

THEOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCHES IN
THE NETHERLANDS AT APELDOORN

**CHURCH GOVERNANCE IN THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON:
A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY**

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by

OLAYINKA SAYO ADETOYEBI

12 December, 1975 (Ibadan).

Supervisors

Prof Dr A. de Muynck (Theological University of Apeldoorn)

Prof Dr Brian Talbot (North-West University, Potchefstroom, RSA)

Members of the Assessment Committee

Prof Dr Wijnand Zondag

Prof Dr Knut Holter

Prof Dr Derrick Mashau

Dr Ebenezer Adu

Dr Jan Van 't Spijker

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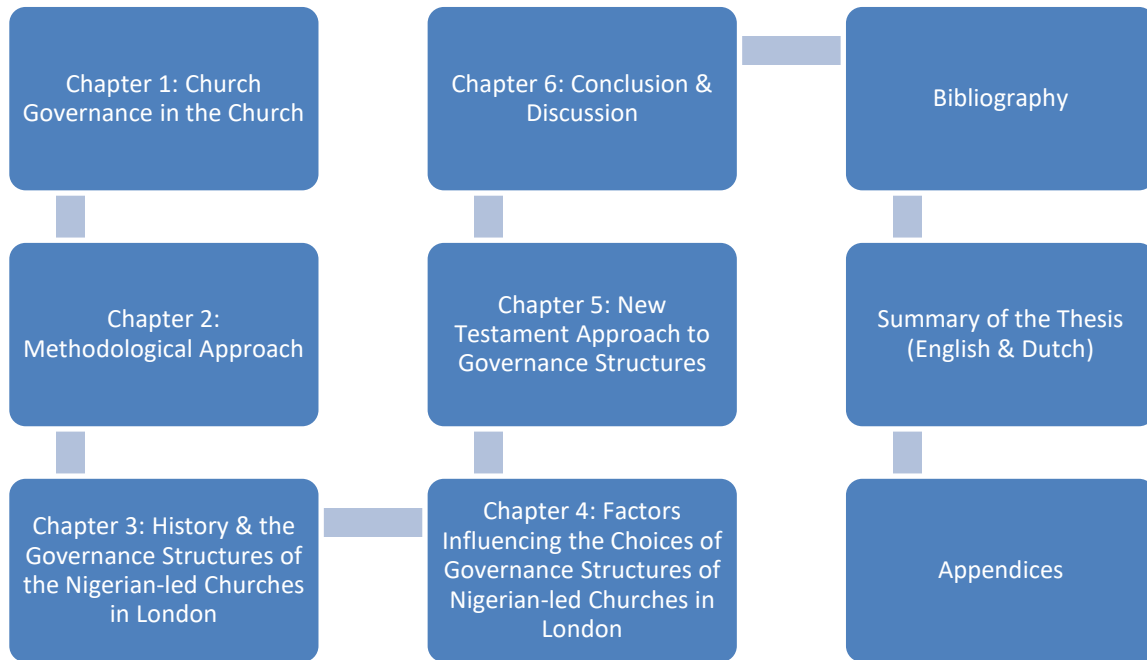
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ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

AIC(s)	African Instituted Churches
BMC	Black Majority Churches
C & S	Cherubim & Seraphim
CAC	Christ Apostolic Church
Church 5	One of the representative churches (anonymous)
DJG	Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels
DPL	Dictionary of Paul and his letters
EDBT	Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology
FOP	Fountain of Peace Ministries of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church
GC	General Council
GEC	General Executive Council
KICC	Kingsway International Christian Centre
N.D	No date
NT	New Testament
OBC	The Oxford Bible Commentary
PG	Prosperity Gospel
RCCG	Redeemed Christian Church of God
TUA	Theological University of Apeldoorn

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY



CHAPTER 1

GOVERNANCE IN THE CHURCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a practical theological study of church governance in Nigerian-led churches in London. There are a variety of views on this subject amongst these churches, but this discussion is only a part of a wider conversation within different branches of the Christian Church. It has been recognised that there is an on-going debate among scholars, theologians and church leaders on governance structures in the church in order to determine how closely it should be in accordance with leadership in the New Testament. The subject of church government is linked with a question of where authority resides within the church and who is to exercise it (Erickson 2013, 990; Banks *DPL*, 132). For some people, church government is also referred to as church polity, church order or church structure (Strauch 1995, 101). Some scholars such as Schweizer ([1961] 2006, 13), McGrath (2017, 356), and Fee ([1991] 2010, 141) posit that church government was not a major issue in the New Testament. Grudem (2020, 1114) adds that “*the form of church government is not a major doctrine like the Trinity, the deity of Christ, substitutionary atonement, or the authority of Scripture*”. Cowan (2004, 11), however, asserts that the authority structure of a church may not be a doctrine crucial to the being of the church, but it is a doctrine vital to the well-being and spiritual health of the church. On the other hand, some scholars argue that the New Testament does not provide us with a fixed pattern of church government which we are to regard as normative (Kunhiyop 2012, 166; Davies 1950, 22; Jorgensen 2012, 59; Malphurs 2007, 70, 71). For instance, the book of Acts and the Pastoral epistles portray plural leadership while the Pauline corpus such as Romans, Galatians and the Corinthians do not refer to this governing structure (Thompson 1992, 5). Others argue that the New Testament is silent regarding the topic and therefore no one can insist upon a biblical model of church polity for all churches because the Scriptures do not provide one (Strauch 1995, 103). However, there are scholars such as Grudem (2020, 1122, 1123) who opines that “*there is quite a consistent pattern of plural elders as the main governing group in New Testament churches*”. One can see here how opinions are divided concerning the issue of church government. Consequent to this, several systems of church government have emerged throughout the history of the church (Erickson 2013, 991; Grudem 2020, 1114; Kunhiyop 2012, 167). Church governance is varied in the Nigerian-led churches in London as will be seen in this practical theological study.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Church polity affects every aspect of the inner life of the church and therefore it is a significant subject (Strauch 1995, 102). Strauch (1995, 101) also links some of the negative incidents that have happened to the Christian faith as a direct result of what he views as unscriptural forms of church order. This view is corroborated by Cowan (2004, 8) when he states that disagreements over matters of church government have been the source of numerous schisms in church history. For instance, it was out of the Elizabethan Calvinistic Puritanism stream within the Church of England that the major denominations of English Separatism had their source (Watts 1978, 14). Cowan (2004, 8) adds that ecclesiological debates led to the formation of three major Protestant traditions in the seventeenth century. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists (then

called independents) parted ways with the Church of England and from each other in part over the nature of church structure (Cowan 2004, 8). Baptists likewise, emerged out of this same theological tradition, in their separation from the ranks of English independent congregations in the seventeenth century (Haykin 2020, 113-138). At the heart of the separation were disagreements involving church government (Cowan 2004, 8). Thus, the issue of church government not surprisingly has continued to be understood as having great significance for the modern church (Cowan 2004, 8). Strauch (1995, 101) adds that “*church government is an extremely practical and theologically significant issue*”. Therefore, this study agrees with Cowan (2004) and Strauch (1995) that church government is a significant issue and therefore needs further consideration as will be seen in this study of church governance in Nigerian-led churches in London.

1.3 BASIC FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

Historically, there have been three basic forms of church government: Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational (Cowan 2004, 12). In this section, this study will examine each of this form of government.

1.3.1 THE EPISCOPAL FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Greek word “*episcopal*” translates the English word “bishop” (Strauch 2014, 58; Barclay [1975] 1991, 70; Stacy 2017a, 293). Authority resides in the office of bishop in the Episcopal form of church government (Erickson 2013, 991, 992). A bishop cares for a group of churches rather than merely one local congregation and this is known as a “diocese” (Cowan 2004, 12). However, an archbishop has authority over many bishops (Grudem 2020, 1135). Thus, in some sense, Episcopalianism is hierarchical, with the bishop “*ordaining and governing the leaders (often called priests or rectors) of several local parish churches*” (Cowan 2004, 12). It is important to note that the local church is part of a hierarchical organisation that oversees and governs the church denomination (Kunhiyop 2012, 2). A group of denominations that are actively functioning in the Episcopal form of government include the Eastern Orthodox Churches (Cowan 2004, 13); the Roman Catholic Church (Grudem 2020, 1135), the Anglican, Lutheran and some of the Methodist Churches (Taylor 2004b, 75). However, there are some significant differences among these churches in terms of how they operate in their governance structures. For example, the Pope exercises absolute authority (Avis 1992, 3) and he remains the ultimate source of authority within the Roman Catholic Church (Erickson 2013, 993). By contrast, in the Methodist and the Lutheran churches, the congregation have full participation in decision-making at the national as well as the local level (Toon 2004a, 33).

The argument in favour of the Episcopal model centres on the position occupied by James, the Lord’s brother, within the church of Jerusalem (Toon 2004a, 27). Another significant argument in support of this model hinges on the historicity of an unbroken line of succession from the apostles to today’s bishops (Ryrie [1986] 1988, 407; Bauckham 2002, 116). Finally, the early appearance of the model in the church history gives strong argument for its legitimacy (Cowan 2004, 16). However, as for James, his level of authority beyond the city of Jerusalem is not clear (Ladd 1993, 577). It is essential to note that the office of “bishop” did exist in the New Testament; however, there is no Scriptural evidence that bishops had a higher status than church

officers such as the elders (Acts, 20:17, 28; Phil 1:1; Titus 1:5-7) (Kunhiyop 2012, 168). Scholars such as Waldron (2004b, 197) and Patterson (2004a, 105) assert that biblical support for the Episcopal form of government is inferred rather than explicitly taught; it was a postbiblical development.

1.3.2 THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The Presbyterian system of church government is derived from the Greek word “*presbyteros*” that is usually translated as “elder” (Taylor 2004b, 73). This model of government is a collective form of leadership in which each elder shares equally the position, authority, and responsibility of the office (Strauch 1995, 39). Waldron (2004a, 112) describes it as a form of church government that is representative and connectional. Some of the denominations that practice Presbyterianism include the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Christian Reformed Church, and the Assemblies of God (Cowan 2004, 14). It is important to point out that there is a gradation of church courts within the Presbyterian system of church government (Taylor 2004b, 74). The session exercises governing authority at the level of the local church (Grudem 2020, 1138). The Presbytery, however, exercises jurisdiction over all churches in one geographical area (Erickson 2013, 996). The general assembly governs the entire denominational body (Taylor 2004b, 75).

The Presbyterian system of government preserves the lordship of Christ over the local church (Strauch 1995, 115). Those holding to this form of church government argue that it was practised in the New Testament, although it appears to have vanished in the mid-second century AD, but reappeared in the church in the sixteenth century in the Protestant reformation of the Western Church in Europe (Taylor 2004b, 76, 98). Also significant is the fact that there is a consistent pattern of plural elders as the main governing body that existed among the first Christian churches (Acts 11:30; 14:23; 15:2, 4, 22-23; 16:4; 20:17, 28; 21:18; Eph. 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14, 15 & 17; Phil. 1:1; 1Tim. 3:1-17; 5:17-25; 1Pet. 1:1; 5:1) (Taylor 2004b, 79,80; Strauch 1995, 104, 113). The Presbyterian model also gives room for accountability (Taylor 2004b, 97). On the contrary, the New Testament record shows that the original apostles had authority over all the churches. It is argued by Grudem (2020, 1139) that there is no evidence from the Scriptures to indicate that the elders by themselves, even in Jerusalem, established authority over more than their own local church. Also, there is no scriptural evidence for “church courts” consisting of sessions, presbyteries, synods and general assemblies in the New Testament; it belongs to a post-biblical era (Patterson 2004a, 108).

1.3.3 THE CONGREGATIONAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT

In the Congregational system of government, the ultimate authority for governing the church rests in the congregants (Ryrie [1986] 1988, 408; Kunhiyop 2012, 167). In this model, there is only one level of clergy (Erickson 2013, 1000). Two related but distinct concepts are basic to this form of church government: autonomy and democracy (Waldron 2004b, 187; Erickson 2013, 998). The concept of autonomy means that each local church, under the authority of Christ, governs itself (Cowan 2004, 14). However, the idea of democracy in the Congregational form of government means that authority within the local assembly resides in the individual congregants (Erickson 2013, 998; Wagner [1984] 1986, 95). The Congregational form of government is favoured among major denominations such as the Baptists, Congregationalist, most Lutheran

groups (Erickson 2013, 998), as well as Churches of Christ, Bible Churches and some independent churches (Cowan 2004, 15). However, there are different types of internal structures and operations within the Congregational model of government (Cowan 2004, 14).

The promoters of the Congregational model claim that there are instances in the New Testament where the entire congregation chose persons for office and determined policy (Acts 1:23, 26; 6:3, 5; 15:2, 22, 30; 2Cor. 8:19 (Ryrie [1986] 1988, 408; Erickson 2013, 1000). Likewise, the solution of the Jerusalem council was approved by the apostles, the elders and the whole church (Patterson 2004b, 146; Fitzmyer [1980] 2010, 561; Marshall [1980] 2008, 258). In addition, there is no reference to any structure above or beyond local assemblies in the New Testament (Rom. 1:7; 1Cor. 1:2; Acts 20:17; Col. 1:2; 1Thess. 1:1) (Kunhiyop 2012, 167). By contrast, biblical texts such as Acts 14:23 and Titus 1:5 appear to argue against congregational involvement in choosing persons for office in the early church (Ryrie [1986] 1988, 408).

This section has attempted to provide a basic account of the main types of church government that particular Churches have found in the New Testament and utilised in their governance structures. It aims to lay a good foundation for this practical theological study of church governance in Nigerian-led churches in London. The evidence tends to suggest that there is no explicit instruction in the New Testament justifying the normativity of any one of the forms of church government examined. Nigerian-led churches in London, like other Christian churches in the city, hold to varied convictions on church governance, in line with their understanding of New Testament practices. As we shall see later in chapters three and four, the approaches of some Christian leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London to church governance seem to be similar to some forms of authority structures discussed in this section.

1.4 RELEVANCE OF STUDYING THE GOVERNING AUTHORITIES OF THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON

In this study, Nigerian-led churches in London can be described as congregations that are founded and governed by Nigerians. The Nigerian-led churches represent one of the largest, most widespread networks of churches founded by Africans in Europe and the United States (Adogame 2013, 62; cf. Burgess 2012, 127; 2011, 430); the overwhelming majority of them are in London (Akhazemea 2015, 1; Duffour 2012, 146). These churches are varied in terms of their *“historical origins and development, social composition, geographical distribution, polity, ethos, and liturgical orientation”* (Adogame 2013, 62). Significantly, seven of Britain’s twelve largest mega-churches in London are led by Nigerians. These are: Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC); Jesus House; Winner’s Chapel; New Wine Church (NWC); Glory House; Victorious Pentecostal Assembly (VPA); and Christ Faith Tabernacle (Burgess 2020, 244). Olofinjana (2010) described a mega-church as a church with an average attendance of 1,000 congregants or more. VPA boasts a regular attendance of 5,000 in its London headquarters; NWC, and Glory House both have 2,000; and Christ Faith Tabernacle 3,500 (Burgess 2020, 256). In addition to these, there are other smaller groups of Nigerian-led churches in Britain (Burgess 2020, 254). Historically, since the late nineteen fifties, these churches have had a prominent place in the religious landscape in Britain. They have had a remarkable impact in shaping British society (Adedibu 2012, 50, 111). For instance, the proliferation of these churches have had a significant impact in repositioning Christianity in the public space, courtesy of their continued embeddedness and sacralisation of

space in the social, economic and industrial spaces in England (Adedibu 2022, 31). These churches, however, have been connected with a series of accusations of abuse of office in their different governance structures within the church community (Adedibu 2012, 106; Adu 2015; Burgess 2020). This serious problem has motivated the research for this thesis with a view to ascertaining whether the forms of authority structures followed in these churches conform to the examples of leadership seen in the New Testament.

1.5 SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP ON GOVERNING AUTHORITY STRUCTURES OF THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON

This review explores the works of leading scholars who have wide knowledge of the history of Nigerian-led churches in London and a keen awareness of where they are and what they are doing. The scholars have contributed a lot to the study of African Christianity in Europe and some of their works are significant to this research. This survey will summarise and critique the contributions of Olofinjana (2010; 2011; 2015; 2017; 2018), Adedibu (2012), Adogame (2013), Adu (2015; 2017), Amadi (2016), and Burgess (2020). The rationale for this arrangement is chronological in terms of the year of publication. Any kind of problem or gap found in this survey relating to this study will be stated in section 1.5.2.

1.5.1 INDIVIDUAL SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

1.5.1.1 ISRAEL OLUWOLE OLOFINJANA

A Nigerian Baptist minister in London, a scholar and prominent writer on African Christianity in Britain, Israel Olofinjana, has attributed one of the factors behind the success of BMC mega-churches in Britain to the fact that “*the congregation believes in the leadership and they do not enter into debates about issues*” (Olofinjana, 2010:52). He posits that “*the democratic process is not really part of the culture; there are principles of democracy in terms of trustees and leadership, but it is not an open debate*” (Olofinjana, 2010:52). Nigerian-led churches are not the only churches in the BMC church group. Olofinjana (2018:234) defines Black Majority Churches (BMCs) as “*Caribbean and African church denominations and Independent churches that have originated within the African diaspora community, having a Black majority congregation and leadership*”.

More work needs to be done before a convincing case can be made that might support the points made by Olofinjana. It is important to find out the leadership structures that are specific to the Nigerian-led churches in London before adequate conclusions can be reached on this subject. Credit should be given to Olofinjana for his unique contribution to the growing literature on Nigerian Christianity in the UK. He has displayed a wide knowledge in some of his writings (2010; 2011; 2015; 2017; 2018) in narrating and explaining the history of the Neo-Pentecostal churches in Britain and the emergence of the AICs and Neo-Pentecostals. By conducting interviews, he has done a lot of research to share the life stories of church pioneers in England who are of Nigerian descent. He has been consistent on the concept of reverse mission and ecumenism. However, although Olofinjana has contributed significantly to our understanding of the work of these church pioneers, his work lacks adequate critical appraisal of the work of the subjects of his studies.

1.5.1.2 BABATUNDE ADEREMI ADEDIBU

Babatunde A. Adedibu has played a major role in promoting Nigerian Christianity in the United Kingdom by his scholarship. He is currently a full-time professor at Redeemer's University in Nigeria but he continues to make a unique contribution towards the Black Majority Churches (BMCs) in the United Kingdom. He opines that *"a common feature of most BMCs in Britain, despite the complexities due to the heterogeneous nature of these churches, is the hierarchical or pyramidal model of leadership"* (Adedibu 2012, 208). He continues: *"the prevalence of this model of leadership is a reflection of the inherent predominance of this model in African and Caribbean countries, but it seems to be a major constraint to the empowerment of the laity and missions"* (Adedibu 2012, 208). Thus, few people are in leadership positions in these churches. Adedibu's contribution is important to this study as he reveals that *"common among some 'dysfunctional' BMCs are sycophancy, blind loyalty and absolute negation of stipulated inter-regulatory responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, so that church leaders' appointees are lame ducks or cronies that often times will not constructively challenge procedural and operational modalities of the church leaders"* (Adedibu 2012, 211). In order for the BMCs to be more effective, he has suggested that those churches that are using the restrictive and controlling hierarchical structures should change to the *"open network model which is empowering and missionally inclined"* (Adedibu 2012, 212, 229). His observation is important because it sheds some light on issues that this research needs to explore. However, this study will be assessing critically whether his conclusions are applicable to most of the Nigerian-led churches in London. Findings will have to be produced along this line to avoid any form of overgeneralization of data. Also, there were no attempts made by Adedibu to evaluate the pyramidal structures found in these churches from Biblical data. Adedibu's insights raise significant questions for adherents of hierarchical models of church leadership. The key test that needs to be addressed is this: How close do the practices of each of these churches come to identifying with the Apostle Paul's views on this subject?

1.5.1.3 AFE ADOGAME

In *The African Christian Diaspora* (2013, 80), Adogame noted that the African Instituted Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal/charismatic churches in Africa and the African diaspora *"vary from groups with loose structures to those where the day-to-day running is anchored on the leader, his wife and his family and to his peers, to those with complex politics and administrative structures"*. This is vital information in the context of this study. In this book, Adogame analysed organisational structures and hierarchisation of two Nigerian-led churches in the United Kingdom namely the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG). It will be well worth considering Adogame's analysis of these two popular churches. He writes that CCC has a pyramidal structure that could be categorised into upper and lower cadres (Adogame 2013, 81). Both cadres may be further classed into *"two distinct but parallel paradigms as 'administrative and prophetic'"*. However, the governing authority of the church is structured around the pastor-founder as both spiritual and administrative head. He has unchallengeable authority on all matters, and legitimises his leadership through his personal charisma (2013, 81). By virtue of his status, he is the only one who embodies both structures contemporaneously. *"The lower provides a vertical progression along three separate but corresponding axes – leader, Wolider/Wolijah (prophet/prophets) and elder"* (2013, 81). It is important to note that, according to Adogame, the line of leaders is exclusively for males, while the other two can be attained by both males and females (2013, 81). There is no automatic promotion for members from one rank to another in the CCC. There are

only two ways a member can progress from a lower rank to upper hierarchy. The pastor can use his sole discretion to promote any member of the church or “*through the Pastor’s ratification of nominations made by the Pastor-in-Council and other special committees*” (2013, 81). There seems to be inequality between the genders in terms of appointment to positions in CCC. Adogame reports that women’s promotion in the pyramid is limited and they cannot go beyond the lower ranks because of prohibitions and taboos (Adogame 2013, 82). Appointment of any member into the board of trustees can only be made at the sole discretion of the pastor. The properties of the church are managed by the trustees and they are also responsible for representing the church in all matters relating to the state, religions and other organisations (Adogame 2013, 82). Adogame’s analysis of the governance structure of the Celestial Church of Christ sheds some light on issues that this study needs to explore.

Adogame (2013, 83) notes that the RCGG also uses a hierarchical structure of leadership but it is more complex than the version used by CCC. He describes the leadership structure of the RCGG as follows:

“The General Overseer, the governing council, deputy general overseer, mother-in-Israel, assistant general overseers, elders, assistant elders, secretaries, provincial coordinators, directors, assistant secretaries, provincial pastors, assistant provincial pastors, zonal pastors, area pastors, parish pastors, assistant parish pastors, deacons/deaconesses, ministers, workers, the faithful (congregation), and seekers/visitors”.

The man at the top of the pyramid in RCGG is called the General Overseer (GO). His office oversees and maintains both the national and international headquarters of the church. His office oversees six administrative blocs attached to the national headquarters and he is also in charge of all activities involving foreign missions outside Africa through the international office (Adogame 201, 83). Adogame’s analysis of the governing, hierarchies, and organisational structures of these churches should be commended. It lays a good foundation for this study. However, these two churches are more institutionalised compared to many other Nigerian-led churches in London. More work needs to be done to have a clearer understanding of the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. For example, the Cherubim and Seraphim church (C&S) is another AIC – type church that is popular among Nigerians living in London. However, a cursory reading of many of the previous studies has shown that many scholars have addressed only relatively limited aspects of the leadership of this church. Some leading academic scholars such as Adogame (2013) have chronicled the growth and expansion and also the emergence of the AICs such as C&S, but have failed to examine the authority structures of these churches through the lens of the leadership in the New Testament.

1.5.1.4 EBEN ADU

More recently, Adu, whose research focused on African-led Pentecostal churches in British society, reveals in his thesis that the trend which seems to appeal to some African-led Pentecostal churches in British society is a model of the senior pastor supported by other pastoral leaders/ministers (Adu 2015, 80). He observes that the designation CEO is not used, but in practice the leader at the helm of affairs resembles a CEO and he noticed that this happens in churches where the congregation is large, in excess of 500 congregants. He cited the New Wine Church as an example (Adu 2015, 80). He also points out that there is a measure of

influence from North American Pentecostal pastoral leaderships on their African counterparts in British society with reference to their leadership structures (Adu 2017, 228). He also notes that there have been allegations of the abuse of power in these churches (Adu 2015, 80). Adu has helpfully highlighted more of the wider influences that shape African church leadership models in Britain. He also reveals a more complex understanding of the role of senior pastors in some of these churches than previous studies. However, this study will explore governance structures of both mega-churches and small groups within the Nigerian-led churches in London.

1.5.1.5 MARK AMADI

A key leader of a Nigerian-led church in London, Mark Amadi, the lead Pastor of Fountain of Peace Ministries of the Cherubim and Seraphim church, engaged in doctoral research on the subject of *“British-African Pentecostal mega-churches and postmodern worship: comparative and contemporary influence and impact”*. In this thesis (Amadi 2016), Amadi explored the organisational structure and leadership mechanisms of New Wine Church in London and states that:

“NWC leadership is a network of board of ministers (BOM), cabinets leaders, portfolio leaders, and team leaders interlinked together under a dynamic leader who exercises authority and power in matters of doctrines, administration, worship and finance, but allows each portfolio and team sufficient scope to develop according to their responsibilities.” (2016, 211).

The leadership structure is similar to secular models of ‘leadership,’ though Amadi writes that *“NWC’s senior minister (pastor) is not a standalone leader but leads a dynamic network”*. He also observes that the leadership of the church *“could be bureaucratic in operation due to its departmentalization”* (Amadi 2016, 211). This particular thesis is relevant and significant to this study as it reveals the leadership structure of one of the mega-churches in London led by a Nigerian. However, it is not appropriate to assume other large churches have similar governance structures.

1.5.1.6 RICHARD BURGESS

Burgess has written about mega-churches that are led by Nigerians in the UK. Burgess (2020) has analysed the strengths of these mega-churches and has also written about alleged abuse of power in these churches carried out by some of their leaders. Burgess stressed that the *“Nigerian Pentecostal churches have been commended as dynamic and fastest growing in a context where the mainstream Christianity in Britain is declining”* (Burgess 2020, 261). This statement is undoubtedly true, but he went on to say that these churches *“have also been linked to financial misconduct, and human rights infringements connected with witchcraft accusations, deliverance practices and so-called ‘gay cure’ therapies”* (Burgess 2020, 261). These allegations are serious accusations being made against these churches. These specific issues will not be addressed in this thesis. However, this thesis will be assessing their leadership structures to see if it makes these congregations potentially more vulnerable to these types of abuse taking place in their ranks.

In summary, this review has explored the scholarly literature of some notable scholars who have broad knowledge of the history of Nigerian-led churches in London. A number of scholars such as Burgess and Olofinjana have made a significant contribution to the study of Nigerian-led mega-churches in London. Burgess has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of these mega-churches. In his thesis (Amadi 2016), Amadi explored the leadership structure of New Wine

Church in London. Adedibu's works shed some light on issues that this thesis needs to explore. In *The African Christian Diaspora* (2013, 30), Adogame analysed governance structures of the Celestial Church of Christ and RCCG. Adogame's analysis of the leadership structures of these churches laid a good foundation for this study. Adu reveals in his thesis that there is a measure of influence from North American Pentecostal pastoral leadership on their African counterparts in British society in reference to their leadership structures. He also states that there have been allegations of the abuse of power in these churches. However, this review of scholarly literature has revealed that insufficient attention has been paid to the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. Previous studies that addressed research into the leadership of these churches failed to give a thorough reflection of the demographic representation of the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

1.5.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some leading scholars have written about governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London, but there has been a scarcity of material examining this topic through the lens of leadership seen in the New Testament.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

The overarching research question of this study is: how closely is church governance, as practised in the Nigerian-led churches in London, in accordance with the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this subject?

