

**THE LEVITICAL - PRIESTHOOD LITURGY IN THE
TABERNACLE AND ITS RELATION TO CHERUBIM
AND SERAPHIM CHURCH LITURGY**

BY

NBTS
M 363 L
MATS

JOSEPH OLUSEGUN MARTINS

SUBMITTED TO

**NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF ARTS IN
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES (MATS)**

JUNE 2001.

05 - 1141

ABSTRACT

This long essay centers on one of the crucial issues in contemporary liturgical theology. This is the issue of liturgy as practised in the Old Testament tabernacle and Cherubim and Seraphim Church. It seems more has not been done on this.

The essay shall consists of five chapters. The first chapter shall be a general and panoramic prologue to the whole study. However, the second chapter is focusing on the etymology study of the concepts used in subject and excursions into the historical background of the study.

The third chapter is concerned with detail analysis of the forms of levitical priesthood liturgy in the tabernacle. But chapter four will be a discussion on the liturgy of Cherubim and Seraphim church.

Chapter five is the integration and synthesis of the liturgies of the two institutions discussed in the previous chapters. Also, some recommendations and suggestions for further study are given in this end.

CONCLUSION

This present study has sufficiently revealed the nature and manner of Old Testament Tabernacle liturgy and that of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church. Attempts have already been made to define some crucial concepts that relate to the subject under discussion. Also the writer has given an historical excursus of the Old Testament Tabernacle with all its paraphernalia and that of the denomination in view, Cherubim and Seraphim Church. Furthermore, a detailed discussion on the Levitical - Priesthood liturgy in the tabernacle and the worship of C&S has been made. Therefore, this concluding part shall reflect the writer's reflections on the subject viz a viz observations, recommendations and suggestions.

A. OBSERVATIONS

As this study comes to an end, some salient truths which require further scrutiny have emerged. These shall constitute the comparative analysis of this study on the paradigm of similarities and dissimilarities.

(i) Similarities

There are observable points of similarities in the worship or liturgical forms of the two institutions being examined. These similarities have made the members of C&S to claim that the church liturgy is based on the Old Testament. These similarities will be examined one after the other.

- (a) The concept of tabernacle as the place of meeting God is similar to that of C&S house of prayer. As the Hebrews regarded the tabernacle as “a sanctuary” or “a place of meeting God”, the C&S worshippers regard the ‘*Ile Adura*’ (ie House of prayer) as a place where God has His dwelling and presence. As tabernacle played important role in the Israelite’s religion, so also is the house of prayer to C&S church.
- (b) The furnishings and objects that are used in the tabernacle for worship are similar to the ones used in C&S house of prayer. For instance, in the tabernacle we have the laver where the officiating priests and worshippers performed their religious ablutions; the same thing is found at some C&S churches, where a pot is placed at the entrance of the church for the same purpose. The altar in the C&S is a caricature of the tabernacle’s holy place and holy of holies. In the former and the latter, only the priests or the ordained are eligible to minister therein. As worshippers were exclusively prohibited from entering the holy place and holy of holies, like wise they are barred from entering altar in C&S church. Also, as we have lampstand in the tabernacle, we also have candlesticks in C&S church. And the use of them in the duo has the same theological or typological significance: the Spirit of God. Furthermore, the use of incense in C&S worship is said to have its base in the use of same in Old Testament tabernacle. Even though the reasons for the use of it in the former and latter are not the same.
- (c) The ‘*leitogoi*’ or officiating ministers play important role in the liturgy of the two institutions. As there was hierarchy in the tabernacle clerics the same is seen in C&S church. The two institutions operate sacerdotal bureaucracy in

their liturgical polities. Also, the use of special ministerial 'regalia' is common to both. The Old Testament Levitical - priesthood had special vestment for every particular kind of worship. Also in C&S, the patterns of their ministerial vestments are designed according to rank and occasion. However, as the priestly garments in the Old Testament had cultic and spiritual significance, so also do the C&S priestly garments have socio - cultural significance.

One of the major features in tabernacle liturgy was rituals and sacrifices. These are considered to be the epitome of Old Testament and Israelite's religion. According to Wenham. "Israelite sacrifice was concerned with restoring the relationship between God and Israel, and between different members of the nation"¹. But the question that arises from this is that, are there elements of rituals and sacrifices in C&S church worship? To this writer, the answer is Yes and No. If by rituals we mean demonism, and occultism, then the answer is Yes and No. Making a judgement of 'categorical imperative' on this hypothesis is tantamount to academic fallacy. The answer is yes because there are ritual and sacrificial practices in some 'certain sections' of C&S church. And when one applies the principle of synecdoche, then one will substitute a part for the whole². But the opposite which is 'merism' in which the totality or whole is substituted by two contrasting or opposite parts³ are more acceptable academically. This writer wants to state that none of the Sacred C&S churches where he worshipped used any visible rituals or sacrifices. In fact majority of

1. Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979) p.25.

2. Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991) p. 151

3. Zuck.

