

Diarchical Administration and Its Developmental Implications Within the African Church, Nigeria

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Abstract

Church governance has traditionally followed four models: Congregationalism, Episcopalism, Autocratic, and Presbyterianism. The Episcopal system is hierarchical, with authority flowing from a Bishop to the congregation, while the Presbyterian model places power in the hands of elected elders. Congregationalism, on the other hand, allows members to govern under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The African Church Nigeria (TACN) rejected these models, considering them dictatorial due to their experience of racial discrimination in the Anglican Church, where lay members had no administrative voice. As an alternative, TACN adopted a diarchical system, a dual leadership model introduced in British India in 1919. This governance style allows two authorities to share power, ensuring collective decision-making. This study explores the importance of structured administration in church governance, highlighting its role in maintaining order and guiding organizational progress. Using the dual executive theory, the paper examines TACN's administrative framework, discussing its impact since inception. The study emphasizes the need for skilled administrators to manage church affairs due to the sensitive nature of governance. It concludes by recommending constitutional reforms to address ambiguities, ensuring stability and reducing internal conflicts.

Keywords: Church Governance, Diarchical Administration, TACN, Dual Executive Theory,

Introduction

Diarchical administration refers to a system of governance where two or more authorities or leaders share power responsibility. This system is also known as dual governance or co-governance. In a

diarchical administration, the two leaders or authorities work together to make decisions, allocate resources, and oversee the implementation of policies and programmes. The concept of diarchical administration has its roots in ancient civilizations, where dual systems of

governance were common. For example, in ancient Rome, the consuls shared power and responsibility {Aristotle, 350 BCE}. Similarly, in ancient India, the concept of diarchy was practiced, where the king and the priest shared power {Banerjee, 1931}. However, according to Oluwasegun, G. the word administration is derived from the Latin word *administrare* which literally means to serve or to minister. Pallock and Ordway Tead opined that administration is “a function within an organization which is responsible for establishing its objectives, purpose, aims or end for implementing the necessary organizing and operating steps and for assuming adequate performance toward the desired end”. In addition, Tidwell describes church administration as the leadership which equips the people to do Church work effectively. It is the guidance provided by church leaders as the head of the Church to use spiritual, human, physical and financial resources to move the church towards reaching its objectives and fulfilling its avowed purpose. He went further to describe Church administration as a field in terms of certain functional areas in which leaders perform certain leadership functions to the extent that, whoever performs these leadership functions in the field of church administration is termed a church administrator. Administration has been a very significant, crucial and a sensitive issue in any organization either corporate or private, for it deals with formation of policy and implementation. In spite of this, each organization is expected to have good administration with the sole aim of having their day-to-day activities coherently run. How ministers and the laity could be partners in progress in the running of the Church administration is very important and

contemporary also the issue of he who pays the pipe dictates the tune, should not be mentioned in Christian community. Furthermore, ministers are to be at the helm of the administration of the Church and not the Laity. Advanced Learner Dictionary {1974}, Structure was said to be a way in which things are put together or organized, however, the word structure is more than this, in view of this, other scholars' opinions on the subject matter were considered. A structure provides a convenient way of organizing several related variables as a single unit. Also, structure is also said to be a set of regulations in place to control activity, usually in large organizations and government. It is characterized by standard procedure (rule – following), formal division of responsibility, hierarchy and impersonal relationships. In practice the interpretation and execution of policy. According to Oxford English Mini-dictionary, structure is said to be the way a thing is constructed or organized; or a thing supporting framework or essential parts.

Statement of the Problem

Most scholarly works on church administration focus on Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Autocratic, and Congregationalism. However, limited academic discussion exists on the diarchical form of church governance, particularly in its operation within The African Church Nigeria (TACN)—a key example of this model in Nigeria.