The questions arising from this problem are:

1. What is the history and the forms of church governance of the Nigerian-led churches in London?
2. How can you describe the Apostle Paul's teaching on church government?
3. How can you describe the church governance of the Nigerian-led churches in London when evaluated from the New Testament data?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.7.1 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

1. To present an in-depth view of demographic representation of the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.
2. To understand the extent to which the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London is in conformity with the Apostle Paul's views on this topic.

1.7.2 OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aims of this research, the thesis will be approached as follows:

1. To research the church governance that exists (or is typical) among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

2. To research the contributing factors that influenced the founders of the Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their forms of church government.

3. To evaluate the significance of the contributing factors.

4. To evaluate the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London through the lens of the Apostle Paul's teaching on this subject.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

To avoid unnecessary confusion, it is essential to define some terms in this study. The terms that need to be defined are: Authority; Power; Church; Theology; Practical theology; and Culture.

1.8.1 AUTHORITY

In the New Testament, the Greek term "*exousia*" is usually translated by the word "authority" (Shogren *DJG*, 51; Shearman 2009, 24). *Exousia* means a legitimation or permission to do something (Kessler 2010, 535; Tucker and Liefeld 1987, 456), which is well reflected in the translation as authority. In addition, *exousia* in the New Testament can mean the right that legitimates the exercise of power (Avis 1992, 19; Birkey 2001, 2). Authority can be defined as "*the freedom to decide or a right to act without hindrance* (1Cor. 8:9)" (Hamstra *EDBT*, 45). To put it in another way, Marshall ([1991] 2019, 105) defines authority as "*firstly, the right to exercise power and secondly, the actual exercise of that power*". Marshall's definition of authority will be taken as the working definition of authority in this study, because it expresses the close connection between authority and power. The word "authority" often accompanies the term "power" even in the Scriptures (Shearman 2009, 24). In fact, the two terms are sometimes used almost synonymously (Avis 1992, 19). This can be seen from chapter three through to chapter six of this study.

1.8.2 POWER

Unlike the term "authority", "power" is often translated from the Greek word "*dunamis*" meaning "*ability*" or "*strength*" (Shearman 2009, 24). Kessler (2010, 530) writes that there is no consensus among scholars over the basic definition of power. For example, Russell (2004, 23) defines power as the production of intended effects. However, Dahl (1957, 202, 203) defined power in a different way: "*A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do*". However, this definition seems not to be convincing enough as the word "power" appears in the definition itself, and this is the actual word we are trying to understand the basic meaning of. On the other hand, Avis (1992, 25) defines power "*as the capacity to obtain compliance with one's will*". This definition is not as popular as the definition of power provided by Weber, who defines it thusly: "*By power is meant every opportunity/possibility existing within a social relationship, which permits one to carry out one's own will, even against resistance, and regardless of the basis on which the opportunity rests*" (Kessler 2010, 530). Put differently, Mulder (1977), as quoted by Hofstede, defines power as "*the potential to determine or direct (to a certain extent) the behaviour of another person or other persons more so than the other way round*" (Hofstede 2001, 83). This definition seems to be noticeably different and superior to the rest and will be considered as the working definition of power in this study. For instance, the word "potential" in this definition appears to show that having power does not always have a negative meaning, as the other definitions imply it to have.

Biggar (1994, 141) asserts that power is morally neutral, in the sense that it is neither good nor bad. Kessler (2010, 531) adds that the quality of power is determined by the person who wields it. We can see different types of power exhibited by the Christian leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London in chapters three and four of this study.

1.8.3 CHURCH

The New Testament word for “church” is “*ekklesia*,” which means “the called-out ones” (Pate *EDBT*, 95). The Greek word, *ekklesia*, was used in the first century AD almost exclusively for political gatherings (O’Brien *DPL*, 123; Ryrie [1986] 1988, 393). The New Testament, however, uses this term in three different ways (Gelder 2000, 163). Firstly, *ekklesia* (church) was used to describe those who profess faith in and allegiance to Christ in local congregations (1Cor. 1:2; 16:19; Rom. 16:3, 5; Acts 8:3; 11:26; 13:1; 14:23; Philem. 2 (Ladd 1993, 390; Gelder 2000, 163; Pate *EDBT*, 95; O’Brien *DPL*, 124). Secondly, it can designate the totality of believers who lived in a general region (Acts 9:31; 2Cor. 8:1; Rom. 16:1; Col. 4:16; Gal. 1:22) (Gelder 2000, 164; Ladd 1993, 582). Thirdly, *ekklesia* is clearly used of all who belonged to Christ, regardless of where they lived in the world (Col. 1:18, 24; Eph. 1:2, 3:10, 21; 5:23, 24, 27, 29, 32; 1Cor. 12:28; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Acts 8:3; 9:31) (Gelder 2000, 164; Ryrie [1986] 1988, 395; Ladd 1993, 582; Pate *EDBT*, 95). In this study, the third category will be considered as the working definition of church as this research covers Christians in the Nigerian-led churches and some followers of Jesus Christ including the Apostle Paul in the first century AD.

1.8.4 THEOLOGY

The term “theology” is derived from two Greek terms “*Theos*” “God” and “*logos*” “word” (McGrath 2017, 86; Smith 2013, 17). The word “theology” is not biblical, but, in the second century AD, Clement of Alexandria (c.150- c.250) used it when speaking of the true knowledge of God (Kunhiyop 2012, 1). The root meaning of theology is widely accepted as the study or science of God (Kunhiyop 2012, 1; Erickson 2013, 8; McGrath 2017, 86; Smith 2013, 17). Bradshaw (2013, 55) adds that theology is “*the study of God, his attributes, and his relationship with man and the universe*”. This definition is shared by Aldred (2013, 17). On the contrary, the word “theology” gained a more technical meaning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as great prestigious universities such as the Universities of Paris and Oxford began to emerge (McGrath 2017, 86). Parisian writers such as Gilbert of Poitiers (1070 – 1154) and Peter Abelard (1079-1142) taught that a name had to be found for the systematic study of the Christian faith at the university level. Consequently, the Latin word “*theologia*” developed to mean “*the discipline of sacred learning, embracing the totality of Christian doctrine and not merely the doctrine of God*” (McGrath 2017, 86). Following this, a number of scholars have come up with different definitions of the word “theology” that is more comprehensive than the basic meaning of the term. For example, Barth (1979, 3) points out that “*the word “theology” seems to signify a special science, a very special science, whose task is to apprehend, understand, and speak of “God”*”. By contrast, Erickson (2013, 8) provides a more robust definition of theology: “*the discipline that strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith, based primarily on the Scriptures, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in a contemporary idiom, and related to issues of life*”. This definition of theology by Erickson appears to be broad, but it contains some interesting elements such as “Scriptures,” “culture,” and

“contemporary”, and because of these terms, the definition by Erickson will be considered as the working definition of theology in this study.

1.8.5 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

There seems not to be a widely accepted definition of practical theology. Pattison and Woodward ([2000] 2003, 7) define practical theology as “*a place where religious belief, tradition and practice meets contemporary experiences, questions and actions and conducts a dialogue that is mutually enriching, intellectually critical, and practically transforming*”. This definition appears to be very broad and general, a fact admitted by both Pattison and Woodward ([2000] 2003, 7). On the other hand, Cartledge (2017, 9) writes that “*what practical theology has done is to give us processes and tools to analyse the contemporary end of the question in a theological manner in order to revise contemporary practices for the sake of the kingdom of God*”. To put in another way, Smith (2013, 106) defines practical theology as “*the branch of theology which studies Christian praxis (actions and practices), with the objective of formulating theories of action to improve the mediation of the Christian faith*”. This last definition seems to be more direct and highlights the uniqueness of practical theology from the other branches of theology and for this reason it shall become the working definition of practical theology in this study. Cameron *et al* ([2010] 2018, 17), added that “*practical theology’s task is to make practice more theological – and in that way it makes theology more practical*”.

1.8.6 CULTURE

Culture is an abstract term, it is difficult to define, and therefore anthropologists, sociologists, and many others, often define it in dissimilar ways (Northouse 2013, 384). Also, the term “culture” is an inclusive term which takes into account linguistic, political, economic, social, psychological, religion, race and many other aspects (Hesselgrave 1991, 99). Nevertheless, Malphurs (2007, 98) defines culture as “*the sum total of what people believe and how they act on their beliefs*”. The definition seems to be too broad. On the contrary, Luzbetak ([1988] 2002, 156) posits that “*culture is not just an open-ended way of life. Rather it is a plan, map, or blueprint for living that is always in the process of formation and adjustment. It is a code for action, for survival, and for success in life*”. Unlike Malphurs (2007, 98), Luzbetak’s definition of culture does not include words such as “beliefs,” or “believe” and these words seem to carry weight when considering the concept of culture. However, Taiwo (2017, 206) defines culture as “*an integrated system of learned behaviours, patterns, ideas, materials and aesthetic representation of an individual or society*”. Similarly, Nicholls (2003, 10) writes that “*culture is a design for living. It is a plan according to which society adapts itself to its social and ideational environment*”. On the other hand, Northouse (2013, 384) defines culture “*as the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people*”. This definition contains several worthy elements which makes it worthy to accept as the working definition of culture in this study. In addition, it is essential to note that “*culture determines what is normative and plausible amongst persons of the same group according to its worldview*” (Gibbs and Coffey 2001, 33).

1.9 OUTLINE OF THESIS

For clarity of purpose in this study; the outline of the chapters are as follows:

This thesis will be divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the reader to the ongoing debates among scholars on the subject of church government; the relevance of the topic,

major forms of church government, a survey of scholarship on governing authorities of the Nigerian-led churches in London, which will be followed by a statement of the problem; research questions, research objectives, definition of terms and an outline of the thesis.

Chapter two will explain the research methodology, ethical considerations and scope and delimitations of the study. The research design by Osmer (2008) will be used as the framework for this project.

Chapter three will utilise the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer's (2008) research design. This chapter will describe the history of *CAC*; *RCCG*; *KICC*; *FOP*; and *Church 5* (anonymous). The chapter will also describe the governance structures of these churches.

Chapter four will make use of the descriptive-empirical task of the practical theological interpretation to describe the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London from the participants' perspectives. This chapter will also employ Osmer's (2008:4) interpretive task of practical theological interpretation to seek reasons for the prominence of forms of church government observed in chapter three and section 4.2.

Chapter five will use Osmer's (2008:4) normative task and will seek to explore the Apostle Paul's views on the topic of church government

The final chapter is the concluding part of the study and will look at the current governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London through the lens of data found in the preceding chapter. Moreover, it will suggest further research that may be undertaken to help develop better forms of church polity.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the research methodology that will be used in this study. It also describes the ethical considerations and the scope and delimitations of the research.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY DEFINED

Research methodology is a framework that shows how to answer research questions (Rosario et al. 2021, 156). Cryer (2006, 71) asserts that research design needs to be appropriate for the research problem and the justification that this is so must form part of the thesis. The framework for this study is as follows: research design and its justification, nature of the study, the sample and sampling procedures, the data collection method, ethical considerations, data analysis and scope and delimitations of the study.

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND JUSTIFICATION

A research design proposed and developed by Osmer (2008, 4) will be used as the framework for this project. The design comprises of four tasks which together constitute the basic structure of practical theological interpretation (see figure 2.1).

FIGURE 2.1 THE FOUR TASKS OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

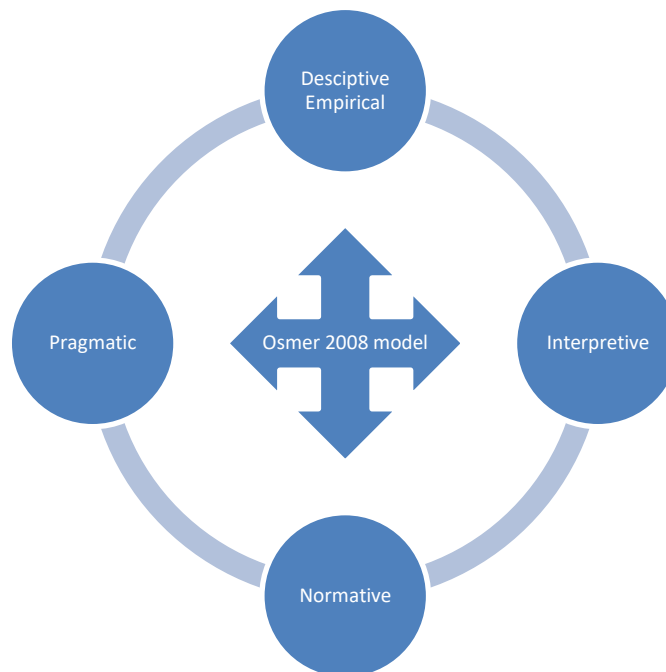


Figure 2.1: the four tasks of practical theological interpretation.

The four tasks are as follows:

1. The descriptive-empirical task asks, “What is going on?”

2. The interpretive task asks, “Why is it going on?”
3. The normative task asks, “What ought to be going on?”
4. The pragmatic task asks, “How might we respond?” (Osmer 2008, 11)

The four tasks are distinct though they are also connected (Smith 2008, 101). Smith (2008, 111) credited Osmer’s (2008) model of practical theological interpretation as a useful and simple tool in itself. He also claims that without formal training in their proper application, congregational leaders would benefit greatly by pondering the above four questions (Smith 2008, 111). On the other hand, in his review of the book written by Osmer (2008) entitled “*Practical Theology: An Introduction*,” Smith expresses his displeasure when he pointed out that the author “*relies more heavily on theological concepts and on theories from the arts and sciences to guide practical theological interpretation than on in-depth study of Scripture*” (Smith, 2008:112). He comments further that Osmer limits the value of his research model for students who hope to use it as a primer for thesis research (Smith 2008, 112). Also, Smith was disappointed with Osmer’s chapter on the pragmatic task. He was “*hoping to find a system for developing a theological theory of action based on the three foundational tasks, closing the circle of reflection from praxis through theory and back to praxis*” (Smith 2008, 113). Instead, he found a discussion of how to lead a church through change (Smith 2008, 113). In a similar vein, Wa-Mbaleka et al (2021, 10) remark that Osmer’s fourfold structure can be useful for pastors, but only if they carry out small-scale empirical research themselves. However, it does need to be said that some scholars such as Adu (2015) and Stauffacher (2013) have used Osmer’s (2008) model to carry out large-scale empirical research at North-West University and Stellenbosch University respectively. Adu’s (2015) thesis titled: “*Pastoral leadership among African-led Pentecostal churches in the context of British Society*” (Available at https://www.dspace.nwu.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10394/14209/Adu_E.pdf). Similarly, Stauffacher titled his own thesis as “*Christian Leadership in a Malawian context: a practical theological evaluation of African Bible College*” (Available at: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/37420455.pdf>). Even, if Smith’s assertion concerning the pragmatic task of Osmer’s (2008) method of practical theological interpretation is correct, it will not have any negative impact on the current study. It is beyond the scope of this study to make any form of suggestion on how to put the theory into practice and therefore, the pragmatic task will not be needed in the context of this study.

2.3.1 THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK: PRIESTLY LISTENING

The first task of Osmer’s (2008) research model is the descriptive-empirical task (Osmer 2008, 4, 31). The developer of the research design expresses that the task is grounded in a spirituality of presence. According to him, a spirituality of presence is “*a spiritual orientation of attending to others in their particularity and otherness within the presence of God*” (Osmer 2008, 33, 34). It concerns the quality of attentiveness congregational leaders or researchers give to people and events in their everyday lives (Osmer 2008, 33). Osmer refers to such attending as priestly listening (Smith 2008, 102). This priestly listening can be informal, semiformal, or formal (Osmer 2008, 37, 38). This study makes use of the formal approach to listening as it relates to attending to what is going on in the Nigerian-led churches in London regarding their authority structures through empirical research (Osmer 2008, 38). This task helps to present an in-depth view of the typical forms of government of the Nigerian-led churches in London (see chapter three & section 4.2).

2.3.2 THE INTERPRETIVE TASK: SAGELY WISDOM

The interpretive task seeks reasons for the occurrences that were observed in the descriptive-empirical task (Osmer 2008, 4). Here the researcher must identify the issues embedded within the matter he is attending to and draw on theories from the arts and sciences to help him understand the issues (Smith 2008, 104, 105). Osmer (2008, 81-86) refers to this process as applying ‘sagely wisdom’. However, due to the nature of the research questions, this study uses the interpretive task to interpret the data from the interview sessions. This helps to better understand the reasons why certain forms of church government are prominent among the Nigerian-led churches in London (see chapter four).

2.3.3 THE NORMATIVE TASK: PROPHETIC DISCERNMENT

The normative task seeks to discern God’s will for how we ought to act in the present situation (Smith 2013, 104). Osmer (2008, 132-139) refers to this task as ‘prophetic discernment’ and he asserts that “*prophetic discernment involves both divine disclosure and the human shaping of God’s word*” (Osmer 2008, 134, 135). According to him, there are three approaches through which prophetic discernment can discover God’s word for the present: (a) theological interpretation, (b) ethical reflection, and (c) good practice (Osmer 2008, 161). This study utilises option (c) to discern God’s will for how Nigerian-led churches in London ought to act regarding their governance structures. Good practice provides normative guidance by exploring good practices from the present or from the past with which to reform church’s present actions (Osmer 2008, 152). The strength of this task is that it helps the researcher to understand the Apostle Paul’s position on the subject of church government (see chapter five). However, this task will not inform the enquirers on how to put Paul’s position on the matter into practice (Osmer 2008, 173); that is beyond the scope of this study.

2.4 NATURE OF THE STUDY

This study will not involve a specific statistical analysis of any kind. The quantitative approach is not suitable for this research because the method underlines objective measurements, gathering numerical data, and generalising the data to provide interpretations on a specific issue (Lim 2024, 2). Thus, this study is qualitative in nature. The qualitative method offers a broad structure for an all-inclusive exploration of complex issues related to human behaviour, human perception, and living experiences in its organic setting (Khan 2014, 300, 301; Wa-Mbaleka et al. 2021, 4). It is a tested and trusted method that gives voices to participants and also enables the researcher to have first-hand information about the subject matter which is unknown to the outsiders (Bauer, Cincala and Zubkov 2021, 39; Gaikwad and Gaikwad 2021, 29). Qualitative research can also be used to explore people’s experience in a systematic and scholarly way (Bauer, Cincala and Zubkov 2021, 39). The method can also help to inform leadership decisions by collecting evidence and finding answers (Gaikwad and Gaikwad 2021, 31).

2.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

2.5.1 A TWO-TIER APPROACH

A two-tier approach to sampling was used to select participants who will provide substantial and pertinent information, considering the research topic (Rosario et al 2021, 145; Merriam and Tisdell 2016, 99). The first tier was five separate representative churches from different networks. They are 1) Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC*) (<https://cachqrtsonline.org>), 2) The Redeemed Christian Church of God (*RCCG*) (<https://www.rccg.org>), 3) Kingsway International Christian Centre (*KICC*) (<https://www.kicc.org.uk>), 4) Fountain of peace ministries of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (*FOP*) (<https://www.fountainofpeace.org>), and 5) one family-like congregation located in southwest of London (named *Church 5* hereafter). The *Church 5* is not currently active on the internet (L2 2022, personal interview). A number of scholars have written about *CAC*, *RCCG*, and *KICC* and some of what they have written will be shared in this study. Some of the information about *FOP* that is used in this study was obtained through their church website, whereas, information about *Church 5* was exclusively from interview sessions and permission was given to use the data in this thesis. The second tier was the chosen respondents who are knowledgeable about the internal life of the Nigerian-led churches in London. The respondents were chosen from those involved in the governance structures as well as baptised members of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

2.5.2 TIER ONE: THE FIVE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCHES

The thesis will explore the governance structures found in *CAC*; *RCCG*; *KICC*; *FOP* and *Church 5*. They were founded by Nigerians and the churches have a presence in London. In addition, the churches have been established for more than five years and a majority of their members are of Nigerian descent. The selection of these churches will give a true reflection of the demographic representation of the Nigerian-led churches in London with reference to their governance structures. *CAC* was founded in Nigeria and it is an AIC-type church. There are many *CAC* churches around in London. *RCCG* is a Neo-Pentecostal church which was founded in Nigeria and after thirty-two years in the UK, it is perhaps the fastest-growing church in the UK (Adedibu [2019] 2020, 182). *KICC* is a mega-church founded in London by a Nigerian and remains the largest single congregation in Western Europe (Burgess 2012, 129). The church has branch churches in Nigeria and Ireland (Bremner 2013, 2). The lead pastor at *FOP* is a theologian who has studied at the doctoral level about the distinctiveness of the mega-churches (Amadi 2016). The name of the church signifies they are C&S and, on their website, they claim they are non-denominational. The *Church 5* is a C&S church established by a female minister, a prophetess, in London. One can observe that the five churches include both family-like assemblies and mega-churches. The list also represents AIC-type churches and neo-Pentecostal churches. These categories are an adequate representation of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

2.5.3 TIER TWO (CATEGORY 1: THE LEADERS)

Twelve of the thirty-three interviewees are leaders from various Nigerian-led churches in London, even though four of them are currently residing in Nigeria. Eight of the twelve leaders gave me permission to use their names in this report and in any future publications on this study in relation to what they have said during the interview. The remaining four leaders do not want their names to be used in the research and, as it is my duty to protect the privacy of all the participants (Drumm 2021, 264), the twelve leaders shall therefore be referred to hereafter as L1 – L12 (see Table 2.1).

These leaders were chosen by a purposive sampling, a type of non-probability sample. In purposive sampling, the researcher purposely includes certain people in the research and evaluates others and in this way the researcher builds up a sample that is satisfactory to his specific needs (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 156).

TABLE 2.1: LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY OLAYINKA ADETOYEBI

(M = Male) (F = Female)

Number	Participant	Rank/Status	Gender	Date of Interview	Mode of Interview
1	L1	CAC Pastor/ Bible scholar	M	12-10-2022	<i>WhatsApp</i> video call
2	L2	Prophetess/ Church pioneer	F	28-09-2022	Face-to-face
3	L3	CAC Pastor	M	11-09-2022	Telephone
4	L4	“Prominent member”	F	15-09-2022	Face-to-face
5	L5	Elder	M	13-09-2022	Telephone
6	L6	Pastor’s wife/women leader	F	21-09-2022	Telephone
7	L7	Elder	M	05-10-2022	Face-to-face
8	L8	Evangelist	F	15-09-2022	Telephone
9	L9	Church pioneer	M	30-09-2022	Telephone
10	L10	Women leader	F	21-09-2022	Face-to-face
11	L11	Church pioneer	M	13-09-2022	Telephone
12	L12	Church pioneer	M	17-09-2022	Telephone

Table 2.1: Leaders interviewed by Olayinka Adetoyebi

Significantly, these leaders were chosen primarily to provide information about the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London from leaders’ perspectives. They were chosen based on the following criteria:

1. They are at least thirty years old and have been professing Christians for at least ten years, and who have knowledge of the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.
2. They are actively involved in the administration or/and leadership position for at least five years in one of the five representative churches or also of any other Nigerian-led churches in London.
3. They must have had theological, biblical or leadership training in a seminary, Bible college or at a university.
4. They live in London or have recently resided in London.

Thus, this group of participants could be considered qualified to provide in depth insight and a wide-ranging account that provides the necessary information to enable this study to answer the research question: how closely does church governance as practised in Nigerian-led churches in London, accord with the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this subject (Kaczynski, Salmona and Smith 2014). Every one of these leaders has a unique and valuable experience of the Nigerian-led churches in London and they all provided significant information that contributes to the richness of this study.

2.5.4 TIER TWO (CATEGORY 2: THE LAYPERSONS)

Twenty-one of the thirty-three informants are members drawn from Nigerian-led churches ranging from the *RCCG*, Cherubim & Seraphim (C&S), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Mountain of Fire & Ministries (MFM), Christ Embassy, The Apostolic Church (TAC), and the *Church 5*. Others are Deeper Christian Life Ministry (Deeper Life), Life for all Nations Ministry (Life Sanctuary) and Mountain of Champions Ministry. The twenty-one laypersons among the thirty-three interviewees will be referred to hereafter as LP1 – LP21 (see Table 2.2). LP9, a former member of the *RCCG* in London, is a current member of an Anglican Church.

TABLE 2.2 LAYPERSONS INTERVIEWED BY OLAYINKA ADETOYEBI

(M = Male) (F = Female)

Number	Participant	Church	Gender	Date of interview	Mode of interview
1	LP1	RCCG	M	09-09-2022	Telephone
2	LP2	C&S	M	09-09-2022	<i>WhatsApp</i> video call
3	LP3	CAC	M	10-09-2022	Face-to-face
4	LP4	CAC	M	11-09-2022	Face-to-face
5	LP5	MFM	F	11-09-2022	Face-to-face
6	LP6	C&S	M	12-09-2022	<i>WhatsApp</i> video call
7	LP7	TAC	F	13-09-2022	<i>WhatsApp</i> video call
8	LP8	C&S	M	13-09-2022	Telephone
9	LP9	Anglican	F	14-09-2022	Telephone
10	LP10	C&S	F	15-09-2022	Telephone
11	LP11	C&S	F	16-09-2022	<i>WhatsApp</i> video call
12	LP12	RCCG	M	17-09-2022	Telephone
13	LP13	RCCG	M	20-09-2022	Face-to-face
14	LP14	RCCG	F	20-09-2022	Face-to-face
15	LP15	C&S	F	22-09-2022	Telephone
16	LP16	Deeper Life	M	24-09-2022	Telephone
17	LP17	Life Sanctuary	M	26-09-2022	Face-to-face
18	LP18	CAC	F	06-10-2022	Face-to-face
19	LP19	CAC	F	09-10-2022	<i>WhatsApp</i> video call

20	LP20	Mountain of Champions Ministry	F	10-10-2022	Face-to-face
21	LP21	C. Embassy	M	14-11-2022	Telephone

Table 2.2: Laypersons interviewed by Olayinka Adetoyebi

These individuals were chosen by another type of purposive sample, called convenience sampling, which is also known as accidental or opportunity sampling and it involves choosing the sample from those to whom the researcher has easy access (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, 156), but who are also well qualified to contribute to this study. They were chosen primarily to provide most relevant and plentiful data from congregants' perspectives (Rosario et al 2021, 144) and that will enable comparisons to be made with responses from the leaders (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 156).

The laypersons were chosen based on the following criteria:

1. They are professing Christians who are knowledgeable about the internal life of the Nigerian-led churches in London.
2. They must have attended Nigerian-led churches for at least three years.
3. They live in London
4. They are at least eighteen years of age.

