

# ASEMKA

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OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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## **ASEMKA: EDITORIAL**

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The Number 11(1) June 2021 Edition of *ASEMKA, The Bilingual Literary Journal of the University of Cape Coast* contains seven (7) papers centred on diverse areas of teaching and research in the Humanities, spanning between themes in Literature and Religion. This Edition contains only one (1) manuscript in French. The remaining six (6) are in English. The papers span between thematic areas in Literature and Religious Studies. The contributors are from Ghana and Nigeria. These papers were taken through rigorous blind peer-review processes and painstaking editorial work.

### **First Section**

*Britnum, A. G.'s paper titled, "Mariama Bâ/Ramatoulaye en un combat douteux dans *Une si longue lettre* », ....*

### **Second Section**

*Nyatname, P. N.'s paper titled "An ecocritical reading of Victor Yankah's *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana and Sikaman*" examines two plays of Victor Yankah concepts within analytical framework of ecocriticism. It is a critical assessment of Yankah's ecodrama in the light of ecocriticism, a field of literary theory and criticism. It draws on the broader concepts and discourses of ecocriticism and demonstrates how the playwright shares a symbiotic relationship which has become a significant feature of the selected plays. This is to emphasise Yankah's view and preoccupations about the mutual relationship between the human other and nature - the natural world of environment with the view to prove the playwright's concern about the interference of human beings into the world of nature. A situation which adversely results in the disruption of the symbiotic (human-nature) relationship. The significance of the paper lends credence to ways in which Yankah provokes environmental debate and a rethinking in African playwrights concerning environmental issues to raise awareness and inspire environmental consciousness and ecological sustainability among people in Africa, Ghana in particular. The findings reveal both the epistemic and retributive forces of nature as well as raising concerns about the environment, ecological consciousness in advocating for ecological sustainability in modern African theatre and dramatic literature scholarship. The paper offers insight into and expand the frontiers of the discourse of ecocriticism in the global south and adds to the relatively new and developing interest in environmental discourses on the African continent and what they reveal about African environmental consciousness and ecological dimensions.*

*Amissab-Arthur, H. W.*'s paper, "**Examining mothering: Race and abjection in Wilson's *Our Nig* and Walker's *The Color Purple***" analyses the concept race and abjection in African-American women's writings. It specifically emphasizes the idea of mothering during the freedom epoch of the African Americans after slavery. The focus is on mother characters in the novels of Wilson and Walker. The paper borders on some thematic components which come together in unravelling the identities of both the mother characters and their children when faced with issues of race and abjection.

*Awojobi, P. O.*'s paper, "**The Ministry of Moses Orimolade and the prophetic tradition of Israel: An ecclesio-historical study**", examines the ministry of Moses Orimolade and the prophetic tradition of Israel from an ecclesio-historical perspective. The thrust of his paper is to investigate the origin, and the place of ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria. Historical method was used for the research. It uses historicity and ecclesiology as conceptual framework to contend that Israel's prophetic tradition started before Israel settled in Canaan where she interacted with other nations. While it cannot be disputed that Israel must have been influenced by the culture of its neighbours, there were some elements in the religion that were peculiar to Israel. The study concludes that Israelite prophetic heritage cannot be compared with the divination in ancient Near East. There exist a parallel between ecstatic prophetic ministry in ancient Israel and Moses Orimolade prophetic ministry in Nigeria. The paper recommends that contemporary Prophets in Nigeria and beyond must strive to fulfil divine mandate received by them at all cost.

*Ofei, D. & Oppong Adjei, D.*'s paper titled, "**Sexual Identities in Africa: A Queer Reading of Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees***" analyses queer sexual identities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*. It draws on the broader concept of queer analysis and demonstrates how *Under the Udala Trees* uses its narrative to conceive space and language whose midpoint encompasses literary innovations and the significance of some experiences of queer individuals within an African setting. Ultimately, instead of simply emphasizing these sexualities as alternative solutions in adverse conditions to some individuals who cannot help being the way they are, the paper unravels the literary merits such as shock, characterization and thematic values of queer sexualities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*.

