

Meeting Point of Culture and Health: The Case of the Aladura Churches in Nigeria

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INTRODUCTION

The Aladura brand of Christianity which has a very long Yoruba tradition and falls within the group known as Independent Church Movement is no more a strange phenomenon both in international scholarship and in ecclesiastical history. The phenomenal growth, astronomical proliferation and sporadic rate of expansion in Nigeria are traceable to the successful and effective preferment of solutions to members' and clients' existential problems. This is in consonance with so many Yoruba sayings, proverbs, adages; one of which is "*Ilera l'oro*", health is wealth. It is however noted that the popularity gained by these Churches¹ through their healing ministry are due to their effective utilization of certain cultural practices and ethos. This paper therefore highlights those aspects of Yoruba culture and examines how the Aladura movement utilizes the elements in their healing ministry. This shows the meeting point of "Culture and Health". The study employs a phenomenological-anthropological approach.

1. ALADURA WORLD VIEW AND HEALING METHODS

The Aladura Church Movement has a World view characterized by 'this worldly' orientation of salvation or deliverance from evil spirit forces. Salvation, to the Aladura, means a state of wholeness in man: spiritual, physical and psychological health. Diseases and illnesses are seen, not necessarily as of a physical, but of a deep spiritual and metaphysical nature and causation. There is a strong awareness of, and consciousness in, evil spiritual forces. These forces which manifest and inhabit in human beings and some natural phenomena², are claimed to be the causes of both natural and non-natural evils and calamities. The Aladura believes that the effects of these spirits could only be subverted by certain ritual preparations to

¹ The group of Churches under study in this paper are the major ones and appendages of Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Celestial Church of Christ, The Church of the Lord (Aladura) and Christ Apostolic Church.

² These include trees, rivers, cross-roads, winds. Also spirits are claimed to inhabit animals like lizards, cats, cockroaches, mosquitos, spiders, etc.

enhance good health and to ward off misfortunes and sufferings (Omoyajowo 1982: 169-183). Thus, healing in Aladura Churches is not to be seen only as a "return to a normal state or condition" (Chambers Universal Learner's Dictionary 1980) but also includes the prevention of unseen influences of evil spiritual forces and the soliciting of support from benevolent spirit forces (Omoyajowo, *op. cit.*, p.170).

Olayiwola's categorization (Olayiwola 1989: 40) of healing in Aladura Churches is relevant to our discussions here: psychotherapy, somatherapy, metaphysicotherapy and hydrotherapy. Psychotherapy involves the use of songs, psalms, clapping and drumming, mostly in corporate worship and revival services. Such activities are embellished with symbolic, ecstatic and rhythmic movement, during which performances healings are effected (Omoyajowo, *op. cit.*, p.14). Somatherapy deals with the application of some physical measures like chaining, tying of consecrated thread and chains on wrists, necks and waists; and the use of physical objects like candles, incense, consecrated oil, sponges, soaps, crosses, etc. to ward off evil spirits, to wash away bad destiny and to command fortunes. Metaphysico-therapy deals with the use of prayers, fasting, words and other non-empirical means to effect healing. Hydro-therapy, which is the commonest method, is the use of consecrated water for healing purposes. This includes the drinking of consecrated water to cure certain ailments and diseases, sprinkling of holy water on certain places to bring fortune and prosperity, and the use of streams for ritual bath with soap and sponges as prescribed by the prophets and prophetesses. It should however be stated that none of these methods is exclusive of the others.

2. CULTURAL ELEMENTS IN ALADURA HEALING METHODS

The elements of the Yoruba cultural values and expressions which serve as the bedrock of Aladura methods of healing could be discussed through Ninian Smart's model of six dimensions of doctrinal, mythic, experiential, ethical, social and ritual (Smart 1969).

2.1 DOCTRINAL DIMENSION

The profound religiosity of the Yoruba which forms the basis for Aladura healing operation centres on a traditional belief in the multiplicities of spiritual beings. They include benevolent and malevolent spirits: divinities, ancestors, *Ajogun* and *Eleye* (See for detailed treatment of these spiritual beings in: Parrinder 1968: 10; Abimbola 1976: 151; Gehman 1989: 138ff; Idowu 1991: chapter 5). The activities of these beings revolves round the concept of *Ori* (destiny) (Abimbola, *op. cit.*, p.113). It is believed that each individual has chosen his or her *Ori* while coming into the physical world. Thus, the only way the Yoruba explain the success or

failure, affluence or poverty, fortune or misfortune of a particular individual is to say that he has made the choice in heaven. It is a personal and most important deity. It is also called *Ayanmo* (choice); *Ipin* (predestined share); *Kadara* (divine share of a man) or *Iponri* (Inner head). Divinities, animals and even inanimates possess *Ori*.