Historically, Christian churches have followed four primary governance structures: Congregationalism, Episcopalianism, Autocratic, and Presbyterianism, all found in the New Testament. The Episcopal system is hierarchical, with authority

flowing from a Bishop to the congregation. Presbyterian polity vests authority in elected elders, while Congregationalism allows governance by the members under the Holy Spirit's leadership. TACN rejected these models due to their experiences in the Anglican Church (CMS), where Black members were marginalized, and the laity had no voice in administration. In response, TACN adopted a diarchical governance system consisting of the Primate, Lay-President, Archbishops, Bishops, and Lay Representatives. While this structure ensures shared leadership, it introduces complexities in decision-making and organizational management.

This study investigates the challenges of leveraging TACN's dual hierarchy for development initiatives. Key areas include coordination between leaders, resource allocation, conflict management, and the Church's role in socio-economic development. By examining these factors, the study aims to strengthen TACN's governance framework, ensuring effective leadership for sustainable development and community empowerment.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To investigate the challenges and strategies related to conflict resolution and management arising from the coexistence of the Clergy and Laity within The African Church Nigeria.
- ii. To assess how the diarchical governance model influences decision-making process within The African Church Nigeria, including the implications for strategic planning, policy formulation of developmental initiatives
- iii. To analyze the impact of the diarchical administration on resource allocation within The African Church Nigeria, investigating how human and material resources are managed and distributed across different levels of the organization.
- iv. To examine the organizational structure and operational dynamics of the diarchical administration within The African Church Nigeria, particularly focusing on the roles and interactions between the Clergy and Laity
- v. To propose recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the diarchical governance framework within The African Church Nigeria

Research Questions

1. How has the Church been coping with dual leadership structure from inception?
2. What characterized the dual leadership system where authority is shared between traditional ecclesiastical leadership and contemporary administrative executive?
3. How has this diarchical form of church government impacted the church through its strategic decision-making, financial management, community outreach, and institutional adaptability?
4. How has the diarchical administration impacted on the Church's ability to address social-economic challenges, promote sustainable development, and foster cohesive community relations?

5. What informed the adoptionism of diarchical administration in TACN against episcopatism?
6. How has the Church been managing its internal rifts as a result of dual leadership?

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on diarchical administration and its relevance to religious organizations with reference to The African Church, Nigeria

The research examines the theoretical framework of Henry Fayol on the administration of TACN and its application to the church in question.

The study further explores the detailed exploration of the roles and responsibilities of ecclesiastical leaders and the laity administrative executive officers of the Church

Limitation to the Study

The study's findings are specific to TACN and might not be applicable to other mainline churches or Churches of Ethiopianism due to human nature. The interplay between the Clergy and laity introduces complex variables that may be challenging to disentangle and assess independently. The study is geographically focused on Nigeria, which limits the applicability of conclusion to other contexts with different cultural or organizational structures.

Methodology

This study employed qualitative research design, utilizing a combination of historical analysis, comparative analysis, and theoretical analysis to examine the concept of diarchical administration

Background of The African Church, Nigeria

From all available records, the Church known as The African Church, Nigeria came into existence on October, 13 1901, but it is also pertinent to note that The African Church Nigeria is one of the Ethiopian Churches. However, S.A Dada in his book asserted that The African Church Nigeria is a church created by the Africans under God's direction. It is of local origin and African management: independent, self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending. However, Deji Ayegboyin and S.A Ishola, refer to The African Church Nigeria as one of the Churches of Ethiopianism. The Church in question broke away from the established denomination St. Paul's Breadfruit (CMS) Church, in Lagos in 19th century. More so, the group of the secessionists that founded the Church were laities; again, the founding of The African Church, Nigeria came into limelight because of the ecclesiastical and political dominations and the imposition of European culture on the Africans.