All the twenty-one laypersons of the thirty-three participants have first-hand knowledge about the Nigerian-led churches both in London and in Nigeria. It is significant to point out that purposive sampling provides greater depth to the study than does probability sample and it is also vital in generating theory through the gradual accumulation of data from different sources (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 156). This representative sample of lay-members of these Nigerian-led churches in London, gives the researcher confidence that the information they have provided will enable this study to answer the research question: how closely does church governance as practised in Nigerian-led churches in London, accord with the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this subject.

2.5.5 SUMMARY: TIER 2 (CATEGORIES 1 & 2)

In total, thirty-three people were interviewed; they are all professing Christians over eighteen years of age who have experiential knowledge and understanding of the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. All the participants are Nigerians; fifteen females and eighteen males (see Table 2.3).

TABLE 2.3 RESPONDENTS' GENDER AND NATIONALITY

GENDER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF NIGERIANS
Male	18	18
Female	15	15
Total	33	33

Table 2.3: Respondents’ gender and nationality

Also, in total, twenty-one interviews were conducted by telephone; six of the twenty-one were conducted via *WhatsApp* video calls and the remaining twelve interviews were done face-to-face (see Table 2.4). Telephone interviewing is cheaper and speedier than face-to-face interviewing and it also enabled the researcher to carry out the fieldworks at times which were more convenient to the informants than if a visit were to be made (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 439). It was observed during the interview sessions that using the *WhatsApp* video calling was also very helpful because it allowed the researcher to speak with the participants while picking up visual cues, albeit that these clues might not be quite as clear as face-to-face interviewing. All the respondents were delighted to take part in the research and they opened up to share their experience of the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London (Vyhmeister and Robertson 2020, 62).

TABLE 2.4 MODE OF INTERVIEW

MODE OF INTERVIEW	NUMBER OF USERS
Telephone	15
<i>WhatsApp</i> video call	6
Face – to – face	12
Total	33

Table 2.4: Mode of interview

2.6 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

This thesis utilises a semi-structured interview style to gather information from the participants, which was then used for empirical analysis. Cameron and Duce ([2013] 2017, 83) describe the semi-structured interview method as the most widely used style in practical theology. Zubkov and Kafeero (2021, 161) accept that a semi-structured interview “*is not as rigid as a structured interview, but also not as loose as an unstructured one*”. As a result, the style gives both the participants and the researcher opportunity to re-order questions depending on the situation. Interviews will give the researcher a deeper and fuller understanding of the participants’ responses; “whereas survey may have room only for “agree” and “disagree” answers” (Vyhmeister and Robertson 2020, 62). Cameron and Duce ([2013] 2017, 92) declare that there are limitations to the interview style. They state that “*interviews can be time-consuming to set up, conduct, transcribe and analyse*”. They admit further that researchers may get loads of information from interview sessions with the participants and yet much of it may not be useful for the purpose of the study. Some participants may also decide to share or say what they think you want to hear (Cameron and Duce [2013] 2017, 92). Cameron and Duce assert that “*with adequate sensitivity these limitations can be managed*” (Cameron and Duce 2017, 92). Written notes were taken during the interview process without using any audio-recording device. This decision was taken by the researcher in order to build trust with the participants and to encourage them to speak at length. Files of all the thirty-three participants are kept in a locked safe with access only by the researcher.

2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations are valued in an academic research but some ethical risks may arise if the researcher is not sensitive to these ethical values. Drumm (2021, 258) laments that “*researchers cannot foresee all risks that may exist for their participants*”. There are certain ethical risks that are common with the qualitative research method. This study uses an interview as its data collection method and Zubkov and Kafeero (2021, 164) think that “*the participants may potentially feel pressured or coerced during the interview due to awakening bad memories or negative emotions related to a past experience that could unduly create or reopen a wound*”. The interview venue, too, may trigger an ethical risk if the chosen venue does not enable the researcher or/and the participants to feel at ease (Cameron and Duce [2013] 2017, 86, 87). This study uses face-to-face semi-structured interviews; however, the fear of the Covid-19 pandemic when the interviews were conducted (2022) caused almost two-thirds of the participants to be uncomfortable with face-to-face meetings. This development prompted these interviewees to suggest telephone or virtual interviewing. This brings an ethical risk relating to privacy, confidentiality and non-consented audio recording (Cameron and Duce [2013] 2017, 85). Similarly, ethical risk may occur in a study if the researcher decided to lie about the actual information that is needed and the reason why it is needed (Vyhmeister and Robertson 2020, 62). Equally, Drumm (2021, 259) adds that “*it is unethical to ask questions of participants to satisfy one’s personal curiosity*”. Drumm also argues that researcher’s biases, too, may cause an ethical risk to the study (Drumm 2021, 264).

Therefore, this thesis follows the ethical guidance of the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA) to avoid any form of ethical risks that may jeopardise the credibility of the research. For instance, all the participants were treated as potentially vulnerable and every one of them was given a participant information sheet before the interview that explained the reason why the research is being done and what it would involve for them (see Appendix A). The issue of consent was taken seriously and no participant was tricked or coerced to participate in the research. Thus, every participant was given a consent form to sign and return before involving them in personal interviews or telephone interviews (Zubkov and Kafeero 2021, 164; Gaikwad and Penno 2021, 76; Drumm 2021, 261; Rosario et al. 2021, 148). They all signed an approved letter of consent according to the requirements of the ethics guidelines of the Theological University of Apeldoorn (see Appendix B). The signed consent forms were received via email from the participants that were interviewed over the phone. The participation was voluntary and at all levels and in every case, the participants were reminded that “*they have the choice to answer a question or to pass, to continue or to end the interview*” (Drumm 2021, 259, 263). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, 77) agree with this view. Every question asked of the participants was solely to proffer knowledge that will be useful for the purpose of the research (Drumm 2021, 259-262; Vyhmeister and Robertson 2020, 62). Finally, all the individuals that participated in the interview were assured of total confidentiality and that their data and all other records shall remain in a safe place (Zubkov and Kafeero 2021, 178; Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 92) for a further ten years after my degree has been conferred. Thereafter, all the paper documents will be shredded using a cross-cut shredder and disposed of securely (Drumm 2021, 264, 265).

2.8 DATA ANALYSIS

2.8.1 DESCRIPTION

Fukofuka (2021, 220) opines that data analysis “*points to the mechanics of splitting and lumping data to derive themes or categories*”. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, 537) define it more broadly: “*Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situations, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities*”.

The data from the interviews is coded, analysed and interpreted through Wa-Mbaleka’s (2019) model of data analysis. This analysis procedure consists of ten phases: 1) preparing and organising your data, 2) reading the transcripts (or reviewing the data), 3) developing the coding manual, 4) coding all the data, 5) finding recurring ideas, 6) abstracting the ideas, 7) writing the interpretation of all the data, 8) writing the report, 9) verifying the findings and concluding, and 10) making final revisions (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 212-215). It is significant to note that Wa-Mbaleka’s (2019) model of data analysis is a straightforward thematic analysis model that can be applied easily. The model is flexible as various steps in each of the phases do not have to be implemented (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 215). The data analysis was done manually and took considerable time to do properly. The data analysis software saves time when it is used but comes short of actually doing the thinking for the researcher (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 196).

2.8.2 PHASE 1: PREPARATION AND ORGANISATION OF THE DATA

Prior to formal data analysis, the practice of rewriting the notes was applied after every interview, especially the ones that were penned down in bullet points. Information provided by every respondent was put in a separate folder (cf. Zubkov and Kafeero 2021, 178). At this stage, the researcher put the initials of every participant and the date of the interview on their respective files. Following the initial labelling of all the folders, relevant information from the interview responses were identified and selected for analysis (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 202). Microsoft Word was used to create two tables; one for the leaders and the other one for the laypersons. L1 is used for the first leader’s interview response that was analysed, L2 for the second leader, and so on (see Table 2.1). LP1 is used for the first layperson that participated in the interview, LP2 for the second layperson, and so forth (see Table 2.2).

2.8.3 PHASE 2: REVIEWING THE DATA

At this point, all the transcripts have been reviewed and relevant ideas that came to mind were written down.

2.8.4 PHASES 3 & 4: CODING OF ALL THE DATA

A code is a name that the researcher gives to relevant data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011, 559). All the data that contains an idea were coded. All the codes bear resemblance of the original data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 560) and this make the data easy to recognise. Also, the temptation to use two codes that have overlapping meanings was avoided (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 197).

2.8.5 PHASE 5: FINDING RECURRING IDEAS

Next, recurring ideas were found and grouped together in the same category. It is worth noting that an idea may not be recurring, but yet be considered significant for the study as determined by the researcher. Codes were removed that do not seem to be relevant to the study (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 213).

2.8.6 PHASE 6: ABSTRACTING THE IDEAS

New folders with the inscription of aliases on them were used for each category. Categories are put together in different group called themes (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstones 2021, 213). Themes were inductively generated from the research data (Cameron and Duce [2013] 2017, 103) and they are nine in numbers (see chapter four). As Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstones (2021, 203) rightly note, that, “*good research depends on the judicious use of research methods by good thinking.*” Good thinking in this sense is the ability to elicit themes from the data.

2.8.7 PHASE 7: WRITING THE INTERPRETATION OF ALL THE DATA

Significantly, themes are organised logically and different categories for each theme are discussed. Some direct quotes from the data are used where appropriate. Similarly, tables are created where they are appropriate to display the synthesis of the data. Also important to note is the fact that the discussion of each theme ends with a short comment and some connection to the research questions (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 213).

2.8.8 PHASES 8 – 10: WRITING THE REPORT & FINAL REVISION

Findings are synthesised and what they mean is explained. Finally, the thesis is presented clearly and logically so that it is easy for everyone to read and understand what is written (Ekoto, Wa-Mbaleka and Gladstone 2021, 213-215).

2.9 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS

The scope of the research here is limited to the Nigerian-led churches in London and their governance structures. The study involved primary research that focuses on those who are engaged with the Nigerian-led churches in London. The selection of five representative churches; the thirty-three individuals that participated in the interview process, as well as the analysis of the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches, all serve to delineate the scope of the research. Therefore, the information provided by these interviewees will be sufficient to enable this study to answer the research question: how closely does church governance as practised in Nigerian-led churches in London, accord with the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this subject.

In the following chapter, consideration will be given to the history of the Nigerian-led churches in London. Chapter three will also describe the governance structures of these churches.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORY AND THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter utilises the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer's (2008) method of practical theological interpretation, as this task helps to study the history and the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. The focus of this section is on five of these churches: the *CAC*, *RCCG*, *KICC*, *FOP* and *Church 5* (anonymous) (see section 2.5). The *CAC* and the *RCCG* started from Nigeria while the remaining three ministries began in the UK (see section 2.5.2).

To understand the Nigerian-led churches in London, it is imperative to start by addressing the Christianisation of Nigeria before proceeding to the history and authority structures of the five representative churches namely: *CAC*, *RCCG*, *KICC*, *FOP*, and *Church 5*. It is worth noting that a number of scholars such as Komolafe (2013), Ukah (2008) and Olofinjana (2011) have written on how Christianity was brought to and developed in Nigeria. They tend to explain the same sequence of events starting from the arrival of the Portuguese explorers to the emergence of the neo-Pentecostals in the 1990s. This current study will follow the same sequential approach in part one of this chapter but will include references to the governing authorities of the churches. The second part of this chapter will focus on the history and the governance structures of the five representative churches. The descriptive-empirical task is used in this chapter to find out the history and the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London, in order to help us ascertain how closely the church governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London accords with the teaching of the Apostle Paul on this subject. This chapter helps us answer the first sub-question: "what are the history and the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London?"

3.2. PART ONE: THE CHRISTIANISATION OF NIGERIA

3.2.1 INITIAL CONTACT OF NIGERIA WITH CHRISTIANITY

The first attempt to Christianise Nigeria was in the fifteenth century by the Portuguese Roman Catholics (Rozario 2012, 13; Ukah 2008, 2). The Catholic explorers were successful in converting some people such as the Oba (King) of Warri and the King of Benin into Christianity (Olofinjana 2010, 11) and they also built churches for the locals (Ukah 2008, 2). The Roman Catholic Church utilises the Episcopal form of church government (Grudem 2020, 1135) and this could be considered as the first form of church polity to be introduced into the Christian landscape in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the missionary enterprise in the Warri and Benin regions was short-lived and Christianity soon became history in Nigeria (Olofinjana 2010, 12; Akinwunmi 2011, 11).

3.2.2 THE ARRIVAL OF THE EURO-AMERICAN MISSION AGENCIES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY

The second attempt to Christianise Nigeria was initiated by the liberated slaves from Sierra Leone that migrated into Nigeria in the middle of nineteenth century (Komolafe 2013, 430). In

the period of 1841 – 91, there were five principal Euro-American missionary societies operating in Nigeria (Olofinjana 2011, xvii). They are: 1) Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1842), 2) the Anglican Church Missionary Society (1845), 3) the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1846), 4) the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, USA (1850), and 5) the Roman Catholic Society of African Missions of France (1867) (Komolafe 2013, 33). These missionary societies became known as Mission Churches in Nigeria (Olofinjana 2011, xvii). As mentioned before in chapter one, some Methodist Churches, the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Church are actively operating with the Episcopalian model of church governance (Kunhiyop 2012, 2; Erickson 2013, 991); the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland exercises Presbyterianism (Cowan 2004, 14); and the Southern Baptist Convention, USA, utilises Congregational polity (Erickson 2013, 998). One can see here that the Nigerians would have been exposed to more forms of church order unlike the first time when the Portuguese Catholics arrived in the country. Regrettably, the good relationship between the missionaries and the local Christians was short-lived for a variety of reasons. For instance, Rozario (2012, 22) posits that it was difficult for the indigenous clergy to get promotion. Ayegboyin and Ishola (1997, 25) also claim that the Nigerian Christians were dissatisfied with the leadership of the church as they were appointing some notable native people with questionable traits into the church hierarchy. This development led to what is known as African nationalism or Ethiopianism (Ukah 2008, 3). This period seems to mark the beginning of success in the spread of Christianity in Nigeria with different forms of church government.

3.2.3 THE ETHIOPIAN CHURCHES

It is important to stress that the “Ethiopian Churches” or the “Native African Churches” were founded to demonstrate the Africans’ rejection of Euro-American leadership (Ayegboyin 2011, 41). The Native Baptist Church (NBC) seceded from the Lagos Baptist Church in March 1888, which belonged to the American Southern Baptists (Rozario 2012, 21; Ukah 2008, 3). The non-denominational United Native African Church (UNA) was formed by members of the Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches in 1891 (Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 38; Crumbley 2008, 27). Similarly, the African Church, Bethel, seceded from St. Paul’s Anglican Church, Breadfruit Street, Lagos, in July 1901 (Komolafe 2013, 100). The United African Methodist Church, Eleja, Lagos, also seceded from the Methodist Church in 1917 (Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 41). Contrarily, despite their secession from the mission churches, their organisational structures remained identical to the foreign missions (Komolafe 2013, 100; Rozario 2012, 22). It is apparently clear that there is no difference in approach to church governance between the first set of indigenous churches in Nigeria and the earlier congregations affiliated with the Baptist, Anglican and Methodist Churches.

3.2.4 THE EMERGENCE OF THE ALADURA MOVEMENT

The first wave of the Native African Churches in Nigeria was followed by the African Instituted Churches (*AIC*), generally known as Aladura churches among the Yoruba people (Adedibu, Akindolie and Olujobi 2022, 2; Crumbley 2011, 127). In 1918, there was a world-wide pandemic caused by the HINI influenza (Adedibu, Akindolie and Olujobi 2022, 2) that devastated Nigeria, leading to reported deaths of two hundred and fifty thousand people in the south-western region (Crumbley 2008, 28). There was also a breakout of bubonic plague, measles and smallpox that

ravaged the country from 1924 to 1926 and economic hardship and famine in 1932 (Crumbley 2008, 28). In Yorubaland, many local Christians were disappointed with the missionary leadership's response to the crises (Ayegeboyin and Ishola 1997, 23). Consequently, some praying groups of committed Yoruba Christians functioning on the fringes of orthodox churches such as the Diamond society started prayer and healing fellowships in response to the outbreak and the economic crisis (Komolafe 2013, 101; Olofinjana 2011, xviii; Jenkins 2007, 60; Ayegeboyin and Ishola 1997, 23). Olofinjana (2011, xviii, xix) reemphasises that the movement has been called Aladura (praying people) because the pioneers were devoted to prayers, however, this emphasis on prayers led to the metamorphosis of some of the prayer groups later into church denominations (Olofinjana 2010, 21), even though Rice (2009, 13) and Ukah (2008, 3) argue that many scholars admit the Aladura church was an entirely independent phenomenon.

Some prominent Aladura churches are Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), and the Church of the Lord – Aladura (CLA) (Adedibu, Akindolie and Olujobi 2022, 3; Adogame 2013, 67; Jenkins 2007, 60). Others are the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), and the Evangelical Church of Yahweh (ECY) (Adogame 2013, 67). One of the things they seem to have in common is the use of hierarchical models of leadership (Ukah 2008, 2; Adogame 2013, 81; Crumbley 2008). Today, the Aladura churches have a presence all over Europe and America (Adedibu, Akindolie and Olujobi 2022, 2) though some may still have their original approaches to leadership intact, as it operates in their homeland.

3.2.5 THE EMERGENCE OF INDIGENOUS FORM OF PENTECOSTALISM IN NIGERIA

During the 1930s and 1940s, there was an increasing understanding of Christianity among Nigerians by courtesy of their interaction with foreign Pentecostal groups and their materials such as tracts, magazines and books (Ukah 2008, 4). This period marked the emergence of an indigenous form of Pentecostalism in the country (Ukah 2008, 4). This new brand of Christianity was different to Ethiopianism and the Aladura (Ukah 2008, 4). In Nigeria, an indigenous form of Pentecostalism comprised of three strands namely: classical indigenous Pentecostal churches; the charismatic movement and the Neo-Pentecostals (Ukah 2008, 4).

3.2.5.1 THE CLASSICAL INDIGENOUS PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

The first wave which is known as 'classical indigenous Pentecostal churches' were established in the 1940s (Ukah 2008, 4). This strand is not wholly a religious movement pioneered by the Westerners for in its beginning some important developments of it were home-grown (Olofinjana 2011, x). Prominent among these churches include the Assemblies of God Church Nigeria and the Gospel Faith Mission International. The Assemblies of God Church Nigeria practices a mixture of Congregational and Presbyterian systems of church administration. Each local assembly is independent while maintaining fellowship with other local churches yet a national governing body of elders exercise jurisdiction over the local churches (Nmah 2017, 118-124). On the other hand, the Gospel Faith Mission International (*GOFAMINT*) uses a hierarchical model of leadership. They have principal officers headed by the General Overseer of the church worldwide and the Executive Council as the highest policy making authority in the administration of the ministry (*GOFAMINT, Gofamint Constitution* 2018).

3.2.5.2 THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

The arrival of the charismatic movement during the 1960s and 1970s occasioned the second strand of Pentecostalism in Nigeria (Ukah 2008, 4). Thus, there were two significant strata in the development of charismatic movement: the first layer was orchestrated by the youth wings or fellowships of some of the existing classical Pentecostal churches and mission churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church (Komolafe 2013, 139). The same author lists “*the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and the Foursquare Gospel Church*” as churches that fit well into this description (Komolafe 2013, 139). Babatunde (2023) points out that “*the Foursquare Gospel Church in Nigeria demonstrated a relatively high level of member sovereignty*”. He comments further that the church’s approach to leadership avoids power concentration but rather gives room for checks and balances (Babatunde, 2023).

The second layer in the charismatic renewal expansion in Nigeria has been credited to the trans-denominational movement among students (Komolafe 2013, 140). The introduction of Pentecostal experiences into the universities and other academic institutions during late 1960s and 1970s rekindled charismatic Christianity all over Nigeria (Komolafe 2013, 139, 140; Olofinjana 2011, xii; Rice 2009, 6; Kalu 2003, 221). Rice (2009, 6) asserts that the “*Christian students, rejecting their parents’ less-vigorous beliefs, became born again and embraced Pentecostalism, which had long been present in Nigeria but previously was considered lower class*”.

Thus, Komolafe (2013, 142) observes that the student-led charismatic renewals were loosely structured initially; functioning on the fringes of mission churches as Bible study and prayer groups. However, towards the mid-1970s, some of the Christian students were transforming their movements into independent charismatic organizations; more than ten had been established by 1974 (Komolafe 2013, 142). One of such establishments was the Deeper Christian Life Ministry, pioneered by W. F. Kumuyi, which began in 1973 as an inter-denominational Bible study fellowship in the University of Lagos (Osgood 2012, 111; Adedibu 2012, 69; Adeboye 2007, 29). Unlike the classical Pentecostal churches, the pioneers of charismatic movement were in most cases University graduates who had previously worked in secular fields. Kumuyi was a former lecturer of mathematics at the University of Lagos (Adogame 2013, 210; Adedibu 2012, 69), while Bishop David Oyedepo of Winners Chapel (Living Faith Ministries) was initially an architect by profession (Adogame 2013, 210). They left their secular jobs to focus on full-time church ministry (Adogame 2013, 210). The types of ministries they operate are very attractive to youths, students, women and professionals in Nigeria and in the other parts of the world (Adogame 2013, 210).

In addition to campus fellowships and independent ministries headed by university graduates, many other churches came into being (Osgood 2012, 111; Adeboye 2007, 29). Some notable ones among them are the Church of God Missions established by Benson Idahosa in the early 1970’s and the Christian Pentecostal Mission established by O. Ezekiel in the late 1970’s (Adeboye 2007, 29). The existing classical indigenous Pentecostal churches such as the RCCG were also growing (Osgood 2012, 111). The emergence of the charismatic movement in Nigeria could be seen as the beginning of the proliferation of independent ministries in the country. The charismatic revivals that roughly covered two decades (1970s and 1980s) have made significant progress in Nigeria and in the diaspora. Nigeria-led charismatic churches now have a presence in

Western Europe (Ayegboyin, 2011:41) and in other major cities of the world (Olofinjana 2011, xii).

3.2.5.3 THE NEO-PENTECOSTALS/CHARISMATICS

Adeboye (2007, 29, 30) describes the third strand as the contemporary period of Nigerian Pentecostalism. The Neo-Charismatic churches bridge across and into mainline, classical and charismatic churches and then surpass the constraints of denominationalism (Komolafe 2013, 143). The Nigerian version of Neo-Pentecostalism can generally be classified under two categories – “the holiness” and “the prosperity gospel” groups (Komolafe 2013, 143). The latter came into limelight during the hardship created by the military regime of General Babangida from 1985 to 1993 (Adeboye 2007, 31). The message of hope and power (Adeboye 2007, 31) and the doctrine of prosperity by the Neo-Pentecostals during this military administration made them popular in Nigeria (Komolafe 2013, 144).

Prominent among Neo-Pentecostal churches are Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry (1989), Christ Embassy (1991) and Daystar Christian Centre (1995) (Adeboye 2007, 31). Moreover, Ukah (2008:6) states that change of demography in the Neo-Pentecostal churches resulted in a change of their leadership style and organisational structure. Adu (2017, 227) reveals that the neo-Pentecostals are “*founder-led independent churches that share phenomenological similarities with North America’s new paradigm churches*”. They are well organised and the ethos of these churches are similar to some Pentecostal churches in America (Akinwunmi 2011, 17). They encourage active participation of women in the ministry of the church (Ayegboyin 2011, 46) and also include women in different leadership positions and this makes them more appealing to the younger generation and women (Bateye 2011, 116).

It is essential to note that there are significant differences between the charismatics and the newer Pentecostal churches. For instance, the leaders of the latter group are typically young, upwardly mobile and relatively well-educated (Akinwunmi, 2011:17; Adeboye 2007, 31). However, some leaders of the charismatic movement are older and more conservative. Also, some pastors of the newer Pentecostal churches are celebrities and are living superstar life-styles (Ukah 2008, 6). Meanwhile, David Martin (2002, 152) quoted by Ukah (2008, 6) asserts that the old Pentecostal churches have changed from a “*bumble egalitarian fellowship to a bureaucratic church under an authoritarian personality*”. Some scholars, however, have found faults in the third strand of Nigeria Pentecostalism. For example, Olofinjana (2011, xiv) argues that some leaders of the Pentecostal churches are professionals in their fields, but some of them have never been to Bible college and probably will never do so. The lack of theological education may influence their interpretation of the Word of God. Today, the Pentecostal churches continue to expand and are becoming one of Nigeria’s most dynamic realities (Komolafe 2013, 150). There seems to be some differences among leaders of the Pentecostal churches in Nigeria. Olofinjana, however, has accused some of these leaders of lack of theological education which may influence their interpretation of the Scripture.

In summary, this segment has shown how Christianity was brought to and developed in Nigeria. Since the fifteenth century when Christianity first came to Nigeria, different networks of

churches have been operating in different forms of governance structures in the country (see Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.1 FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA

EMERGENCE	DENOMINATION	FORM OF GOVERNMENT
15 TH century	The Roman Catholics	Episcopalism
19 th century	The Mission Churches	Episcopalism Presbyterianism Congregational polity
19 th century	The Ethiopian Churches	Episcopalism Congregationalism
1918	The Aladura Churches	Hierarchical models
1940s	Indigenous classical Pentecostal churches	A mixture of congregationalism & Presbyterianism; Hierarchical model of leadership
1960s	Charismatic movement	Independent
1990s	Neo-Pentecostals	Founder-led/independent

Table 3.1: Forms of church government in Nigeria

The evidence tends to suggest that a Christian network that is actively operating in Episcopalism was the first to arrive in Nigeria. This followed by the likes of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism in the nineteenth century. The first wave of the indigenous churches in Nigeria remained identical to the Mission Churches in terms of their governance structures. However, pyramidal leadership model appeared to be favoured among the Aladura movement. Significantly, the emergence of the indigenous form of Pentecostalism in Nigeria seems to contribute to the prominence of independent ministries with independent leadership styles in the country. Today in Nigeria, the Christian landscape is diverse with numerous traditions operating in different forms of government ranging from Episcopalism to Presbyterianism, Congregationalism, hierarchical model, and Founder-led model.