*Sam, C. A. & Nkansah, S. K.*'s paper, "**Evidences of our Inhumanity: Representations of Evil and the Quest for Postcolonial Healing in Tadjoo's *The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda***",

explores the literary representations of evil in relation to the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda while simultaneously looking at therapeutic strategies in healing the wounds of the past as depicted in Veronique Tadjó's *The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the heart of Rwanda* using Kant's conceptions of evil and postcolonial literary theory. The results of the analysis is that hatred, otherness, genocide and remembrance constitute conversations for understanding travel writings and historical violence.

Inusah, A-R.'s paper, "**Lundaa as speech surrogate of Dagbamba**" examines surrogate language in Dagbani, a Mabia language spoken in the Northern Region of Ghana. The paper pays attention to its functions and its transformation from traditional to the contemporary sociocultural issues. Premised on participant-observation, the paper supports the multi-toned language represented on a pressure drum capable of many pitches. It attests that the *lundaa* 'pressure drum' is a speech surrogate used among Dagbani speakers. The *lundaa* has a wide distribution of functions but this paper is focused on the core functions of drum language that include *molo* 'announcement', *salima* 'Panegyric', *ginguani* 'invocation' and *naba* 'proverbs' as examples of drum literature and transformation. The paper suggests that the communication potential of the *lundaa* rhythms and its interpretation leads to an understanding of the sociocultural life of the people.

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# The ministry of Moses Orimolade and the prophetic tradition of Israel: An ecclesio-historical study

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## Abstract

The phenomenon of religious ecstasy has been the focus of scholarly investigations and debate for centuries. Israel was believed to have gotten her culture, values and religion from Yahweh through prophetic oracles. The Israelites were warned many times by Yahweh and the prophets to distance themselves from their neighbours and their gods. However, some scholars claimed that Israel borrowed ecstatic prophecy from her neighbours. The thrust of this paper is to investigate the origin, and the place of ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria. Historical method was used for the research. It uses historicity and ecclesiology as conceptual framework to contend that Israel's prophetic tradition started before Israel settled in Canaan where she interacted with other nations. While it cannot be disputed that Israel must have been influenced by the culture of its neighbours, there were some elements in the religion that were peculiar to Israel. The study concludes that Israelite prophetic heritage cannot be compared with the divination in ancient Near East. There exists a parallel between ecstatic prophetic ministry in ancient Israel and Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria. The Cherubim & Seraphim (C&S) church established by Orimolade grew through the instrumentality of ecstatic prophecy. The paper recommends that contemporary prophets in Nigeria and beyond must strive to fulfill the divine mandate received by them at all costs.

**Keywords:** ecstatic prophecy; hermeneutics; history; Moses Orimolade.

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## Introduction

Prophecy is defined as a way of knowing the truth about God, man and the world through a divinely appointed agent (Ellis,537). Israel was believed to have gotten her culture, values and religion from Yahweh through prophetic oracles. The Israelites were warned many time by Yahweh and the prophets to distant themselves from her neighbours and their gods. However, some scholars claimed that Israel's prophetic tradition was greatly influenced by that of her neighbours. It is the view of scholars that Israel interacted sufficiently with her neighbours and this brought some changes to her culture and values (Walton, 13). One of the areas of influence was the ecstatic prophetic tradition. Some scholars are of the view that Israel borrowed ecstatic prophetic tradition from her neighbours. They opined that Israelite neighbours had organized prophetic tradition before Israel settled as a nation. The thrust of the paper is to investigate the origin and place of ecstatic prophetic tradition in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria.

### Conceptual framework: Historicity and ecclesiology

It is expedient at this juncture to define the two basic principles that constitute the fulcrum of this paper. These are: Historicity and Ecclesiology. The word Historicity came from the word History. According to Hornsby (744) in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, History means all events that happened in the past or the study of past events. History could be oral or written. Historicity is the theory that cultural and social events and situations can be explained in history. In other words, historicity is the interpretation or explanation of happenings yesterday in the light of today's realities. One of the main purposes of History is to teach humans some lessons. History has the capacity of regulating human behaviors.

