Mountaintop) is the general name for any place where one can pray and fellowship with his God in CAC although such places could be a plain ground, a building, a compound, or a hilltop.

Prayer: Prayer, in this study, does not refer to a single activity, but rather, to the sum total of the activities of the people as a means through which they intend to realize their desired objectives.

Syncretism: As used in this study, syncretism is the resultant description of the assimilation of ATR into Christianity, as it is evident in the practices of the people under study.

Yoruba religion: Yoruba religion is the ATR as it is practiced in Yoruba land. It is used in this study to mean the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Yoruba people; which were

passed down from the genesis of their generation to this contemporary age and, as it is being practiced in the places under study.

2.1 Yoruba People

The Christ Apostolic Church started in Yoruba land by the Yoruba people. Yoruba is a name, a land and a people. As a people, they are mainly in the Southwestern part of modern Nigeria, where they form one of the large population ethnic groups. They live in the Southwestern Nigeria, in the present states of Oyo, Ogun, Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Lagos, some parts of Kwara and Kogi. The sub-ethnic groups found in Yoruba land are Ijebu, Oyo, Ife, Ijesa, Ondo, Ekiti, Akoko, Ikale, Ilaje, Egbado, Okun, and Igbomina. A substantial number of the Yoruba People also inhabit the Southeastern part of Republic of Benin. Similar pockets of their population, largely off-shoots from their West African base, are also found across the Atlantic, for instance South America, particularly in Cuba, Brazil, Trinidad and other places in the Caribbean (Omotoye 2015:5; Mullen, 2004:9)

Femi Fani-Kayode (2013) writes, “The Yoruba people of south-western Nigeria are a nationality of approximately 50 million people” This assertion is questionable because Femi Fani-Kayode did not disclose the source of his statistics. Meanwhile, according to the CIA World Fact book report of the same 2013, the Yoruba constitute over 40 million people in total; the majority of this population is from Nigeria and make up 21% of its population (www.informationng.com/2016/01/6-interesting-facts-you-should-know-about-the-yoruba-people-html).

The Yoruba traditional society has been described as a corporate and religious society, and that every Yoruba person is inherently religious (Oderinde, 2011:1; Ashiegbu and Achunike, 2014:5). According to Idowu (1962) Religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principles of life for them; hence, they are religious in all things. They believe in the existence of God, the Supreme Being, whose name is *Olorun*, or *Olodumare* meaning “the Owner or Lord of heaven”, a term which depicts God as the Author of all things, visible and invisible (Idowu, 1962:5). Idowu states further:

Olorun or Olodumare is the supreme deity in whom they belief and worship. He is supreme over all on earth and in heaven,

acknowledged by all the divinities as the Head to whom all authority belongs and all allegiance is due and His status of supremacy is absolute. Things happen when He approves, things do not come to pass if He disapproves. In worship, the Yoruba holds Him ultimately, first and last; in man's daily life, He has the ultimate pre-eminence (Idowu, 1962:586).

Odejobi (2014), Amanze (2003), and Idowu (1962) have all written that, for the Yoruba people, the next in rank to the Supreme Being, God, is a multitude of spiritual deities, a series of secondary gods; the *Orishas* (divinities), brought to life as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and the rest of the universe, including human beings. They have no power of their own, except what the Supreme Being permits them to do.

Odejobi (2014) mentioned the Yoruba Peoples' belief in the *Irunmale* (Spirit creatures) as being closely related to belief in the *Orisas*. The Yoruba people, according to him, regard them as powers which are almost abstract entities that take on human shape. Unlike the *Orisas*, they do not have specific assignment, but perform jobs given to them by Olodumare. He identifies the spirits, variously as *Ajija* or *Aaja* (spirit of whirlwind, with knowledge of the use of herbs), *Aroni* (a spirit with one leg that teaches the use of herbs), *Egbere*, (a smallish elf that carries a small mat and weeps all the time), *Oro* (spirits of trees), *ebora*, or *iwin* (a fairy believed to live in the ground, rock, forest or hill)'. These spirits, according to him, are usually associated with natural phenomena like trees, rocks, rivers, lagoons, forests, bushes, hills, earth, mountains, winds, dark groves and isolated places in which they reside. These spirits may even inhabit animals, or birds or snakes. (Odejobi 2014:586). Awolalu (1976) insists that 'the Iroko tree is not an ordinary tree; it is believed to be inhabited by a spirit; the Oshun River (in Western Nigeria) is believed to be more than an ordinary river because the spirit (Oshun) dwells in it and this makes the river efficacious in many respects, especially during barrenness. Lightning and thunder are manifestations of the thunder god. (Awolalu, 1976:8)

Meanwhile, in writing about the function of the spirits, Odejobi asserts that the spirits serve as intermediary between the heaven and earth (Odejobi 2014:586). This assertion is questionable, because in most African societies, as confirmed in the writings of Choon (2007) and Amanze (2003), it is the ancestors, and not the spirits, that serve as intermediary between the heaven and

earth. They, according to their nature as human beings, who have passed from the realm of the living to that of the superhuman, are able to communicate with God, and with man. They, as noted, particularly, by Amanze (2003) “are part of a long chain of “intercessors whose ultimate function is to intercede on behalf of humankind” (Amanze, 2003:45).

It is obvious from the writings of Adeoye (1979), as cited in Elesin (2013), that the Yoruba people see the *Irunmale* as having real existence, and can be for good and for bad, and that the objects that the *Irunmale* inhabit has certain mysterious powers, or magical significance, and they may become the emblems of the spirits, which the *Babalawo* (Yoruba medicine men) used in the preparation of magic, and medicine, particularly for ritual healing. (Elesin, 2013:4). Leaves and herbs, according to Ogunleye (2014), are other objects used in ritual healing. “Leaves are normally collected in the morning and afternoon, but in exceptional cases, when there is an urgent need for them; leaves are plucked in the night. It is interesting to note here that among some of the Yoruba people in Nigeria and in other parts of Africa, believe that leaves sleep at night; hence sleeping leaves cannot be efficacious” (Ogunleye, 2014:214)

The Africans equate the duties of the *Irunmale* with that of the prophets. According to Alokun (1991), “the Africans believe that some of the gods especially *Orisa nla* are like the prophets in the Bible or Quran. To them, the gods exist for the good of the people. They therefore go to them for needed guidance in the event of choosing a life partner, embarking on a journey, curing a sick person or appointing a chief. (Alokun, 1991:4). The approach to the gods is through their priests (*Babalawo*). Olowe (2007) also writes about the vital roles of the *Babalawo* in the religious life of the Yoruba people. The Yoruba people would consult *Babalawo*, who in turn, would consult his divination board, and then prescribe what should be the solution to the need of the clients. The prescriptions may be to make certain ritual, take some native medicine, or get some prepared charms with incantation (Olowe, 2007: 46)

The presence of malevolent spirits and all different kinds of enemies are real to the indigenous Africans and Yoruba people in particular. The presence of malevolent spirits and all different kinds of enemies are real. The need for protection against them is of paramount concern to them.

Therefore, many means, including the use of incantation, which are imprecatory words (*ogede* or *ofa*), are used to protect themselves. Adamo (2012) writes about this and other means of protection in African Tradition. He states:

Protection includes the use of human parts, animals, water, and whatever can be mentioned to help in safeguarding people. There are three major ways of protection in African indigenous tradition: (i) the use of potent words called *ogede* among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, (ii) the use of a talisman, and (iii) other medicine for the body. In the Yoruba tradition, every person is believed to have an enemy, known or unknown. This enemy is called *ota*. These enemies may be witches or sorcerers. These enemies could also be one's friends. One of the ways of protection against enemies is the use of imprecatory potent words (the so-called incantation- *ogede*) (Adamo, 2012:16).

Water is a vital substance for protection in African indigenous tradition, and it is as old as the Yoruba race. Folarin, Oladosu, and Baba (2012) list the Rivers of Oya (Niger), Okun (Ocean), Osa (Lagoon), Osun, and Esinrinmi, as the most sacred in Western Nigeria. Having cited Ogungbile (2005) who refers to the common Yoruba saying, "*Odo gbogbo l'agbo*", ("Every river/water is herbal/medicinal") they concur that 'water from various sources is therapeutic' (Folarin, Oladosu, and Baba 2012:18).

Women in African do not enjoy equal participation in the traditional religion. They are restricted from playing major roles. Alokun (1991) gives the following examples: "women are forbidden to see the *Alapansanpa* masquerade whenever he performs at Ibadan, (Oyo state).... In Ijebu Ode, and Abeokuta, Ogun State, during the feast of *Alagemo*, women are forbidden to come outside of their houses.... Similarly, in Akoko, Ondo State, during the celebration of *Orogudugbe* festival, no woman should come out and see the divinity (Alokun 1991:5). In the same vein, Familusi (2012) posits that:

A menstruating woman must not participate in the sacrifice to Obatala - Yoruba divinity of fertility and other religious activities. Obatala is renowned for whiteness and this symbolizes purity (as menstrual period is believed to be a time impurity or defilement). Also, they are forbidden from entering into any sacred places because they could render all objects

there.” ineffective. This taboo apart from depicting women as being unclean equally reduces their relevance in religious activities (Famulusi, 2012:303).

Ancestors are a vital part of the belief of the Yoruba people. Bediako (1990) as cited in Choon (2007) and Odejobi (2014) have written, respectively, about the centrality of the belief in the ancestors, to the religion of Yoruba people. Odejobi (2014) describes the ancestors as dead persons who turned to deities and worshipped by their family members, or individuals, who were elevated to the status of ancestors, and became deified by his community (Odejobi, 2014:586). It is not just anybody that can be qualified to be an ancestor in Africa. Bediako (1990) as cited in Choon (2007) states that only those who lived exemplary lives, and from whom the community derived some benefits are qualified to become ancestors. Such people must have lived to old age, had children while on earth, died natural death, and lived lives that are worthy of emulation (Choon, 2007:187). Bediako writes that, the belief in Ancestors is about relationship. It is a matter of communication between the living and the dead. He describes it as:

...a communicating relationship. He states that the “ancestors speak with the living through dreams, visions, nature and persons. At times they can be seen; particularly when they appear in dreams. At times only their presence is felt. Often the communication is facilitated by a mediator (diviner, witchdoctor, priest, shaman), and in many traditions this position is a very powerful one, enabling the living to consult with the ancestors (Bediako, 1990, as cited in Choon, 2007:32).