3.3 PART TWO: HISTORY AND THE AUTHORITY STRUCTURES OF THE FIVE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCHES

3.3.1 THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

The Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), with its headquarters in Nigeria, is a distinctly an indigenous African church (CAC Mount of Redemption 2021, 1) which identifies itself as a Pentecostal church (CAC Headquarters, *About Us: President's Welcome Address* 2021, 1) believing in the efficacy of prayer, prophecy and divine healing (Crumbley 2008, 31; Alokun 2018, 12-17). Its history can be traced directly to Daddy Alli, Mr Sadare, D. C. Oduga, E. O. Onabanjo and E. O. W. Olukoya (CAC Headquarters, *About US: Origin of Pentecostalism and The Birth of Aladura Group* 2021, 1). In the early part of the year 1918, this five-man group aimed at purifying themselves and the church (CAC Mount of Redemption 2021, 1). They joined efforts with some lay members of Saint Saviour's Anglican Church, Ijebu Ode, Nigeria, and began meeting regularly at a scheduled place for prayers, spiritual guidance (Alokun 2018, 81-83) and for divine intervention

(Folarin 2017, 21). Simultaneously, the Lord had called Miss Sophia Odunlami, an unmarried school teacher and a native of Isonyin in Ijebu area (CAC Headquarters, *About US: Origin of Pentecostalism and The Birth of Aladura Group* 2021, 1). According to Komolafe (2013, 103), Odunlami also became a leader in the group and Folarin (2017, 19) argues that her prophetic gifts contributed significantly to the development of the group. The CAC began with five men in the early twentieth century and they were later joined by a prophetess who became part of the leadership.

3.3.1.1 FROM PRECIOUS STONE SOCIETY TO FAITH TABERNACLE

The group adopted the name “*Egbe okuta iyebiye*” which means “*Precious Stone Society or Diamond Society*” (Olofinjana 2011, 21; Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 67) and it was formally inaugurated in July 1920 (Komolafe 2013, 103). In 1922, the group was ejected from the Anglican Church who claimed that they disobeyed the canon (CAC Headquarters, *About US: From Precious Stone to Faith Tabernacle* 2021, 1). Consequently, the group was transformed into an autonomous institution (Alokan 2018, 82; Crumbley 2008, 30). In the same year, the Diamond Society was affiliated with the Faith Tabernacle, based in Philadelphia, USA (Komolafe 2013, 104), and this necessitated a change of the society’s name to Faith Tabernacle, Nigeria (Crumbley 2008, 31; Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 68). The partnership brought many benefits to the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle. For instance, in less than a decade, the church spread and established branches in all parts of the country (Alokan 2018, 84; Komolafe 2013, 104). Moreover, the authorities of the church in America were impressed by the growth and development of the church in Nigeria and therefore appointed some of the Nigerian leaders as pastors by proxy to be in charge of the Faith Tabernacle churches in Nigeria (Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 70). After their ejection from the Anglican Church, the Precious Stone Society affiliated with the Faith Tabernacle based in Philadelphia, adopted a new name and this affiliation enabled them to flourish in the founding church, at the same time as planting new congregations in other locations across Nigeria.

Unfortunately, the relationship between the two parties was short-lived (Crumbley 2008, 32) because the Nigerians’ affiliation with the Philadelphia based church did not last more than four years before the former began to lose confidence in the American leadership (Alokan 2018, 84; Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 71). The Nigerian church was also disappointed with the Americans opposition to ownership of private property, whereas Nigerians see owning of property as a sign of being a responsible adult (Crumbley 2008, 32). In 1925, the Nigerian Faith Tabernacle severed ties with the Philadelphia church (Olofinjana 2011, 21; Crumbley 2008, 32) and became autonomous (Komolafe 2013, 105), but the church decided to still retain the name “*Faith Tabernacle Nigeria*” after the break (Crumbley 2008, 33). The outcome of this whole period was that ‘Nigerian sister churches’ affiliation with the Philadelphia one was brief but also successful.

3.3.1.2 THE EMERGENCE OF JOSEPH AYO BABALOLA AND THE GREAT REVIVAL OF 1930

The history of CAC will not be completed without mentioning the name of Joseph Ayodele Babalola. Babalola, a prominent healing prophet, joined the Faith Tabernacle Nigeria in 1929 (Medaiyese 2013, 31; Crumbley 2008, 33, 34). The church leaders “*sensed that Babalola was an answer to their prayers, as since 1918 they had been praying for revival in the land*” (Olofinjana 2011, 16). In

July 1930, Babalola raised a boy from death which caused a tremendous outbreak of faith among the members of the *CAC* (Folarin 2017, 24). The unexpected miracle at Oke-Ooye changed the course of Faith Tabernacle history and boosted it into the limelight (Ayegboyin and Ishola, 1997, 73). A crucial aspect of the time of growth in these churches came about when Babalola joined the Faith Tabernacle in Nigeria. The church grew dramatically in numbers after Babalola prayed successfully for the restoration to life of a boy who had died.

3.3.1.3 FROM FAITH TABERNACLE TO CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

In 1931, the Nigerian Church formed co-operation with the British Apostolic Church, Bradford, England (CAC Headquarters, *About US: From Faith Tabernacle to Christ Apostolic Church* 2021, 1). Consequent upon the affiliation with the British Apostolic Church, the Nigerian Church also changed its name to “*Apostolic Church*” (CAC Mount of Redemption 2021, 1). However, the expectation of the Nigerian Christian brothers that the partnership would mitigate or eliminate their sufferings and persecutions by the colonial administration became an illusion as persecutions continued (CAC Headquarters, *About US: From Faith Tabernacle to Christ Apostolic Church* 2021, 1). In spite of this, the relationship lasted for ten years before it finally crumbled during a 1939/1940 crisis that separated the two parties (CAC Mount of Redemption 2021, 1). Thus, the name “*Christ Apostolic Church*” was unanimously adopted at the church convention which was held at Efon Alaaye, in April 1942 (Crumbley 2008, 36; Adeboye 2007, 27). Thereafter, on May 4, 1943, the name *CAC* was embraced and duly registered as a self-governing body under the Lands Perpetual Succession Ordinance of 1924 with the registration number 147 (CAC Mount of Redemption 2021, 1). It is significant to note that once more a Nigerian church separates from their overseas partners, this time with the British Apostolic Church after a decade of relationship, however, following that they became a duly registered independent church with the name *Christ Apostolic Church*. This development allowed them to develop their own leadership and organisational structures.

3.3.1.4 CAC: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

3.3.1.5 THE CAC 1998 CONSTITUTION

The Christ Apostolic Church is governed by a central constitution and all her bodies are guided by these rules and regulations flowing from this constitution (CAC Headquarters, Youth Department: Historical Background 2021, 1). The 1998 *CAC* constitution provides explicit structures and processes for the day-to-day governance of the church delineating a working organisational plan that addresses issues such as the selection of local assembly officers, the role of the church lawyer and prerequisite for bank signatories (Crumbley 2008, 98).

3.3.1.6 STRUCTURE OF HIERARCHY

It is important to realise that two separate ministries – “spiritual” and “administrative” emerged early in the church organisational development (Crumbley 2008, 99). The spiritual ministry contained two distinct offices namely Pastoral offices that include apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and catechist; and Presbyterian offices such as elders and deacons (Crumbley 2008, 147). On the other hand, the administrative ministry is divided into three categories – pastoral, general and missionary with their unique offices, bodies and geographical units (Crumbley 2008, 147).

The pastoral administration arm of the church is led by the general superintendent on the national level while the regional level is governed by district superintendent, the assistant district superintendent, district pastors, and the area pastors. The pastoral administrative offices at the local level is headed by a Senior Pastor and other ministers namely assistant pastors, associate pastors, youth pastors evangelist; elders and deacons (CAC NEWS 2017, 2). However, the general administration is handled by the president and general secretary on the national level; by the district secretary on the regional level and directed by an assembly secretary at the lowest unit of the church (Crumbley 2008, 147). The third arm, the missionary administration is directed by a general evangelist and his assistant; district evangelists and assistant district evangelists leading at the regional level, and assembly evangelists operating at the local congregational level (Crumbley 2008, 147). The church functioned “*as a consensus-based bureaucracy tempered by notions of brotherliness*” (Crumbley 2011, 129), where assemblies were the lowest unit in the CAC organisation and each congregation had its own board of elders and a minister in charge (CAC NEWS 2017, 2). About eight congregations formed an area led by a pastor, and thirty or more assemblies constituted a district, which was headed by a district superintendent, aided by his assistants, and handled matters that are beyond the competence of the local authority (Crumbley 2008, 147, 148). However, up to twenty districts constituted the Districts Coordination Council headed by the DCC Superintendent (CAC NEWS 2017, 1); whereas, the “*sectional executive council was in turn responsible to the general council headed by the president*” (Crumbley 2008, 148).

3.3.1.7 GOVERNING BODIES IN THE CAC

3.3.1.7.1 THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council (GC) is the highest administrative and policy making body of the organisation worldwide (CAC Headquarters, *Good Women Association: Position of Women* 2021, 1). The General Council comprises of representatives of all CAC districts globally (CAC Headquarters, *Presidency: Historical Background* 2021, 1). Also significant is the inclusion of women in the General Council (CAC Headquarters, *Good Women Association: Position of Women* 2021, 1).

3.3.1.7.2 THE GENERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Out of the General Council the General Executive Council (GEC) is formed, which is the highest ruling body of CAC, with the president of the church as its chairman. The GEC is saddled with the appointment of the church’s principal officers, church’s trustees and special standing committees. All relevant officers of the church derive their authority from the GEC. The 1998 CAC constitution provides that GEC membership shall be made up of ninety members – sixty pastors and thirty elders (CAC Headquarters, *Presidency: General Executive Council* 2021, 1). The GEC oversees the activities of the office of the president and they also take part in the process of final decision-making; the GEC and the president of the church are partners (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). The GEC meets periodically to formulate policy directive for the church (CAC Headquarters, *Presidency: Historical Background* 2021, 1).

3.3.1.8 CAC: A DENOMINATION GOVERNED BY MEN

The government of the CAC is built on the apostolic order; the leadership governed by men with varying God-given ministries. The men complement one another and together express

Christ's government of his church (CAC Surrey Docks SDCC HQ London: *Tenets of CAC* 2025, 2) and Crumbley (2008, 98) affirms that the *CAC* was never a leader-bound institution. Contrary to general belief, Babalola is not the founder of *CAC*; “*he was absorbed into structures already hammered out by educated civil servants and teachers with hands-on experience in bureaucratic processes*” (Crumbley 2008, 98, 99). Furthermore, Crumbley (2008, 99) is correct when she postulates that “*while the charisma of Babalola may have galvanized CAC's growth, the organizational development of the church was never dependent on the force of his personality*”. It is axiomatic that the growth of the *CAC* stems from the works of the pioneering fathers of the church.

3.3.1.9 THE CAC PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

A scholar and prominent *CAC* pastor in London (hereafter L1), asserts that the church uses a centralised pyramidal model of leadership albeit the denomination is segmented into sections. He also reveals that the position of an officer in the hierarchy would be determined by the scope of his authority (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

3.3.1.9.1 THE PRESIDENT

The current president of the *CAC* is Pastor Samuel Olusegun Oladele. He is the eighth president of the denomination. He rose through the ranks, including serving as an assembly pastor, district superintendent, assistant general superintendent, chairman, and general superintendent, before getting to his current position in January 2021 (Adeniran 2021, 2).

The president is the highest officer, the overall head of the church and the chairman of the church's board of trustees. He is also the spiritual head of the *CAC* and regarded as God's spokesperson to the whole congregation and the world at large, and he is the declarer of the doctrines laid down by the pioneers of the church. He is the head of the GEC as well as the chairman of the general council. He carries out the policy formulated by the GEC. All special or regular committees, all church officers, particularly other principal officers, report to him. He takes the final decision on any issues affecting the church. (CAC Headquarters, *Presidency: Historical Background* 2021, 1). He is also the chairman of the finance committee of the church. The president is regarded as the accounting officer of the organisation and he is, therefore, responsible for authorising all payments. However, he has the authority to delegate this function in respect of certain votes to other officers but he must make sure that no payment is made without his authorisation or the person to whom such power is delegated (CAC Headquarters, *Finance Department: Financial Controls And Discipline in Christ Apostolic Church* 2021, 1). On the other hand, the president cannot decide alone unless he was directed by the Holy Spirit and can justify it by the Scriptures (L3 2022, telephone interview). In fact, the president's own thoughts or ideas can be challenged as the *CAC* constitution does not allow any officer to impose decisions on the church. The president is the head, but there is a separation of power in the church; the presidency and the GEC are partners. Moreover, the president shares his visions with the GEC because he is accountable to them (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

3.3.1.9.2 THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

Pastor Emmanuel O. Odejobi is the current general superintendent of the mission. He is the second-in-command to the president. He is the twelfth person to occupy the office of the

general superintendent of the *CAC* (Adeniran 2021, 3). The general superintendent is in charge of transfer of ministers from one assembly to another (L3 2022, telephone interview).

3.3.1.9.3 THE GENERAL EVANGELIST

Prophet Hezekiah Oladeji is the general evangelist of the *CAC* and the founder of *CAC* Canaan Land worldwide (Adeniran 2021, 3). The office of the general evangelist is traditionally reserved for prophets and evangelists. Oladeji leads the evangelical efforts of the church and he is the primary prophet and evangelist of the church. All evangelists in the *CAC* are under his authority. He organises crusades and all evangelical outreaches of the denomination (*CAC* Headquarters, *Evangelical Department: Historical Background* 2021, 1). Sometimes, the general evangelist and his team will pray over certain issues and send the result to the president for consideration (L3 2022, telephone interview).

3.3.1.9.4 THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Pastor Ezekiel Mapur is the current general secretary of the *CAC* worldwide (Adeniran 2021, 4). He shoulders the burden of administration in the church (*CAC* Headquarters, *Administration Department: Historical Background* 2021, 1).

3.3.1.9.5 THE FINANCE DIRECTOR

Pastor Johnson F. Omitinde is the current finance director of the Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC* Headquarters, *Finance Department: Historical Background* 2021, 1). He is the chief finance officer of the mission. Omitinde is responsible and accountable to the president for the day-to-day financial management of the church (*CAC* Headquarters, *Finance Department: Financial Controls And Discipline in Christ Apostolic Church* 2021, 1).

3.3.1.9.6 THE MISSION DIRECTOR

Pastor C. S. Fasuyi is the current mission director of the Christ Apostolic Church and he is in charge of missionary activities of the organisation (*CAC* Headquarters, *Missions Department: Brief History Of The Missions Department* 2021, 2).

3.3.1.10 ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Since the inception of the ministry, members are accountable to their local pastors. The local pastor is accountable to the district superintendent while the district superintendent is accountable to the office of the general superintendent. All the principal officers report to the president. The president is the spiritual head of the mission but he is accountable to the GEC (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

3.3.1.11 INDEPENDENT MINISTERS WITHIN THE CHRIST APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Today, *CAC* have a presence in most major cities of the world, including London, and this is made possible by several independent ministries such as World Soul-Winning Evangelistic Mission (*CAC* WOSEM) established by Evangelist T. O. Obadare in May 1974 (Alokan 2018, 132-133; Ayegboyin and Ishola 1997, 79). *CAC* WOSEM boosted the membership of *CAC* in

USA, England, Europe and Canada (Jenkins 2007, 249). Other prominent *CAC* assemblies in London include CAC Surrey Docks District HQ London; Christ Apostolic Church of Great Britain; CAC Stockwell; and CAC Outreach DDC HQ. These churches have given birth to several other *CAC* branches in London and beyond. They have boosted the reputation of the organisation in the West by their numerous initiatives. However, the proliferation of independent *CAC* congregations caused crises and divisions in the church since the early 1990s (Alokan 2018, 190; Komolafe 2013, 111). Some pioneers of the independent ministries do not follow the laws of the church (Alokan 2018, 132). Thus, there were many court cases and some assemblies turned out to have used the *CAC* logo without having any form of relationship with the church headquarters in Ibadan, Nigeria (Crumbley 2008, 99). However, the crises compelled the church to restructure the organisation which paved the way for the creation of more districts and Zonal Coordinating Councils within the church setting. This led to rapid promotion for many church officers and encouraged many pastors to come back to the church (Alokan 2018, 216). Nevertheless, the denomination is still facing the challenge of how to integrate growing ministries within the larger *CAC* structure, while allowing them the autonomy they need to develop (Crumbley 2008, 100, 101).

The Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC*) started in the early twentieth century by a group of five men in Nigeria and since then the church has been governed by principal officers headed by the president of the mission. The *CAC* uses a centralised hierarchical model of leadership though the denomination is segmented into sections. The denomination is currently having six principal officers governing the church. Even though the leadership structure of *CAC* is not centred on one person, the president exercises his authority as the highest executive officer of the church but he is responsible for his decisions to the church board of trustees and other principal officers. Finally, the General Executive Council (GEC) is the highest ruling body in the *CAC* where all relevant officers derive their authority. Presently, the *CAC* is a worldwide church that has a presence in a large proportion of the major cities across the globe.

3.3.2 THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD (RCCG)

3.3.2.1 THE FOUNDER AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF RCCG

In 1952, Reverend Josiah Akindayomi left the leadership of the Cherubim & Seraphim Church, part of the Aladura movement and established his own religious group which later became known as the Redeemed Christian Church of God (*RCCG*) (Ajayi 1997, 43, 44; Jenkins 2007, 245). The group started with nine members and gradually grew as the news of miracles happening in their services spread to the neighbouring towns and cities (Ogunewu 2009, 2). Josiah led the group and dictated its activities (Ukah 2008, 15), but the nucleus of the society comprised of twelve men namely “*Messrs. Fakinmoju, Makun, Adekoya, Padonu, Olonode, Fadiora, Ilenusi, Okunobi, Fetuga, Adefeso, Adefunwa and Matiluko*” (Adeboye 2011, 57). Other members were men and women from the lower and middle classes; they all shared the same goal of trying to know more of God and to have a better life socially and economically (Adeboye 2011, 57). Josiah was exposed to doctrines of some Pentecostal churches such as the Assemblies of God Church and the Foursquare Gospel Church through some friends and printed materials from these denominations influenced his own congregation for the better (Olaleru 2007, 60). For example, the church adopted the Sunday school manual of the Assemblies of God Church from 1952 –

1982, and this helped the congregants to have better understanding of the word of God (Olofinjana 2011, 79). Accordingly, Josiah left the Aladura church in 1952 and established his own congregation and his exposure to some Pentecostal churches influenced him and his ministry to have better understanding of the Scripture.

3.3.2.2 HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE UNDER AKINDAYOMI'S LEADERSHIP

The organisational structure under Josiah Akindayomi's leadership comprised of seven levels of hierarchically ordered offices namely, the founder, who served as the General Superintendent and the President of the General Council; followed by the General Secretary, then the assistant General Secretary and the General Treasurer. Next were the Financial Secretary and the Auditor of the mission (Ukah 2008, 59). These executive officers administered three divisions of the church which were as follows: the Executive Council (made up of the principal officers of the church), the General Council (which constituted the primary officers), and then all the ordained ministers. The third division, the Parish Council, was made up of the Main Officers at the Parish level (Ukah 2008, 59). These departments later expanded to six hierarchically ordered bodies with the Supreme Council at the zenith, followed by the Committee of Elders; Council of Ministers; the General Council; the Parish Committee; and the Assembly of the Faithful (Ukah 2008, 59).

3.3.2.3 ADEBOYE: HIS ASCENSION TO THE RCCG APEX RANK

In 1973, Enoch Adejare Adeboye joined the *RCCG* because of his daughter's persistent illness (Rice 2009, 6); gave his life to Christ and become a Christian on 29 July 1973 (Olofinjana 2011, 125). He attended the mandatory believers' baptismal classes, was baptised by immersion in September 1973 and later became a church-worker (Ukah 2008, 75). Adeboye was later ordained as an assistant pastor and was made an official interpreter and translator for Akindayomi (Ukah 2008, 75). Then, on 14 September 1975, Adeboye was ordained a pastor of the *RCCG* (Ogunewu 2009, 2).

As Akindayomi became aged and fragile, some of his co-workers considered it an opportunity for contesting for the senior position in the church (Ukah 2008, 60). This is because Article (18.a.ii) of the church constitution stipulates that "*in the event of the death of the General Superintendent, a successor shall be elected by the General Council (all Principal Officers and all ordained ministers) at their annual meeting by a simple majority of those present and entitle to vote*" (Ukah 2008, 59). Thus, there was some in-fighting among three educated pastors namely Pastor Ogedemgbe (an engineer), Pastor Chris Fajemirokun (a lawyer) and Pastor Adeboye (a University lecturer & a part-time pastor), while other interested parties took sides with these main contenders (Ukah 2008, 60, 68). Hence, Josiah Akindayomi announced that his successor shall be selected by the leading of the Holy Spirit instead of following the letter of the constitution (Ukah 2008, 60). He believed that the Bible is the real constitution of the *RCCG* and considered the written constitution as a tool to get government approval (Ukah 2008, 60). *RCCG* literature opines that the Lord had revealed to Akindayomi the description of the man who would succeed him (Ukah 2008, 60). Ogunewu (2009, 2) posits that Adeboye, too, had a revelation from the Lord that he would be Josiah Akindayomi's successor, but it was hard for him to contemplate such an awesome responsibility. In 1980, before his demise, Josiah appointed Adeboye as his successor (Olofinjana 2011, 125).

These significant steps were taken by Josiah Akindayomi to prevent the congregants doubting the authenticity of what he desired for his church (Ukah 2008, 49). For instance, he tape-recorded his intentions for the RCCG particularly mentioning Adeboye as his successor (Olofinjana 2011, 82). Deborah, Josiah Akindayomi's daughter, also claimed that her late father gave Adeboye a rod which he brought from Jerusalem and that he prayed for Adeboye, signifying transfer of power and legitimacy (Ukah 2008, 62). Josiah Akindayomi died on 2 November 1980 at seventy-one years of age (Adedibu [2019] 2020, 171, 172; 2016, 82), survived by a wife and three children (Olofinjana 2011, 82) and, at the time of its founder's death, the RCCG had thirty-nine branch churches in south-western Nigeria (Ukah 2008, 2).

After Akindayomi demise, the battle for the top office was intensified among the ambitious senior pastors who were still vying for the position. On 20 January 1981, Adeboye was consecrated and installed as the new and second General Superintendent of the RCCG (Burgess 2012, 127). He therefore resigned from his secured and prestigious job as a lecturer at the University of Ilorin, where he was then employed, after previously (in 1979) transferring his services there from the University of Lagos (Coleman and Maier 2013, 353; Olofinjana 2011, 125). He then relocated to Lagos with his family and began his full-time ministry in 1981 (Ukah 2008, 76). One can observe here how Adeboye joined the RCCG and rose to the position of the General Superintendent, making some senior pastors uncomfortable due to his rapid promotion to this senior post in the church.

3.3.2.4 HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE UNDER ADEBOYE'S LEADERSHIP

The leadership of Adeboye heralded in a new era in the organisational and leadership structures of the RCCG (Adedibu [2019] 2020, 172). Since his ascension to the apex rank, Adeboye has changed the categories of leaders in the church hierarchy a number of times. For example, prior to 1990, Adeboye increased the categories of leaders in the church hierarchy to ten and these were the "*General Overseer, an Assistant General Overseer, a general secretary, a treasurer, zonal pastors and area pastors*". Others include "*parish pastors, assistant pastors or deacons, church workers, and the choristers*" (Ukah 2008, 94). After 1990, more offices were added and the order in the pyramid had to change. The new offices included "*a Deputy General Overseer, then the expansion of the office of the Assistant General Overseers to six in 2002, and a distinct office of 'mother-in-Israel' for the General Overseer's wife*". Others include "*Regional Co-ordinators, provincial pastors and distinct office of deacons as different from Assistant pastors*" (Ukah 2008, 94-96). It is therefore obvious that, since the inception of his reign as General Overseer, Adeboye has made a lot of changes to the organisational structure of RCCG, particularly the inclusion of his wife in a position of leadership.

Thus, the current leadership structure of the RCCG has Adeboye, the General Overseer, at the apex, followed by his wife, and then the Continental Overseers. Following in the hierarchy are the Deputy Continental Overseers, Assistants to the Continental Overseers, then the Intercontinental appointments. The Intercontinental appointments include Intercontinental evangelist, Intercontinental youth pastor, Intercontinental prayer coordinator, Intercontinental music director, Intercontinental missions coordinator, Intercontinental financial controller, and Intercontinental CSR coordinator (RCCG: Our Structure 2024). Despite frequent changes in the categories of leaders in the RCCG hierarchy, it is noticeable that the category of the General Overseer and that of the office of the 'mother-in-Israel' always appear in the church hierarchy.

3.3.2.5 AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL OVERSEER OF RCCG

The General Overseer (GO) is at the apex of the RCCG pyramidal leadership structure, whose position “*is sacrosanct for he is regarded as God’s representative whose authority is supreme, his orders final and his power and supremacy are considered next to Jesus Christ*” (Ukah 2008, 96). Adeboye is accorded the formal status of the divine in human form to the extent that his teachings constitute doctrinal elements and biblical exegesis for the denomination (Ukah 2008, 171). Moreover, Adeboye’s portrait is second only to the Bible in terms of ubiquity within the RCCG world; his pictures themselves are seen as conductors of miracles and a divine presence (Ukah 2008, 228). It is significant to note that Adeboye oversees the RCCG International headquarters in Lagos and, through this office; he also presides over the diaspora by controlling doctrine centrally and also over all or some of its core religious personnel at global level (Adogame 2013, 121). He reports to no one except God. Therefore, there is no trace of democracy within the RCCG; the denomination is autocratic (Ukah 2008, 96). According to Rice (2009, 7), the RCCG is “*a tightly regimented organization, with authority flowing down from the general overseer through geographic zones and into individual parishes*”. The RCCG claims that any decision made by Adeboye remains and can only be reversed by the church’s Governing Council (Eyoboka, Ovuakporie and Agbakwuru, 2017, 1). It would seem difficult for the General Council to reverse his decision because the General Overseer also serves as the chairman of the General Council. Since the current General Overseer is neither voted into office nor nominated by anyone, he cannot be removed from office. In fact, the RCCG constitution does not make provisions for him to resign or retire therefore he holds the office for life, unlike the other pastors who must retire at the age of seventy (Eyoboka and Latona 2014, 3).

3.3.2.6 THE OFFICE OF THE ‘MOTHER-IN-ISRAEL’

Significantly, Adeboye transformed the patriarchal organisational structure of the RCCG through the creation of the distinct office of ‘mother-in-Israel’ for his wife, Pastor Folu Adeboye and the wife of the late founder, Pastor Esther Akindayomi (Adedibu 2012, 78). Adedibu (2012, 78) affirms that the use of the title ‘Mother-in-Israel’ “*is consistent with the Aladura’s ecclesiastical nomenclature from which the RCCG has its roots*”. After the death of Pastor Esther in 2001, there remains one occupant of the office and it is important to know that only the wife of a General Overseer can occupy this post (Ukah 2008, 98, 99). Ukah (2008, 99) describes the rank of ‘Mother-in-Israel’ as more powerful than all other offices except the office of the General Overseer. Pastor Folu is fondly called ‘Mummy GO’ as her husband is called ‘Daddy GO’: “*such designations indicate direct equivalents, and point to the unique power and administrative authority of wives of church leaders*” (Ukah 2008, 101). Pastor Folu leads the African Missions, that is, RCCG mission work within the continent of Africa (Adogame 2013, 82). Thus, it does need to be said that the RCCG uses a centralised hierarchically leadership structure with the inclusion of the GO’s wife at the helm of affairs.