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the Church (Malomo, 193). In other words, Ecclesiology is the study about the Church. The word Ecclesiology came from the Greek word *ekklesia*, literally means the "called out" ones and translated as "Church" "Assembly" or "Congregation" in the New Testament. The term Church appears 114 times in the New Testament (Douglas, 1). The Church is the people that have been called out. The Church is the people of God worldwide where Jews and Gentiles are united together as "one new man" (Ephesians 2: 11-18). The Church is a spiritual organism (Colossians 1: 24)

Also, the Church is a structural organization and its ministry must be achieved within some structural frame work (Acts 6:1-7; Titus 1:5; Hebrews 13:7-17). According to Donnelly, the Church denotes a building in which

Christians meet for worship. In a wider sense, it denotes a variety of relationship, ranging from that of a group of Christians professing a particular creed to the whole body of the faithful, either in the practice of their faith or in their dealing with the State (696). The Church is composed of believers from all nations, colors, races and tongues (Mk. 16: 15). The primary purpose of the Church on earth is to evangelize humanity. Church requires a standard and unique ecclesiastical organizational structure (Awojobi, 2).

It should be noted that the Church is a product of History. The doctrines, practices and personalities in the Church have their history and as such history and the Church are inseparable. The Prophet is one of the officials of the Church (Ephesians 4: 11). Prophetic enterprise will succeed where the Prophet enjoys the support of his immediate audience (the Church). The Prophet is the mouth piece of Yahweh and the eye of the Church. Prophets were spokesmen for Yahweh in the arena of history. In the Old Testament, ecstatic Prophet is a type of prophetic guild. One of the earliest mention of ecstatic Prophet was when Israel was to choose a king and Prophet Samuel predicted that Saul would meet a group of Prophets on his way back home and he will be turn to another man because he will prophesy (1 Samuel 9: 19-21). Examples of ecstatic Prophets are Elijah and Elisha. The aim of this paper is to trace the origin and place of ecstatic prophetic tradition in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria.

### **Origin of prophecy in Israelite religion**

On the origin of prophecy in Israelite religion, a school of thought traces it to the time of Moses. They based their evidence on the testimony of the Torah. Scholars argued that the prophetic institution came directly from Yahweh and was not borrowed from any neighbour in the Near East. Three reasons could be given for this position (Akaabiam, 144). They are:

1. On the basis of comparison, Moses was the standard for prophetic parsonage among the Jews (Deut. 18:15-18; 34:10).
2. It was in Moses' era that we began to hear the names of other prophets in Israel (Aaron – Ex. 7:1, Miriam – Ex. 15:20, Deborah – Judges 4:4 and Moses – Deut 18:19; 34:10; Num. 11:26-29; 12:5-8).
3. The only appearance of the term “prophet” before the time of Moses in the Old Testament is in Genesis 20:7 in relation to Abraham.

It was observed that the personalities in the above texts were called prophets because of the way the people saw them. The above persons lived before Israel settled in Canaan. This is an indication that Israel's prophetic tradition could be dated back to the time of the patriarchs. Freeman (28)

maintains that the prophetic institution in Israel started with Samuel. He claims that from the death of Moses to the time of Samuel the voice of prophecy was really heard. Freeman further argues that the prophetic movement became prominent and organized in the time of Samuel. According to Folarin (15), at this time, there were schools of prophets in some cities in Israel and the students were known as 'sons of the prophets'. Therefore, Moses who was the mediator of the old covenant was the founder of the prophetic institution which was formally organized by Samuel.

To buttress the above assertion, Folarin (16) argues that it was in the time of Samuel that the prophets of Israel increased numerically (I Kgs. 13:11; 20:35; 2 Kgs 4:38; 6:1-7 etc). Folarin further maintains that Samuel had some connections with a band of prophets. It is also believed that at a time he became the leader of a prophetic guild. To Freeman (28), this groups or schools of prophets made their living by telling fortunes or performing miracles (cf I Sam. 9:7-8).

Besides, although the prophetic office was instituted in Samuel's time, the classical prophets did not appear until the Davidic kingdom. Along with the kingly and priestly office, the prophetic office forms an integral part of the community. Unlike kingship and priesthood, the prophetic office was seen as a gift given by Yahweh for a purpose. According to Folarin (15-16), the classical prophets were fearless and solitary prophets. These are the prophets whose messages are kept for us today in the books of the Old Testament that bear their names.

Scholars agreed that prophecy is the art of creating a bridge between the natural and the supernatural order. They can be regarded as the link between the natural and the supernatural. Gleaning from ancient Near Eastern sources, we noticed that prophecy then was closely related with that of today (Wilson, 133). The stereotype behaviour of intermediaries or prophets shaped their societies. For instance, in Mesopotamia some intermediaries were required to deliver oracles in specific contexts in conformity with an already existing behavioural pattern. Good examples were the central intermediaries who were also called the diviners.