More so, Ayandele, E.A {1966} notes that the most offensive act for the founding of The African Church, Nigeria was the rejection of the people's petitions, by Bishop Isaac Oluwole who was acting for Bishop Herbert Tugwell when he was on furlough, based on this, the Bishop Isaac Oluwole used his influence by virtue of his position as a Bishop with executive authority on the committee to reject the petition of the parent body because the parishioners requested that Rev. James Johnson should be allowed to continue as the vicar of the church (St. Paul Breadfruit Church CMS) for a short period. Also, the

parishioners regarded the rejection of their request by the Church committee under the hegemony of Bishop Isaac Oluwole as the brain child of imperialism and this heightened the degree of the anger of the local people, but the rejection of Rev. James Johnson was not seen as the rejection of Rev. James Johnson as an individual rather than the rejection of the African nationalists as a whole, according to Dada, S.A {1986}

The African Church Nigeria from its inception and with her experience in the CMS and for the purpose of effective administration, Adewale, S.A {1994} submits that the government of The African Church, Nigeria has been a joint venture of both the clergy and laity through a number of committees, sub-committees and socio-religious organizations of the traditional setting known as 'Egbe' incorporated into the framework of the Church milieu. The government of The African Church Nigeria is organized on a hierarchical basis like that of the mission-oriented Churches particularly the Anglican Church. It comprises the Church societies known as 'Egbe', the Parish Committee, Disciplinary Committee, the Archdeaconry Council, the Diocesan Councils, the General Committee and the conference. Each of these committees and councils has a number of sub-committees like, building, planning and finance. There are also Ad-Hoc Committees. Each local Church is governed by a committee known as Church committee and in case of a cathedral, cathedral council. The membership of the committee/council is composed of the financial male and female representatives of different societies of the Church. The local Church is the vital force that gives life, meaning and cohesion to the other constituent

bodies of the Church, including the General Committee and the Conference. A few local Churches make up a Parish which is governed by a committee called Parish Committee whose membership is composed of the clergy and lay representatives of the local Churches. The next in the hierarchy of the Church governing agencies is the Archdeaconry Council which comprises the clergy and laity representatives. The priests are the chairpersons of the Parish Committees, and the Archdeaconry Councils. Over and above the Archdeaconry council is the Diocesan Council whose membership comprises the Bishop as the chairperson, the clergy and the Lay representatives from the Archdeaconries. Also, the General Committee co-ordinates and monitors the activities of the Diocese, and its members are the clergy and Lay representatives from the Diocesan Council and its chairperson is the Primate who is the spiritual head of the Church.

Again, he further adds that the last in the series of governing bodies of The African Church is the Conference of the Church, which in the usual manner comprises the clergy and the Lay representatives of each Diocese. The Primate is the President of the Conference. The statutory meetings of the Archdeaconry Councils, the Diocesan Councils and the General Committees are scheduled to take place once in every quarter of the year while emergency meetings may be held at any time of the year. The conference is a biannual event, and it is held in rotation during the second week of May. Characteristically, the government of The African Church Nigeria is dyarchical. It is an issue of the most influential either the laity or Clergy that rules at every meeting and in decision-making, while the authority of most