3.3.2.7 RCCG LONDON

In the United Kingdom, every RCCG parish is a legal entity (Adedibu 2012, 209). Each parish is headed by a pastor and each assembly is connected to the church headquarters in Nigeria (THE RCCG 2018). It is pertinent to note that the RCCG give room for their parishes in the UK to

adopt policies that best fit their own circumstances before adopting any of the templates designed by the central office as a parish policy (RCCG UK: *Compendium of Policies* n.d., 1). Today, the RCCG remains the fastest growing Nigerian-led network of churches in Britain (Burgess 2020, 252; Adedibu [2019] 2020, 182; Wahrisch-Oblau 2012, 6; Kwiyani 2017, 13).

The RCCG began in 1952 and since then the church has been utilising a pyramidal model of leadership. Since his ascension to the position of the General Overseer, Adeboye has changed the categories of leaders in the church hierarchy in a number of times. He also elevated his wife to the position of second-in-command. Adeboye enjoys the privilege of having an absolute authority within the RCCG and he reports to no one except God.

3.3.3 KINGSWAY INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CENTRE (KICC)

3.3.3.1 HISTORY & ORIGIN

The Kingsway International Christian Centre (*KICC*) was founded by Matthew Abiodun Ashimolowo, who was born on 17 March 1952 into an Islamic family in Zaria, northern Nigeria (Olofinjana 2018, 246; 2010, 59). He pastored in Nigeria for about ten years (1974-1984) before he was sent to England in response to a missionary request from London (Olofinjana 2015, 43) and, consequently, he and his family arrived in England on February 11, 1984, as part of the Foursquare denomination, to establish a church branch in London (Olofinjana 2015, 42; Burgess 2020, 251).

On 6 September, 1992, Ashimolowo seceded from the Foursquare Gospel Church to start an independent ministry, known as Kingsway International Christian Centre (*KICC*) (Olofinjana 2018, 247). He was convinced he had been given an assignment that would be difficult to achieve in the Foursquare church (Olofinjana 2018, 247). This coincided with an era when the number of Nigerian migrants in Britain was on the increase (Burgess 2012, 129). The church began with approximately 200 adults and 100 children (*KICC: Leadership* 2020, 2), and the congregants reached 4,000 in 1997 (*KICC: Our History* 2020, 3). On 23 August 1998, the new site known as the 'Miracle Centre' was launched by Dr. Morris Cerrullo (*KICC: Our History* 2020, 2). It can accommodate five-thousand worshippers, therefore becoming the largest church in the UK (Olofinjana 2015, 30): double the capacity of Westminster Abbey or St Paul's Cathedral (Jenkins 2007, 115). So, it can clearly be seen that, during the first nine years since Ashimolowo left Foursquare Church and established *KICC*, that the church at least in numerical terms appears to have become a resounding success.

3.3.3.2 FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION INTO KICC BY THE CHARITY COMMISSION

In March 2002, payment of salaries to trustees, expensive gifts to Ashimolowo by some members, and a lack of clarity between the founder's private companies and the church's property, prompted an investigation by the Charity Commission into the *KICC* (then known as the King's Ministries Trust (Olofinjana 2018, 248, 249). Ashimolowo, his wife and two assistant pastors were receiving salaries as trustees with no church documents validating this development (Olofinjana 2018, 248, 249). The Commission focused their investigation on three particular issues: "Firstly, to investigate whether money has been inappropriately paid to members of the Trustees, secondly,

the quality of governance and thirdly, to ascertain whether the church's assets were at risk" (Olofinjana 2010, 64). The steps taken by this overseeing watchdog brought the integrity of the *KICC*, and particularly Ashimolowo, under suspicion (Olofinjana 2010, 63). Some churches in England, including *KICC*, believed that there was a coordinated effort by the regulators to remove or weaken the administrative power of an independent leader and to replace it with leadership by committee (Sturge 2005, 212). Conversely, the Commission argued that the *KICC* leadership was not administering in the best interest of the charity and therefore warranting an independent receiver manager to be placed in the church (Sturge 2005, 212-214). The Charity Commission later further stated in their report that Ashimolowo and his family lived rent-free in a property owned by the church (Adedibu 2012, 108) and they also reported that Ashimolowo used *KICC's* credit card to purchase a £12,000 timeshare in Florida, as well as for the running of a commercial business from church premises (Adedibu 2012, 108). In addition, *KICC* members lavished him with a birthday party worth £120,000, of which £80,000 went to the purchasing of a Mercedes-Benz car (Adedibu 2012, 108). However, after the investigation the *KICC* was vindicated on all three issues, but a few amendments were needed to be made to the church documents. For instance, the church needs to state in their constitution that trustees shall be paid salaries as it is legal to do so in the UK (Olofinjana 2010, 64). It is significant to note that this saga tarnished the reputation of Ashimolowo and the *KICC* (Olofinjana 2018, 248; Adedibu 2012, 227). This whole episode shows that *KICC* was investigated for financial mismanagement, but it was vindicated although there was a need for the church to amend its constitution with more appropriate wording.

3.3.3.3 LEADERSHIP AND KICC

The previous section demonstrated that *KICC* is an independent Nigerian-led mega-church using an independent leadership style and organisational culture (Sturge 2005, 212). The organisational structure of the *KICC* places the senior pastor, Matthew Ashimolowo, as the head of the church (Olofinjana 2010, 63). Osgood (2012, 114) affirms that Ashimolowo has been able to exercise greater freedom in decision-making at *KICC* because he is detached from denominational ties. Ashimolowo is a mentor, businessman, spiritual father and has the ability to combine his calling as a pastor and teacher (*KICC: Leadership 2020, 1*). Olofinjana (2018, 247) opines that Ashimolowo has become a model and inspiration to many Christians globally. *KICC* involves women in leadership and this is demonstrated through the ministries of Pastor Yemisi Ashimolowo, the resident pastor of the headquarters church, and other women in the church (Olofinjana 2010, 69). As the resident pastor of the largest single congregation in Britain and the head of *KICC's* Winning Women ministry, Pastor Yemisi oversees the spiritual lives of more than five thousand women (*KICC Leadership 2020, 3*). In January 2022, Ashimolowo ordained his first son, Tobi Ashimolowo, and appointed him as resident pastor 2 of the headquarters church; his primary role is to help his mum, pastor Yemisi, resident pastor 1, in the church (Oluwafemi 2022, 1). *KICC* also has a senior management team which manages the day-to-day activities of the church. The team consists of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Resident Pastor 1, Resident Pastor 2 and Director of Finance & Compliance. Others are Director of Administration, Director of Communications, Media & Marketing, Senior Facilities & Premises Manager and Pastor of Counselling (*KICC: Leadership 2020, 3*). The *KICC* Board of Trustees has eight members with Wyn Knuckles as the chair (*KICC: Leadership 2020 3*). There

are numerous leaders undertaking a variety of responsibilities as ministers and deacons or divisional, departmental or Caring Heart Fellowship leaders (KICC: Leadership 2020, 4). The church has a training institute that equips congregants depending on their role in leadership, ministerial or pastoral skills (KICC: Leadership 2020, 4). It is *KICC's* vision to equip every Christian for an important ministry by helping them to discover, develop and deploy the gifts and talents God gave them (KICC: *KICC Vision* 2020, 1). *KICC* leadership is centred on the senior Pastor who is also the founder of the church, with the founder's wife and their son also actively involved in the most senior position of leadership.

3.3.4 THE FOUNTAIN OF PEACE MINISTRIES OF THE CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM CHURCH (FOP)

3.3.4.1 HISTORY & ORIGIN

The history of the Fountain of Peace Ministries of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (FOP) began on 16 May 2004, when Mark Amadi, Gbenga Koledoye, Yemi Atanda, Deji Olayemi and Dayo Oladehin, who gathered at Oladehin's flat to seek the face of the Lord. Consequent to this meeting, they started a Saturday fellowship and this marked the beginning of what would later become the *FOP* (FOP: *Our Beginning* n.d, 1). On Sunday, 1 August, 2004, the prayer group began their spiritual journey as a church (FOP: *Our Beginning* n.d, 1). Today, the church is located on 3 Staffa Road, off Lea Bridge Road, Argall Estate, Leyton, in the London Borough of Waltham Forest. *FOP* is a nondenominational, cross-cultural and multi-racial congregation reaching out to people and families in London and beyond. The church is Pentecostal, Evangelical and Charismatic in nature and approach; therefore it is often described as a Pente-charismatic ministry, flowing in the apostolic and prophetic anointing (FOP: *About Fountain of Peace Ministries* n.d, 1). It is a fast-growing family church that is willing to welcome any who desire to visit, fellowship and experience the love of Christ (FOP: *Who we are* n.d, 1). *FOP* is a confessional church that firmly holds Scripture to be the only source of truth and final authority for all Christian doctrine (FOP: *Fountain Pastoral Academy* n.d, 2). It is a Missional Church who believes that they were empowered by the Holy Spirit to do missionary work. They train and equip believers to become disciples of Christ by creating an avenue where every congregant is a minister. In addition, they emphasise the significance of dependency on the supernatural empowering of the Holy Spirit (FOP: *About Fountain of Peace Ministries* n.d, 1). The church does not model their programs around consumeristic Christian needs only, but around ministries shaped to preach the Good News to the non-believer. This they do, not as a programme, but a lifestyle (FOP: *Who we are* n.d, 1). Therefore, their core values in serving include excellence, integrity, innovation and simplicity (FOP: *Fountain of Peace welcome video* 2021). In summary, *FOP*, a Pente-charismatic ministry, started as a prayer group with five men and later metamorphosed into a family church that emphasises evangelism and discipleship.

3.3.4.2 LEADERSHIP AND FOP

At *FOP*, the 'Pastorate' is the most significant body in terms of leadership positions. It consists of the senior pastor, who is the spiritual head, and the pastoral team. The body is responsible for church life, as well as the pastoral and spiritual care of the ministry (FOP: *Pastorate* n.d, 1). The church operates a collegiate system, "where most ministries are referred to as College, Faculty, School and

Institute for an effective teaching and learning, evangelism and development” (FOP: Ministries n.d, 1). However, due to expansion of the congregation, some administrative machinery was put in place for the smooth running of the church (FOP: *Leadership Overview* n.d, 1). Dr Amadi has been the senior pastor of FOP since its inception (FOP: *Meet Our Pastor* n.d, 1) and he is passionate about empowering lives and preaching the Gospel to a hurting world (Amadi 2020, 150). Amadi is a prophet, an author and holds several educational qualifications and professional positions including BSC (Nigeria), MA, MSC, DBTS, PhD and Cardio Vascular Disease Researcher (UK) (Amadi 2020, 150). He is also an associate of Christ Church University, Canterbury (UK) and a member of the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism (GloPent) (Amadi 2020, 150). In addition, he is a practising member of the British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR), the British Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology (BSACI) and the British Society for Heart Failure (BSH) (Amadi 2020, 150). Amadi “*believes that God has empowered everybody with a unique potential that needs to be displayed – to have dominion*” (FOP: *Meet Our Pastor* n.d, 1). The Pastoral team comprises of persons administering the following departments, namely: worship, spiritual, pastoral care, hospitality and programming, Head Believers’ College, Head School of Apologetics and one Minister Rotimi Familusi (FOP: *Pastorate* n.d, 1). There is only one female among the seven members of the pastoral team. The FOP Board of Trustees has Taiwo Olugbode as the chairman, Tutu Ajiboye and minister Kola Lambo as members, and Abiodun Atanda as the secretary (FOP: *Board of Trustees*, n.d, 1). The Apostolic Council of the church has two female members and nine male members (FOP: *Apostolic Council* n.d, 1). It is important to note that every worker in Christ at FOP is considered and addressed as a ‘Minister’ in the sense that they all have a responsibility to serve others effectively (FOP: Ministries n.d, 1).

It is significant that the church has attributed their pioneering spirit to a dynamic apostolic prophet, to the leadership team as well as to every member of FOP. They affirm that “*leadership is not being strong-willed; rather it is having a strong sense of purpose that is centred upon God’s will*” (FOP: *Leadership Overview* n.d, 1). This statement tends to suggest that FOP’s leadership is not centred on one person but authority is shared among the church leaders even though the church has a senior pastor who also serves as the spiritual head.

3.3.5 Church 5: Anonymous

It is necessary to mention that *Church 5* is a white garment church founded by a prophetess. In 2012, the founder (L2 hereafter) started women of faith meetings on one Saturday every month to discuss issues affecting women’s relationships with other people. In 2014, they started holding Sunday services, as well as Wednesday fellowships and night vigils at the founder’s residence. In 2017 the prayer group was registered as a charity: they have no property of their own (L2 2022, personal interview). These *Church 5* members donned white garments during church services, and L2 (2022, personal interview) states that the reason for wearing these garments is because the Holy Spirit likes white robes because they symbolise purity and holiness. This view confirms assertions by Adedibu (2018, 3) and Alokun (2018, 72) about the wearing of white apparel by the Aladura Churches, as well as the rule that females must cover their heads whenever they are in the church premises. It is also observed shoes are not allowed in the church: one must leave them at the entrance. Unlike many C & S churches in Nigeria, there are no menstrual rites in the *Church 5* (L2 2022, personal interview). The membership of the church is under 100 congregants,

mostly made up of women. They have regular prayer meetings for different groups within the church and the prayer sessions also provide opportunities for non-members to participate. Some of their prayer points carry local cultural significations. The founder and the members believe in the existence of the power of divine healing (L2 2022, personal interview) as well as in spiritual powers, mystical forces and the host of angels. They emphasise the manifestation of the Holy Spirit during their services. The worship session that the researcher observed was emotionally stirring: the worshippers were clapping and dancing to the music rendered by the church choir.

Church 5 members believe that the church is the body of Christ that must be open to all people without restriction to any race or colour. The church gives monthly regular donations to different charity organisations in the UK and to many churches in Nigeria and Ghana. During the first Covid-19 lockdown, the church distributed facemasks, gel and hand sanitisers to the local community (L2 2022, personal interview).

The organisational structure of *Church 5* is somewhat loose, flexible, and non-formalised. They claim to have reserved the church altar for Christ as the Head of the church. However, the church leadership seems to be centred on the founding pastor, L2, as she is both the spiritual and administrative head, therefore *Church 5* can be described as a founder-led independent church. They claim that the Holy Spirit guides the founder, particularly in regard to liturgy and preaching and thus they rely solely on her in matters of faith, doctrine, administration and worship. L2 is in sole charge of the congregation and the day-to-day running of the church is anchored on her. She has unchallengeable authority on all matters as she claims to be guided by the Holy Spirit and she may delegate responsibilities to whosoever in the assembly as she feels led. The most important aspect of *Church 5* is that it is governed by the founder and no member is allowed to question her authority as she claims to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

3.3.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The descriptive-empirical task of Osmer (2008) was used to study the history and the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. This section was started by addressing the Christianisation of Nigeria, as two of the five representative churches began from Nigeria. This chapter shows that the Christian landscape in Nigeria is diverse with traditions ranging from Mission Churches to the Ethiopian Churches, Aladura Churches, and the Pentecostals. These churches are actively operating in different forms of church governance ranging from Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, hierarchical model of leadership and Founder-led model of leadership. While the hierarchical leadership model is favoured among the Aladura churches, the Founder-led approach to leadership is prominent among the Pentecostals. The chapter also shows the richness in diversity of five Nigerian-led churches in London: *CAC*, *RCCG*, *KICC*, *FOP* and *Church 5* (see Table 3.1).

TABLE 3.2 FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT OF THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON

CHURCH	CAC	RCCG	KICC	FOP	CHURCH 5
ROOTS	Anglican	C & S	Foursquare	C & S	C & S
FORM	Centralised hierarchical	Centralised hierarchical	Centralised hierarchical	Collegiate	Founder-led

	leadership	leadership	leadership		
AUTHORITY	GEC	General Overseer	Senior Pastor	PASTORATE	Founder
DESCRIPTION	The president leads the church but he is accountable to the GEC	The General Overseer exercises absolute authority and reports to no one	The Senior Pastor who is also the president alone is allowed to make decisions for the church	Shared authority	The Founder enjoys absolute authority and unopposed power

Table 3.2: Forms of church government of the Nigerian-led churches in London

Table 3.2 indicates that the Nigerian-led churches in London are diverse in their polity. It is observable that the *RCCG*, *FOP*, and *Church 5* had the same roots but they are different in their approaches to leadership. Also significant is the fact that Adu, in his PhD thesis, observes that the designation CEO is not used in some African-led Pentecostal Churches in British society, but in practice the senior leader resembles a CEO and he noticed that this happens in churches where the congregation is large, in excess of 500 congregants. He referenced the New Wine Church, a Nigerian-led church in London, as an example (Adu 2015, 80). On the other hand, this study reveals that some denominations of substantial size such as the *RCCG*, as well as family-size congregations with a single Pastor such as *Church 5*, are using this leadership model. This table also shows that Nigerian-led mega-churches in London are not carbon copies of each other in terms of their ecclesiastical structures. For instance, both the *RCCG* and *CAC* are using a centralised pyramidal model of leadership. However, the leadership structure of *CAC* is not centred on one individual only; whereas, the man at the helm of affairs in the *RCCG* worldwide, exercises absolute power and authority and he is accountable to no one except God. Finally, this segment reveals the predominance of the one-person leadership model where absolute authority and sole decision-making power usually resides in the leader and the centralised pyramidal leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

Chapter four will focus on Osmer's (2008, 4) interpretive task of practical theological interpretation to seek reasons for the prominence of the forms of church government observed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICES OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter utilises Osmer's (2008) descriptive-empirical task of the practical theological interpretation to describe the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London from the participant' perspectives. Osmer's (2008) interpretive task of practical theological interpretation will also be employed to interpret the data collected from the thirty-three participants seeking reasons for the prominence of forms of church government observed in the descriptive-empirical task (see section 2.5). The twelve leaders of the thirty-three participants are referred to as L1 – L12 while the twenty-one laypersons of the thirty-three informants are referred to as LP1 – LP21. To maintain consistency between the different interviews, every informant was asked two questions (see Table 4.1) albeit the data collection method used gives the researcher the opportunity to restructure questions depending on the situation (Zubkov and Kafeero 2021, 161). Every question asked of the participants proffer knowledge that will enable this study to answer the research question: *How closely does church governance, as practised in Nigerian-led churches in London, accord with the teaching of Apostle Paul on this subject* (Drumm 2021, 259-262; Vyhmeister and Robertson 2020, 62).

TABLE 4.1 SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
1. How would you describe the governance structure of your church or also of any other Nigerian-led churches in London?
2. What factors have influenced the founders of Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their governance structures?

Table 4.1: semi-structured interview questions.

The interview data are presented question by question (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 547). The answer to the first question will be addressed first with the aid of a table showing responses from the interviewees. Consequent to the second question, nine themes were inductively generated from the research data (Cameron and Duce [2013] 2017, 103) and they are as follows: financial gain; lack of financial accountability; lack of trust; the Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria; unwillingness to serve others; love of power & authority; lack of unity; numerical growth; and gender. The discussion of each theme is driven by the data: responses from the leaders will be stated first and then followed by the comments from the laypersons. Tables will be used to display responses of the informants where appropriate. Where the data from leaders and laypersons are similar in the table, they are grouped into a single set of responses by row; where there are dissimilar responses they are kept separate (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2011, 547). It is important to point out that where a table is used, the number of leaders and/or laypersons that made comments is going to be displayed but not their coded names such as L1 or LP5.

4.2 QUESTION 1: How would you describe the governance structure of your church or also of any other Nigerian-led churches in London?

All the thirty-three participants responded to this question (see Table 4.2). L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview); L3 (2022, telephone interview); L5 (2022, telephone interview); L6 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview); L10 (2022, personal interview); and L11 (2022, telephone interview) gave a description of a centralised pyramidal leadership model where no individual leader exercises absolute authority or having unopposed power. On the other hand, L7 (2022, personal interview) and L12 (2022, telephone interview), gave a description of a centralised hierarchically leadership model where the authority of the supreme leader is absolute. The description given by L2 (2022, personal interview); L4 (2022, personal interview); L8 (2022, telephone interview); and L9 (2020, telephone interview), can be described as a one-person leadership model. According to them, the one-person approach to leadership is when a pastor of a local church is in sole charge of the ministry and the day-to day affairs of the church. L2 (2022, personal interview) and L9 (2022, telephone interview) are church pioneers and they both admitted that they are in sole charge of their respective ministries though with the help of the Holy Spirit. When describing the authority structures of their respective churches, eleven laymembers of the thirty-three informants gave descriptions similar to what can be described as a one-person leadership model; whereas, the other ten laypersons of the thirty-three participants gave descriptions of centralised pyramidal models, where the person at the apex of leadership exercises absolute authority.

TABLE 4.2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES OF THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON

QUESTION 1: How would you describe the governance structure of your church or also of any other Nigerian-led churches in London?			
FORM	Centralised pyramidal leadership model (shared authority)	Centralised pyramidal leadership model (absolute authority)	One-person leadership model
LEADERS	6	2	4
LAYPERSONS	0	10	11
TOTAL	6	12	15

Table 4.2: Governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London

Table 4.2 indicates that the leaders had a broader range of views than the laypersons. It is observable that the laypersons think absolute authority always resides in the person holding the highest office in the Nigerian-led churches. Significantly, some of them gave accounts of their respective local churches without commenting on the church headquarters. There seems to be no difference between centralised pyramidal leadership models where absolute authority always resides in a leader and what some laypersons described as a one-person leadership model, except for the fact that some churches are family-size congregations while others are mega-churches that have branch churches. Therefore, the word “centralised” cannot be used to refer to a pastor of a local church that has no authority over another church. Table 4.2 also shows that the centralised pyramidal leadership models (where leaders exercise absolute authority and sole decision-making powers) and the one-person leadership model (where power usually resides in the leader), seem to be the most prominent governance structures among the Nigerian-led

churches in London. This section helps us shed more light on the second part of sub-question one: what form of church governments exist (or are typical) among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.3 Question 2: What factors have influenced the founders of Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their governance structures?

This question produces nine themes out of the data provided by the thirty-three participants. Each theme will be discussed separately and the long ones among them (such as theme 1) will be broken down in categories. Comments from the leaders will be addressed firstly, while comments from the laypersons will be discussed thereafter and then the discussion of each theme will come to an end with a mini-conclusion.

4.4 THEME 1: FINANCIAL GAIN

Twenty-seven (six leaders and twenty-one laypersons) of the thirty-three participants made comments indicating that financial gain is the primary factor influencing the proliferation of the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Some of the comments are as follows:

4.4.1 THEME 1: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LEADERS

Some of the general overseers of the Nigerian-led churches in London own private jets while many of the church workers are struggling financially. Thus, some of the new pioneers see church ministry as a lucrative business where they can make ready cash and have absolute control over it (L4 2022, personal interview; L6 2022, telephone interview). Also, some Nigerian-led Neo-Pentecostal churches like the *KICC* are utilising business strategy to run their ministries (L8 2022, telephone interview; L5 2022, telephone interview). L4 (2022, personal interview) and L7 (2022, personal interview) added that Ashimolowo, the president of *KICC* and some leaders of Neo-Pentecostal churches in London are preaching wealth creation and materialism solely. They argue that this development is encouraging Nigerian young ministers to start their own independent ministries. L3, a *CAC* pastor, adds that a minister in the church who is poor will have no connection with the leaders at the top of the hierarchy and may find it difficult to get promotion to the next level. Consequent to this, some young ministers have left the denomination to start independent ministries (L3 2022, telephone interview). This view is corroborated by L11 (2022, telephone interview) and L7 (2022, personal interview) when they both agreed with L3 that some young pastors are leaving the *CAC* to start their own independent ministries because of their monthly wages that seems insufficient to cover their lifestyles.

On the other hand, L9 (2022, telephone interview) opines that some founders may have wrong motives, but not all church leaders who run independent ministries are greedy for money. This view is supported by L2, founder of *Church 5*, when she states that some pioneers may have wrong motives but not all pastors/ leaders are in the ministry because of their self-interests. She argues “*when God calls a minister, He calls her to be blessed, there is blessing that comes with working as a pastor apart from the church offering*” (L2 2022, personal interview). L2 also states that “*some people think riches and wealth are not meant for the ministers of God*” (L2 2022, personal interview). It is

noticeable that comments from these leaders link lifestyles of some leaders of Nigerian-led mega-churches; preaching of wealth creation; use of business strategy to run ministry; and economic survival of some young pastors to financial gain, which seems to be the primary factor influencing the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.4.2 THEME 1: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LAYPERSONS

All twenty-one laypersons of the thirty-three participants argue that financial gain is the primary factor influencing the proliferation of the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Below are some of their individual comments though, where data is similar, they are grouped together and where they are dissimilar, they are grouped separately.

4.4.2.1 CATEGORY A: SEEING CHURCH AS A BUSINESS

Eleven laypersons of the thirty-three interviewees comment that some young Nigerian pastors see church as a profitable business where they can make ready cash and have absolute control over it (LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP2 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP3 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP10 2022, telephone interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP15 2022, telephone interview; LP16 2022, telephone interview; LP17 2022, personal interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

4.4.2.2 CATEGORY B: ECONOMIC SURVIVAL

Some pastors started independent ministries using one-person leadership model after they got sacked from denominational churches (LP8 2022, telephone interview). This view is supported by LP21 (2022, telephone interview), LP1 (2022, telephone interview) and LP2 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). A trend that seems to be common among those that started independent ministries after losing their secular jobs, is that they usually go to theology school for six months or a year to study theology so that they can appear to their members as individuals who are actually called by God into full-time ministries (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP2 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

4.4.2.3 CATEGORY C: LUXURIOUS LIFESTYLES OF SOME LEADERS

LP6 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) and LP9 (2022, telephone interview) opine that the luxurious lifestyles of some senior Nigerian pastors are influencing other ministers to establish their own churches. Some laypersons think that the buying of private jets by some senior leaders of the Neo-Pentecostal churches in the name of the gospel is influencing some young ministers to start losing interest in staying with larger groups and, therefore, they start their own independent ministries (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

4.4.2.4 CATEGORY D: THE USE OF BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR RUNNING CHURCH MINISTRY

LP1 (2022, telephone interview), a member of the *RCCG* and a specialist trade & investment adviser and consultant, commented that some Nigerian-led churches in London (including the

RCCG,) are utilising business strategy to run their ministries. This view is corroborated by the other RCCG's members that participated in the interview process (LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP13 2022, personal interview; LP14 2022, personal interview). Similarly, LP5 (2022, personal interview) asserts that the marketing skills that Ashimolowo acquired from his businesses back home in Nigeria, seem to be reflected in his handling of the *KICC*. In other words, these RCCG members and LP5 see the use of business strategy by these senior leaders as a sign that these leaders see the church as a business organisation.