Across Africa, adherents of traditional African religions are converting largely to Christianity and Islam. They are, however, still strongly under the influence of the traditional belief. Hence, their versions of Christianity or Islam are infused with traditional African religious practice.

2.2 Christ Apostolic Church (CAC)

Undoubtedly, there are many CAC members, who have written on CAC and Babalola, but only a few are scholarly. Among the scholarly authors in CAC, whose works are extensively reviewed for this study are, Adeware Alokun, a member of the former CAC supreme council, and a former chairperson of the CAC National Board of Education. Christopher Oshun, a professor of church history, who was the pioneer Vice Chancellor of Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji Arakeji,

Osun State; and Abiodun Olowe, a research and engineering professor in France, and in USA. He is the consultant of information technology for CAC Worldwide.

Alokan (1991) and Olowe (2007) are unanimous about the origin and development of Christ Apostolic Church. They agreed that the entity that is known today as Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) actually started as a prayer group in the St. Saviors Anglican Church, Ijebu Ode, a Yoruba land in the southwestern Nigeria in 1918. One Daddy Alli who was the sexton of the church had a dream in which he saw that the church divided into two unequal halves whereby the bigger half was in darkness while the lesser half was in light. He interpreted the dream to mean that the church's faith in God had been lukewarm and that there was the need for spiritual reawakening. He, at first, relayed the dream to the Resident Minister Rev. Gansallo who dismissed the dream as meaningless. Alli then relayed the same dream to Mr. J.B. Sadare, a People's Warden in the church, who, having accepted the dream as a genuine revelation from God, recruited some like-minded members of the church and formed *Egbe Aladura* (A Praying Band) they started meeting every Sunday, after regular worship service at the St. Savior's Anglican Church. At this stage, the group was informal (Olowe, 2007:68-70; Alokan, 1991:32; CAC Constitution, 1998:15).

Still in 1918, there was Influenza epidemic that ravaged the world and was more severe in the Yoruba land. The epidemic killed Thousands of children in the southwestern Nigeria. The epidemic was the aftermath of the First World War. The influenza epidemic became a challenge to the Praying Band, whose main proclamation centered on the power of God to heal without medicine. They therefore resorted to finding a cure through prayer. About this same time, a nineteen year-old Miss Sophia Odunlami, at Isonyin, which was just about 5 miles away from Ijebu-Ode, had a dream in which she was divinely instructed to use rainwater and prayer to cure the victims of the influenza. She did so and the result was positive. J. B. Sadare heard about her and invited her to be part of the prayer band. She joined the prayer band, and together, they later named the band *Egbe Okuta Iyebiye* (Diamond Society or Precious Stone) this was the first step towards the formalization of the society (Olowe, 2007:68-70; Alokan, 1991:32; Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013:149).

Ogunleye (2013) has claimed that ‘the influenza outbreak that spread to Yoruba land in 1930 which killed many people was suppressed by Apostle Babalola during his Oke-Ooye revival at Ilesa (Ogunleye 2013:5). This work disagrees with this claim, for fact that the researcher could not find any authentic record of any influenza epidemic in Nigeria in 1930. Similarly, Oshun (1985) Olowe (2007) and Alokun (1991) are unanimous in their writings that the actual miracle that was credited to Apostle Ayo Babalola in 1930 was the raising of a child, who was being taken to the cemetery. They both write that the influenza epidemic had been completely subdued by the use of sanctified waters, through prayers to God, by the *Egbe Okuta Iyebiye* (The Diamond Society or Precious Stone), about eleven years before the revival at Oke Ooye, Ilesa, which was initiated through Apostle Ayo Babalola.

Oshun (1985) as cited Ogunrinade and Ogbole (2013) claims that the ability of *Egbe Okuta Iyebiye* to subdue the influenza through prayer strengthened the prayer group, and increased its fame and population as there was the formation of many of its branches throughout Nigeria (Ogunrinade and Ogbole, 2013:150). Following God’s special revelation, the group rejected all forms of western and traditional medicine. The prayer band also rejected infant baptism .They believed that baptism is for those who respond to the message of the gospel, and that an infant cannot rationally respond to the message of the gospel, therefore infant baptism was wrong and, consequently rejected it. They further attributed the death of many young children in the Anglican Church, in that locality, at that time, to the practice of infant baptism as practiced in the Anglican Church. This criticism annoyed the Anglican Bishop who condemned the group and asked the Anglican Church to banish them from the church. Consequently, the prayer band became independent of the Anglican Church. This event translated the prayer group into a formal church (Alokun, 1999:33).

2.3 The Faith Tabernacle

The CAC Constitution (1998) the writings of Olowe (2007) and Alokun (1991) have detailed the account of the encounter of the Diamond Society with the Faith Tabernacle, an American based religious organization, which also believes in divine healing. The account credited one Mr.

David Ogunleye Odubanjo in Lagos, a member of The Diamond Society, and a strong believer in divine healing too; as the person who introduced the Faith Tabernacle, to the Diamond Society. The Diamond Society later contacted the Faith Tabernacle in 1923 and became its affiliate in Nigeria, and was known as Faith Tabernacle Nigeria (FTN) (Olowe, 2007:111-120; Alokun 1991:44; CAC Constitution, 1998:16)

The emergence of Babalola at Oke Ooye, Ilesa, in July 1930, changed the course of the FTN and enhanced its fame worldwide. Olowe (2007) and Alokun (1991) discuss the remarkable event in their writings. An executive meeting of the FTN leaders was scheduled to hold at Oke Ooye. Mr. David Ogunleye Odubanjo had introduced a new member in the person of Joseph Ayodele Babalola, as a spirit filled evangelist, who the leaders would interview later. Babalola was asked, after the introduction, to wait in the mission house, and that he would be sent for later to be interviewed. Meanwhile, Babalola, who was waiting in the guesthouse, heard the wailing of mourners who were carrying the corpse of a child to a cemetery, and he promptly accosted them. He then prayed and the dead child resuscitated. That single act ignited the famous *Isoji Oke Ooye* (Olowe, 2007:111-120; Alokun, 1991:44; CAC Constitution, 1998:16).

2.4 Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola

Joseph Ayodele Babalola was born at Odo Owa, Ilofa; a small town near Ilorin in Kwara State on 25 April 1904, to Christian parents; Pa David Lawani Rotimi, and Mrs. Martha Talabi Rotimi. Both of them were members of the Anglican Church. Olusheye (2004) as cited in Olowe (2007) presented Ayodele Babalola, in a way that the members of CAC and indeed many people of other churches may see him as a kind of deity. For instance, Olusheye writes that just before her conception, Babalola's mother was going to farm, an angel appeared to her in form of an elderly man in white robe, and told her that she would conceive and have a male child whom the lord will use to bless many all over the world (Olowe 2007:87). Similarly, Olowe (2007) gives the following account about the birth of Babalola:

Joseph Ayo Babalola was born ...to David and Martha Talabi Rotimi, while Martha was away in an Odo Owa farmland, called *Igbo niyun* (pleasant forest), working on palm oilseeds. No midwife was around to help, but her work mates. On this day of his birth, there were reported great thundering and

lightning, with winds that shook mightily trees and the entire community (Olowe, 2007:87).

The researcher has not found any means to either confirm or refute the above claims, but views the claims as capable of deifying Joseph Ayodele Babalola. The prophecy about his birth, written by Olusheye (2004) was similar to the prophecy of the birth of Christ. An angel had appeared to Mary before conception, and told her that she would give birth to a male child who will save his people (Luke 1:26-38). The similarities of the birth of Ayodele Babalola and that of Jesus Christ in the account of Olowe (2007) are: (1) Babalola's mother was in a farmland, away from home; just as Mary the mother of Jesus too was away from home. (2) There was no trained midwife around to help Babalola's mother; just as there was no one to take the delivery of Jesus. (3) Babalola was born in the bush; just as Jesus was born in a manger. (4) Mysterious happening attested to the birth of Babalola, in form of great thundering and lightning, with winds that shook mighty trees, and the entire community. Similarly, in the case of Christ, "a great company of the heavenly host appears with an angel singing" (Luke 2:1-14). Meanwhile, based on the various literature reviewed for this study, and to the best of the researchers knowledge, the positive responses that greeted the 1930 revival at Ilesa, and in the subsequent places were not based on the alleged supernatural account of birth, but on the evidential manifestation of God's work of healings, among other things, through him.