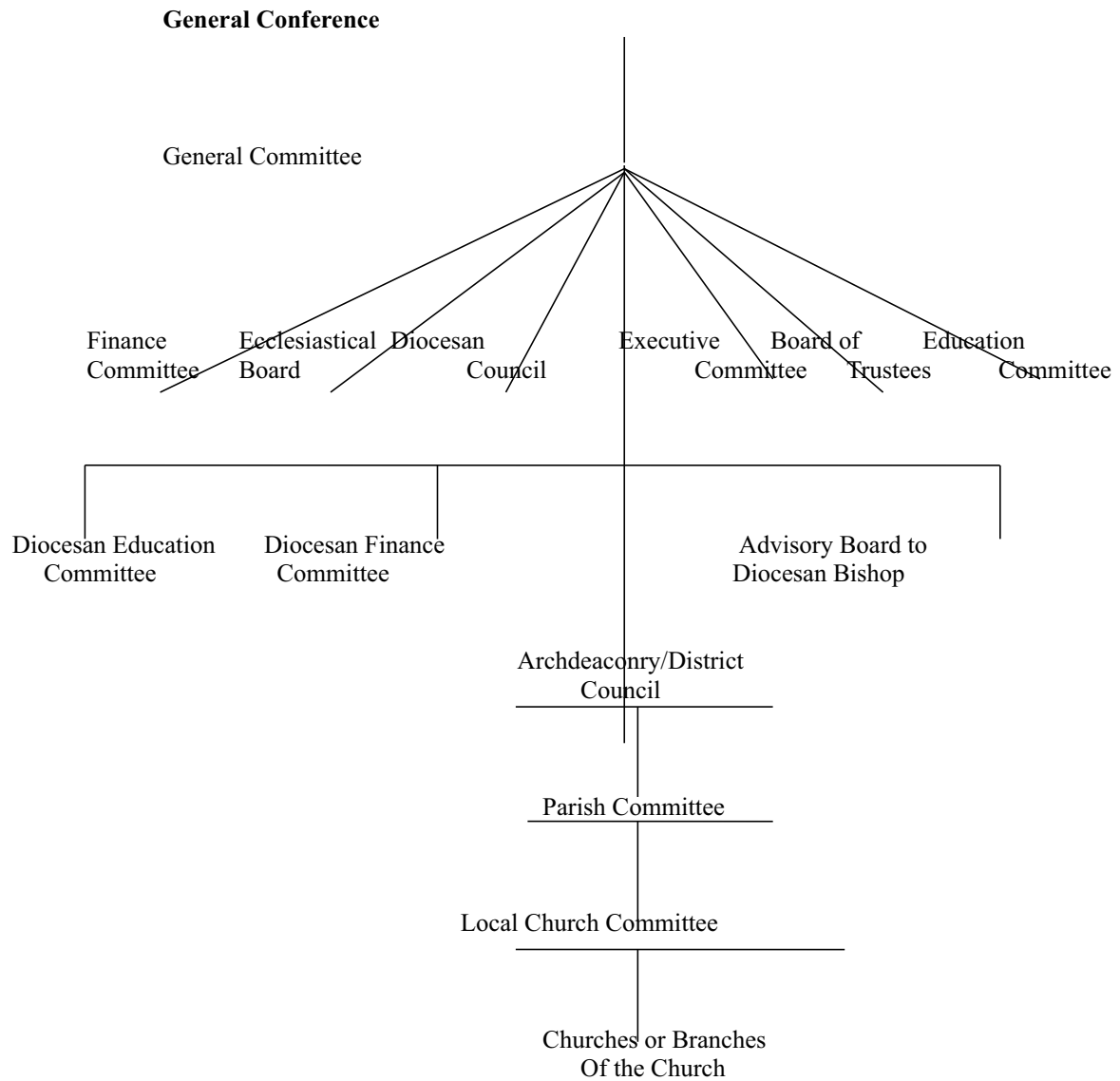
powerful between the Clergy and lay members is final. Although, the laity has the policy of 'He who pays the pipe dictates the tune' predominates. The clergy, although are the chairperson of the councils and committees, they have not the absolute and final authority over the affairs of the committees and the councils. In most cases, only the laity of timber and caliber participates in the deliberations of the meetings. In addition, every local congregation is administered through several age-group associations known as "Egbe" (societies). There are associations or societies of male members of the Church as well as 'societies' of female members. Each society has officers and holds meetings regularly and is represented on the memberships of Church committees. Church reaches the generality of the congregation through the society representatives who always watch the interest of their societies during discussions at Church meetings. The societies lobby and campaign for votes for their members during election of Church officers, while the most powerful and prestigious societies always win the elections for their members. The Church maintenance fund is levied on members of Church societies and there is always competition among societies as to which society will contribute greatest amount in the year. The names of the individual members of societies that contribute the highest amount during the year are read out to the congregation or printed out in their vestry meeting report for everyone to see and sometimes awarded prizes. However, this generates great applause and incentive for others. The societies are named generally after personalities of the

Christian Church and in some cases to reflect some Christian virtues and norms e.g. Ifelodun society (Love is Pleasant), Egbe Ife ('Love Society'). The names are not given arbitrarily to societies but purposefully. It is expected that each society will reflect in their religious and moral activities, while the qualities and characteristics of their patron and of Christian ideals are equally expected from the society's e.g Dorcas society is expected to be generous, hospitable and charitable; while Ifelodun society (Love is Pleasant) or Egbe Ife 'Love Society' is according to their name, expected to demonstrate love at all times. In The African Church Nigeria, every member is advised and expected to be enrolled into one society or another, because every arrangement is made and based on the number of societies in the Church. Church ceremonies and rites are accorded through societies.