Thus, at every conceivable occasion, the Yoruba embarks on nothing except he consults the *babalawo* who inquires through his *Opele* (divination board) and proffers solutions to his client's problems, which are revealed by *Ori*. To aid and pursue success, one needs to consult the *babalawo* so that evil forces would not thwart the good choice of *Ori*. These evil forces could be classified into two: the *Ajogun* (belligerent enemies of man and the *Eleye* (witches). The *Ajogun* work against the success and interest of man. They are also interested in terminating human existence. They are harbingers of hardship. They are seen as natural occurrence but are instinctively spiritual. They are eight in number: *Iku* (Beath), *Arun* (Disease), *Egba* (Infirmity), *Ofo* (Loss), *Epe* (Curse), *Oran* (Trouble), *Ewon* (Bondage) and *Ese* (Sin). They are all messengers of *Esu*, who is, more or less, a neutral force between the activities of the *Ajogun* and those of man and the divinities. The *Eleye* (birds) are believed to be capable of assuming the form of birds whenever they are on assignment against a person's interest. They are called *Aje* (witches). They are regarded as arch-enemies of human beings. Their purpose in life is to destroy, cause havoc and inflict diseases on humans. Illness or death of children, blindness, accidents, barrenness, damage to farms and other misfortunes are attributed to the influence of these *aje* (Ruel 1965: 16). People that consult the Aladura prophets / prophetesses for inquiry into the cause of any noticeable problems in their families, places of work and their social life, and to perform necessary ritual prescribed by to subvert evil machinations of these spiritual forces.

Closely related to this is the belief in the influences of *Emere* (children with familiar spirits) and *Abiku* (born-to-die children), usually called *egbe orun* (spiritual/heavenly mates). They are believed to be capable of entering into pregnant women as spirits and driving out the real would-be baby. They 'die' at their covenanted times. Their manifestations are often repeated many times and such can render a couple childless for life. The Aladura are strongly patronised for this because of the traditional attachment to child-bearing in Yorubaland (Ilesanmi 1982: 108-119).

Belief in certain benevolent spirits is another element in Yoruba culture. Such spirits include Oosaala, Ogun, Osun, etc. They are invoked to bestow blessings on people and places where rituals are performed (Idowu, *op. cit.*, p.200). In Aladura Churches, invocation of angels who are addressed as *maleka* (angels), *ogun orun* (heavenly hosts) and *onida ode-orun* (heavenly sword bearers) is a commonplace phenomenon.³ For instance, in the C & S, Holy Michael is believed to be the defender of saints from problems, enemies, oppressions and evils. Holy Gabriel is

³ This practice is common to all Aladura Churches except the C.A.C. The C&S further claims that all the other innumerable angels function under the four Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael (Omoyajowo, *op. cit.*, pp. 114ff),

believed to be in charge of the western corner of the universe and he controls the west wind. He bears good news from God, comforts the sad-hearted and the depressed. He possesses and bestows the blessings of children to the barren and fortunes to the unfortunate. Holy Uriel, who is in charge of the Northern corner of the earth, is the helper of the saints, a good guide and director of man's ways, channelling him towards God's grace. Holy Raphael is the officer in charge of the southern hemisphere of the earth, commanding water, and he is the healer of all types of diseases. Individual members are also believed to have guardian angels who give them assistance and protection from evils. These are invoked by candles and incense to make prayers efficacious.

Yoruba belief in ancestral spirits is another significant aspect of their doctrine (Ikenga-Metuh 1987; Awolalu and Dopamu 1979; Idowu, *op. cit.*; Gehman, *op. cit.*). It is noted that the founders of each group are venerated and members invoke them in their prayers. For instance, C.A.C. members often pray in the name of *Olorun Josefu Babalola* (the God of Joseph Babalola) and *Olorun Danieli Orekoya* (the God of Daniel Orekoya); The Cherubim and Seraphim members pray in the name of *Olorun Mose Orimolade*, (the God of Moses Orimolade); the Church of the Lord (Aladura) members pray in the name of *Olorun Josaya Ositelu* (the God of Josiah Ositelu), and the Celestial Church members pray in the name of *Olorun Osofa* (the God of Oschoffa). Similarly, leaders of the appendages of these churches are invoked in their prayer activities.