At age 24, Babalola took an appointment with the Public Works Department, (PWD) Osogbo Osun State, Nigeria, in 1928. At PWD, he learned how to operate steamroller, and repair roads. He became a supervisor and assigned to work on the construction of Igbara-Oke Road. They allocated a caterpillar to him for the work (<http://irr.org/african-indigenous-churches-chapter-nine>; Olowe, 2007:88-90; Alokun, 1991:36; NOUN, National Open University of Nigeria Course Guide CTH192. 2012:43). Within few months as a PWD staff, Babalola "started having strange experiences which disturbed his sleep for a couple of months. His steamroller ceased to function at the middle of the road by Ariran Stream at Ikeji Arakeji, about 7 kilometers away from Ipetu Ijesa. He had what he believed was God's voice, telling him to leave the secular work for missions work. Initially, he refused to react positively to the voice he heard repeatedly. Many days gone, yet the steamroller had remained un-repairable. However, On October 11, 1928, at

around 12 noon, he went to Ariran River to clean himself. Suddenly, he heard the voice again, and after series of signs; it became clear to him, that these meant God's call to him to become an Evangelist. He decided to obey God. He thereafter heeded the call and resigned his appointment with PWD (NOUN.CTH832. 2015:21; Alokani 1991:38; Olowe 2007: 96)

Six months later, as part of his preparation for the work of evangelism, he was taken to a hilltop known as *igbo ilesi* at Ipetu Ijesa, Osun State, by one Prophet Fapohunda, to pray to God (Olowe 2007:98). He, afterwards, began his ministry by first going to his birthplace, Odo- Owa to preach the Gospel to his people, but his people rejected him. Consequently, small pox afflicted many people at his hometown. However, God healed those who heard the Word of God and obeyed it. The people of the town decided to kill him for they could no longer tolerate his words (NOUN 2015:21-23). An academic paper, titled 'The Divine Ministry Encounter of Apostle Ayo Babalola of Christ Apostolic Church', which was presented to an international religious conference on the origins of Christ Apostolic Church (2012) describes the ministry of Babalola thus:

He continued his ministry by paying visits to many towns and villages in the Yoruba land preaching the Good News. As he preached the Gospel, he healed many people that were ill. He went about ringing a hand bell to call the attention of people to his messages of salvation. He had the Stamp of Deity upon his ministry. Signs and wonders accompanied his ministrations. The blinds were made to see, the dumb spoke, the cripple worked, the demon-possessed, and lunatics were instantaneously delivered, the lepers were made whole, ... women who carried four to five years of protracted pregnancies were delivered of their burdens....His originality lays not so much in the discovery or rediscovery of divine healing and of other Truths, but in the fearless and public proclamation and application of these Truths. "By telling whole communities and towns to surrender their idols, charms, and fetishes to rely on God alone, by asking masses of people and entire town to do away with all medicine, herbs, and roots, both local and foreign, to take Christ as their Healer – something which the mission church and even C&S had not been able to do (<http://www.eternityrace.com/2016/10/the-divine-ministry-encounter-of.html>).

The core of Babalola's message was Divine Healing. Alokani (1991) states that his message to the people was to that they should reject all forms of medicine, traditional or modern, and that they should surrender their idols and charms for burning (Alokani 1991:58) Olowe (2007) states that the people responded in large numbers, even the king (of Efon Alaye) emptied all the idols in his palace. Everyone...surrendered ungodly objects for burning (Olowe 2007:156)

The news of Prophet Joseph Babalola soon got to the Faith Terbanacle Congregation in Ebute-meta Lagos. The FT Lagos, led by D.O. Odubanjo sent for him to minister among them. An eyewitness, Idowu (2007) as cited in Ogunrinade and Ogbole (2013) reports:

The whole of Lagos and Ebute-meta shook when he came. He preached a wonderful sermon that thrilled the heart to us. They brought several works of healing to him when he was here and the Lord stretched forth His hands to heal many people from various churches. Since the days of the apostles, we have not seen such a manifestation full of great wonders of the power of God, like this in this land (Ogunrinade and Ogbole: 2013:149).

D.O.Odubanjo was convinced about the charismatic potentials of Ayo Babalola and his ministry, and decided to introduce him to the general body of FT in their next meeting that was scheduled to hold at Oke Ooye Ilesa.

Oluseye (2004) as cited in Olowe (2007) writes that Apostle Babalola died on Sunday July 26, 1959 at Ede, Osun state Nigeria (Olowe 2007:247). Meanwhile, the CAC authority, after Ayodele Babalola's death, built a mausoleum for him, dedicated the place of his call, and preserved some mountains and streams with which he had memorable contacts during his life times, for his memory, as a rallying prayer ground for all Christians. These places are sacred to the members of CAC; hence, they make pilgrimages there regularly. This study refers to those memorial sites as sacred places (*Ori Oke*) of CAC in Yoruba land.

2.5 The Uniqueness of CAC

Ayegboyin & Ishola (1997) see CAC as one of the churches that are identified as *ijo aladura* (churches of the praying people) because of its emphasis on prayers. Every African indigenous prayer that emphasized prayers like CAC is given the name "*aladura*". Ayegboyin, and Ishola, states:

This name confers on them an identity that they are for no other business than to pray. This seems to suggest that all other functions are secondary.... It is their habit to pray several times in a day. Some enjoin and observe "hours of prayers" (as

in Judaism) and night vigils....have intercessory (prayer) groups called "Prayer Warriors" - *Afadura Jagun* (Yoruba) *Mpaebo-Kuo* (Akan). It is their sole responsibility to pray and fast for those who have problems and to commit special programmes of the churches into God's hands. (Ayegboyin, and Ishola 1997: 1)

The CAC Constitution, on its part, describes the church, (CAC), as one possessing its uniqueness and identity in liturgy hinged on praying and singing of hymns, anthems and choruses. In addition, that it has an impelling message of worshipping in a truly African pattern and tenacious believes in, and practice of, divine and Christian healing. (CAC Constitution, 1998:18)

Through Joseph Babalola CAC, became famous for revivals, accompanied by miracles and power of God that often resulted in the conversion of the adherents of ATR to Christianity.

Sunday Tribune,(2001:1), cited in Ogunleye (2013) reports that “During some of these revivals, many people, including kings who are the custodians of the indigenous faith have renounced their old faiths, gods and goddesses and substituted them with the new life in Christ” Ogunleye concludes that:

These are regular occurrences during various revivals organized by the C.A.C. nationwide in general and in Yoruba land in particular. Through this, some oppressive demonic forces that have been receiving sacrifices from people were eliminated and places believed to be *Igbo awos* (demonic forests), which ordinary human beings could not enter before have been converted to churches, camps and prayer grounds. It is interesting to note here that, Yoruba land, which is formally known as the stronghold of divinities, is now the international headquarters of the C.A.C (Ogunleye2013:181).

Alokan, (1991) in his writings claimed that Babalola was never a member of FT (Alokan 1991:147). No writer who wrote on Babalola validated this claim. Folarin (2013) refutes this claim in his own writing, by citing Ademakinwa (1975) one of the founding members of FT, and a well-known figure in CAC, who states “that Babalola told members of the FT in 1929, that God had sent him to ‘*fara mo*’ (join) the FT, and he, ‘*dara po mo wa bi ijo*’ (joined us as a church member)” (Folarin (2013:2). Both Olowe, (2007) and Fatokun, (2010) agreed that

Babalola joined the FT as member, and was baptized by one of its leaders, in the person of Pastor Joseph Bayo Esinsinade Shadare. Olowe states that the baptism rite took place in the lagoon at the back of the FT church at No. 51 Moloney Bridge Street, Lagos, in November 1929 (Fatokun, 2010, Olowe, 2007: 106). Meanwhile, Alokun contradicted himself later when he states that Babalola was baptised by Pastor Esinsinade Shadare, who was a remarkable leader of FT (Alokun, 1991; 41). Fatokun writes further on the membership of Babalola in the FT thus:

J.A. Babalola, the key actor in the indigenous revival, far from being the leader of F.T. as some think, was an Anglican who was allegedly led by God to join F.T. in 1928. He was after series of interview with Shadare and Odubanjo administered water baptism by immersion by Pastor J.B. Shadare in the Lagos Lagoon in Dec. 1929, consequent upon which he was absorbed as a full member of F.T. This position is further supported by archival records. For example, in a letter written by the Assistant District Officer, Ilesha, to the District Officer, Ile – Ife, dated 13th Aug. 1930, and another one dated 25th Aug. 1930 by the Resident, Oyo Province, to the Honourable Secretary, Southern Province (Enugu), J.A. Babalola is portrayed as “a member of Faith of Tabernacle - an institution connected with U.S.A.”² Moreover, he is reported in the second letter to have visited Ilesha “to preach out the Faith Tabernacle. (www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj19/fatokun.html)

Shitu (2014) titled an article he wrote for City People in 2014 as ‘story of late CAC founder Apostle Ayo Babalola’ (<http://breaking.com.ng/nigeria/story-of-late-cac-founder-apostle-ayo-babalola>). The title is misleading, for it asserts that Apostle Ayo Babalola is the founder of CAC. As it has been stated above, both Olowe (2007), Fatokun, (2010) and Alokun, (1991) agrees that It was the same FT, having, previously answered few other names that became CAC in 1942, and that Babalola joined FT and was baptized by an FT leader, in the person of Pastor Esinsinade Shadare in November 1929. Babalola could not be a founder of an association he joined as a member. However, Alokun (1991) also writes that it was Babalola who suggested the name ‘CAC’ to the FT leaders, when it was seriously searching for a new name for the movement. It was not until 1943, the year that the church was incorporated, that Babalola was eventually appointed as the first general evangelist of CAC (Alokun, 1991:322).

2.6 Sacred Places of Christ Apostolic Church in Yoruba Land

The Merriam-Webster English Dictionary defines sacred thus: “Dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity; devoted exclusively to one service or use; worthy of religious veneration: holy; entitled to reverence and respect; of or relating to religion: not secular or profane; highly valued and important”. (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sacredly>>)

This study defines Sacred Places of Christ Apostolic Church in Yoruba Land to be places that, because of their association with Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola, are very dear to the members of Christ Apostolic Church, and are, therefore, consecrated, and dedicated solely to holy use of CAC members and other Christians. The places thus defined are *Ori Oke Babalola*, (Babalola Prayer Mountain) at Odo Owa, *Ori Oke Aanu*, (Mount Mercy) at Erio Ekiti; *Ori Oke Iyanu*, (Mount Miracle) at Ido Ile;. Others are The Babalola’s Mausoleum, and *Omi Oni* (River Oni) at Efon Alaye, as well as Babalola Miracle Center, and *Omi Ariran*, (River Ariran) at Ikeji Arakeji.

2.6.1 *Ori Oke Babalola* (Babalola Prayer Mountain) at Odo Owa

The ancient city of Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero local government area of Kwara state, where the late Apostle Ayodele Babalola was born. He started his preaching ministry there, but the people rejected his message, he then moved to the forest, now known as *Ori Oke Babalola* (Babalola’s Mountain) He was there for two weeks, calling people to repentance. Osun (1981) cited in Olowe (2007) writes that, on certain occasion when Babalola and his disciples were on the *Ori Oke* praying, one of them noticed a big snake in the water in a crevice. The snake later produced a loud sound, which Babalola interpreted as being indicative of the power residing in the water (Olowe, 2007:144). It is still on this mountain that he prayed for close to five hours, and his foot leaves a mark on the spot where he stood for the prayer. Furthermore, in another session of prayer a big snake crawled over the Apostle while lying down in prayer and the snake instantly died and dried (Olowe, 2007:255).