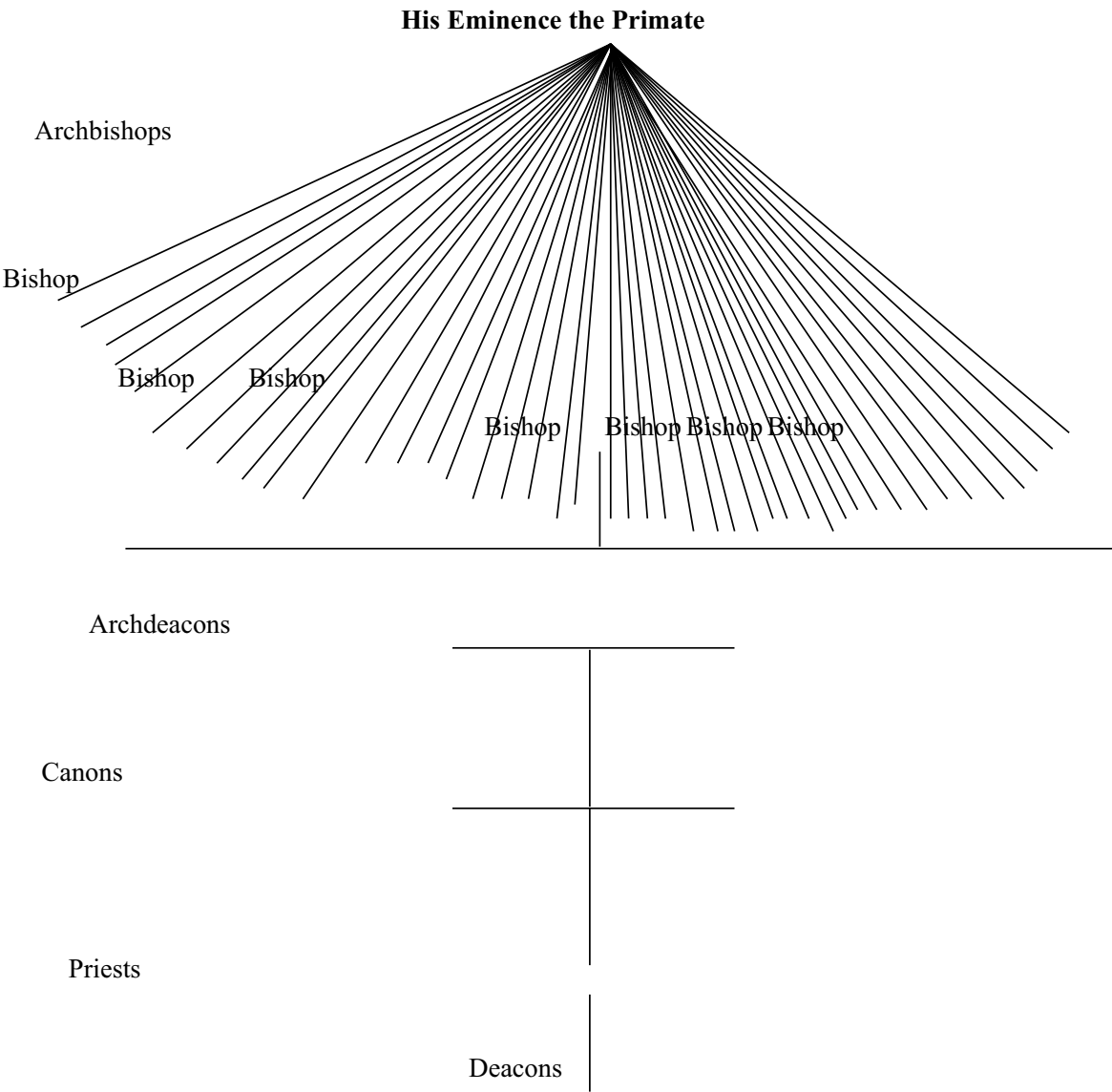
All members who do not belong to a society are not given such recognition as is given to those who affiliate themselves with societies and besides, they are given funny and ridiculous names that will make them have a second thought about it. Some new members may withdraw because they are being forced to join societies e.g they received such names as Egbe Alufaa (Society of the Priest) Kolegbe (No Society). Such members are not represented at any committee even when they pay their Church dues regularly and completely. They cannot vote or be voted for, and only their relations and friends attend their social and religious ceremonies like naming, wedding and house warming. However, identification with an 'Egbe' has a great moral, financial, social and religious advantage. The