4.4.2.5 CATEGORY E: METHODS OF FUND RAISING

LP5 (2022, personal interview) comments that Ashimolowo and some other leaders of the Nigerian-led mega-churches in London are overemphasising the doctrine of tithing and offerings to generate funds in their ministries. For instance, LP6 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) postulates that some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London are overemphasising the concept of the prosperity gospel (PG) to their members and other people that are listening to their messages on the social media platforms. In a similar vein, some of the thirty-three informants are not pleased with the way the advocates of the PG are preaching prosperity as a determining factor in judging the welfare of the church (LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP3 2022, personal interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview). LP11 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) adds that some pastors do not care about the type of job you are doing, but are only interested in the amount of money you are giving to their ministry. Also, some of these senior leaders are fond of giving titles and positions to rich people in their congregations and, consequently, they often find it difficult to caution or discipline the wealthy members when they go wrong (LP2 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP4 2022, personal interview). It is interesting to note that a common feature among the advocates of the PG is that, while the church is in its infancy (especially when the ministry is struggling financially), you will hear a leader saying “our church”. However, when the church is financially buoyant and stable, the same leader will be saying “my church” (LP3 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP20 2022, personal interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). Some of the thirty-three interviewees left their previous churches because of the methods the leadership use in collecting money from the congregants while others have stopped attending Nigerian-led churches entirely because of the same reason (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP11 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). This new development of using the prosperity gospel to raise funds seems to be common among the Neo-Pentecostals and is contrary to the message of salvation that was popular among the senior leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in the 1950s and 1960s (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP1 2022, telephone interview). Even though it is true that the church needs money to finance its expenses, this should not warrant the congregational leaders to drain the congregants financially (LP3 2022, personal interview).

4.4.2.6 CATEGORY F: SOME LEADERS ARE DIRECT BENEFICIARIES OF THE CHURCH'S FUNDS

Six lay-members among the thirty-three people that were interviewed argue that some leaders are the ones spending the church money to satisfy their own self-interests (LP13 2022, personal

interview; LP14 2022, personal interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP20 2022, personal interview; LP3 2022, personal interview). The leaders are doing what LP3 (2022, personal interview) describes as “*kill and divide*,” meaning that the leaders are doing everything possible to get money from the church members and few people in the leadership are sharing the money among themselves.

4.4.2.7 CATEGORY G: RESOURCE CONTROL

In my interviews with four laypersons of the thirty-three informants, they thought that the primary reason some general overseers of the Nigerian-led churches in London are employing a centralised hierarchical leadership model is to increase the financial base of their ministries and to protect their own self-interests (LP15 2022, telephone interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP13 2022, personal interview; LP16 2022, telephone interview). For instance, there is certain percentage of the church funds that some local assemblies (such as RCCG–UK parishes) are sending to their mother church in Nigeria (LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP17 2022, personal interview). A trend that also seems to appeal to some general overseers of the Nigerian-led churches in London is setting financial targets for the pastors working in their ministries (LP3 2022, personal interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview). This attitude of these senior leaders seems to be affecting their congregations and also the parish pastors. For instance, the assembly pastors are liable to get sacked if they cannot meet the financial targets (LP20 2022, personal interview; LP14 2022, personal interview). Consequent to this, some local assembly pastors are using witchcraft to boost crowd attendance in their churches so that they can have enough funds to meet the financial target set by their superiors (LP3 2022, personal interview; LP11 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview).

Table 4.3 shows categories that made up theme 1. Theme 1 is financial gain and it is one of the factors that are influencing the prominence of the one-person leadership model and the centralised hierarchical leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. The first column to the left in the table indicates the number of respondents that commented on each category. The right-hand column shows the forms of church governance that theme 1 influences, while the column in the middle indicates the categories that made up the theme.

TABLE 4.3 THEME 1: FINANCIAL GAIN		
Number of Respondents	CATEGORIES	FORMS OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE THAT THEME 1 INFLUENCES
4 leaders & 11 laypersons	A. Seeing church as a business	One-person leadership model and centralised hierarchical leadership models.
3 leaders & 5 laypersons	B. Economic survival	
2 leaders & 5 laypersons	C. Luxurious lifestyles of some church leaders	
2 leaders & 8 laypersons	D. The use of business strategy to run church ministry	

2 leaders & 14 laypersons	E. Methods of fund raising	
6 laypersons	F. Some leaders are the direct beneficiaries of the church's proceeds	
10 laypersons	G. Resource control	

Table 4.3: Theme 1: financial gain

It is essential to note that all twenty-one laypersons among the thirty-three participants commented on this theme and they shared a wider range of views than the leaders. From the laypersons' perspectives, seven categories are grouped together to form theme 1 (financial gain) and they are as follows: a) seeing the church as a business, b) economic survival, c) luxurious lifestyles of some leaders, d) the use of business strategy to run the church, e) methods of fund raising, f) some leaders are direct beneficiaries of the church's funds, and g) resource control. Some of the laypersons emphasised that category (g) is directly linked to the proliferation of the centralised pyramidal leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. None of the leaders attested to categories (f) and (g). However, two leaders admitted to the fact that categories (c), (d) and (e) are parts of what is promoting the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Three leaders made comments on category B, while four leaders of the thirty-three participants agree with category A. The evidence tends to suggest that financial gain is apparently influencing the one-person leadership model and the centralised pyramidal leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Thus, the information provided by the participants on this theme enables this study to achieve one of its objectives: to research the contributing factors that influenced the founders of the Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their forms of church government. Theme 1 could be seen as one of these contributing factors that are influencing the founders of the Nigerian-led churches in London in the choice of their church governance structure.

4.5 THEME 2: LACK OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Lack of financial accountability on the part of some Christian leaders marked the second factor that appears to be influencing the proliferation of the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Eight leaders and eighteen laypersons commented on this theme. Below are some of the comments made by these leaders and this is followed by some comments from the church members.

4.5.1 THEME 2: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LEADERS

Some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London lack financial accountability towards their congregations (L8 2022, telephone interview; L10 2022, personal interview; L4 2022, personal interview). It is also common in some of the Nigerian-led churches that a special committee might raise money, but they will not know how the money is being spent by the church pioneer

(L7 2022, personal interview; L10 2022, personal interview). L4, who is a prominent member of *Church 5*, remarks that she has no idea of the financial standing of the church (L4 2022, personal interview). L2 (2022, personal interview), the pioneer of *Church 5*, confirms that church members have no details about the financial standing of the church: this includes her daughter, who is one of the trustees of the church, and her other children, who are also members of the church. Also, some independent ministers within larger denominations have in the past used personal money to establish their own assemblies, thus thinking they are now entitled to the financial gains of their parishes. This trend seems to be common among *RCCG* and *CAC* (L8 2022, telephone interview; L9 2022, telephone interview). Moreover, L3 (2022, telephone interview) laments that there is no form of financial audits in many of the *CAC* assemblies run by independent ministers. L4, however, opines that the founder of *Church 5* is not necessarily corrupt, but that it seems she struggles to understand the roles and responsibilities of a trustee (L4 2022, personal interview). Similarly, L3 (2022, telephone interview) and L7 (2022, personal interview) assert that they have confidence in some senior leaders of the Nigerian-led churches such as the current president of the *CAC* when it comes to financial accountability, but they have concerns about some of the leaders operating at the local levels. The information provided by these leaders tends to show that some church pioneers of the Nigerian-led churches in London lack financial accountability towards their members and this explains one of the reasons why they prefer the one-person leadership model.

4.5.2 THEME 2: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LAYPERSONS

Fourteen laypersons of the thirty-three respondents argued that some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London lack financial accountability towards their congregations (LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP2 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP3 2022, personal interview; LP4 2022, personal interview; LP5 2022, personal interview; LP6 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP8 2022, telephone interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP10 2022, telephone interview; LP15 2022, telephone interview; LP17 2022, personal interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

Six lay-members of the thirty-three informants argue that a number of senior leaders have used personal money in the past to start their own congregations therefore they think that they are now entitled to the financial gain of their ministries (LP2 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP6 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP4 2022, personal interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP17 2022, personal interview). LP5 (2022, personal interview) adds that “*some of these general overseers see their ministries as family business and they want their personal signature in it*”. This view is shared by LP7 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview); LP3 (2022, personal interview) and LP9 (2022, telephone interview).

Furthermore, LP1 (2022, telephone interview) postulates that some Nigerian-led churches in London are not transparent about the way they are running their organisations. LP1 cites the church he attended at a tender age in Nigeria, as an example of how leaders have a board showing the attendance and the actual money collected in the previous week; he sees this as a form of financial accountability (LP1 2022, telephone interview). It is also common in some of the Nigerian-led churches that some members will be in charge of counting money after the

church service, but they will not know how the money is being spent (LP12 2022, telephone interview). This is contrary to what is going on in many historic churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church in London (LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP2 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). In addition, LP5 (2022, personal interview) comments that some members of the board of trustees in the Nigerian-led churches in London lack authority to carry out roles and responsibilities expected of trustees in the church. Like L3 and L7, nine laypersons of the thirty-three interviewees, including former and current members of the *CAC*, admit that they have confidence in the church president when it comes to financial accountability, but that they worry about some of the church pioneers who operate individually within the denomination (LP3 2022, personal interview; LP4 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP13 2022, personal interview; LP14 2022, personal interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP16 2022, telephone interview). Finally, LP6 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) and LP1 (2022, telephone interview) argue that reported cases of financial mismanagement of some Nigerian-led churches in London in the media is enough to justify the concerns raised about the lack of financial accountability some leaders have towards their congregations. A wide range of views coming from the respondents on this particular theme can be observed. There is not much difference in what the leaders and the laypersons have said about lack of financial accountability of some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches towards their congregants. The only difference is the mentioning of reported cases of financial mismanagement made by two lay-members. This theme sheds more light on one of the objectives of this study: to research the contributing factors that influenced the founders of the Nigerian-led churches in London in the choice of their forms of church government.

4.6 THEME 3: LACK OF TRUST

Some leaders' lack of trust in their church members marked the third factor that is promoting the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. L4, a long-time member of *Church 5*, comments that lack of trust is the primary reason *Church 5* is currently not having assistant pastors like other Pentecostal churches. L4 also comments that the founder of that particular church has no trust in any other church member except for her daughter. L4 claims that the founder prefers solo leadership and it seems to be affecting the health of the church (L4 2022, personal interview). L7 (2022, personal interview) shared a similar experience, though of another church pioneer who does not trust his church members. Judging from the participants' observations in *Church 5*, there seems to be a trust gap between the founder and the members. There are lots of potential candidates for leadership in *Church 5* who are not currently being given opportunities to take up leadership positions. Consequent to this, some members have left the church to start their own ministries. However, L2 (2022, personal interview) posits that an assistant pastor may steal the sheep and change the tradition of the church. She claims further that when popularity sets in, some assistant pastors tend to secede and this often causes crises in the church. It is apparently clear that some leaders' lack of trust in their congregants supporting them in the leadership seems to be promoting the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. It is interesting that none of the laypersons made any comment concerning this theme. Nevertheless, comments from all three leaders of the

thirty-three participants on this third theme added light on the factors that are influencing the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.7 THEME 4: THE EURO-AMERICAN MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE IN NIGERIA

The Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria is one of several key factors that has influenced the leadership structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London (L11 2022, telephone interview). This view is buttressed by the historical records on how Christianity was brought into Nigeria by the European and American missionaries. A relative number of mainline denominations such as the Baptists, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church established missions in different parts of Nigeria (see section 3.2.2). Consequently, a significant number of Nigerians became Christians but it was not long before some of them started seceding from the Mission Churches (L11 2022, telephone interview; cf. section 3.2.3): some adherents of the Ethiopian Churches deserted from the Orthodox Churches in the late nineteenth century to establish their own churches (see section 3.2.3). However, despite the secession of these Nigerian Christian groups such as the Ethiopian Churches and the Aladuras from the Established Churches, their form and organisational structures remained identical to the Mainline Churches' (see chapter three). It is interesting to note that only one respondent spoke about the influence that the Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria had in the choice of governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. Significantly, the theme touches on different leadership models including hierarchical leadership models. Thus, information provided by the informants on this theme added to our understanding on the factors that are influencing the choices of governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.8 THEME 5: UNWILLINGNESS TO SERVE OTHERS

Eight leaders and five laypersons of the thirty-three participants spoke on theme 5: unwillingness to serve others. Some of the comments are as follows:

4.8.1 THEME 5: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LEADERS

One of the paradigms common among Nigerian parents in the southern parts of Nigeria is teaching their children always to strive to be first in whatever they do in life and this seems to be reflected in the Nigerian-led churches (L12 2022, telephone interview). L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) remarked that the unwillingness of some young ministers to serve under another person's authority is the key factor influencing the one-person leadership structure within the Nigerian-led churches in London. Some of these pastors are gifted professionals who have lots of charisma and therefore struggle to submit to a higher authority (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). Today, there are hundreds of pioneers running independent ministries under the banner of Christ Apostolic Church worldwide. These founders claim to be prophets and state that God had spoken to them to establish their independent ministries (L3 2022, telephone interview). This view is shared by L5 (2022, telephone interview) and L6 (2022, telephone interview). L1 describes this development as an unwillingness to serve others (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). During the interview with L2, founder of *Church 5*, she admitted there was no need for her to serve continually under the leadership of her former church as people have started coming to her for counselling and spiritual guidance (L2 2022,

personal interview). This is contrary to what happened during the 1960s and 1970s when loyalty and honesty to the larger group could be taken for granted (L11 2022, telephone interview). God's calling does not automatically mean one has to establish a church (L9 2022, telephone interview). Moreover, L1 is concerned about who it is who are validating these independent ministries. He asserts that there is beauty in belonging to a larger group (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). L1 comments further that "*one is vulnerable to suspicion if you are the beginning and ending of your ministry*" (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview).

4.8.2 THEME 5: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LAYPERSONS

Five laypersons among the thirty-three interviewees argue that the unwillingness of some young ministers to serve under another person's authority is the key factor influencing the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP11 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP16 2022, telephone interview). LP4 (2022, personal interview), LP1 (2022, telephone interview) and LP11 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) lament the fact that Nigerians are admirers of titles and it currently seems to be reflecting within the church setting. On social media, many Nigerians are presenting themselves as prophets, claiming to have the calling of God on their lives (LP9 2022, telephone interview; LP16 2022, telephone interview). LP1 (2022, telephone interview) adds that "*where people do not follow, there is chaos. It is good to be a follower*". It is noticeable that a number of leaders who were interviewed spoke on this theme and they are concerned that young ministers in the Nigerian-led churches are losing interest in staying within the larger groups. This development is promoting one-person leadership among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Information provided by these respondents on this theme also shed more light on the second objective of this study: to research the factors that are influencing the choices of governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.9 THEME 6: LOVE OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

Love of power and authority is the sixth theme that seems to be influencing the one-person leadership among the Nigerian-led churches in London. A total of six leaders and thirteen laypersons shared their views on this theme. Below are some of the comments made by the respondents.

4.9.1 THEME 6: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LEADERS

There is no doubt that the manner in which some general overseers of the Nigerian-led churches (such as Adeboye) are admired and adored, may be tempting to the younger ministers to seek power by all means (L3 2022, telephone interview). In fact, it is claimed that some of these leaders derive pleasure seeing their congregants singing their praises (L8 2022, telephone interview). L8 (2022, telephone interview) adds that some leaders believe their members can only get access to God through them. These leaders also believe that making decisions on their own for the whole church is more expedient as it needs to be quick and decisive (L12 2022, telephone interview; L8 2022, telephone interview). L4 (2022, personal interview) argues that the pioneer of *Church 5* has unchallengeable authority and exercises absolute power within her ministry. For example, the church's board of elders comprises of four women, yet they do not seem to have any form of power in terms of decision-making in the church (L4 2022, personal interview). L4

comments further that L2 often makes decisions by herself and then justifies it by saying “the Holy Spirit says.....” However, the founder involves the congregation in decision-making only when the church needs financial assistance or when there is a church outing and someone needs to drive the church’s van (L4 2022, personal interview). L4 describes this development as love of power and authority on the part of the church founder and pointed out that such a unitary government degrades the role of the elders in the church.

During my interview with the founder of *Church 5*, she confirmed to be taking the majority of the decisions in the church and emphasises that not all the ideas are coming from the Holy Spirit. L2, however, points out that you will not be earning much respect as a leader if you are involving your members too much in the decision-making process. She also argues that involving youths in decision-making will put a burden on them and may affect their participation in other departments, such as the choir (L2 2022, personal interview).

The truth of the matter is, of course, that senior leaders such as L2 are human beings and therefore, they are liable to make mistakes in their decision-making (L3 2022, personal interview). L3 (2022, telephone interview) comments further that the president of the Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC*) worldwide, cannot make decisions exclusively on his own (unless on a rare occasion) and the leader has to justify it by Scripture (L3 2022, telephone interview). The president of the *CAC* is able to seek opinions and advice from others when bringing his ideas to the General Executive Council (GEC) and members are free to express their views. Such a leadership structure helps the office of the president to see its policies through a rigorous process of deliberation. If people are honest and truthful, the church will have better policies (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). Moreover, the *CAC* emphasises that God is no respecter of persons, so anyone may be used by God to carry out an important task in the church (L3 2022, telephone interview). Some of the leaders that participated in the interview process have expressed their concerns about leaders that are acting in a way that could be considered as love of power and authority which, in turn, is influencing the one-person leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.9.2 THEME 6: THE COMMENTS FROM THE LAYPERSONS

Common features among the senior Christian leaders in some of the Nigerian-led churches in London are the way they are acting like emperors and empresses respectively in their different ministries (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP3 2022, personal interview; LP6 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). LP4 (2022, personal interview) adds that some of these senior leaders move around with heavy security operatives. Some of them are also attention seekers (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP10 2022, telephone interview). Three lay-members of the thirty-three participants also argue that some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London derive pleasure seeing their members singing their praises (LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP11 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP21 2022, telephone interview). LP13 (2022, personal interview) opines that “*we are trained not to question the authority of the pastor*”. It is important to mention that once you raised a question as a member, the leadership will label you a rebel (LP17 2022, personal interview; LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). The fact remains that in some congregations, members do not have the courage to challenge the authority of the leadership (LP16 2022, telephone interview). Furthermore, some of these general overseers (such as

Adeboye) are allowed to make decisions for their churches worldwide on their own, without any input from other church members (LP7 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). LP17 (2022, personal interview) asserts that RCCG is actually utilising the one-person leadership structure albeit they have a complex structure for leadership in place. LP19 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) and LP7 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) argue that general overseers are human beings and thus, they are liable to make mistakes in their decision-making. Similarly, LP4 (2022, personal interview) posits that “*it is not good for one person to control everything as excessive power is a recipe for disaster*”. On the other hand, LP2 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) supports the idea that church is not a democracy when he states that Jesus’s disciples never challenged His authority.

The information provided by these laypersons shows that they have a wider range of views than the leaders. The laypersons made a number of prominent comments about some leaders of the Nigerian-led mega-churches that none of the leaders that were interviewed spoke about. However, there were areas where the leaders and the laypersons agreed on this theme. Thus, this study tends to show that some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London enjoyed making decisions for their churches totally by themselves, and this privilege is linked to the establishment of ministries with the one-person leadership structure. It is also essential to note that there are other Nigerian-led churches such as the *CAC* where the president cannot make decisions on his own, except on rare occasions. This invaluable information provided by the respondents on this theme enhanced my understanding of the factors influencing the choices of governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.10 THEME 7: LACK OF UNITY

The pioneers of the Christ Apostolic Church started the ministry with exemplary lives of love and unity; however, crises have been rocking the denomination from the 1990s till today (L3 2022, telephone interview). The problem began because of differing opinions on how to handle the popularity and expansion of CAC World Soul-winning Evangelistic Ministry (CAC WOSEM). CAC WOSEM is one of the independent ministries operating under the banner of *CAC* so the matter became “a church within church” (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). One of the primary factors that has affected the church and that is still affecting the ministry is lack of unity (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). The *CAC* has numerous gifted ministers in their pastoral rank, but unfortunately many of them are operating individually [under the same banner of *CAC*] and claiming the ownership of the assemblies and ministries they established (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). This development is affecting the unity of the church significantly and, consequently, many members have left the denomination entirely in order to start their own ministries (L3 2022, telephone interview). L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) affirms that “*if the founding fathers had the mentality of being a one-man army, there would not have been CAC.*” He comments further that “*the early fathers of the church were planters, but they did more than that without undermining anyone else*” (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). L1 is also concerned about the efforts of those who are trying to solve the crisis facing the church. This is because some *CAC* prophets in the past (such as Prophet S. K. Abiara), have pioneered their own independent ministries, headed it and taken control of it; yet, they reached the top hierarchy of the church globally. The same thing is happening with the current general evangelist of the church and the danger is that many prophets and ministers in the church would like to follow the

same pattern (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). There is an on-going attempt by the church to solve this long-time crisis facing the denomination (L3 2022, telephone interview).

During participant observation in *Church 5*, it appears that there is no unity between the church leader and some of the members in the church. *Church 5* is a Cherubim and Seraphim Church (C&S) and there have been numerous schisms and secessions since the early days of the denomination (L4 2022, telephone interview; L11 2022, telephone interview; L5 2022 telephone interview). The one-person leadership model seems not to be unifying the membership and the leadership of *Church 5*.

This study shows that unity is apparently lacking in some of the Nigerian-led churches in London and this contributes to the proliferation of churches with a one-person leadership structure.

4.11 THEME 8: NUMERICAL GROWTH

L3 (2022, telephone interview) postulates that numerical growth is the primary factor influencing some Nigerian-led churches in London who are using centralised pyramidal governance structures. For example, the *CAC* began with a five-man group and today it has turned to a global church, utilising a centralised hierarchically leadership model (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). L10 (2022, personal interview) adds that Akindayomi started the *RCCG* with a small group and the denomination is currently having over 50,000 parishes worldwide, using a centralised pyramidal authority structure. Likewise, the *Deeper Christian Life Ministry* began as a prayer group with fifteen people before metamorphosing into a church with a wide administrative structure (L8 2022, telephone interview). During my interviews with the informants, some of them expressed displeasure about the centralised pyramidal governance structures. Thus, it is worth considering the strengths and weaknesses of the model within the context of Nigerian-led churches in London.

4.11.1 THE STRENGTHS OF THE CENTRALISED HIERARCHICAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

1. Hierarchy creates positions and levels therefore more leaders are produced in the establishment (L9 2022, telephone interview).
2. The model gives room for promotion. For example, a parish pastor in *RCCG* could become a continental overseer over a period of time, or a *CAC* assembly pastor may rise to the position of president of the mission (L3 2022, telephone interview).
3. L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) also hailed the structure for giving room for accountability.
4. The Centralised pyramidal leadership model contributes significantly to the progress of the *RCCG* (LP1 2022, telephone interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview; LP13 2022, personal interview; LP14 2022, personal interview).
5. LP16 (2022, telephone interview) points out that conflicts were dealt with within the hierarchy.

4.11.2 THE WEAKNESSES OF THE CENTRALISED PYRAMIDAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

1. The leadership of some of the Nigerian-led mega-churches often failed to support their daughter churches in London (L5 2022, telephone interview; L10 2022, personal interview, L12 2022, telephone interview). For example, the leadership in the headquarter church sometimes finds it difficult to carry out projects in the daughter churches because the projects will not benefit them directly (L10 2022, personal interview).
2. The pyramidal leadership structure does not give room to dynamism of individual ministry (LP18 2022, personal interview).
3. No matter who you are, you cannot outshine the general overseer (LP16 2022, telephone interview).
4. There are times when parish pastors of the denominational churches in London conduct what is contrary to the good practices of the mother church in Nigeria (LP5 2022, personal interview).
5. The more complex the hierarchy, the more some senior leaders seem to be disengaging themselves from their members (LP16 2022, telephone interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP1 2022, telephone interview).
6. Some senior leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London often brag about the number of parishes they have around the world; they think numerical growth determines the level of a spiritual leader (L6 2022, telephone interview; LP16 2022, telephone interview). In fact, some of these leaders are after crowd-winning rather than soul-winning (L6 2022, telephone interview).
7. There is an on-going competition among some Nigerian-led churches in London to increase their membership base and therefore it should not be surprising to see some parishes of the same denomination worshipping separately in the same building (L3 2022, personal interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP11 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). There are instances where five different parishes [under the same banner] with less than fifteen members each are worshipping separately on Sundays inside different flats of the same building.

A number of comments were made by the respondents on both the strengths and weaknesses of the centralised pyramidal governance structure. However, the weaknesses tend to outweigh the strengths of the centralised hierarchical leadership models within the context of the Nigerian-led churches in London. The information provided by the informants do not only enlighten the researcher on the fact that numerical growth is one of the key factors that is influencing the centralised pyramidal authority structures among the Nigerian-led churches in London, but also enhanced our understanding about their views on the leadership model itself.

4.12 THEME 9: GENDER

Some *CAC* women leaders such as Mrs M. B. Odeleke and Archbishop (Dr.) Dorcas Siyanbola Olaniyi, have left the denomination to start their own independent ministries. This is because women's mobility in the hierarchical structure of this Aladura Pentecostal church is limited (L3 2022, telephone interview). Some of the informants give various reasons why *CAC* prohibit

women from pastoral ordination. It is noteworthy that the theories raised by the informants are their personal opinions and not the formal policy of their particular church. The following factors are some of the reasons for prohibiting women from pastoral ordination in the *CAC*.

4.12.1 THE FALL IN EDEN

L5 (2022, telephone interview) and L12 (2022, telephone interview) think *CAC* leadership restricts women ordination as pastors because of the role played by Eve in the account of the fall of the human race.

4.12.2 WEAKER OBJECTS

L5 (2022, telephone interview) comments that women tend to make gross mistakes anytime they are given a chance to lead. L3 (2022, telephone interview) adds that “*women are important in the church but giving them power without limit is dangerous*”. L9 (2022, telephone interview) stipulates that “*God prefers men to lead but only uses women when men are not available*”. L6 (2022, telephone interview) argues that “*a woman is a weaker object, one who quarrels and gets involved in strife, anger and accommodates jealousy and envy*”. LP12 (2022, telephone interview) and LP21 (2022, telephone interview) remark that women are often arrogant and therefore they should not be ordained as pastors. The information provided by these respondents is their personal opinions about why they think *CAC* is restricting women in the upper echelon of the church.

4.12.3 THE 12 APOSTLES OF JESUS

L5 (2022, telephone interview) and L9 (2022, telephone interview) strongly believe that the exclusion of women from the twelve apostles of Jesus is likely to have influenced the restriction of *CAC* women from pastoral ordination. L3 (2022, telephone interview) laments that all the principal officers of the *CAC* are male. Conversely, at no time did Jesus ever say that women should not be ordained (L8 2022, telephone interview; LP9 2022, telephone interview).

4.12.4 AFFILIATION WITH WESTERN CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS

L3 (2022, telephone interview) and L5 (2022, telephone interview) argue that the gender practices of the *CAC* may have been influenced by the affiliation with Faith Tabernacle Philadelphia and the British Apostolic Church, UK, in its early days. However, the two leaders claim that the pioneers of the denomination had minds of their own and that they were also receiving revelations from God which helped them to formulate the church doctrines and practices (L3 2022, telephone interview; L5 2022, telephone interview).