2.6.2 *Ori Oke Aanu*, (Mount Mercy) at Erio Ekiti

Little has been written about the origin of Babalola’s relationship with Erio Ekiti. However, Olowe (2007) hints that at a point in his ministry, Babalola moved his parents from Odo Owa to

Erio Ekiti. The researcher has not seen any author who gives reasons for the movement. However, going by the observation of Olowe (2007) that Ekiti area is a mountainous region, and that Babalola loved to fast and pray on the mountains, particularly when he was around Ekiti or Ilesa. Incidentally, Erio Ekiti has a beautiful mountain too. It is very likely that for these reasons he moved his parents to Erio. The mountain at Erio Ekiti is now known as *Ori Oke Aanu* (Mountain of Mercy). Olowe (2007) states that, at this *Ori Oke*, during the time that Babalola was praying for 51 days, Satan confronted him, accused him of wrong doings. But the Lord stood for Babalola, and acquitted him at the end of the 51 days (Olowe, 2007:254).

2.6.3 *Ori Oke Iyanu*, (Mount Miracle) at Ido Ile

Ido-Ile is a town in Ekiti west local government area. It has the longest mountain, which could take an hour to climb it in those days. The Mountain was a forbidden forest that abode various evil spirit and dangerous animals. Apostle Babalola, sometimes in the forties, had the direction from God who asks him to go to the mountain to meet with him. The mountain is known today as *Ori Oke Iyanu*, (Mountain of Miracles). It was at the *Ori Oke* that Babalola, with some CAC pastors fasted and prayed for seven days. At the conclusion of the exercise, he told them that they had not prayed enough.

2.6.4 Babalola's Mausoleum and *Omi Oni* (River Oni) at Efon Alaye

Efon Alaye is the most mountainous city in Ekiti States. God led Babalola to Efon Alaye in September 1930. The king, Oba Agunsoye Aladejare, and his subjects warmly received him. When he asked for a place for revival, they gave him a hilltop known as *Igbo Aiwo*, (a forbidden forest) which was a den of evil spirits. Babalola led the people to clear the place without any harm to anyone. They eventually build the first CAC building in Efon Alaye there. Babalola loved Efon town and its people so much that he adopted the place as home. Hence, when he died in 1959, they brought his corpse, even against the wishes of the people of Odo Owa, his hometown, to be buried at Efon. His Mausoleum is one of the *Ori Oke* (a place of prayer) in Efon Alaye. There are two miraculous rivers in Efon. Adeoti (2013) writes about them thus:

Efon is drained by many streams and rivers from the surrounding hills. They are dependable even in dry season

because they never dry up completely. Two of such rivers are historically significant for they are believed to be of medicinal value, which the people consider as divine blessings bestowed on them. River *Olua* is believed to be capable of healing victims of guinea worm, while river *Oni* is also believed to possess elements of divine healing to the sick and capable of washing off misfortune in anybody who bathes in it after the late Apostle J.A. Babalola of Christ Apostolic Church (C.A.C) fame had blessed it. These two ‘miraculous’ rivers attract people from diverse areas of Yoruba land to Efon Alaaye (Adeoti, 2013: 170,171).

C.A.C authority has dredged and expanded *Oni River*. There are separate bathing areas for men and women. There is also another area of the river that is meant for drinking to cure all forms of ailment.

2.9.5 Babalola Miracle Center, and *Omi Ariran*, (River Ariran) at Ikeji Arakeji

Ikeji Arakeji is not a mountainous town like Ekiti. It is located in Osun State. It was at Ikeji Arakeji that Babalola had the encounter, which turned him from steamroller to an evangelist. The steamroller with which he was working was grounded along ipetu ijesa road, near Ariran River. He afterward went to the river to clean himself when he heard God’s voice calling him to work for him. The CAC Authority has consecrated the place of his call to immortalize him. The place is known today as ‘Babalola Miracle Center’. Olowe (2007) writes that the Ariran River was, in 1990, dredged and expanded by one Pastor Isaiah Ogunbomehin. There are separate bathing areas for men and women. There is also another area of the river that is meant for drinking to cure all forms of ailment.

Apostle Joseph Ayodele Babalola, in his lifetime prays a lot. Reading the personal diary of Apostle Babalola, as found in Olowe (2007) it becomes obvious that Babalola was a habitual *Ori Oke* goer. He did not only go *Ori Oke* to pray, but also to hold meetings with his disciples (Olowe 2007:186, 233). Olowe, however, did not state whether Babalola ever instructed that all or any of the *Ori Oke* should be maintained as a sacred place. Notwithstanding, the CAC authority, in order to preserve the memory, as well as the legacies of Babalola, consecrated both the mountains; the rivers, the Mausoleum, and the place of Babalola’s call as sacred places. CAC

members often go there on pilgrimage. The idea of going on pilgrimage to sacred places is not alien to Christianity. George (2016) writes:

The practice of pilgrimage had long been an established reality in Israel before the advent of the Constantine Christianised Rome in the fourth century, and that to the people of the Middle Ages; pilgrimage was the assurance of a road to God, or a highway to heaven. He allegorises Christ's incarnation as a pilgrimage from the celestial to the terrestrial....Pilgrimage is rooted in the soil of the human soul. This intentional mode of travel has been practiced through the centuries by Christians who are seeking to stretch their faith radically by discovering the God who invites us into sacred and risky intimacy (George, 2016:19).

In Africa, the idea of going on pilgrimage to sacred places is not peculiar to CAC. It is a common practice of the African Indigenous Churches. Ayegboyin (1997) listed sacred hills and mountains as one of the features of the African Indigenous Churches. He writes:

The Church makes use of some hills and mountains as places of worship or saying solitary prayers. These places, which are usually away from the hustle and bustle of life, are observed as sacred places. Churches, permanent buildings or huts have been built on some of these hills with resident pastors, prophets or prophetesses to assist those who come there for spiritual assistance (Ayegboyin, 1997: 9:4)

George (2016) notes that, during the medieval period, "...pilgrims traveled for many reasons: the veneration of relics, the demands of penance, the promise of miracles and healings". On why people go on religious pilgrimage, notes that, during the medieval period, "...pilgrims traveled for many reasons: the veneration of relics, the demands of penance, the promise of miracles and healings" (George, 2016:21). To many Christians in Africa, holy pilgrimage means going to *Ori Oke* (the Prayer Mountains), and this has become an essential aspect of the spiritual life of, not only CAC members, but also members of the African indigenous churches. Could there be any different reasons for religious pilgrimage? Reverend James Akinadewo (2016) notes that:

People go to Prayer Mountains to avoid distraction. It is like being alone with God. Jesus Christ took three of his disciples to the mountain during the transfiguration and he taught and prayed with them there. In the Bible as well, Moses communicated with God on the mountain where he received

the Ten Commandments (<http://tribuneonline.ng.com/prayer-mountains-solutiongrounds>).

Obasola (2004) in his work; ‘Religious Tourism and Sustainable Development: A Study of Eyo Festival in Lagos, Nigeria’, establishes “the fact that religion is not just a mere spiritual affair and communion between man and God, but also, it deals with the personal, inter-personal, social and economic dimension of life”(Obasola 2004:527) this suggests that, going to *Ori Oke*, is to meet other needs apart from religion. These needs could, among many others, be for tourism.. Obasola (2004) observes further:

From the beginning of times, human beings have always traveled and their motivations have always been food, water, safety and acquisition of resources. However, the idea of travel for pleasure or exploration soon emerged which has always depended upon the technology to provide the means of travel. Accordingly, it was established that the earliest travelers walked or rode domestic animals. As roads were improved, government stabilized, interest in travel increased for education, site seeing and religious purposes (Obasola, 2004:527).

Mathieson & Wall (2010) as cited in Obasola (2004) define tourism as “the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to cater to their needs” (Obasola 2004:527). Similarly, anyone who will go *Ori Oke* would have to travel from his place of abode to the locations where the various *Ori Oke* are located, where, apart from, the purposes of religion; he would see many interesting and historical sites.

There is yet another reason why Africans, particularly Yoruba people go to *Ori Oke*. It is because going to *Ori Oke* exemplify their traditional worldview; the understanding of the sources of their problems, and the means to solve them. In the worldview of the Yoruba people, most situations of failure are believed to be an influence of the malevolent spirit, which can only be prevented by the supernatural intervention of various spirits in various phenomena, coupled with prayers and healings, through the divine mediation of prophets and priests, explains another reason why people go to *Ori Oke*. This attitude is not peculiar to CAC, but characterizes all African indigenous churches (AIC) Falaye (2015) notes:

Spirituality as understood in the AICs is given a far deeper understanding because of their appreciation of the reality of the spirit world. The Yoruba believed in the world of the spirits, ancestors, and other metaphysical forces which often are ignored by the Orthodox missionary churches because of their scientific and secular orientation of the world. The Yoruba have always believed in the dualistic nature of the world where the forces of good and evil are warring. It was from this backdrop that the Yoruba belief in the reality of the existence of evil. Their experience of evil is real and no theology can explain it away (Falaye, 2015:1).

Similarly, Owwoye (2012) notes that Nigerians from whatever tribe attributes all ailments to spirits or mystical sources, and that they would seek to preserve their lives at all costs either through the assistance of traditional or Pentecostal healers. He sees this as the reasons why people seeking for divine healing or divine intervention in their lives go to prayer houses, and miracle centers, etc. The places they go for solutions include the mountains and sacred rivers (Owwoye, 2012: 3)

Yoruba people belief that there are spiritual powers who resides in natural phenomena, including *Ori Oke*. Moreover, this is part of African Traditional Religion. Leigh and Asojo (1999) notes that the Yoruba people considered groves, hills or mountains, to be sacred (Leigh and Asojo, 1999:50). Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) as cited in Ogunade (2005) writes that “the myriad spirits which populate the world of Yoruba belief are associated with hills, mountains, rivers, rocks, caves, trees, brooks, lakes, and thick forests” (Ogunade, 2005: 2). Oladosu (2005) writes that the religion of the Africans is “keenly attached to the principle of animism which means beliefs in spirits.... The spirit world of African religion is initiated by the belief that certain spiritual entities reside in natural phenomena or landmarks such as rivers, mountains, or trees that serve as focus of communal ritual” (Oladosu, 2005:1).