Like their counterpart in Israel, the ancient Near Eastern intermediaries related with their societies in diverse ways. Some of them were part of the central social structure and as such helped to regulate and maintain the system. It must be pointed out that the central intermediaries were carefully selected, trained and supported by the whole society or at least by the rulers. However, there were peripheral figures who delivered oracles aimed at reforming the political and religious establishments. Some peripheral figures were taken seriously by the ruler whenever they did their bidding (Wilson, 134).

Besides, diviners in the ancient Near East were consulted like the prophets in Israel. They were part of the royal establishment. The monarch of the day consulted them before making political, religious, military and social decisions. They were supported by the powers that be for the services they rendered. In the light of the

aforementioned, it is safe to conclude that there are Ancient Near Eastern materials in Israelite prophetic tradition as a result of interaction Israel had with her neighbors. The affinity is so much that it has become increasingly difficult for one to be discussed in isolation from the other.

## **Ecstatic prophecy and prophets in ancient Israel**

A Prophet is an individual that has the ability to prophesy. To prophesy means to receive a message and then communicate it to the rightful recipient without mincing words. Prophecy is a noun and it is in functional relationship with the verb “prophesy”. The communicated word from Yahweh through the prophets is called prophecy (Kareem, 96). The word prophecy came from the Greek word *prophemi*, meaning to say it before or beforehand. To many people, prophecy is talking about what will happen in the future. For instance prophecy is defined as statement that something will happen in the future, especially one made by somebody with religious or magical power or by power of being able to say what will happen in the future (Hornby, 1165).

The above definitions limited prophecy to fore-telling—declaring what will happen beforehand. However, a deeper study of prophecy revealed that it is a combination of Forth-telling (exhortation, preaching, teaching, counseling and praying) and fore-telling (prediction of the future). A prophet is first and foremost concern with contemporary affairs before the future. The prophet speaks about the future as a consequence of the present situation.

A true prophet must not only have message for the present but also for the future. One of the hallmarks of a true prophet is the ability to talk about the future. For instance, Elijah spoke about the famine that will come upon Samaria because of her idolatry (1 Kgs. 17:1); Jeremiah foretold the 70years of Babylonian exile for southern kingdom (Jer. 25:11). The above prophecies were fulfilled at the appointed time. The prophet also speaks of the current issues. They pointed out evils in their days and called people to repentance. They informed the people that while the covenant brought many privileges, it also brought many responsibilities like justice, righteousness, and holiness. The prophets were social and political activists. They speak boldly against injustice in their days. They defended the right of the poor, widows and orphans. Prophets were the life wire and conscience of the nation of Israel. Prophets in ancient Israel championed morality and fight against any form of evil and oppression in their time.

The word Ecstasy describes an experience of being overcome with an emotion so powerful that self-control or reason may be suspended. The Greek compound *ekistanai*, “to set or stand out”, thus to put out of (*ek*) place, derange, to be beside oneself. In this case, however, the ecstasy arises from



emotional rapture but from the spirit (ruach) of Yahweh which falls upon a person, takes control of the centre of the self, and makes him an instrument of divine will (Philips, 192). In Number 11:24-29 there is a curious story about the spirit of Moses which was transferred to the elders of Israel, and that caused them to prophesy ecstatically. The first record of ecstatic Prophet is in connection with the philistines' attempt to overrun the territory of Israel (1 Sam.10:5-13). It was a time of great crisis, when the very existence of Israel hung in the balance. Shiloh, the confederate sanctuary, had been destroyed and the people were in despair. Samuel the last Judge of the tribal confederacy, attempted to rally the people to a militant devotion to Yahweh, as Deborah had done at the battle of Megiddo. Samuel was supported by some Prophets who evidently had been carrying on their prophetic activities for sometimes in Israel but their ministries were taken for granted. It was this group of Prophets that Saul met when he departed from Samuel after he has been anointed the first King of Israel. Prophet Samuel told Saul that one of the signs that Yahweh had appointed him King in Israel is that he will prophesy in the congregation of Prophets. The Bible declares:

And there as you come to the city, you will meet a band of Prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. Then the spirit of Yahweh will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man (1 Samuel 10:5-6)