4.12.5 BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

L5 (2022, telephone interview) and L3 (2022, telephone interview) think that the *CAC* excluded women from ordination as pastors based on 1Tim. 2:11-15, which exhorts women to learn in silence with all subjection. By contrast, L8 (2022, telephone interview) and L9 (2022, telephone interview) accused the denomination of taking the text out of context. L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview), a renowned *CAC* scholar based in London, comments that there is no biblical basis to exclude women from pastoral ordination. LP9 (2022, telephone interview) adds that Scripture does not condemn female leadership.

The fact remains that there are some in *CAC* membership who are critical of any attempt by anyone trying to change the gender practices of the church (L3, 2022: telephone interview; LP18 2022, personal interview; LP19 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview; LP21 2022, telephone interview). Nonetheless, L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) opines that “*some leaders of CAC recognise the graces and abilities of women such as Mrs Pearce and Miss Odunlami in the church*”. L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) comments further that “*the church inherited the practice of not ordaining women as pastors from the church pioneers, but that does not mean the denomination has taken a formal position*”. He affirms further that the issue of women being ordained as pastors has not been addressed so the matter becomes challenging for the present generation (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). L1 stressed further that “*pastoring is not about gender, but about the calling, but then, if it is about the calling, who does the calling? God is the one who calls,*” says L1 (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). In addition, LP18 (2022, personal interview) suggests that some women have passed through the same theological training as men, so there should be no reason to restrict them from ordination as pastors.

On the contrary, some of the Nigerian-led churches in London (like the *KICC* and *RCCG*), do not exclude women from pastoral ordination (see chapter three). Several of the informants gave numerous reasons why these churches are ordaining women as pastors and they are as follows:

L10 (2022, personal interview) and six laypersons out of the thirty-three individuals that were interviewed mentioned ‘*modernisation*’ while L6 (2022, telephone interview) and LP6 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) stated ‘*ecumenism*’ as the reason.

Four leaders and LP5 (2022, personal interview) pointed out ‘*Scripture*’ as the reason while LP16 (2022, telephone interview) attributed the reason to the ‘*Prosperity gospel message that came from America*’.

L3 (2022, telephone interview) and L4 (2022, personal interview) mentioned ‘*competence*’ while LP14 (2022, personal interview) suggested ‘*gender equality*’ as the reason these churches are ordaining women as pastors.

Also, some church leaders allowed their partners to be ordained as pastors because they want their congregants to be respecting their wives (LP21 2022, telephone interview).

One of the striking points from the information provided by the informants is the fact that restriction of women as pastors in some denominations such as the *CAC* is influencing the prominence of one-person leadership structure among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Attention was also given to reasons why some churches restrict women from ordination as pastors and why others are ordaining women as pastors. Nevertheless, all the thirty-three people that were interviewed agreed that there are some prominent women leaders in the Bible.

4.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The descriptive-empirical task of Osmer (2008) was used to describe the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London from the participants’ perspectives. The interpretive task of Osmer’s (2008) method of practical theological interpretation was also used to study the factors that are influencing the predominance of the one-headed leadership model where absolute

authority usually resides in the leader and the centralised pyramidal leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. In an effort to fully understand the subject matter, the study utilised a semi-structured data collection approach focusing on two main questions to gather information from thirty-three informants. These participants were drawn from various Nigerian-led churches in London.

From the data provided by the thirty-three participants, three different forms of governance structures were described, but the idea of the names given to them came from some of the leaders who were interviewed. They are as follows: 1) centralised pyramidal model where no individual leader exercises absolute authority or having unopposed power, 2) centralised pyramidal leadership model where the authority of the supreme leader is absolute, and 3) one-person approach to leadership where the pastor is in sole charge of a local church and its day-to-day affairs.

None of the laypersons talked about model 1; rather, they described models 2 and 3. They seem to think that absolute authority always resides in the person holding the highest office in any of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

It is noticeable that leaders in models 2 and 3 both exercise absolute authority in their respective ministries. However, the level of authority of leaders in model 3 is limited to the local church. This is because churches utilising model 3 do not have other church branches, whereas authority of senior leaders in model 2 is beyond local churches. Thus, an approach to leadership where the senior leader exercises absolute authority and unchallengeable power seems to be the most prominent among the Nigerian-led churches in London. The preceding chapter reveals that the emergence of the charismatic movement in Nigeria paved the way for this kind of approach to leadership (see section 3.2.5.2).

From the data provided by the respondents, nine factors were mentioned that are influencing the proliferation of the one-headed leadership model and the centralised leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. These are: 1) financial gain, 2) lack of financial accountability, 3) lack of trust, 4) the Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria, 5) unwillingness to serve others, 6) love of power & accountability, 7) lack of unity, 8) numerical growth, and 9) gender. Factors 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 are directly linked with the proliferation of the one-headed leadership model. By contrast, points 1 and 8 are the primary factors influencing the centralised pyramidal leadership structures (see table 4.4).

TABLE 4.4 NINE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHOICES OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES IN THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON			
QUESTION 2: What factors have influenced the founders of Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their governance structures?			
NUMBER	THEMES	DESCRIPTIONS	FORMS OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES THAT THE THEME IS INFLUENCING
1.	Financial gain	* Some young ministers	One-person

		<p>see ministry as a lucrative business where they can make ready money and have control over it.</p> <p>*Economic survival. Some individuals started independent ministries after they got sacked from their secular jobs.</p> <p>* Luxurious lifestyles of some leaders. Buying of private jets by some senior leaders is influencing some young ministers to start independent ministries.</p> <p>* The use of business strategy to run church ministry. This shows some leaders see church as their personal business.</p> <p>* Use of the prosperity gospel message to raise funds and overemphasis of the concept of tithing and offering</p> <p>* Some leaders are direct beneficiaries of the church's funds.</p> <p>* Resource control. Some leaders focus more on how to increase the financial base of their ministries and they are setting financial targets for their pastors.</p>	<p>leadership model and centralised hierarchical leadership models.</p>
2.	Lack of financial accountability	<p>Non-disclosure of financial details and this cannot be questioned in some of the Nigerian-led churches</p>	<p>One-person leadership model</p>
3.	Lack of Trust	<p>Some leaders lack trust in their congregants and therefore decided not to</p>	<p>One-person leadership model</p>

		share authority with them	
4.	The Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria	Established Churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church established Mission Churches in Nigeria and this development influenced some Christian leaders in Nigeria to copy the governance structures of the Mission Churches	Episcopalism, Presbyterianism & Congregationalism
5.	Unwillingness to serve others	Some young ministers are not willing to serve under another person's authority	One-person leadership model
6.	Love of power & authority	Some senior leaders are acting like emperors and empresses respectively and enjoyed making decisions solely for their different ministries	One-person leadership model
7.	Lack of unity	Unity is apparently lacking in some Nigerian-led churches in London	One-person leadership model
8.	Numerical growth	Increase in numbers of the congregants brings changes to the leadership structure	Centralised pyramidal leadership structures
9.	Gender	In some churches, women's mobility in the hierarchical structure is limited	One-person leadership model

Table 4.4: Nine factors influencing the choices of governance structures in the Nigerian-led churches in London

None of the laypersons that were interviewed spoke about factors 3, 4, and 7. However, a tiny fraction of the participants that are leaders commented on factors 3 and 7. Factor 4 was less discussed though it touches different leadership models, including the hierarchical leadership model. There was considerable, though not absolute, unanimity between the leaders and the laypersons on factors 2 and 6. On the other hand, the number of leaders that spoke on factor 5 is more than the number of lay-members that commented on it; the leaders seem to be more concerned about the unwillingness of some young ministers that are not willing to serve under another person's authority. A relative number of the respondents spoke about the strengths and weaknesses of factor 8. A tiny fraction of the informants mentioned factor 9 as one of the factors influencing the prominence of the one-headed leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London. However, the majority of the interviewees spent more time explaining reasons why some churches (such as the *CAC*) are restricting women from ordination as pastors and why other denominations (like the *RCCG*) allow women's ordination as pastors. It is essential to note that there was an absolute unanimity among the laypersons on factor 1.

Interestingly, half of the leaders that participated in the interview sessions agreed with the laypersons' view on factor 1. The respondents that spoke about theme 1 shared a wide range of views ranging from a) seeing church as a business, to b) economic survival, c) luxurious lifestyles of some leaders, d) the use of business strategy to run church, e) methods of fund raising, f) some leaders are direct beneficiaries of church's fund, and g) resource control. Thus, theme 1 is the most widely discussed factor influencing the choice of governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. It is the only factor that links directly to the one-headed leadership model and the centralised pyramidal leadership models. In fact, factor 2 and factor 6 are a direct result from craving for factor 1. However, these other factors are also directly linked to the perceived focus on factor 1: factor 5, 7, as well as factor 8. Such a degree of unanimity of the respondents on factor 1 and its connection to some other factors gives credence to factor 1 as the most persuasive factor influencing the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London.

This chapter is significant because in his PhD thesis, Adu reveals that there is a measure of influence from North American Pentecostal pastoral leadership on their African counterparts in the British society in reference to their leadership structures (see section 1.5.1.4).

However, this study reveals not one, but nine factors that seem to be influencing the predominance of the one-headed leadership model and centralised pyramidal leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. They are as follows: 1) financial gain; 2) lack of financial accountability; 3) lack of trust; 4) the Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria; 5) unwillingness to serve others; 6) love of power & authority; 7) lack of unity; 8) numerical growth; and 9) gender. Significantly, factors 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 9 are directly linked with the proliferation of one-headed leadership governance structure (a model which Adu describes as "CEO model of leadership" in his PhD thesis) (see section 1.5.1.4).

Chapter five will use Osmer's (2008, 4) normative task and will seek to explore the Apostle Paul's views on the topic of church government.

CHAPTER 5

A NEW TESTAMENT APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter utilises Osmer's (2008) normative task of practical theological interpretation to study the Apostle Paul's perspective on where authority should reside within the church and how it is to be exercised. In this study, "church" is understood as a gathering of professing Christians in any place (see section 1.8.3). This task, however, will not inform the enquirer on how to put Paul's standpoint on the matter into practice (Osmer 2008, 131, 132): that is beyond the scope of this study.

Some scholars such as Engstrom (1976, 37) and Morris (1964, 11) argue that any discussion on church governance will be incomplete unless Jesus' view on the subject is studied. Patterson (2004b, 134) adds that our understanding of authority structures in the church must begin with Jesus himself and his kingdom authority. This is because it is widely accepted from the authority of Scripture (Eph. 1:22-23 & 5:23; Col. 1:18) that Jesus is the supreme head of the church (Crowther 2018, 19; Hodge [1879] 2012, 7; Coriden 2000, 52; Stott [1979] 2020, 40, 41; Davids 2017, 456; Eyres 1975, 8; Ogden 2003, 212; Bock 2019, 174). However, this thesis will not argue that Jesus initiated a formal system of church government. The reason for this is that Jesus engaged in an itinerant ministry during his lifetime (Sanders 1995, 107; MacArthur 2002, 16; Wright 1996, 148; Hawthorne 1996, 164) and he left no guidelines on how the church should be governed. Instead, "*he left instructions on how the church is not to be governed, and that is according to the model of secular power*" (McKenzie 1966, 32). Jesus seems to have had little interest in the church order (Giles 2017, 19; Stacy 2017b, 317). For instance, Jesus did not institute the church with given structures and mandated forms of leadership during his earthly ministry (Giles 2017, 19; Hurley 2002, 224). Jesus also avoided designations such as pastors, overseers or priests (Watsons 2008, 1). Thus, it is worth considering governance structures exhibited by one of the most important disciples of Jesus Christ in the New Testament: the Apostle Paul (Agosto 2005, 197).

Like Jesus, Paul ran an itinerant ministry (Campbell 1994, 132); however, apart from being a founder of many of the early churches, he also wrote extensively on leadership and on the organisation of the primary assemblies (Driscoll 2008, 39). In addition, his letters seem to form a large proportion of the New Testament text (Strauch 1995, 55; cf. Needham 2011, 49). Significantly, the data provided so far about the Nigerian-led churches in London seems to echo some of the events that happened in the Pauline churches in the first century. This includes internal conflicts, equality issues in leadership, the use and misuse of power and the attitudes concerning the use of money. Thus, in an effort to understand Paul's perspective on leadership and ecclesiastical structures, this study will examine the authority relationship between him and the Twelve (church at the global level); his status and authority among his fellow-workers (regional level), and his authority within his churches.

5.2 AUTHORITY RELATION BETWEEN PAUL AND THE ORIGINAL APOSTLES (Acts 15:1-21; Gal. 2:1-10)

Luke emphasises that Jesus (after the resurrection) chose and commissioned Paul like the twelve apostles (Acts 9:1-19, 22:6-11; 26:17-18) (Giles, 2017:138; Marshall [1980] 2008, 175-186). Unlike the original apostles, Paul assumed the headship of many early churches (Carroll, 1976:18) and this has been causing debates among scholars who want to establish Paul's high regard for the Jerusalem leaders and those who want to demonstrate his independence (Polaski, 1999:84). It is significant to understand Paul's position in the church at the global level and the Jerusalem council provides the best insight into this. The famous Jerusalem council is the first of its kind in the history of the church (Wagner [1994] 2017, 322; Bock 2007, 495; Judd, 2011; Schaff [1882] 2017, 305). It occupies a central role in the book of Acts, and it serves as a point of overlap between the apostles Peter and Paul (Mahan 2013, 2).

There is an on-going debate among biblical commentators on whether Gal. 2:1-10 refers to Acts 15:1-29 (council narrative) or the famine-relief visit of Acts 11:30 and 12:25. A number of scholars including Roberts (2005, 1); Schaff ([1882] 2017, 217); Keener (2019, 11); Stein (1974, 241); Machen ([1976] 2009, 100) and Fitzmyer ([1998] 2010, 539-540, 543) favour the former. Other respected scholars such as Bruce ([1982] 1988, 108-109); Moo (2013:118); Morgado (1994, 62); and Knox (1948, 44) support the latter.

The promoters of the famine-relief visit assert that the meeting of Galatians 2 occurs in private (2:2), while the meeting in Acts 15 suggests a public one (Bruce [1982] 1988, 110; Moo 2013, 123; Morgado 1994, 63; Marshall [1980] 2008, 258; Schreiner 2010, 121; Stott 1968, 41, 44). The famine-relief visit is chronologically Paul's second visit to Jerusalem in the book of Acts, corresponding to the account of Gal. 2:1-10 as the second visit in Galatians (Morgado 1994, 66). This eliminates the decisive problem of the number of visits paid by Paul to Jerusalem when one attempts to identify Gal. 2:1-10 with Acts 15 (Marshall [1980] 2008, 259). Also, the motivation for Paul's visit in Gal. 2:1 is a "revelation" (2:2) (Morgado 1994, 61). Schreiner (2010, 120); Moo (2013, 12) and Stott (1968, 41) postulate that this revelation parallels with the Acts 11:27-30 visit of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem rather than the visit in Acts 15. In Acts 15:2, we know that Paul and Barnabas travelled to Jerusalem at the behest of the church in Syrian Antioch (Schreiner 2010, 120; Fitzmyer [1998] 2010, 540; Morgado 1994, 61). Furthermore, the council episode in Acts 15 concludes with the "apostolic decree," while Galatians 2 says nothing about the actual conditions imposed upon the Gentiles (Marshall [1980] 2008, 258).

Contrarily, Schaff ([1882] 2017, 211) posits that Paul is describing two meetings: a private meeting to settle differences between the apostles to the Jews and the apostles to the Gentiles, and a public meeting to solve the conflict on circumcising Gentiles and to define the relationship between the Jewish and Gentile Christians. This view is corroborated by Keener (2019, 11) when he comments that Paul and Barnabas testify to the whole congregation in Acts 15:4, but in 15:6 the matter of circumcising Gentiles is brought to a smaller group: the apostles and elders. The same author remarks further that Luke does not seem to be clear when the matter is finally brought back to the whole church (15:12) (Keener 2019, 11). It is important to note that Bruce ([1977] 1981, 151), a supporter of the famine-relief visit, admits that "*when Paul speaks of going up to Jerusalem 'by revelation' it is improbable that he has the prophecy of Agabus in mind.*" Schreiner (2010,

120), another advocate of famine-relief visit, conceded that the request by the Antiochene Church to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem does not necessarily preclude the giving of a divine revelation to Paul. It needs to be said concerning Paul's failure to mention the 'apostolic decree' in the Galatian account, that the book of "*Acts itself tells us that Paul had already delivered these decrees to south Galatia (16:4) – apparently before insistence on circumcision became an issue there (suggested by the geographic range in 15:1, 23)*" (Keener 2019, 9). This does not mean that there are no differences of detail in Gal. 2:1-10 and Acts 15:1-29 (Fitzmyer [1998] 2010, 540). However, the similarities are numerous to the extent that none of the differences will be enough to undermine the substantial agreement of the two reports (Fitzmyer [1998] 2010, 540). It is worthy to note that the authors of the two accounts write from the standpoint of different interests (Keener 2019, 108; Alexander [2007] 2018, 1047; Schaff [1882] 2017, 217). The Apostle Paul is adamant about his personal relationships to the twelve apostles and their recognition of his independent apostleship; while Luke focuses on the public action that was taken by the leadership of the Jerusalem church (Machen [1976] 2009, 99).

The commonalities include the following: the same people were present, the same topic was discussed and the leaders agreed that Gentiles need not be circumcised (Marshall [1980] 2008, 258; Fitzmyer [1998] 2010, 544). This study agrees with biblical scholars such as Keener (2019, 11), Roberts (2005:1) and Machen ([1976] 2009, 100) that the traditional view, which identifies the event of Gal. 2:1-10 with the council narrative of Acts 15:1-29, must be regarded as more tenable. The two accounts must be studied side by side to make up a full history. It needs to be said that the question that was discussed at the council was not primarily the power and status of Paul but whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised to be saved (Merkle 2017, 384; Holmberg 1980, 19; Burge *DPL*, 67).

The argument started in Antioch but could not be resolved there because the situation required a summit meeting where the consensus of the supreme leadership of the church could be attained under apostolic leadership (Wagner 2017, 324; Bock 2007, 495). Thus, the church of Antioch appointed Paul, Barnabas, along with certain others, and sent them to Jerusalem to discuss the issue with the apostles and elders (Acts 15:2-3) (Saucy 1972, 151; Schaff [1882] 2017, 440; Ryrice [1961] 2018, 72). Some scholars opine that the church of Antioch sending delegates to Jerusalem to debate the issue of law and circumcision is a testament that it considers the church in Jerusalem as the mother church (Holmberg 1980, 19). Paul and his companions can be seen as an Antioch delegation to a Jerusalem conference (Polaski 1999, 84) that is in fact dependent on what decision is taken by the Jerusalem leaders (Holmberg 1980, 28). This is not surprising as the church at Jerusalem, established ten days after Jesus' ascension into heaven on the Day of Pentecost, was then, the headquarters church of the entire Christian movement (Wagner 2017, 325). Clarke (2012, 121) adds that Paul's visit is in clear recognition of the Jerusalem authorities as he seems to be seeking their endorsement of his mission and gospel (Gal. 2:2). Consequent to this, Holmberg (1980, 194) affirms that as regards the church at the global level, Paul has not the same level of authority as the apostolate in the church of Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, the church at Antioch perhaps appears to have been self-created and self-directed (Strong 1907, 648). It is worth noting that Paul's visit to Jerusalem was not prompted either by his needs nor the Jerusalem leaders' summons, but by revelation (Gal. 2:2) (Fee [1991] 2010, 140; Stanton [2007] 2018, 1156; Clarke 2012, 121; Schreiner 2010, 118). In addition, it was a purely

voluntary decision on the part of the church in Antioch (Strauch 1995, 126; Saucy 1972, 113). In fact, it was the Judaizers who suggested that Paul and his team should go up to Jerusalem (Wagner 2017, 325). It is of material significance that Paul took Titus, a Gentile, along with him into the headquarters of the Jerusalem church in order to establish the truth of the gospel (Stott 1968, 42). The ‘false brethren’ were insisting that without circumcision converts such as Titus could not be saved (Stott [1990] 2008, 242). Paul refused to submit to the Judaizers (Gal. 2:5) (Stott 1968, 46; Keener 2019, 120). What matters to Paul is the unity of the gospel (McKenzie 1966, 46); his concern was not the validity of his gospel but its practicability (Bruce [1977] 1981, 152). There is not enough evidence to suggest Paul and his team were forced to attend the Jerusalem Council.

Furthermore, in Galatians 2:6 & 9, Paul appears quite unimpressed by the status of the Jerusalem leaders, for they have no special standing in God’s eyes (Stanton [2007] 2018, 1156). Paul emphasises to the Galatians that he did not consider any of the twelve apostles to have authority over him (Clarke 2012, 121; Fee [1991] 2010, 140). He claims that at no point did the Jerusalem authorities confer on him any authority which he did not possess already by a direct commission from Jesus Christ (Banks [1979] 2020, 157; Machen [1976] 2009, 99; Bruce [1977] 1981, 153). Here, the Jerusalem leaders “*made no attempt to add circumcision to it or to embellish it in any other way*” (Stott 1968, 45). The Galatian account of this event reveals an intangible and immeasurable expression of Paul’s power (Clarke 2012, 122). Paul, however, does not repudiate other authority than his own and was especially careful with the Twelve with which he wished to remain on good terms (Holmberg 1980, 16). There was no doubt that he respects the original apostles (Polaski 1999, 89); he refers to James, Peter, and John as the acknowledged “pillars” of the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9) (Hort [1897] 2016, 85, 86; Strauch 1995, 46). Paul somehow “*does not commit himself to acceptance of their status as ‘pillars’*” (Bruce [1977] 1981, 153). Hence, scholars such as Stanton ([2007] 2018, 1156) and Holmberg (1980, 25) argue that Paul’s attitude to the Jerusalem leadership is somewhat ambivalent. Stott (1968, 44) gives some reasons why he thinks Paul is addressing the Jerusalem authorities in a roundabout way. For instance, he suggests that Paul’s expression may have been influenced by the fact that the Judaizers were exaggerating the status of the primary apostles at the expense of his own authority (Stott 1968, 44). He stressed further that “*perhaps the false brethren were drawing attention to what they regarded as the superior qualifications of James, Peter and John – that James was one of the Lord’s brethren, and that Peter and John had belonged to the inner circle of three*” (Stott 1968, 44, 45). This may have prompted Paul’s response in Galatians 2:6: “what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality” (Stott 1968, 45). It is instructive to note that Paul’s apostleship was never doubted by the Twelve (Schweizer [1961] 2006, 214; Keener 2019, 124). It is clear that the “acknowledged pillars” recognised the grace that had been given to Paul (Clarke 2012, 82). All the Jerusalem leaders including the elders at the meeting seem to hold Paul in high esteem (Acts 21:17-26; 2 Pet. 3:14-16; Gal. 2:1-9) (Garrett 2013, 10; Bock 2007, 645). They acknowledged that Paul’s apostleship is quite independent of theirs (Machen [1976] 2009, 99). The fourteen-year gap between Paul’s visits to Jerusalem suggests that he had no sense of dependence on Jerusalem and he is in no way accountable to them (Clarke 2012, 121; Keener 2019, 109; Schreiner 2010, 114, 119). The twelve apostles recognised the apostolic independence of Paul; they agreed that the latter had evidently already been appointed and commissioned by God to be apostle to the Gentiles, as Peter to be apostle to the Jews (Grudem 2020, 1077; Machen [1976] 2009, 341). That is, both the Twelve

and Paul had been entrusted with the same gospel while the only difference between them was that they had been allocated different domains in which to preach it (Stott 1968, 45). The only request made by the acknowledged pillars to Paul and Barnabas was that they should remember the poor and Paul did not find it difficult to accept their request (Stanton [2007] 2018, 1157; Bruce [1982] 1988, 126). Paul did not see his acceptance of their request as subordination to the Jerusalem leadership, but rather as something he would have done regardless of the request from the leaders in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 9:11-13; Rom. 15:26-27) (Banks [1979] 2020, 149; Stott [1994] 2020, 390, 391; Garland 1999, 412 – 414; Barrett [1973] 1976, 239 - 242). That means, at the Jerusalem Council, Paul concedes almost nothing to the original apostles from his own authority (Clarke 2012, 121). In fact, the inner circle disciples sealed the meeting by giving the right hand of fellowship to Paul and Barnabas (Hort [1897] 2016, 85, 86; Bittlinger 1973, 52). The implication here is that the Jerusalem leaders accepted the leaders from Antioch as partners (Stott 1968, 46) and the agreement establishes two cooperative but independent missionary efforts (Stanton [2007] 2018, 1157). The primary goal at the Jerusalem Council was to discuss an issue of law and circumcision, but the meeting reveals that both Paul and the twelve apostles hold significant power potentiality as neither party actually conceded power to the other.

5.3 PAUL'S AUTHORITY AMONG HIS CO-WORKERS

From the book of Acts and the Pauline corpus we know that Paul worked with a sizeable team of people, many of whom are mentioned by their names (Clark 2021, 116; Piper 2019, 147, 148; Barna 2001, 34). As a worker, Paul uses the term “*synergoi*” meaning “my co-workers” to refer to all those who work with him, men and women alike (Agosto 2005, 121; Clark 2021, 131). *Synergoi* appears twelve times in Paul's writings (Hellerman 2017b, 425; Clarke 2012, 47). It is interesting that those who worked with Paul have various degrees of dependence on him (Agosto 2005, 122). To understand Paul's authority in the church at the regional level, this study will briefly examine his relationship with some of his immediate co-workers including Barnabas, Apollos, Silas, Epaphras, Timothy, and Titus.

5.3.1 PAUL'S PARTNERS: THOSE WHO ARE INDEPENDENT OF HIM

During the first missionary journey, Paul seems to begin his journey as an assistant to Barnabas (Acts 13:2-4) (Banks [1979] 2020, 131; Driscoll 2008, 22; Marshall [1980] 2008, 228; Moo 2013, 122), but in a short time, leadership shifted to Paul and they came to be known as “Paul and his companions” (Acts 13:13) (Garrett 2013, 34; Fitzmyer [1998] 2010, 495; Bock 2007, 449). Paul appears to be more gifted than Barnabas, yet he held no formal ranking over the latter (Strauch 1995, 47; Holmberg 1980, 61). They are both apostles (Acts 14:14) (Grudem 2020, 1118). Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement over John Mark and got separated, yet Barnabas stood his ground (Acts 15:36-41) (Hort [1897] 2016, 92; Burge *DPL*, 67; Alexander [2007] 2018, 1048; Schreiner 2010, 120). This is a sign of strength and independence on the part of Barnabas. In fact, the division did not reduce the respect Paul had for Barnabas as an apostle (Bruce [1977] 1981, 155). Paul's working relationship with Barnabas teaches us that the former did not hold a position of unopposed power.