A ready and trusted means of overcoming problems which is noticeable in Aladura community is the belief in, and the use of the power and authority of the Spoken Word. This is also expressed in the use of certain anthropomorphic descriptions of Olodumare, as the all-powerful, all-seeing, all-wise, deliverer, etc. With the correct use of certain statements, it is believed that requests are sanctioned in the word of *Ase*.⁴

2.2 MYTHIC DIMENSION

Traditional cosmogonic and cosmological myths relating to animate and inanimate objects are used by the Aladura in effecting healing. It is believed that every person or thing has a particular myth of origin which orders its existence and recognition by the Yoruba. Certain herbs and other natural phenomena in Yoruba cultural mythology and practices are believed to be efficacious and repetitious of their nature and primordial functions. The Aladura uses certain words from, *ogede*, *ayajo* (incantations), imageries, proverbs, symbols, metalanguage in relation to the myths of origin and behaviour of natural phenomena like streams, mountains, earth, valley, etc. to command healing and ward off evil spirits, to bewitch and cast spell

⁴ *Ase*: It is a traditional connotation of an affirmation of one's request as against the persuasive nature of 'Amen'.

on enemies (Expressions such as these are collated and classified in Fabunmi 1987), to command honour, comfort and peace on clients.⁵ These are used as embellishments while praying for clients. Examples of these include:

Gbegbe ki i gbe s'oko
Odidere ki i ku s'oko iwaje
Aluko ki i ku s'oko ikosun
Agbe ki i ku s'oko idaro
Eye ki i fo k'o f'ori so'gi
Omi ki i san k'o p'aju w'ehin.

*Gbegbe*⁶ is not lost in the bush
*Odidere*⁷ does not die in search for food
*Aluko*⁸ does not die in the process of dyeing its feather
*Agbe*⁹ does not die in its mission of dyeing its feather
A bird does not miss its flying path
A fish does not miss its bearing in the sea
A river does not miss its running course.

Symbolic application includes the use of certain fruits for ritual purposes to repeat their primordial functions. Such fruits include sugarcane, coconut, pawpaw, banana, etc. There is also the telling of the primordial myths of the establishment of their churches, land-marks in their activities and their founders' actions. These are recounted to make their prayers efficacious.

⁵ An example of these is:
Yiye ni i ye eyele
Dide ni i de adaba l'orun
Petu-petu ni i s'adie aba
Oro t'okete ba ba'le so ni'le i gba
literally,
A pigeon is always honoured
A dove is always comfortable
A hatching-hen site majestically
A word spoken to the earth by a large rat is always obeyed.

⁶ Name of a bird.

⁷ Name of a bird: Parrot

⁸ Name of a bird: a species of a woodcock

⁹ Name of a bird: a kind of woodcock

2.3 EXPERIMENTAL DIMENSION

Spirit possession is the commonest mode through which divine communication is made in the Aladura Churches, this phenomenon, Dopamu and Awolalu noted, "is a feature in West African Traditional Religion" (Awolalu and Dopamu, *op. cit.*, p. 281). Associated with possession as Aladura means of revealing the mind of the Divine are visions, trances, auditions, prophecy and *glossolalia*. These experiences are encountered mostly during corporate and revival services which are heightened by drumming, clapping, dancing and singing (Crowder p.366). It is through this emotionalism that the Spirit is manifested and a ready ground for the kind of revelation models needed for future telling and ritual prescriptions is prepared. Diverse revelations are received on clients' problems and rituals to perform. Aladura mediums operate under a momentary or prolonged ecstasy and receive necessary solutions to problems.

Dream is regarded as a spiritual experience for which people consult Aladura Churches. These dreams are given similar symbolic interpretations (Ogungbile 1992: 101-146).

2.4 ETHICAL DIMENSION

Ethics, as "a theoretical way of explaining and defending (sometimes criticising) moral action" (Cavanagh et al. 1985: 125), finds its expression in Yoruba notion of conscience and society. Yoruba society is believed to be ordered by spiritual beings and representative human beings such as the traditional priests and kings. Calamities, diseases, sicknesses and problems are claimed to be direct influences of spiritual beings who may have been offended especially if certain taboos are broken. There are various taboos, *eewo*, which if broken will result into certain moral evils. Taboos in Yoruba ethics are not to be seen as mainly an attempt to socialise the society but they are sacred duties to divinities (Thorpe 1972). There are certain periods of the day during which man is forbidden to walk about; there are certain places where man is forbidden to go. In cases when a man breaks any of the taboos, he may be inflicted by spiritual forces. To restore such broken relationship with either man, or spiritual forces, man must retrace his steps to appease the deities.