Consultations with Priests of the deities, concerning one’s problems, are parts of the African worldview. Ugwoeye and Uzuegbunam (2013) wrote about how the typical African seeks solution to his problem. He captured the different roles of both the clients and the priests, and described the methods employed to solve their problems thus:

In traditional Africa, different ethnic groups offer prayers directly to the Supreme Being or through intermediaries. ...Priests of deities were regularly consulted to present prayers to the deities in accordance with the needs of the individuals, families or communities. Such consultations sometimes involved making spiritual enquiries over some mysterious occurrences such as sudden or frequent deaths or even a matter as light as delay in the return of the rains to mark the beginning of the planting seasons. Such enquiries may lead to making some sacrifices to appease the gods and restore their benevolence, and this was done in the context of prayer (Ugwueye and Uzuegbunam, 2013:2).

Similarly, at the various *Ori Oke*, the worshippers take their problems to the spiritually wise ones, the prophets, who, to the best of their knowledge, are in the position to proffer solutions for them. Adogame (2001) as cited in Dada (2008) observes that this attitude is borne out of them, being Africans, whose attitude is to consult priests of deities whenever they have problems. Thus, they accord the prophets the same status as the priests of deities. This attitude, according to Adogame (2001) hinges on the lacuna, which is created because of the Africans turning from traditional religion to Christianity. The prophets in these churches fill this lacuna, and that, they have taking over the functions of “*babalawo*” of the traditional Yoruba religion” (Dada, 2008: 3).

Madukovich (2015) obviously, writing on the reason for the popularity of the prophets and mountains, and the increase in the numbers of their patrons, particularly in Nigeria, sarcastically, states:

It is not unexpected that we find this situation in societies like Nigeria, where the dead are hardly ever thought to have died by natural causes, even when the deceased was very old and had translated to the great beyond while sleeping. Evil days or Adverse periods are interpreted as attacks and never as something as natural as with "night" following day (Good times) and vice versa. The fear that someone, an enemy is responsible for the ills that befalls the person is usually at the root of the helter-skelter that many have found themselves in today. The more reasonable ones, may even consider that the enemies aren't humans but spirits, and even if "man" acts out against the one, he must have been compelled to do so by the

malevolent spirit possessing his/her soul, so they respond by attacking the malevolent spirit in ways they deem the most effective. Others postulate that the enemy is the man or woman they suspect in having a hand in their misfortune, and for many who live in the city, they would usually suspect that this enemy is located in their ancestral homes in the village or some obscure location they had once lived or even their next door neighbor ([http://madukovich.wordpress.com/of prophets and charlatans](http://madukovich.wordpress.com/of_prophets_and_charlatans)).

Adogame (2001) as cited in Dada (2008) notes that the prophets, rather than using the African Traditional religious sources, channels and nature of revelation; they use dreams, and vision as the new means of achieving the same objective. Thus, only the means are different, the attitude is the same (Dada, 2008:3). This is an inroad to syncretism.

A Pew survey shows that despite the dominance of Christianity and Islam, traditional African religious beliefs haven't diminished; large numbers believe in witchcraft, evil spirits, sacrifices to ancestors, traditional religious healers, reincarnation and other elements of traditional African religions. The practicing of traditionally infused Christianity and Islam shows how integrated the beliefs are within African lifestyles.

(<http://oldweb.sbc.edu/sites/default/files/Honors/Water/Treatment/Context/Religion-1.pdf>)

Researchers such as Oshun C.O., Alokun Adewale, and Olowe Abiodun, have written extensively on variety of topics on CAC, and about the legacies of Babalola. However, none has investigated the contemporary activities, specifically, at various *Ori Oke* of CAC that preserve the memory of Babalola; as this study is set to do; not only about the mountains and monuments, but also with the dedicated rivers. River/Water was pivotal in the ministry of Babalola. Alokun (1991) states that God reportedly, gave water to Babalola at the time of his call, as a token for the deliverance of humanity from all forms of evil (Alokun, 1991:40). Consequently, all rivers, which he sanctified, have become sources of miraculous healings to many (Olowe, 2007:257). Adamolekun (2012) writes that CAC members belief in *Ori Oke* (sacred Hills and mountains) and in the use of *Omi Iye* (Holy water), and *Ororo Adura* (blessed oil) for faith healing, like Yoruba traditional, believers” (Adamolekun 2012:10). However, Adamolekun did not provide

information about how the way and manner the *Omi Iye*, and *Ororo Adura* are used by the CAC members, and did not investigate the reasons for their use at *Ori Oke*.

Taiwo (2011) who investigated the activities of the worshippers at the *Iboji Babalola* (Mausoleum of Babalola) at Efon Alaye writes:

To most of the CAC faithful they do not only go to the grave of their founder to pray, some also sleep there, while many bring kegs of water to the grave with the belief that the power of their founder is still potent and could still perform miracles as he did when alive....items like kegs of water, bottles of olive oil, bells, Babalola's photograph where he was holding a bell, letters, photographs, Holy Bibles among other things were placed on the graves (http://taiwosworld.blogspot/20110501_Archive.html)

The information provided above by Taiwo (2011) is based on the discussions, and interactions with the worshippers at the *Ori Oke*, but not with the principal officers of CAC, As such, he could not state categorically whether the events he write about exemplify the intention of the CAC authority for building the mausoleum.

3.1 Major Findings

The researcher was physically present at all the *Ori Oke* to participate in all the activities at *Ori Oke*, and to also administer questionnaires, and conduct interviews. The Questions raised elucidated responses leading to the disclosure of motives in the various activities at *Ori Oke*. The respondents included the authority of CAC, the managers of the various *Ori Oke*, and a good number of the actual partakers in the activities of all the *Ori Oke*. The researcher's conversations with the people as he observes and participate in their activities provided additional means for qualitative primary data for this work.

CAC assemblies spread all over Yoruba land, covering eight states in Nigeria. The five *Ori Oke* in this study are located in three states, namely Osun, Ekiti, and Kwara. Ekiti State has three *Ori Oke*, while Osun, and Kwara have one each. Incidentally, Ekiti is in the center of four states, and share borders with them (Kogi, Ondo, Osun, and Kwara) But Lagos, Ogun, and Oyo, have Osun state between them and Ekiti. This research confirms that majority of CAC members are

domiciled in Lagos, followed by, Osun, and then Ondo. Ekiti comes next, followed by Ogun. The least number of members are in Kogi State. The location of the various *Ori Oke*, largely determines the traffic of pilgrims to it. Osun is in the center of the Yoruba states except Kogi. It is easier and quicker for those in Lagos, Ondo, Kwara, Ogun, and Oyo states to get to Osun state. Hence, the most patronized *Ori Oke* is the Babalola Miracle Center at Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, which attracted 26.34% of the whole people that attended the entire *Ori Oke* during this research. The three *Ori Oke* in Ekiti state also enjoy patronage in number, next to Osun state. The reason for this is because, Ekiti state, itself has a good number of CAC assemblies having come fourth position after Lagos, in terms of membership population. Besides, it is located in the center of Kwara, Osun, Ondo, and Kogi states. Whereas, the location of *Ori Oke Babalola* at Odo Owa, Kwara state, Nigeria, being farthest to Lagos, and Ondo states, where there are majority members of CAC, and who have found the *Ori Oke* in both Ekiti and Osun states to be easily and quickly accessible.

The total number of the people that visited the five *Ori Oke*, put together, at the time of the study was 224 in 35 days; 5 weeks. Out of these, 150 people were administered with the questionnaire, and 5 ministers in charge of the individual *Ori Oke* were interviewed. The register that the visitors signed at the point of entry of each *Ori Oke*, the majority were male. The reason for this, as disclosed in an interview with Pastor Oni, the minister in charge at *Ori Oke Babalola*, Odo Owa, is that most women could not endure the stress involved in the climbing of mountains, where the *Ori Oke* is a high hill. This explains why most of the women were found at the sanctified rivers, and in low land places, such as the Babalola's Mausoleum, Efon Alaye, and Babalola Miracle Center at Ikeji Arakeji.

This research confirms that the middle-aged people attend *Ori Oke* more than the aged. These are people still facing mid-life challenges. Every respondent came to *Ori Oke* to find solution to his/her problems. Some came for healings from certain ailments, while some came to secure deliverance from malevolent spirits. Most of them came to pray for employment, or promotion at work, while others came to pray to get husband, or wife. This is the reason why the majority of the people found at *Ori Oke* are between the ages of 30 and 35, followed by those aged 36 to 41,

while the least age bracket of the respondents is 60 years and above. Although Babalola's memorial places, *Ori Oke*, belong to CAC: it attracts people from other churches and denominations too. However, the non-CAC members are in the minority, in contrast to the CAC members, at *Ori Oke* during the time of this research.

The piece of naturally large mass of rock, arising above the level of earth, known as mountains in the cities of Erio-Ekiti, Ido-Ile town of Ekiti, and Odo Owa in karat states were not established, or created by the CAC authority. They are natural creation of God that became prominent because of Babalola's choice of them as his favorite prayer spots in his lifetime.