members of an 'Egbe' bind themselves together in a closer fellowship than that of the larger Church. They give moral and financial support to one another during socio-religious ceremonies like weddings, naming etc and whenever a member has one problem or the other like sickness, unemployment etc. other members of the small groups will rally round him or her and give their support severally or collectively. Each society has its byelaws or regulations with set aims and principles to guide and regulate the religious and public performances of their members. Some impose sanctions on members who misbehave or disobey while well behave members receive commendation. Also, the youth feature prominently in The African Church administration today and not like before that elderly ones were the only people administering the affairs of the Church. In this case, the elders of the Church are appointed chairman of committees while young men and women are becoming more and more prominent in The African Church Nigeria. But this transition is not a slight or despise of the elders. It is to give youth the opportunity to

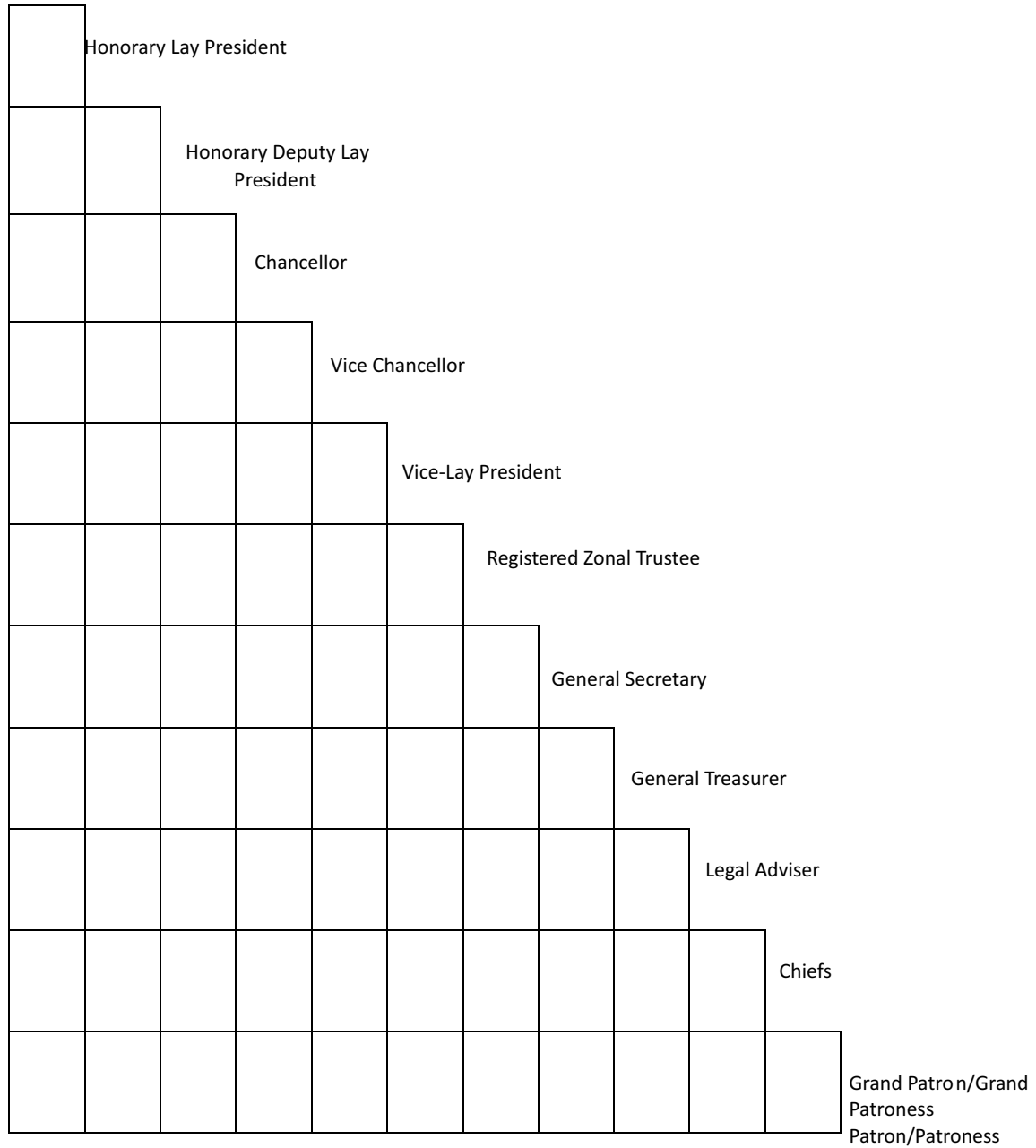
use their talents for they are virile and versatile. The socio-religious significance of the 'Egbe' can never be overlooked as far as the organization and the administration of The African Church, Nigeria is concerned. Strictly speaking, the societies (Egbe) are the livewire and the back bone of every Church which make up The African Church. Furthermore, the 'Egbe' (society) is the grass-root government of The African Church; base on this the Egbe is in every parish in The African Church, Nigeria. The members of each 'Egbe' society are so few that