From the above Scripture, Samuel informed Saul that he will be turned into "another man". In other words, he would no longer be Saul the son of Kish, but "possessed" by Yahweh's Spirit. Some scholars opined that Saul's friends were disgusted when he joined a band of Prophets. These types of Prophets were able to prophesy when inspired by Yahweh. Their oracles were usually of national importance and were often expressed in poetic form (Hinson, 101). In Ecstatic prophetic condition, the unusual things happened. In another instance, Saul in an ecstatic prophetic state, stripped off his clothes and lay naked in a stunned condition all day and all night (1 Sam. 19: 19-24). These stories remind us of those Christians who on the day of Pentecost were "drunk with the spirit" (Acts 2:1-13). They spoke in tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. In the words of Prophet Samuel they were turned to men. This is an indication of ecstasy. The stories in 1 Samuel presupposes that ecstatic prophecy was already in full swing in Israel during the days of the early monarchy.

Stimulated by the rhythm of music and bodily movement, the contagion of the prophetic ecstasy could carry away a person who fell in among them. According to an interesting passage in 2 Kings 3:15, Elisha, when asked for a word from Yahweh, first summoned a musician, “and when the minstrel played, the spirit of Yahweh came upon him” Under the influence of the divine spirit, the body was sometimes stimulated to hyperactivity, as in the case of Elijah who ran before the King’s chariot with superhuman energy (1 Kgs. 18:46).

Ezekiel was an ecstatic Prophet. In moments of ecstasy or near ecstasy, he would deliver oracles by symbolic acts to his audience. For instance, drawing a diagram of Jerusalem on a clay brick, ate rationed food, shaved his hair and beard, burned some of his hair in the fire, hacked at some with a sword, scattered some to the winds, and tied a few in the skirt of his robe (Ezek. 4:1-15; 5: 1-4), all these symbolizing what his people will experience. At another instance, Ezekiel made a hole in the wall of his house and carrying his baggage on his back acted the part of one going on exile. When his wife was captured after the fall of Jerusalem, he did not show any sign of grief indicating that the forth coming disaster will be serious. Bright (336) notes: “No stranger figure can be found in all the goodly fellowship of the prophets than Ezekiel. His was a stern personality and not very winsome, in which one senses contradictions. A harsh demeanor concealed passionate and, one suspects, profoundly repressed emotion”. All through his life and ministry, Ezekiel was always in trance, visions and in ecstatic mood. Ezekiel was scarcely what one would call a normal human being. Some Scholars believe that Psalms 12:5; 14:4; 50; 81:6-15; 82:2-7; 95:8-11 were received in ecstatic prophetic condition (Hinson, 101). However, these bands of Prophets often join in a corrupt form of ecstasy and prophesy without inspiration from Yahweh chiefly to please the people and to obtain payment for their work (Isa. 28: 7; Jer. 5:31; 6:13; Deut. 18:20).

In search for the background of ecstatic prophecy, scholars like Freeman (18) argued that it was borrowed from Israel’s neighbours. They traced ecstasy to Baal religion. This school of thought claimed that ecstatic prophecy started with the Prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18: 28. They argued that these Prophets were imported from Phoenicia, worked themselves into an ecstatic frenzy on top of Mount Carmel as they danced around the altar cut themselves with knives and raised their cultic shout. As far as (Freeman, 25) is concerned, the word ‘ecstasy’ is used to describe a situation of being overcome with emotion to the extent that self-control or reason may be suspended. The word is from Greek *ekistanai*, to put (*bistenai*) out of (*ek*) place, to derange. Hence *ekstasis* Late Latin *ekstasis* is a trance. Freeman (2) opines that inspiration and revelation by the Spirit are definite statements by the canonical prophets. He

cites Ezekiel speaking of the 'spirit' entering into him (Ez. 2:2; 3:24), the 'spirit' also lifted him up and took him by vision to Jerusalem (Ezek. 8:3; 11:1). In the same fashion, Anderson (226-232) goes further to describe Ezekiel's prophetic experience with that of Isaiah using the popular prophetic formula, 'the hand of the Lord,' or 'the Spirit of the Lord was upon me' as a type of experience similar to ecstatic prophets. In most cases an ecstatic person is out of his mind (*existencia*, out of place).