Apart from Babalola Miracle Center, ikeji arakeji, other *Ori Oke* in this study, came to being, not by any formal planning, but by circumstances. Interviews with the CAC principal officers confirm that all the mountains had existed before the emergence of Babalola, but that they were forbidden forests and abode of various evil spirits and dangerous animals. Apostle Babalola's successful foray to these evil forests transformed the places to safe habitation for people. This agrees with the writings of Alokun (1991) and Olowe (2007) where they both states that the *Ori Oke* of Odo Owa Ido, and Efon were forests full of malevolent spirits. However, there is no confirmation of any written or verbal instruction from Babalola to the effect that any of the *Ori Oke* should be turned to either a tourist center or a prayer camp. Prophet John Oyelami revealed in the interview with the researcher that, initially, it was the Christian indigenes of the individual town where a mountain, or a river, that is associated with Babalola is situated, that decided to conserve the place as their own heritage, pride, and evidential prove of their connection to Babalola. Although, this was with some form of understanding with the CAC authority. This research found that the CAC authority on the aforementioned *Ori Oke*, except Babalola Miracle Center at Ikeji Arakeji, is not total. The indigene, mostly, control the affairs of the *Ori Oke* in their towns. Pastor Peter Olajide, an indigene of Efon Alaye, who manages Babalola's Mausoleum at Efon Alaye, confirms this. He says that it is the Efon Alaye Gospel Association, which finances the projects of the Mausoleum. The indigenes determines who should manage the Mausoleum, but sends the name of the person to the CAC authority for record purpose. Pastor C.M. Oni, the minister in charge of *Ori Oke* Babalola, Odo Owa, agrees with

Pastor Peter Olajide's submission, and adds that *Ori Oke* is the exclusive responsibility of the host indigenes. As such, CAC authority is not funding the *Ori Oke*, and is not requesting returns from it. Hence, the various *Ori Oke* gets most of its finances including the staff salary mostly through its activities. In the words of Pastor Peter Olajide, Ori Oke has no human founder; it is an endowment of God through Babalola to the town where it is found. The researcher noticed that construction work was going on in most of the *Ori Oke* at the time of this study. More hostels are being built in Ido, and Erio. Renovation works on some portion of historical importance was being done at Odo Owa, while fund was raised in the night prayer session held, with the researcher present, at the Babalola Mausoleum at Efon Alaye, for a new borehole as another monument to dedicate the place where Babalola's corpse was lying in state before burial.

Even though all the proprietors of the *Ori Oke*, and majority of the respondents disagreed that *Ori Oke* is meant for people to come, see, and hear about the historical things Babalola did in his lifetime the actions of the proprietors betrays this position. At Ori Oke Babalola (Babalola Mountain) at Odo Owa, for example, many spots are fenced, and labeled. The label tells the visitor of the exploits of Babalola, or some supernatural event that occurred at the spot. The places so designated include, where one of Babalola's disciples during prayers, saw a big snake, in the water in a crevice, and where Babalola prayed for close to five hours, and his foot leaves a mark on the spot where he stood for the prayer. Another is the place where a big snake crawled over him, while lying down in prayer, and the snake instantly died and dried. Alokun (1991) and Olowe (2007), in their works, mentions these incidences in the life of Babalola. The situation is the same at *Ori Oke Aanu* (Mount of Mercy) Erio Ekiti. A must-see spot for every visitor is the place on top of the mountain rock where Babalola knelt to pray and his knee pierced through, leaving a giant hole in the rock due to his long hours in praying. The proprietors of the *Ori Oke* have made a low fence round the hole for visitors' attention. At *Ori Oke Iyanu* (Mount Miracle) Ido Ile, where Pastor Kolade Alabi, is the minister in charge; the spots for the attention of visitors are demarcated with low fences, and are painted in white color. At Efon Alaye, the white-painted mausoleum where the graves of Babalola and his father, David Rotimi were buried is an attraction. The grave itself is adorned with many colorful flowers. On the grave of Babalola are the following words engraved on the tombstone; this is to commemorate the

immutable work, the priceless love and selfless service to mankind and evangelization of late Apostle Ayodele Babalola, born in 1904, called to God's ministry in October 1928 and slept in the lord on Sunday 26th July 1959.

However, majority of the respondents agreed, even strongly, that the *Ori Oke* was set up for people to come and encounter the God that empowered Babalola in his lifetime. This is the main objective of most people that came to *Ori Oke* despite their individual different needs that are intended to be met.

The CAC members, who go to Babalola's mountains or to his tomb, do so because the places signify connection to Babalola, or to the power of his God. They hold Babalola highly and dearly in their hearts. They see the *Ori Oke* as the major avenue to tap unto his power or the power that was available to him. Pastor C.M Oni brags about *Ori Oke* Babalola at Odo Owa, of which he is the caretaker, as the place where Babalola started his work, and where the keys of successful ministry were handed over to him. He referred to *Ori Oke* Babalola at Odo Owa as *ibi ti agbara ti jade lo*, meaning where the power began. He claimed that the *Ori Oke* was the first *Ori Oke* where Babalola prayed. Similarly, Pastor Peter Olajide, of Babalola's Mausoleum also referred to the Mausoleum as *ibi ti agbara wole si* meaning 'where the power is'. Inherent in these claims is the inadvertent ascription of power to the phenomenon of the mountain and, of the grave. It is another way of saying that Babalola got his power from the mountain at Odo Owa, and that his grave at Efon Alaye now possesses the power.

The respondents equally express this mentality, which in their majority agreed and strongly agreed that *Ori Oke* is inherently powerful. They see *Ori Oke* as the place where they can receive divine healings. Divine healing is the healing that is obtained without the use of medicine. Alokan (1991) has stated that the reason for the break of relationship between the Diamond Society (now CAC) and the white missionaries in 1932 was because the missionaries violation of the doctrine of divine healing, by taking drugs especially quinine when they are sick.

Incidentally, the core of Babalola's message was Divine Healing. Both Alokan (1991) and Olowe (2007) have written that his message to the people was that they should reject all forms of

medicine, traditional or modern, and surrender their idols and charms for burning. Since members have done away with medicines, and they still fall sick, they have no option than to come to *Ori Oke* for divine healing and solutions to other problems.

The belief in the *Ori Oke* as inherently powerful is a part of the Yoruba traditional belief. Odejebi (2014) and Awolalu (1976) has written about the belief that spirits are usually associated with natural phenomena like trees, rocks, rivers, lagoons, forests, bushes, hills, earth, mountains, winds, dark groves and isolated places. The belief of CAC members is that anything that has Babalola's marks signifies his presence and his power, or the power of his God.

The assertion of Dada (2008) that "Since members of these churches (AIC) have turned from traditional religion to Christianity, a lacuna is created" is especially true of CAC. Majority respondents agreed that they came to *Ori Oke* as a substitute for going to a shrine and that the prophets at *Ori Oke* have the same status as the priests of deities in the shrines. This is in tandem with the position of Alokun (1991) who states that "the Africans believe that some of the gods especially *Orisa nla* are like the prophets in the Bible or Quran, and they therefore go to them for needed guidance in life matters. The approach to the gods is through their priests (*Babalawo*) whose function, according to the majority respondents the Prophets of the *Ori Oke* have taking over. Even though the majority respondents claimed that, they did not expect a prophet to prophesy to them but they strongly expected the Pastor or Prophet of the *Ori Oke* to tell them the practical steps that they must take to solve their problems. Pastor Peter Olajide who is in charge of the Mausoleum insists that the major role of the prophets at *Ori Oke* is to serve as spiritual consultants to the pilgrims *vis-a-vis* their problems. This agrees with Olowe (2007) who writes about process of the consultation between *Babalawo* (the traditional priest) and their clients in the religious life of the Yoruba people. The Yoruba people would consult the *Babalawo*, who would in turn, consult his divination board, and then prescribe what should be the solution to the need of the client. It is logical, therefore, for the respondents to conclude that the activities of the pastors and prophets of *Ori Oke*, to some extent, are similar to those of the typical African traditional priests.

The activities in all the *Ori Oke* are similar. The researcher observed and participated in all activities at *Ori Oke* during the period of this study. Individual pilgrim would find a suitable place to stand, sit or lie down to pray. People in clusters also join hands to pray from time to time. In all the *Ori Oke*, there was a fixed time for congregational prayers sessions, which are led by the Baba *Ori Oke* (the prophets in charge) or his designees. It is mandatory that everyone abandoned what he or she was doing at the time to join the prayers. Prayers are accompanied with either total or partial abstinence from food.

One feature that is noticeable to this researcher is the volume of the imprecatory prayers of the pilgrims at *Ori Oke*. It is ironical that the majority of the respondents disagreed that they came to *Ori Oke* to seek revenge on their perceived enemies whereas, the researcher could hear them praying so loud decreeing all sorts of calamities that they wanted for their perceived enemies. When confronted with the question on the propriety of such offensive prayers, in spite of Christ's injunction to pray for your enemies, Pastor Kolade Alade claims that such form of prayer is biblical. He cited Psalm 35 and 109 as examples of imprecatory prayers in the Bible. Pastor Peter Olajide, admitted that Christ commanded Christians to pray for their enemies, but that such is not tenable in Africa. He explained that one could not stop a person with only three children, whose two of the children had been killed by witches, and the last one is being threatened not to pray for the sudden death of his enemies. This is not different from the use of *ogede* or *ofo* (incantations) which Adamo (2012) claims to be one of the three major ways of protection against enemies in African indigenous tradition.

Another activity is the usage of streams and rivers that are associated with certain *Ori Oke*. There is Oni River at Efon. There is also Ariran River at Ikeji Arakeji. Babalola allegedly sanctifies both Oni and Ariran Rivers. In the two places, the river had been dredged, and partitioned into three parts. A path is a bathing place for the male and another for the female pilgrims. The third path is meant for strictly drinking by everyone. Both Alokun (1991) and Olowe (2007) confirm that Oni River was sanctified by Babalola, but did not state that he ever sanctified Ariran River. The reference to Ariran River by Olowe is that, On October 11, 1928, at around 12 noon, Babalola went to Ariran River to clean himself. Suddenly, he heard the voice again calling him

to work for him. It is not until about sixty-two years later that, according to Olowe, that one Pastor Isaiah Ogunbomehin dredged it in 1990 and that people has since been giving testimonies of the wonder of the river. At Efon Alaye, Oni River, blessed by Babalola in the 1930's for the healings of people, is not the only River in the town that has healing virtues. The official website of Efon Alaye, and Adeoti (2013) both confirmed that there is another river (River *Olua*) which was not blessed by Babalola, which is believed to be capable of healing victims of guinea worm. However, the majority of the respondents agreed that Rivers sanctified by Apostle Babalola still have virtues for miraculous healings. Hence, they bath and drink from the rivers at *Ori Oke*.