they can reach and understand one another easily; mostly whenever any information is passed from the central body, such information is being disseminated to every member through the 'Egbe' (society) after it might have been discussed at the Parish Council in which the societies are represented. The societies equally meet to discuss the growth of the Church in their meetings either fortnightly or monthly, while the socio-religious activities of the age-group associations, Egbe, have a tremendous advantage in indirect evangelization and conversion of the local people.

Administrative Chat of the African Church Nigeria

CLERGY HIERARCHICAL CHART



Laity Hierarchical Chat



With the two structures of administration showed earlier, one would have felt that the management and pastoral administration, as well as, mundane affairs of the Church would run very smoothly, progressively and effectively. But as earlier observed, the secessionists were much distracted and troubled by members of their own body as well as by outsiders. Sometimes indeed, it seems they had gone out far from shore into the sea rudderless. Coker again observed quite rightly: What disturbs our sociality and cooperation, is the spirit of arrogance, pride, vindictiveness, selfishness and sectarian bitterness, which we have imbibed through contact with foreign influence, which has more inflamed our spirit of prejudice, rancor, hatred, malice and distrust to such a high degree in us generally. In corroboration with the above, Mojola Agbebi in his sermon at The African Bethel Church made this remark: “it is one of the besetting sins of Native organizations that every man desires to be the leader” as noted by Dada, S.A {1986}