The phrase "Spirit of God" was not used by Jeremiah while delivering oracles from the Lord. Freeman argues that this was the distinction between the early ecstatic prophets who were referred to as men of the spirit and the later canonical prophets who were addressed as men of God (Freeman, 57). This assertion appears to be appropriate because the early bands of prophets were ecstatic as a result of the spirit falling upon them (as claims).

Rowley (978) notes that the distinction between the two groups of prophets lie in the fact that the ecstatic prophets were the ones possessed by the spirit while the canonical prophets were national religious thinkers who were inspired by the message of Yahweh that they received. It should also be noted that the canonical prophets did not connect their ministry with that of the Spirit of Yahweh, which was the source of the ecstatic behaviour of *nebbim*, but claimed to have received their message directly from Yahweh (Freeman, 56).

The ecstatic prophets are often seen either to have served as disciples or apprentices under a master prophet or lived as individuals (Freeman, 56). It is clear from the aforementioned that scholars are divided on what ecstasy is all about. If we agree that ecstasy is abnormal behaviour or insanity (cf. I Sam 9:19-21; Jer. 29:26), then one may conclude that ecstasy was not present among true prophets in Israel. On the other hand, if we consider ecstasy as indicating the presence of the Spirit of God, one will conclude that all the prophets were ecstatic (Rowley, 97).

It should however be noted apart from these superficial similarities, the real difference between the Prophets of Yahweh and the Canaanite Prophets was that the former were active primarily in the political sphere. They were not soothsayers or clairvoyants, but spokesmen of Yahweh in the arena of history.

## **Moses Orimolade and his prophetic ministry in Nigeria**

Prophet Moses Orimolade hailed from Ikare in Akoko district of Ondo State, Nigeria. He was from the royal lineage of *Omo'ba Ode Sodio* of Okoron Quarters, Ikare, in southwestern Nigeria. The year of his birth is traditionally given as 1879 (Omoyajowo, 118). Orimolade was born to a family of herbalist (Ifa Priest) and his father was a powerful oracle consultant. His father's name was

Tunolase and his mother's name was Abigail Odijoroto, he was the third in a family of six children with three brothers and two sisters. Many mysterious occurrences were said to have characterized his birth and life. For Instance, Ifa oracle predicted that the baby in the womb would be an important, powerful servant of God and that the parents should be careful not to stumble through him (Ayanda, 58). He was reported to have spoken to his mother while he was in the womb. Orimolade was also reported to have attempted to walk on the day he was born but his father (being an herbalist or witch doctor) prevented this using the powers of incantation. The result was that Orimolade became crippled and was not able to walk when it was time for him to do so (Ogunewu, 27). Orimolade was later called into Christian ministry as Prophet-Evangelist.

Prior to the start of his ministry, Orimolade was divinely instructed in a vision and dream to take some water from a flowing stream and to use it to wash his legs. He complied and partially regained the use of his legs, though he still limped for the rest of his life (Ogunewu, 27). In the dream, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and gave him three objects: a rod, a royal insignia, and a crown. The rod signified his victory. The insignia implied "the unction to make divine utterances, while the crown indicated that he has been endowed with honor and multi-respect which would make people bow before him to receive blessing" (Oshitelu,48).

Orimolade became an itinerant evangelist, preaching the gospel across major cities in Nigeria with signs and wonders following. Though unlearned, the proficiency with which he recited the Bible was astounding. In spite of this and the miracles, Orimolade's *modus operandi* of performing miracles was challenged as incompatible with that of the Anglican Church in which he was a member and as such he was forced out (Ayandele, 267). Between 1916 and 1924, Orimolade preached the gospel in many parts of Yorubaland, Mid-Western and Northern Nigeria. His ministry was marked with signs and wonders. He was called Baba Aladura (The Praying Father) because he visited many people and prayed for them.

Prophet Moses Orimolade was the founder of the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church. Although some members of this church believe that, the C & S Movement was not founded by man but God (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 81). However, history has it that it started as a prayer group in 1925 under the leadership of Moses Orimolade Tunolase in the city of Lagos, Nigeria. Before he started his ministry, he was said to have received a vision about the future of the ministry that would have members throughout the world (C&S). Moses Orimolade was a Christian and preacher of the gospel. When he started his ministry, he had no intention of establishing a church until when he came in contact with a teenage girl by name Christiana Abiodun Akinsowon.