The other activity that is common at the *Ori Oke* is the engagement of the pilgrims with the prophets of the *Ori Oke*. As noted above, majority of the respondents strongly expected the Pastor or Prophet of the *Ori Oke* to tell them the practical steps that they must take to solve their problems. The prophets, after counseling them, would pray for them.

Crusades and revival services do come up at *Ori Oke* periodically. This is usually a big event that draws people from different parts of the town and sometimes from outside the town to the *Ori Oke*. Collection of offerings, donations, and fund raising are essential part of such activity. Pastor C.M Oni says that The CAC General Evangelist, Pastor S.K. Abiara usually hold such a programme at *Ori Oke* Babalola, Odo Owa, every February. The period of this research coincided with the preparation for the annual Babalola Power Explosion at *Ori Oke Aanu* (Mountain of Mercy) Erio-Ekiti. It was scheduled to hold from June 26 to July 1, 2017. An independent ministry, within CAC, headed by Prophet Hezekiah Oladeji, organizes the annual program. A good portion of the funds realized during this programme, according to pastor..... goes to the development of the *Ori Oke*. The same is applicable at the Babalola Mausoleum Power House at Efon Alaye, where Pastor Peter Olajide organizes a monthly Holy Ghost Night.

Primarily, the CAC members are predominantly Yoruba. As such, their worldview is of Yoruba. The researcher found that everyone encountered at *Ori Oke*, by words and action expressed his or her Africanisms. They have turned from traditional religion to Christianity, yet the influence of the traditional believe still holds them strong. Hence, their versions of Christianity are infused

with traditional African religious practices. As Odejobi (2014) Awolalu (1976) pointed out, the Yoruba people believe that there are spirits that indwell natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers and several objects. This belief is a strong factor that motivates people to *Ori Oke*. As noted earlier, many CAC members too, believe that there are spiritual powers who reside in all *Ori Oke* that belongs to CAC. They wish to encounter the spirit of the place and acquire divine healing, spiritual understanding, interpretation, and solution.

The various rules and regulations that are put forward to guide *Ori Oke* by the proprietors are patterned after the African traditional religious belief sets. For example, it is forbidden to spread mat, mattress, or cloth on the floor and sleep on it. Similarly, no one must sweep the floor after 7 pm. The researcher sought to know why, but no one provided any answer, except that “it has been like that from the beginning.” Could this be according to the belief in the traditional religion that the land has eyes, which spreading mats or cloth could cover, or that sweeping after sunset could invite demons? These are areas for future researchers to investigate.

Another pronounced ATR related practice is the restrictions placed on the female pilgrims. Majority of the respondents agreed that women are forbidden from stepping or entry into certain parts of the *Ori Oke* because they are not as clean as men are. (Table 9.5) At the Babalola Mausoleum Power House, Women are not allowed to touch the inside of Babalola’s tomb. At *Ori Oke Iyanu*, (Mountain of Miracles) at Ido, a woman must not step on *ile agbara* (place of power) to pray. *ile agbara* is a barricaded place, where a snake allegedly crawled over Babalola and died instantly. No woman is allowed to fetch the waters at Ido and at Odo Owa. Whereas, men and women are allowed to fetch water from Oni River, at Efon, and at Ariran River Ikeji Arakeji. In most of the *Ori Oke*, it is strongly forbidden for a woman at the time she is menstruating to enter the power house, and other holy arena. This consideration of women as unholy is akin to the practice of the ATR Traditional religion. Alokun (1991) has written about certain traditional festival rites in Oyo, Ogun, and Ondo States that women are forbidden to participate. Familusi (2012) too wrote that in the Obatala cult, a menstruating woman is considered defiled, and unclean. She is, therefore, forbidden from entering into any sacred places

because they could render all objects there ineffective. It is noteworthy that even in the administration of CAC, no female is ever among the principal officers.

The use of objects to assist faith, as it is done at *Ori Oke* equally paralleled ATR. Most respondents agreed that faith must be assisted with concrete objects like *omi iye* (water), *Ororo Adura* (blessed oil) etc., before it can work. Hence, kegs of water, bottles of oil, and items such as artisans' tools, and documents, such as international passports, application, and quotation letters, and photographs adorn the tomb of Babalola, at Efon Alaye, the prayer room, by river Ariran at Ikeji Arakeji, and in every altar in all the *Ori Oke* under study. (Figure 20) Pastor Peter Olajide at Efon Alaye, and Prophet John Oyelami, of Babalola Miracle Center, Ikeji Arakeji, in the defense of this, said that the African people believe more in concrete things, and such things strengthens their faith. Pastor Kolade Alade refers to the ministry of Babalola, that when he asked people to surrender their charms and medicine, and the people did so, he did not leave them without giving them a replacement in the form of *omi adura*. The belief in objects as faith strengthener is a tacit endorsement of the African traditional belief that spirits can indeed inhabits certain objects.

Elesin (2013) has quoted Adeoye (1979) who states that Yoruba people believe that the objects that the *Irunmale* inhabit have certain mysterious powers, or magical significance. The use of water predates the emergence of Babalola. Alokun (1991) and Olowe (2007) have written about Miss Sophia Odunlami, at Isonyin, who, through her dream, got inspiration to bless rainwater and to cure the victims of the influenza in 1918. She did so and the result was positive. Folarin, Oladosu, and Baba (2012) confirms the sacredness of the rivers Oya (Niger), Okun (Ocean), Osa (Lagoon), Osun, and Esinrinmi, and that water from various sources is equally therapeutic'. Therefore, the use of various objects and substances including water has been part of the Yoruba tradition; therefore, those who use them at *Ori Oke* too, did not find it strange.

Equally, closely aligned with the practice of ATR is the attitude of praying to the picture or photograph of Babalola. Ironically, most respondents did not agree that Babalola's photograph is a symbol of divine power, and that looking at it or praying before it will guarantee healings and

answer to prayers, but the researcher saw people praying before the picture of Babalola. This is more pronounced at Babalola Miracle Center, Ikeji Arakeji.

Meanwhile, while the use of *Omi Adura*, (Holy Water) and *Ororo Adura* (Anointing Oil) enjoys the support of the CAC principal officers, they disapprove people praying to the picture of Babalola. Pastor SO. Oladele; CAC General Superintendent, condemned the attitude, and said it is unbiblical. Similarly, Pastor A.O. Akinosun; CAC President, equally condemns the attitude and says that he had, during the pastor conferences made announcement to the effect that people must desist from doing so.

As mentioned earlier, CAC members believe that anything that has Babalola's signature is sacred, and powerful. Hence, Ayodele Babalola's name is mentioned in most CAC prayers. When asked if it is proper to mention Babalola's name in prayers, Prophet John Oyelami, of Babalola Miracle Center answered in affirmative. He equates it with the mentioning of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by the Israelis. This, no doubt, is a tactical acceptance of Babalola as an Ancestor.

On whether the power of Apostle Babalola is potently present at the *Ori Oke* and could still perform miracles as he did when alive, respondents who disagreed are slightly above those who agreed. But they, in their majority strongly agreed that Apostle Babalola, like an ancestor, is still helping people, giving instruction through dreams, and visions, and that he would read, and respond to the content of the letters, bless Oil, water, photographs, etc. that are placed on his grave, at the foot of his picture, or on any place that is connected with him.

Every activities of CAC members at *Ori Oke* stems from the bestowed status of Babalola, as occasioned by the Yoruba people's worldview. To them, he is an ancestor. Even though he was dead, he is still alive, in the realm of the spirits, responding to their needs. In other words, CAC members still communicate with Babalola, as in the ATR, where adherents communicate with their ancestors, through worship or veneration as the case may be. Bediako (1990), quoted by Choon (2007), has written that the belief in Ancestors is about relationship. It is a matter of

communication between the living and the dead and that ancestors speak with the living through dreams, visions,

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, every *Ori Oke* has features of tourism and religious pilgrimage. Apart from seeing spots that could inspire the visitors to pray based on the many supernatural tales surrounding the creation of each spots; every visitor has access to hostels both for male and female. In addition, there are prophets who are readily available to the pilgrims for spiritual consultations. *Ori Oke* also has economy value for the owners because many items are available to the visitors to purchase for their use. There are hostels facilities for which the visitors must pay. A hostel facility at *Ori Oke Aanu* (Mountain of Mercy) Eriro Ekiti, for example goes for ₦2000 (two thousand naira only, per night) as at the time of this research that the minimum wage of an average worker in Nigeria is pegged at ₦17.500 (seventeen thousand, five hundred naira only) An average visitors at the *Ori Oke* spends between one and twenty-one days at a time. This agrees with the position of Obasola (2004) in which he establishes the fact that religion is not just a mere spiritual affair and communion between man and God, but also, it deals with the personal, inter-personal, social and economic dimension of life (Obasola, 2004:527).

5.2 Conclusions

Most of the activities of CAC members in the places that are studied parallel many aspects of Yoruba traditional worship, and therefore, is syncretic. Four reasons are responsible for these syncretic tendencies. First, a notable personality such as Elijah Oluseye, former President, and trustee of CAC, in his work (2004) as cited in Olowe (2007) has attempted to deify Babalola, particularly in his accounts of Babalola's conception, birth, and death. Hence, the members of CAC idolized the places in some part of Yoruba land that are associated with Babalola's life and death, and inadvertently relates with Babalola as one who has not actually died. Second, the worldview of the Yoruba people which, naturally, conditions them to practice any religion in line with their traditional convictions. This negates the anti- ATR stance of Babalola, as it was in his practice and proclamations. Third, the emphasis on the supernatural, which are calculated to ignite in the visitors, an expectation of some kind of supernatural sentiment has grossly promoted

peoples' supernormal conjecture, and thereby increases syncretic tendencies. The fourth reason is the absence of effective and proactive involvement of the authority of CAC, from the National to the assembly level, in the administration of the *Ori Oke*, which made the *Ori Oke* so porous for syncretic activities.

Until the leaders of CAC adopt and implement a plan of action that will give their members everywhere, a positive orientation regarding their inadvertent uses of ATR channels in their worship, and take administrative control of all *Ori Oke*; their *Ori Oke* may, in future, become a den of charlatans and a breeding ground for superficial Christianity.