In view of the above statement, the administration of the Church had not been perfectly implemented despite the fact that all these quotations were quoted long ago. Some laity members do not see themselves under the care and the authority of the ministers rather, some believed that they are above ministers of God. Not only this, some were found of intimidating clergy and put them under terror. Based on this, some ministers found it extremely difficult to discharge their duty effectively with the fear of being transferred if the truth or an undiluted message is preached, because some of the timber and calibers of the Church would be offended with such a message. Therefore, the work of spirituality is being hindered through this administrative system because ministers

are not seen as the oracle of God but as an employee. Also, some of the vision for the expansion and the growth of the Church are being hindered through various committees in which the vision will die a natural death. Secondly, some have forgotten that the house of God is not a place for messy politics, but with the administrative system which is said to be diarchical had dragged The African Church, Nigeria backward during other mainline Churches. The Church government should embrace the good side of Episcopalism and not a democracy or diarchical, it is conspicuous that the minister alone cannot do the work unilaterally without the laity active support in the Church government. This is the only way by which The African Church Nigeria could progress and make an impact in the national issues and comity of the nation. In terms of evangelism, the administrative system has also been a clog, because the ministers in The African Church Nigeria are not financially buoyant to sponsor programmes on their own for examples on Radio, Television and many more. The committee would have to sit before the approval of such a programme. On this, if the minister is not loved by them, such a programme would be turned down, which means that the ministers are not autonomous. Based on this, many Churches have remained undeveloped, because no serious evangelistic activities have been undertaken by The African Church Nigeria. Another vital issue on the implication of the administrative system of The African Church, Nigeria is election. Although, the constitution of The African Church, Nigeria stipulates number of representatives from each society in the Church to represent them in the Parish Council, Archdeaconries, Dioceses, Provinces and the National level of The

African Church, Nigeria. What is observed as regards this is that people elected either through their society or Archdeaconries or Dioceses or Provinces were in most cases the powerful and prestigious societies or Dioceses always win the election for their members. This in some cases has led to the election of unqualified members who through the influence of the members of either their society or Dioceses or Provinces waded to the corridor of power.

Conclusion

The early Church at her inception was first officially administered by the apostles – who were the direct associates of Jesus. Again, as time went on, the Church was expanding, and need became apparent to appoint certain people into some new offices for smooth administration. This eventually gave rise to the development of such key offices as that of Bishop, metropolitan Bishop, deacon etc. However, diarchical administration is a complex and multifaceted system of governance that has been practiced in various forms throughout history. This system, where two or more authorities or leaders share power and responsibility, offers several merits, including promoting collaboration and cooperation, providing checks and balances, and encouraging accountability. More so, diarchical administration also has its limitations, inefficient decision-making, conflicting interest, and lack of clear authority. Therefore, as world continues to evolve and become increasingly complex, understanding the principles and practices of diarchical administration can provide valuable insights for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to promote effective governance and leadership.

Recommendations

1. The African Church, Nigeria's administration should be based on checks and balances system of government, because an absolute power corrupts absolutely
2. The African Church, Nigeria should do away with the employer and employee relationship.
3. A new constitution that is clearer and devoid of ambiguities should be drafted
4. Both the Clergy and the Laity should be greatly concerned with the development and the progress of the Church in question
5. Episcopalian Church administration should replace diarchical administration of The African Church, Nigeria.
6. The laity should desist from considering themselves better than the Clergy
7. The Clergy at their end must be disciplined, truthful, and faithful in order make themselves an epitome of emulations to others
8. TACN should collaborate with external partners like government agencies, non-governmental organization {NGOs}, and other stakeholders to leverage expertise, resources, and funding for larger-scale developmental projects.
9. TACN should explore opportunities to leverage technology and innovation in administrative processes and developmental projects. This could include digital platforms for communications, fundraising campaigns or implementing sustainable technologies in Church facilities
10. TACN should establish a robust mechanism for conflict resolution that is accessible, fair, and efficient. This

may include the mediation committee, grievance redressal procedures of training programmes on conflict management for Church leaders.

11. TACN should develop a fair and transparent system for allocating resources across dioceses based on their developmental needs and priorities. This ensures that resources are utilized efficiently and effectively to maximize developmental impact.
12. TACN should establish a rigorous monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the progress and impact of developmental initiatives. This feedback loop helps in identifying success strategies and areas needing improvement.
13. The Church should encourage innovation and adaptation of best practices in diarchical administration from other successful organizations or religious institutions. This allows for continuous improvement and relevance in changing socio-economic environment

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