The Aladura utilizes these cultural practices in the prescription of certain ritual actions, like going to market places to give alms, clothes, money, fruits, as divine command to effect healing on their clients. There are certain cultural taboos which are prescribed for members to observe for efficacy of some rituals. Certain ritual taboos like eating of pork, wearing of shoes inside the church, eating of *okete* (a kind of large rat), preventing menstruating women from entering the church, are imposed (Awolalu and Dopamu, *op. cit.*, p. 282). It should be noted that in Yoruba

societies, there is the prohibition of certain types of food and soup and abstinence from food for a period of time. Aladura Movement scores on this note.

2.5 SOCIAL DIMENSION

The social life of Yoruba is both spiritual and physical, manifested in the spirit of *communitas*, the attitude displayed through compound dwelling, *akodi* or *agbo ile* where certain behaviours are exhibited: respect for elders, duty-sharing, co-operation, toleration, sympathy, kindness, etc. There occurs natural bond which enhances harmonious and peaceful co-existence and co-habitation. Akinsola Akiwowo has discussed the principles which form the basis for Yoruba interaction: *ajogbe* (co-residentship) and *ajobi* (consanguinity) (Akiwowo 1983). These interpersonal relationships are seen as moral obligations (Fadipe 1970: 301). These are vital in discussing Aladura community as it affects their therapeutic methods.

The relevance of this to Aladura healing ministry is that corporate worship and revival services constitute the major sacred communities where healings are claimed to be effected. Some comments need to be made here. First, the prophet of prophetess is seen as the intermediary between the congregation and the spirit forces. He or She is treated as *baba* (father) or *iya* (mother) regardless of his or her age. Through he or she has his or her own disabilities, his or her prescriptions are treated with divine reverence as those of *babalawo* or family head whose orders and sanctions are not queried. Secondly, members who have diverse infirmities are put together under *abe aabo*, 'spiritual incubation', live harmoniously as family members. They display attitudes of toleration, co-operation, adaptation and mutual respect. They share food together, discuss problems, sympathise and even often help the inmates in supporting them with fasting and prayers. They help in providing each other's essential needs. They share testimonies after their corporate meetings. Thirdly, most healings are claimed to be done under such corporate meetings/communal gatherings, after the singing, dancing, clapping, stamping of feet in congregational mood. They are fond of ejaculatory and dramatic songs.¹⁰

It is worth mentioning that sociological researches confirm the effectiveness of group therapy as one of the medical prescriptions which could be used as an adjunct to western medicine. However, the Aladura lay claim to the Holy Spirit as the source of their healing ministry (Ogungbile, *op. cit.*, p.110).

¹⁰ One of such songs is:
O di saura o, O di saura
Ogun aye ko le b'ori mi
O di saura.
literally,
It is over, it is gone into oblivion!
Evil forces of the world cannot overcome me!
It is vanished!

2.6 RITUAL DIMENSION

Yoruba life is a life of rituals. Rituals are performed on all occasions.¹¹ These rituals have their personal and communal significance. They possess symbolic and communicate connotations. Rituals are the major functional and elaborate aspect of healing both in Yoruba tradition and Aladura Christianity. Many scholars have undertaken extensive and cross-cultural studies on rituals in Yoruba traditions (**Orita** XX(2) 1988; Awolalu 1979; Ray 1976; Sawyerr 1969; Awolalu 1976). The effort made here is to discuss the cultural contents and symbols in Aladura ritual preparations and the cultural problems which gain ready focus in Aladura healing methods.

The contents of rituals in Aladura communities are usually described as *eto*, sacred preparations. *Eto* signifies the sacred preparations that are made to re-organise, restore or re-arrange a broken relationship with God or spirit forces, to 'save' man from his predicaments and reconcile him to God or spirit forces. *Eto* comprise concrete materials, symbols, actions and words. They make sense and essence of, and give meanings to, the whole operations of Aladura healing ministry. The use of sacred objects which is profound in Aladura Churches exposes the attitude of traditional Yoruba worship which is not done in abstraction.