5.3 Recommendations

The CAC authority should commission scholars and provide funds to them to enable an official research that will guarantee an objective scholarly history of CAC, howbeit Babalola. This will result in the members basing their convictions, not on frivolities but on reality.

The CAC authority, through the Sunday school department should develop a series of lesson material to re orient the members regarding the practice of Christianity without recourse to ATR. This, with time, will reduce the tendencies towards syncretism.

Instead of leaving the development of *Ori Oke* to the mercy of an individual, the General Evangelist of CAC should organize periodical activities for the *Ori Oke*, and monitor the affairs of the places through the ministers in charge.

The CAC authority, through its research and development committee, should arrange to develop the *Ori Oke* into religious pilgrimage centers that will attract pilgrims from far and near, with regulations that will eradicate syncretism.

The CAC authority should remove the indigenization policy that puts the administration of each *Ori Oke* wholly in the hands of the host community. This will ensure sanity, and provide uniform activities at the various *Ori Oke*.

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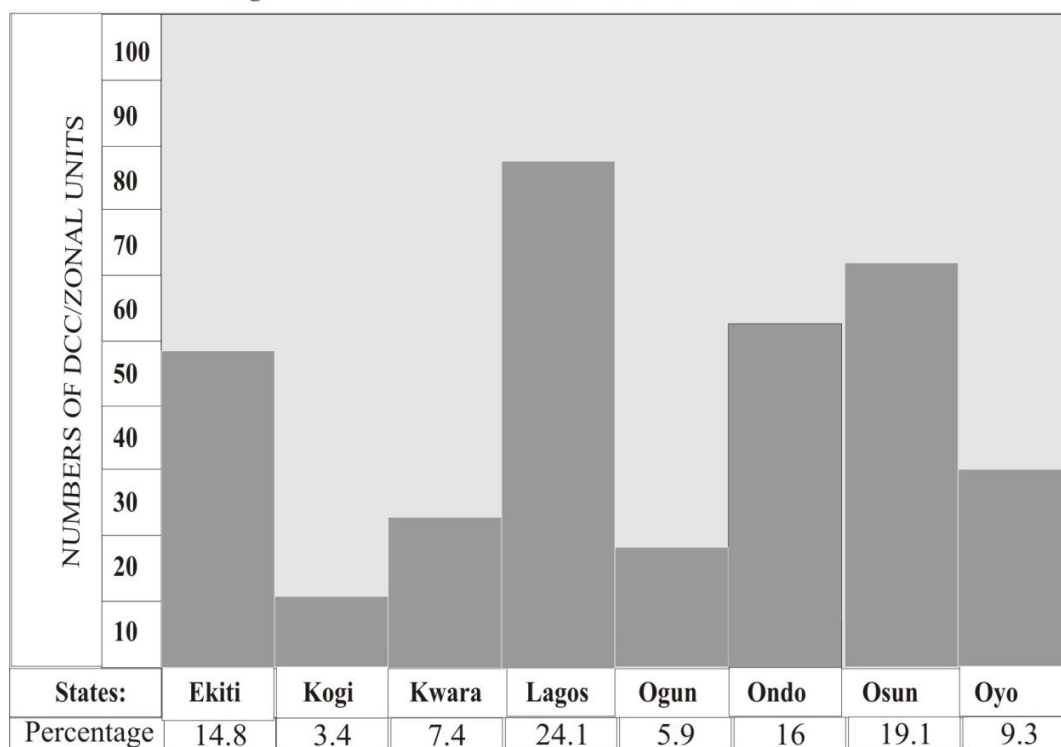
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Appendices

Appendix A

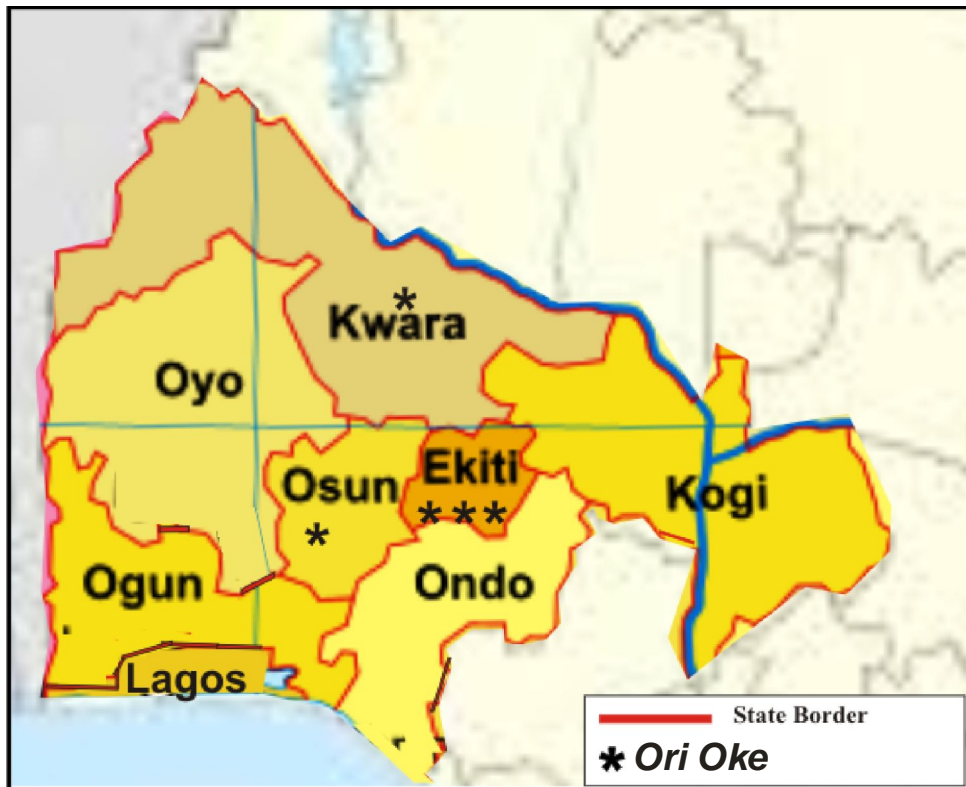
Fig. 1 Distribution of CAC DCC/Zonal Units in Yoruba Land



Source: CAC Year Book 2017

Figure 1 shows that the population of CAC members, represented by the number of DCC/Zonal units in Lagos is the highest in Yoruba Land. It is 24.1%, followed by Osun state (19.1%) Ondo and Ekiti states are 16% and 14.8

Fig.2: Map of Yoruba land showing the CAC Sacred places



Source: CAC Year Book 2017

Figure 2 show that Yoruba people occupy eight states in Nigeria. The five *Ori Oke* studied for the project are located in three of the eight states, which are Ekiti, Osun, and Kwara. Ekiti state has three of the five *Ori Oke*, while Osun, and Kwara has one each.

Appendix B

Pictures



Figure 3: The Mausoleum of Babalola at Efon Alaye, Ekiti State Nigeria



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**Figure 4: The Grave of
Ayo Babalola at Efon Alaye
Ekiti State, Nigeria**



**Figure 5: The Researcher
standing at the entrance of the
Mausoleum of Babalola at
Efon Alaye, Ekiti State Nigeria**



Figure 6: The Oni River that was sanctified by Babalola in the 1930s at Efon Alaye, Ekiti State Nigeria



Figure 7: Signpost at Ido Ile junction, leading to *Ori Oke Ifanu*, (Mountain of Miracles) located in Ido-Ile town of Ekiti west local government area, Ekiti State Nigeria



Figure 8: Steps leading to Ori Oke Iyanu, (Mountain of Miracles) located in Ido-Ile town of Ekiti west local government area, Ekiti State Nigeria



Figure 9: A dammed water at Ori Oke Iyanu, (Mountain of Miracles), which Babalola reportedly called into existence when he was thirsty.





Figure 10: *Ori Oke Aanu* (Mountain of Mercy) Eribo-Ekiti in Ekiti State Nigeria



Figure 11: The spot on top of the *Ori Oke Aanu* (Mountain of Mercy) Eribo-Ekiti in Ekiti State Nigeria, where Babalola knelt to pray and his knee pierced through, leaving a giant hole in the rock due to his long hours in praying.



Figure 12: A Signpost directing the pilgrims to the way leading to Ori Oke Babalola (Mount Babalola) located in the ancient city of Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero local government area of Kwara State Nigeria



Figure 13: Ori Oke Babalola (Mount Babalola) located in the ancient city of Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero local government area of Kwara State Nigeria



Figure 14: A portion of the *Ori Oke Babalola* (Mount Babalola) located in the ancient city of Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero local government area of Kwara State Nigeria, where there is a pair of prints alleged to be of Babalola's foot, where he usually stand while praying



Figure 15: This rocky portion of *Ori Oke Babalola* (Mount Babalola) located in the ancient city of Odo-Owa in Oke-Ero local government area of Kwara State Nigeria is a cave like a room, said to be where dead people appears before finally leaving the earth. It is a reserved place of prayers for men of God. The CAC authority has put an iron gate at the entrance for control purposes.



Figure 16: *Odo-Iwonan* (a healing stream) at *Ori Oke Babalola* (Mount Babalola) located in the ancient city of *Odo-Owa* in *Oke-Ero* local government area of *Kwara State* Nigeria



Figure 17: The researcher standing at the spot where, in 1928, Babalola's Caterpillar was allegedly grounded, at *Ikeji Arakeji*. *Osun State*, Nigeria



Figure 18: The spot at Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria, where Babalola allegedly heard a loud voice which called his name thrice saying “Joseph! Joseph!! Joseph!!! Leave this job you are doing.”



Figure 19 and 20: Worshipers in prayer. Their kegs of water, bottles of oil, and letters of prayer requests are placed at the foot of Babalola's picture, at the place where in 1928; his caterpillar was allegedly grounded, at Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria



Figure 21: Bathing in the river Ariran at Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria, which was allegedly sanctified for healings by late Apostle Babalola



Figure 22: Drinking water from river Ariran at Ikeji Arakeji, Osun State, Nigeria, which was allegedly sanctified for healings by late Apostle Babalola