The Cherubim and Seraphim church is one of the Aladura (owner of prayer) churches in Nigeria. The prophetic Christianity of the Aladura churches represents a demonstration model of a contextualized ecclesiology. It was developed by Africans and shaped by the concerns and aspirations of Africans to make Christianity have an African face (Komolafe, 101).

History had it that on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1925, Miss Christiana Akinsowon went to the campus square in Lagos with some friends to witness that year's Catholic Corpus Christ possession. There she saw an Angel of the Lord under the Corpus Christi canopy. She became feverish and was rushed home. Later she fell into trance which continued for many days. Prophet Moses Orimolade was invited to pray for her and after he did she came to life from a deep sleep (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 84, Adamo, 31). Falling into trance became a recurrent decimal in the prophetic ministry of Orimolade. In other words, trance means a period when the normal faculties of perception and recognition are in suspense.

### **Reflections of Israelite ecstatic prophetic tradition in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry**

One of the features of Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry was trance and ecstasy. Trance is

a hypnotic state resembling sleep in which a person is unable to move or act of his or her own will, daze or half-conscious condition. The Holy Spirit takes full control. When in a trance, is in a higher spiritual pedestal usually on a trip to heaven. (Ayanda, 123)

In other words, trance means a period when the normal faculties of perception and recognition are in suspense. Ayanda went further to give reasons why people go into trance. These include: spiritual growth, to break a yoke, for deliverance, for healing and for regeneration (Ayanda, 124). During ecstasy and trance, Orimolade received messages of all sorts for his audience. According to Odusina, Orimolade was in trance for 3 years and was without food and water. He usually come around once in a while with singing but eventually came to normalcy after the completion of the spiritual journey. Odusina went further to say that it was during this time that Orimolade was empowered for aggressive evangelistic ministry. Most times in his revival meetings and worship services some of the people in the audience often experience ecstasy and trance. Like the biblical Prophet Ezekiel, Orimolade received his ministry and messages in visions (Ezek. 2:1-10). Orimolade is the

acclaimed father of African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria. He was the one of the first *Aladura* (*owner of prayer*) prophets to introduce faith healing into Christianity in Nigeria. Like his counterparts in ancient Israel, members and Prophets fall into trance for many days to receive oracles from God. The C&S members believe that God can use anybody to prophesy whenever the need arises. Before a member or prophet enters into ecstasy or trance, God would have given a message previously of His eminent visit and worshippers would be expectant. So, when the hour of visitation comes, the spirit of God descends on a chosen vessel at that time to deliver divine message (Bada).

Many prophets and members of C&S church claimed that trance and ecstasy are responsible for the growth of the church. This is because Christian and non-Christians during these conditions received divine visitations that turned their lives around. Deliverance, healings, miracles, salvation and revival take place practically during this spiritual feat (Ayanda, 126; Bada & Abiodun). Attendees received and delivered divine oracles during trance and ecstasy. Most of the people who received messages from Prophets during ecstasy eventually became members of the church (Abiodun). Most of the branches of the C&S churches today were planted after revival meetings where ecstasy and trance were evident. It should be noted that most of the converts to Christianity during Orimolade's evangelistic campaigns were adherents of African traditional religion and Islam (Adimabua). Like their counterpart in Israel, some of these prophets when in ecstasy can travel for days in the spirit. When they return from the spiritual journey, people come to consult them to know the mind of God on issues of concern.

To Ayanda, (124-125) there are Four (4) types of Trance. They are: 1. Celestial call (the Holy Spirit descends and takes one on a trance. Sometimes it may span 3, 7, 14, 40 or 90 days), 2. Night call (you sleep and go on a trance in a deep dream and when you wake up you are still able to recount the full experience), 3. Casual trance (this happens when one has an accident. The person dies temporarily but was resuscitated. He/she can still recollect what happened during that time), 4. Damned pretext (pretending to be in the spirit and in trance deliberately or forcing yourself to go on trance for personal gains)

As mentioned earlier, scholar like Freeman (18-24) argued that falling into trance and ecstasy were borrowed by the Israelite from her neighbors. Prophets Moses Orimolade and his group received messages from God through trance and ecstasy. For instance, the name C&S was given to the movement after three days of prayer and fasting. On 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1925 which was the third day of the prayer programme, a female member who fell into trance and in ecstatic position declared that he saw in the sky the letter SE which was later interpreted SERAFU (Seraph). The movement eventually

adopted the name Egbe Serafu (The Seraphim Society). Consequent upon this, the church was named: The Cherubim & Seraphim Society (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 84, Adamo, 29-30). The church later elected Archangel Michael its patron and Angel Gabriel its Deputy patron. Members believed that his election was settled in heaven before it was established in Lagos.