The following elements constitute *eto* ingredients in Aladura healing.

<i>Prayer:</i>	Used in conjunction with other ritual elements.
<i>Fasting:</i>	Total or partial abstinence from food for specific number of days; used to support prayers.
<i>Candle:</i>	To invoke holy angels and ward off evil spirits.
<i>Psalms:</i>	Recitation for deliverance, victory, intercession, dedication and petition.
<i>Sponges/Soap:</i>	To wash off misfortunes, illnesses and sickness.
<i>Water:</i>	Healing and rejuvenating the womb of the barren.
<i>Olive Oil:</i>	Healing and anointment.
<i>Palm fronds:</i>	To avert danger.
<i>Sacred Dresses/Garments:</i>	Protection from evil spirits, purification, dedication.
<i>Handbell:</i>	Elimination of evil spirits and invocation of holy angels.
<i>Staff:</i>	To invoke healing and good spirits.
<i>Fruits:</i>	Communal sacrifices; invitation of blessings. These include coconut, orange, pawpaw, mango, etc.
<i>Alms:</i>	(e.g. money, clothes): To transfer diseases and liberate.
<i>Crucifix Images:</i>	(made into chains, rings): To ward off evil
<i>Salt, Honey, Roasted ground corn:</i>	To invoke happiness, sweetness.

¹¹ It is noted that sacrifice, a cognate word for ritual "is offered in time of happiness and in time of sorrow: in happiness to prevent anything that could mar the favourable atmosphere and in time of calamity to rid the society of evil" (Adewale 1988: 106).

Animals: (e.g. goat, hen, cock, sheep), To cure extreme diseases.

Spiritual Incitation: For protracted illness and pregnant women.

As noted earlier, the fear of the unknown and the problems of uncertainty drive people to look for a certain and stable living. They need "salvation from such evils which include sorcery, witchcraft, illness, bereavements, barrenness, misfortune, ill-luck, trauma and psychic pain" (Awolalu and Dopamu, *op. cit.*, p.281). Thus, all categories of doubts are brought to Aladura Churches. Notable among these are: somebody going on any journey, omens associated with the movement of some birds and animals, cases of *abiku* (born-toddie children) and emere (children with familiar spirits), lunatics, protracted illness, laying of foundation of a new building, village, market place, religious centre, a new programme, beginning of a new year, consecration of a newly-bought car, selection of a marriage partner, contesting for positions of honour, and several others.

When somebody consults an Aladura medium for the first time, he offers an extemporaneous prayer. He may go into momentary ecstasy and comes back with a divine message for the client. It is a common practice to trace the origin of any illness to domestic 'enemies', a close relative who is jealous of the client. In most cases, there are ritual prescriptions, It is also necessary for clients to take active part in the Churches' revival services to 'hear' the causes of, and the solutions to their problems from many other mediums. During such corporate worship, these songs are common:

Ogun oso ni, ate-pa
Ogun aje ni, ate-pa
Ogun ota ni, ate-pa
Ogun abinu-eni, ate-pa.

The forces of sorcerers, be quenched!
The forces of witches, be quenched!
The forces of enemies, be quenched!
The forces of adversaries, be quenched!

Baba, ka a l'ehin
Baba, gba a l'eti
Baba, gba a l'enu
Ogun oso t'o n hale mo mi,
Ba mi mu so.

Father! remove his/her teeth
Father! slap him/her on the face
Father! slap him/her on the mouth
Domestic sorcerer that tries to oppress me
Help me bind him.

Another significant point that needs to be mentioned here is that efficacy of rituals demands that they are performed at the correct time, correct places, by sacred participants within the sacred context. Certain times are considered more auspicious and sacred than others. These times may not only be in the daily or hourly reckoning, it may also be in the number of times a ritual action is supposed to be performed. Periods around 12.00 midnight and 12.00 noon are significant. It is believed that evil spiritual forces usually parade and operate during those periods. There are ritual taboos against these times. Pregnant women are instructed not to move about during these periods. Also, important rituals for chronic diseases are recommended to be performed during these periods. Aladura prophets usually recommend these and other morning and evening hours of 3.00; 6.00; and 9.00 for their clients and members to engage in intercessory prayers against witches and sorcerers. It is also a common practice to prescribe to pregnant women or those with stomach problems to fetch water during the early morning hours. The carrier is not expected to greet or talk while on this mission.

Some symbolic actions are prescribed for a specific number of times to invoke spirits through bell-ringing, shouting of hallelujahs and amen, lighting of a number of candles, bathing in consecrated streams with some number of sponges and soap, reciting a specific psalm, fasting and praying on a matter, etc. The most common numbers are three, seven and multiples of seven.

The places dedicated for ritual performances which also have parallel operative scheme in Yoruba culture and Aladura Christianity include road junction, banks of a river, groves and mountains (Adewale, *op. cit.*, p.106). The Aladura are noted for their profound use of streams and hills. Most Aladura Churches structures are erected near streams because of their constant use of streams and water for therapeutic purposes. In the traditional Yoruba society, the use of Osun water by barren women is prominent. Also, the symbolic use of the term *agbala* (backyard) by the Aladura is reminiscent of the traditional belief of the babalawo where herbs are prepared for clients.

From all the foregoing, it could be noted that ritual activities in the Aladura Churches entail not only curative but also preventive, diagnoses, prescription and control of temporal-spatial events. Testimonies are given that people of diverse diseases receive their healings through all these combined activities.

3. CONCLUSION

The fact that Aladura brand of Christianity has made, and is still making, a significant impact in Yorubaland, most especially in the area of their healing ministry cannot be gainsaid. The question of whether or not their prayers are efficacious could only be answered from clients' testimonies and the dying-hard attitude of those who patronise and flock into Aladura congregations. The rate of their proliferation explains their acclaimed success in their healing ministry since it is widely held that most patronisers and members are salvation-seekers from the problems of enemies.

Writing as far back as 1937, Westermann correctly described African attitude to the problems of life thus:

The enemies of his (African's) life are many; he is surrounded by a host of malevolent beings and is almost constantly engaged in warding off the dangers threatening from them (Westermann 1937: 76-77).

It is noted that the Aladura provides a ready substitute to the African method of diagnosis and healing though still influenced by certain cultural practices. The interpreparations given to these problems are purely cultural. The elements used for healing have cultural and symbolic meanings to be able to effect necessary solutions. Unlike African experience of mission-related churches which separated the physical from the spiritual by the provision of western health facilities in their hospitals and reading the Bible to convert the Africans from their 'paganistic' cultures, the Aladura sees every aspect of African life as spiritual. Omoyajowo's note cited from another source summarises Aladura's success and popularity:

The Aladuras seem to have captured the soul of West Nigeria in a way we have not ... we might be able to learn much from them, particularly from their beliefs in healing ... and from their practical belief in prayer (Omoyajowo, *op. cit.*, p.165).

This position has been justified by Late Professor Bolaji Idowu (Idowu 1973: 46):

They claimed that their prayers were efficacious for every eventuality, and supply also a veritable substitute for the traditional system of divination in their own system of 'prophecy', a person who goes to them received a diagnosis of his trouble as well as the necessary prescription of what to do in a concrete, dramatic way, to be 'saved'.

and recently by Roland Hallgren (Hallgren 1993: 61), a German scholar who undertook the study of the traditional religious culture of the Yoruba people. He sums it up thus:

There is, as in most African Churches, a firm faith in miracles. That God still performs miracles is a leading idea among Aladura Church members. The root of all human suffering is considered to be the Devil and evil powers in general.

No one seems to doubt either the existence of the Devil or the work of witches ... A major concern for the Aladura Church is to obtain good health among the worshippers. This concentration upon the problem of good health has a positive influence on the popularity of these Churches.

This study has demonstrated the contributions of Aladura healing ministry to health in Yorubaland. It has identified certain cultural elements that are responsible for their effectiveness and popularity. This however is not to under-estimate the acclaimed influence of divine power of the Holy Spirit in Aladura healing methods. One needs to ask crucial question at this juncture. Why, despite our medical developments, do people still troop in large number to these churches? Is it because there are not enough medical facilities? But the case is, even in urban towns where there are hospitals, people still patronise the churches' healing ministry. The understanding and utilization of Yoruba cultural elements underscore Aladura healing operation.

One needs to conclude that our western-oriented medical practitioners ought to learn and know the taste of their clients' community, borrow certain aspects of such culture which have been influential to the efficacious magnitude of Aladura healing ministry. Furthermore, our western-oriented medical practitioners should undertake to study Aladura system of healing, encourage and give necessary support to them in form of medical training and ethics.

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