Music plays a vital role in the ministry C&S. In C&S churches a long time is allocated to praise and worship. This is to give members the privilege of given quality praise to God as they dance to the tune of intense music. As the music is being played some worshippers fall into trance and ecstasy. Music, when sung repeatedly and intensely, is believed to bring down the presence of God. Worshippers enter the realm of the Spirit and there received oracles for the people on issues of concern (Bada&Odusina). The message could be in the form of warning, judgment, and consolation, rebuked and so on. Ecstasy is not limited to prophets alone as anybody filled with the spirit can have the experience during worship services. The duration of ecstasy or trance depends on God. There is short and long time ecstasy (Adimabua).

In imitation of heavenly Cherubim and Seraphim who are arranged in white robes, Orimolade instituted the wearing of white robes for members. Orimolade and other prophets in the group had their own types of robes. As mentioned earlier, some scholars argued that the adoption of special dress by the Israelite prophets was another Canaanite influence on their prophetic heritage. Prophets in Israel wore dresses of skin (2 Kgs. 1:8; Zech. 13:14) which to some scholars originated from cultic custom. Today, typical prophets in this church wear robe. They also carry rod and a bell in their hands. Because the members believe that the movement came from God, evangelism was considered a serious business and as such by 1928 vibrant branches were established in Agege, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode and Ibadan in Nigeria (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 84, Adamo,30). Today the Church has grown in lips and bond. There are branches of the church in Africa, Europe, and America and so on.

Besides, some scholars opined that it was soothsaying and divination in the ancient Near East that metamorphosed to prophecy in ancient Israel. They maintained that just like diviners in Near East people come to the prophets to know what the future hold in stock for them. Orimolade was considered by Christians and non-Christians in his days as a Prophet of God. People from all walks of life came to consult him from time to time to know the mind of God for their lives. Early in the life and ministry of the church, admission or ordination into the office of prophet was different from that of the others. Every person is known by the gift of God on his or her life. In the C&S church today, the office of the prophet is well recognized and respected. Like in ancient Israel, a prophet is seen as a messenger of God with a message to

the people. They receive messages for people from God through dreams, visions, trance, and audition.

On October 19, 1933 Orimolade died (Omoyajowo, 131). However, a week before his death he had appointed Abraham William Onanuga as his successor. He was buried on October 20 and it was observed that the flocks of white birds hovered continuously over the grave until the burial ceremony was over. Orimolade had been acclaimed as the sole and indisputable founder of the C & S. All the sections of the C & S deified him “Saint” and prayers are said to the “God of Moses Orimolade” in the same way as the Hebrew pray to the “God of Abraham, Israel and Jacob” (Omoyajowo,132).

## **Conclusion**

From inception our task in this paper was to investigate the ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and its Reflections in Moses Orimolade’s Prophetic Ministry in Nigeria. It is clear from our study that some of the ancient Israelite Prophets were ecstatic. This study revealed that Israel interacted with her neighbours and that the interaction robbed on every aspect her life and religion especially prophecy. It is vivid from the biblical literature that Yahweh spoke to Israel’s ancestors and the nation before they settled in Canaan. This confirmed that Israelite’s Prophetic tradition started before she settled in the Promised Land where she interacted with nations around her. This interaction as it were had some influences on the culture and religion of Israel. However, the fundamental aspect of Israel’s religion was not affected as the influences were at the peripheral level. The prophetic ministry in Israel was unique and cannot be compared with that of the ancient Near East because it came from Yahweh. Ecstatic Prophets in ancient Israel were political and religious reformers. Their main interest was to preserve, defend and protect true worship of Yahweh. Moses Orimolade’s ecstatic prophetic ministry is patterned after the ancient Israel prophetic tradition and this is the reason for the parallel noticed in both contexts. The Prophets in our contemporary time must patten their lives and ministries after these topics in other to fulfill divine mandate.



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