Similarly, Paul and Apollos are together designated as God's co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9) (Crowther 2018, 111; Giles 2017, 44; Barrett [1968] 1987, 86). Also, Paul speaks of himself and Apollos as

“*diakonoi*” (“servants”) (1Cor. 3:5) (Agosto 2005, 202; Thiselton 2006, 62, 63). Paul tends to use this term as a general description of their leadership (Crowther 2018, 111). He reminds the Corinthians that Christian leaders are servants, not objects of worship (Strauch 1995, 94). It is of note that Paul tried to show difference in rank between him and Apollos by referring to himself as a “skilled master builder” who lays the foundation, while his co-worker is one who continues building on the foundation (Holmberg 1980, 66). This is contrary to the account in 1 Corinthians 16:12 where Apollos declined Paul’s request to visit Corinth with the other brethren (Banks [1979] 2020, 141; Thiselton 2006, 294, 295; Barrett [1968] 1987, 391, 392): a clear sign that Apollos was not his junior colleague and that he is not obliged to obey Paul’s wishes (Holmberg 1980, 66). In addition, some congregants of the Corinthian church looked up to Apollos as their own human leader to the degree of opposing Paul’s authority over their congregation (Clarke 2012, 128). It should also be pointed out that the partnership between Paul and Apollos reveals a clear hierarchical separation between the apostles (God’s fellow workers) on the one hand and the community on the other (Castelli 1991, 105). The members are characterised as the passive objects of the apostolic work and there is no trace of any reciprocity (Castelli 1991, 105). Crowther (2018, 112) adds that “*these leaders are servants of the Lord rather than servants of others as was seen in the teachings of Jesus*”. The evidence tends to show that Paul held no formal position over Apollos but they both have exercised leadership over the members of the Corinthian church.

In a similar vein, Paul and Silas (also known as Silvanus) worked together as colleagues (1Thess 2:6) (Strauch 1995, 47; Alexander [2007] 2018, 1048). Silas worked with Paul for a period of time. After the second missionary journey, he decided to move on to work in other places; this choice seems to show his independence from Paul (Holmberg 1980, 64, 65). The examples of Barnabas, Apollos and Silas have shown that some individuals who worked with Paul were not recruited by him and are independent of him both before and after their period of cooperation with him.

5.3.2 PAUL’S ASSISTANTS: THOSE WHO ARE PERSONALLY CHOSEN BY PAUL

Some individuals have been personally appointed by Paul to be his followers and assistants: Timothy, Titus and Epaphras (Holmberg 1980, 157; Schreiner 2010, 120). Paul sees Timothy and Titus as his children and this suggests that they were led to saving faith by him (Macarthur 1996, ix). Timothy and Titus are Paul’s apostolic delegates (Zhekov 1998, 30; Schaff [1882] 2017, 480). The two assistants have been used as envoys to Paul’s churches more than some of his other disciples (Holmberg 1980, 80). They have been fellow-workers with Paul for about fifteen years (Motyer 2010, 23).

Paul also confirms that his two perhaps closest assistants were his partners and co-workers in evangelising the gospel and strengthening the churches under Paul’s care (Agosto 2005, 162; Banks [1979] 2020, 143, 144; Bruce [1982] 1988, 111). It is essential to state that Titus tends to be more independent as regards his position to Paul than Timothy (Holmberg 1980, 60). For instance, he determined his travel plans on his own terms (2 Cor. 8:16-17; 2 Cor. 8:6; 9:5; 12:18; Phil. 4:2) (Banks [1979] 2020, 141; Garland 1999, 391; Barrett [1973] 1976, 227, 228). Timothy, on the other hand, was always under Paul’s authority and direction (1 Thess. 3:2; Phil. 2:19, 20; 1 Cor. 16:10, 11; 1 Tim. 1:3) (Strauch 1995, 105; Thiselton 2006, 296; Motyer [1984] 1996, 137; Towner 1994, 44; Silva 1992, 135 – 138; Barrett [1968] 1987, 390).

Like Timothy and Titus, Epaphras was also one of Paul's apostolic delegates. He ministered on the apostle's behalf in the Lycus valley while Paul was in Ephesus (Col.1:7) (Strauch 1995, 105; Wright 1986, 55). Paul describes Epaphras as a "fellow slave" and "servant" (Col. 4:12) (Banks [1979] 2020, 143). It is also worth pointing out that Paul recommends his assistants "*to the churches by means of letters of introduction (epistolai sustatikai) incorporated in his epistles*" (Agosto 2005, 123). This shows that Paul's position is above that of those addressed and that of his delegates (Holmberg 1980, 80). The three persons discussed here tended to work with Paul and they represented him in his churches. Paul appears to have seniority and influence over them, most especially over Timothy.

Paul worked with a number of men and from my survey of the available evidence, some individuals were his partners and independent of him; he had no control over their decision making. Also, there were those he personally had chosen to be his assistants; no equality is assumed in their relationships.

5.4 PAUL'S AUTHORITY WITHIN HIS CHURCHES

5.4.1 PAUL AS A FOUNDING FATHER

Paul claimed the title "father" of the churches he has founded (1 Cor. 4:15; 2 Cor. 6:13; 12:14-15; 1 Thess. 2:11; Gal. 4:19) (Clarke 2000, 222; Macchia 2023, 130; Lidstone 2019, 55; Cole 1964, 50; Barrett [1973] 1976, 192, 323, 324; Garland 1999, 330; Moo 2013, 288). That means that the faith of his converts was as a result of his activity (Polaski 1999, 74). As a founding father, Paul had a certain authority relative to all the assemblies he had established (1 Cor. 14:38) (Bittlinger 1973, 54; Morris 1964, 51, 52). In the first century Greco-Roman society and culture, a paternal role included absolute authority over the children (Castelli 1991, 101). It is significant that Paul took to himself such a term which was deeply integrated into Greco-Roman culture (Clarke 2000, 222). A number of scholars have cited instances where Paul related to his members in a way that appeared similar to the culture of the day. For instance, Coriden (2000, 113) postulates that Paul sometimes spoke in authoritarian tones (1 Cor. 5 & 6). Additionally, Castelli (1991, 105) raises an alarm over Paul's description of the Corinthians as babies in Christ (1 Cor. 3:1), not ready for solid food (1 Cor. 3:2). She posits that "*this characterization of the Corinthians is a pejorative one, reiterating the political nature of the metaphor of the father-child relationship; this is not a reciprocal relationship*" (Castelli 1991, 105). Contrary to the instruction from Jesus: "call no one on earth your father" (Mt. 23:9), Paul explicitly uses the 'father' simile to describe his relationship with his converts (Clarke 2012, 139). The use of the father metaphor gives the impression of a high-class, privilege and protected relationship (Clarke 2012, 139).

On the other hand, it must be said that the usage of a father simile does not necessarily entail an authoritarian relationship (Clarke 2000, 222). Paul is aware of the connotations of authority associated with fatherhood, but this was of no interest to him (Clarke 2000, 251). There were problems in the church he founded in Galatia and his role as the founding father was challenged; yet, his approach to the members is primarily one of appeal, not of command (Polaski 1999, 74, 75 & 101). Paul may be harsh on them and use strong words to correct them but he cannot prevent them from choosing their allegiances, as well as power to change their minds (Polaski 1999, 101). It should also be noted that Paul is not claiming sole responsibility for having

fathered all the believers in the Corinthian church, neither is he claiming his own authority as superior to that of other appropriately qualified fathers (Clarke 2000, 219-221). It is true that Paul emphasised that he had been influential in the initial founding of the assembly (Clarke 2000, 219) but his co-writers of the epistles to the Corinthians, Timothy and Silas, were included in the analogy of the father/child relationship (Clarke 2012, 141). Also significant is the fact that he only uses this metaphor in regard to the churches, which he founded (Zhekov 1998, 24). As Clarke (2000, 222, 246, 251) rightly states, Paul's use of the 'father' metaphor was influenced by love and care for his churches.

5.4.2 PAUL AS APOSTLE

Paul's authority as a church founder resides in his apostleship (1 Cor. 4:15) (Birkey 2001, 5; Thompson 1992, 5). The title "apostle" seems to be most closely associated with Paul's leadership (Agosto 2005, 100). Some people, however, have discounted his apostleship based on the fact that he had not been a disciple of Jesus during his Palestinian ministry (Bruce [1977] 1981, 95). Paul repeatedly declares that he, too, is an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God (1 Cor. 1:1; 3:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; Titus 1:1) (Kreider et al. 2019, 150; Macarthur 1996, ix; Stanley [1963] 1967, 281; Giles 2017, 136; Stott [1994] 2020, 30; Towner 1994, 218; Morris 1988, 35, 38). A number of prominent scholars accepted his apostleship claim (Piper 2019, 165; McKenzie 1966, 46; Schaff [1882] 2017, 199; Wright 2005, 162). Apostleship involves "*leadership, rulership, and the reception of special revelation*" (Borland [1991] 2021, 153). Some Bible commentators such as Fee ([1991] 2010, 139) and Clarke (2012, 104) affirm that Paul exercised power and obvious authority over the churches he had founded. He exercised his apostolic authority by visits, letters and through his delegates (Campbell 1994, 196). He moved around his churches as a preeminent apostle (Agosto 2005, 122; Piper 2019, 131). During his lifetime, he was responsible for providing authoritative teaching in his churches (Thompson 1992, 5) and his advice was followed (Polaski 1999, 74). Paul described himself as a conduit for the demonstration of God's power and this kind of self-proclamation claims a special, unassailable position from which to speak (Castelli 1991, 104). Consequent to this, scholars such as Graham Shaw (1983, 29) and Stephen Moore (1994, 109, 110) have branded Paul's approach to leadership as both authoritarian and manipulative (Clarke 2000, 210, 211). However, it is helpful to note that apostles in the New Testament did exercise authority, but their authority had limitations (Morris 1964, 55). Had the Apostle Paul possessed absolute authority, he would not have faced challenges in his churches, especially in Corinth and Galatia (Morris 1964, 52). Also significant is that he was not tied or limited to a single congregation (Merkle 2017, 382). He ran an itinerant ministry with no headquarters church or branches (Campbell 1994, 132). He established assemblies; provided them with necessary resources and gave them freedom to lead their communities by themselves (Zhekov 1998, 24). He refused to lord it over his churches (2 Cor. 1:24) (Banks [1979] 2020, 153; Piper 2019, 130; Hodge [1864] 1963, 26, 27). Paul's power and authority have not been manifested in a way which could be interpreted as suggestive of a patron to his clients (Clarke 2000, 243, 244). In dealing with his members, he prefers exhortation and appeal to command or decree (Parkinson 2020, 90). He used the term "*parakalein*" ("appeal") some twenty-three times in his letters (Banks [1979] 2020, 151). Paul exercised his power and authority when needed to stop the "super apostles" (Strauch 1995, 94), but he was never shown to be above criticism (McKenzie 1966, 55). Moreover, there are instances when the apostle

seemed to moderate any image of personal power by means of a number of qualifiers (Clarke 2012, 125, 126). For instance, on many occasions he referred to himself as a servant (1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor.3:6; 6:4; 11:23; Eph. 3:7; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:23, 25; Tit. 1:1) (Clarke 2012, 125; Stott [1996] 2011, 168; Thiselton 2006, 62; Bock 2019, 98; Motyer [1984] 1996, 33; Silva 1992, 39). He understood how to be a servant of Jesus Christ and simultaneously be an apostle (Rom. 1:1) (Wagner 1986, 86; Morris 1988, 36; Bruce [1982] 1988, 72). He adopted the servant leadership demonstrated by Jesus, who came to serve (Mk. 10:45; Jn. 13:1-17; Phil. 2:6-9) (Clarke 2000, 250; Lange [1866] 2007, 106; Marshall 1968, 39). As a humble servant, he avoided self-promotion and self-exaltation (Strauch 1995, 94; Coriden 2000, 113). At other times, he refers to himself as a “prisoner” (Philem. 1) or just “Paul” (1 Thess. 1:1) (Agosto 2005, 102). Clarke (2012, 100), however, points out that Paul in a number of ways downplays his elevated status without actually removing it. Paul belongs to a special class of apostle of Jesus Christ who are privileged to have some power and authority. Some theologians such as Graham Shaw (1983, 29) and Castelli (1991, 104) criticised Paul for misusing his apostolic powers, but the arguments from the likes of Banks ([1979] 2020, 153) and Piper (2019, 130) prove otherwise. The latter argue that Pauline churches were autonomous in daily matters, but they were accountable to the Apostle Paul’s apostolic authority on matters of faith. The Apostle Paul was accused by Castelli and others of being arrogant and manipulative, but there is no scriptural evidence to show that he has a desire to manipulate or dominate his members or to tell them what to think or do, or to control their faith. Therefore, there does not seem to be an abuse of his apostolic powers.

5.4.3 PAUL FINANCIAL RELATIONS WITH HIS CHURCHES

The Apostle Paul emphasises in the Word of the Lord to the effect that God’s workers need and deserve financial support (1 Cor. 9:14) (Kunhiyop 2012, 205; Thiselton 2006, 141). It is also on record that the apostles lived and travelled, taking along their spouses, at the expense of the congregations (1 Cor. 9:3-7) (Sanders 1995, 108; Barrett [1968] 1987, 203). As an apostle, Paul had a right to financial assistance from his churches and this issue is touched upon in almost every one of his uncontested writings (Holmberg 1980, 86, 157). Unlike the other apostles, Paul did not exercise his financial rights, but instead preferred to be working with his hands to provide funds for his personal needs as well as for ministry (1 Cor. 4:12; 9:14; 2 Cor. 11:7; 12:13; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8) (Garrett [1999] 2015, 70, 89; Beale 2003, 70, 71; Garland 1999, 474; Barrett [1973] 1976, 281, 322, 323). He worked night and day because he did not want to put a burden on the Thessalonians while he preached the gospel to them (Holmberg 1980, 88, 89). He refused financial aid from the Corinthians probably because of lack of mutual trust between him and the church (Holmberg 1980, 92). He would not accept financial assistance from them while he was still in Corinth, since that would blunt the sharp edge of his gospel message (Lidstone 2019, 24). He wanted to avoid a situation where the Corinthians may be thinking that the gospel message was something they had to pay for (Banks [1979] 2020:132) and more importantly, “*Paul wanted to be ‘above reproach’ so no one could accuse him of raising money to benefit himself*” (Getz 2003, 199; cf. Dimos 2016, 20). Thus, when he was raising funds for the needy Christians in Jerusalem, he did not handle the monies personally. Rather, he allowed the Corinthians to do that and keep the funds until he arrived, and then to choose among them trusted people to transport the gift (1 Cor. 16:3-4) (Getz 2003, 199; Thiselton 2006, 292, 293; Barrett [1968] 1987, 387).

However, the Corinthian church was embarrassed by Paul's strange insistence on working with his hands; they considered him a weak fool, a person acting like a lower-class artisan and someone to be laughed at (Lidstone 2019, 23, 24). It turns out, on the contrary, that Paul accepted gifts from other churches while working in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil. 4:16-18) (Giles 2017, 37; Clarke 1962, 83). It is to be noted that Paul's reluctance to seek for or accept financial help from the Corinthian church had the opposite effect to what he had intended, "*not to put any obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ*" (1 Cor. 9:12) (Holmberg 1980, 92). His abstention led to a growing distrust which finally broke into open conflict (Holmberg 1980, 92). It is important to observe that though the apostle was careful about accepting financial aid from his churches, he did receive material gifts from Christians who were mature enough to understand his motives (Getz 2003, 136). Also, Paul was willing to accept help only when he has left the church he has founded, since that made them partners in his mission (Lidstone 2019, 24). As an apostle, Paul has a right to ask for or to accept material gifts from his churches, but did only when he is certain that the timing is right.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to examine Paul's position on church governance. In order to understand his perspective on church order, the study covered the authority relationship between him and the Twelve (the church at the global level); his status and authority among his co-workers (regional level), and his authority within his churches.

The original apostles, the elders in the church of Jerusalem and the delegates from the church in Antioch converged in Jerusalem, to debate an issue of the Old Testament Law and circumcision and a decision needed to be made. This summit meeting reveals an intangible and immeasurable expression of Paul's power. The Jerusalem council also discloses that the Twelve did not have authority over the Apostle Paul. The latter went up to Jerusalem by 'revelation' and not by 'requirement'. The Apostle Paul took Titus, a Gentile, along with him into the mother church in Jerusalem: this is a sign of strength and power on the side of Paul. The leadership in the church of Jerusalem recognised the grace that had been given to Paul. They held Paul in high esteem and acknowledged his apostolic independence from theirs. Thus, the Apostle Paul belongs to a special class of apostles of Jesus Christ: those who are privileged to have some power and authority. On the other hand, Paul does not reject other authorities, apart from his own, and it is quite clear that he respects the original apostles. Finally, the meeting reveals that both Paul and the twelve apostles potentially held significant power, as neither party actually conceded power to the other. Nevertheless, the final decision was jointly made by the apostles, the elders and the whole church.

Moreover, it can be seen, at the regional level, that those who worked with Paul had different degrees of dependence on him. The likes of Barnabas, Apollos and Silas (Silvanus) have shown that some people who worked with him were not recruited by him and were independent of him, both before and after their period of cooperation with him. That is, the Apostle Paul did not hold a position of unopposed power. On the other hand, some individuals have been personally appointed by Paul to be his followers and assistants: Timothy, Titus and Epaphras. Paul sees them as his children and they represented him in his churches. It is important to note that Paul did not only see them as spiritual sons, but as partners and co-workers as well. It should also be

noted that these protégés of Paul had different degrees of dependence on him. Thus, the various degrees of dependence between Paul and his co-workers support the fact that the apostle appears to favour some degree of hierarchical leadership within the Christian communities.

This study also shows that Paul had some authority over the churches he had established. However, he is not the only authority in these churches; neither is he claiming his own authority as superior to that of other appropriately qualified fathers. It is significant to note that these authority figures have exercised leadership over the members of the Corinthian church.

As an apostle of Christ, Paul was responsible for providing authoritative teaching in his churches. Contrarily, some scholars criticised him, stating that he abused his apostolic powers and branded his approach to leadership as both authoritarian and manipulative. The evidence tends to show the contrary. For instance, Paul pioneered churches, provided them with the necessary resources and gave them freedom to lead their communities by themselves. He did not attempt to interfere with the freedom of these churches by passing any elaborate laws. Apart from being an apostle, Paul was also seen as a servant of Jesus Christ; he adopted the servant leadership demonstrated by Jesus. As an apostle of Christ, Paul had a right to ask for or to accept material gifts from his assemblies, but only did so when he was certain the timing was right. He did exercise authority in the early church but he recognises that his authority had limitations.

Therefore, after a diligent examination of the Apostle Paul's perspective on where authority should reside in the church and who is to use it, the view taken in this thesis is that plural leadership in the highest governing roles of the church, where leaders are servants and where no individual had unilateral decision-making power outside the other members of the group, is to be regarded as normative.

Chapter six will look at the current governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London through the lens of data found in chapter five. Moreover, it will suggest further research that may be undertaken to help develop better systems of church polity.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This final chapter is divided into four segments. The first segment presents an overview of the discussion thus far and the summary of the results; the second evaluates the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London from the data found in the Apostle Paul's teaching on church government; the third discusses factors ranging from culture and leadership to specific calling and church governance, power distance, academic theological education and church government, concept of prosperity gospel, and the research methodology used. The fourth segment suggests further research that may be undertaken to help develop better forms of church polity.

6.1 REVIEW AND SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This thesis's topic is "Church governance in the Nigerian-led churches in London: a practical theological study." Chapter one set the scene by introducing the reader to the on-going debates among scholars on the subject of church government: the relevance of the topic; major forms of church government; and a survey of scholarship on authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London, which was then followed by a statement of the problem; research questions, research objectives, definition of terms and an outline of the thesis.

Chapter one thus identified the issue of church government as a significant topic throughout church history. The chapter also breaks ground for this study into a wider academic conversation on the subject of church government. In chapter one, the evidence seems to suggest that there is no clear instruction in the New Testament justifying the normativity of Episcopalian, Presbyterian or Congregational forms of church governance (see section 1.3). In addition, chapter one reveals that previous studies addressing research into the leadership of the Nigerian-led churches in London failed to give a thorough reflection of the demographic representation of the governance structures of these churches.

Chapter two provided a methodological approach for this study, and it is as follows: research design and its justification; nature of the study; the sample and sampling procedures; the data collection method; ethical considerations; data analysis; and scope and delimitations of the study.

The Osmer's (2008) research design which comprises of four tasks was used as the framework for this project. The four tasks are separate albeit they are also connected. The first three tasks were used, and they helped this study to answer the research question: how closely is church governance, as practised in the Nigerian-led churches in London, in accordance with the teaching of the Paul on this subject? (See section 1.6). A two-tier approach to sampling was used to select participants who will provide significant and relevant information, considering the research topic (see section 2.5.1). The first tier was five distinct representative churches from different networks. They are *CAC*, *RCCG*, *KICC*, *FOP*, and *Church 5* (see section 2.5.1). The selection of these churches shows the uniqueness of this research in relation to previous scholarship studies, because it explored the authority structures of both neo-Pentecostal mega-churches such as *RCCG* and *KICC* as well as small groups like *Church 5* (a white garment church founded by a prophetess with a membership of under 100 congregants) and the *FOP* (see section

2.5.2). The second tier was the thirty-three participants (twelve leaders and twenty-one laypersons) who have had experiential knowledge and understanding of the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 2.5.5). The selection of both church leaders and lay-members gives the researcher an opportunity to compare their responses in chapter four.

In chapter three, the history and authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London were discussed. The chapter reveals how Christianity first arrived in Nigeria in the fifteenth century and how the Christian landscape in that country is currently diverse with traditions ranging from Mission Churches to Ethiopian Churches, Aladura Churches, and the Pentecostals (see section 3.3.6). The chapter also shows that these churches in Nigeria are actively operating in different forms of church governance ranging from Episcopalism, Presbyterianism, the hierarchical model of leadership and a Founder-led model of leadership (see chapter three). The chapter also reveals the richness in diversity of five Nigerian-led churches in London: *CAC*, *RCCG*, *KICC*, *FOP*, and *Church 5* (see section 3.3.6). The evidence tends to suggest that the *CAC*, *RCCG* and *KICC* are utilising centralised hierarchical models of leadership, albeit with some variations. For example, the GEC is the highest ruling body in the *CAC* where all principal officers derive their authority from (see section 3.3.1). On the other hand, the general overseer of the *RCCG* exercises absolute authority and power, and reports to no one except God (see section 3.3.6). This means that Nigerian-led mega-churches in London are not carbon copies of each other in terms of their governance structures. It is also observable in chapter three that the *RCCG*, *FOP*, and *Church 5* had the same roots in the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, but they are different in their approaches to authority structures. For instance, the *FOP* operates a collegiate system (see section 3.3.4.2); whereas the founder of *Church 5* enjoys absolute authority and unopposed power (see section 3.3.6).

Chapter four describes and interprets the data collected from the thirty-three informants. These participants were asked the following two questions:

- 1) How would you describe the governance structure of your church or also of any other Nigerian-led churches in London?
- 2) What factors have influenced the founders of Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their governance structures?

Responding to question 1, thirty-three interviewees gave descriptions of three different forms of governance structures, but the idea of the names given to these three authority structures came from some of the leaders who were interviewed. They are as follows:

- 1) The Centralised pyramidal leadership model where no individual leader exercises absolute authority or have unopposed power.
- 2) The Centralised pyramidal leadership model where the authority of the supreme leader is absolute.
- 3) The One-person approach to leadership where the pastor is in sole charge of a local church and its day-to-day affairs (see section 4.13).

It is helpful to note that an approach to leadership where the senior leader exercises absolute authority and unchallengeable power seems to be the most prominent model among the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 4.13). The charismatic revivals that roughly covered two decades (1970s and 1980s) in Nigeria could be seen as the beginning of the proliferation of this kind of approach to leadership among the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 3.2.5.2).

In reference to question 2, nine factors were mentioned that influences the proliferation of the one-headed leadership model and the centralised leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London. These are: 1) financial gain, 2) lack of financial accountability, 3) lack of trust, 4) the Euro-American missionary enterprise in Nigeria, 5) unwillingness to serve others, 6) love of power & accountability, 7) lack of unity, 8) numerical growth, and 9) gender (see section 4.13). Chapter four was thus helpful in pointing out more of the factors influencing the choices of governance structures among the Nigerian-led churches in London. It is also essential to note that the chapter highlighted the fact that factor 1 is the most widely discussed issue influencing the choice of authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. It is the only factor that links directly to the one-headed leadership model and the centralised pyramidal leadership models.

Chapter five discussed Paul's perspective on church governance. In order to try and understand his views on leadership and ecclesiastical structures, the chapter examined the authority relationship between him and the twelve apostles of Jesus (church at the global level); his status and authority among his fellow workers (regional level); and his authority within his churches. The chapter shows that Paul held significant power and authority in the New Testament though his level of authority was not absolute. Some of his co-workers were his partners and independent of him. On the other hand, there were those he personally had chosen to be his assistants, and no equality was assumed here (see section 5.3). The chapter concludes by pointing out that plural leadership in the highest governing roles of the church, where leaders are servants and where no individual had unilateral decision-making power outside the other members of the group, is to be regarded as normative (see section 5.5).

6.2 EVALUATION OF CHURCH GOVERNANCE OF THE NIGERIAN-LED CHURCHES IN LONDON THROUGH THE LENS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S TEACHING ON THIS TOPIC

This second segment of this chapter will evaluate the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London through the lens of Paul's teaching on this subject. This evaluation will be based on the findings of chapters three, four, and five. This evaluation will help us to understand better how closely the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London is in accordance with Paul's perspectives on this topic. Based on the research questions, this evaluation analysis will be approached under the following headings:

- 1) Approaches to leadership
- 2) Hierarchical approaches to leadership
- 3) Levels of authority and power

- 4) Use of power and authority
- 5) Approaches to church finance

6.2.1 APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

It is interesting that those who worked with Paul had various grades of dependence on him (see section 5.3). For example, some individuals such as Barnabas and Apollos were his partners and independent of him; he had no authority over them (see section 5.3.1). Contrarily, there were those like Timothy, Titus, and Epaphras, whom Paul personally appointed to be his assistants and no equality is assumed in their cases. It is also important to point out that these protégés of his had different degrees of dependence on him (see section 5.3.2). Thus, the various units of reliance between Paul and his fellow-workers support the fact that the apostle seems to favour some degree of hierarchical leadership within the Christian communities (see section 5.5).

Comparatively, pyramidal leadership is prominent among the Nigerian-led churches in London. For instance, the position of an officer in the hierarchical leadership of the *CAC* would be determined by the scope of his authority (see section 3.3.1.9). The *CAC* leadership structure revolves around six principal officers comprising of the president, the general superintendent, the general evangelist, the general secretary, the finance director and the director of missions. They complement one another and together express Christ's government of his church (see sections 3.3.1.9.1 – 3.3.1.9.6).

Likewise, the governance structure of the *RCCG* has Adeboye, the general overseer, at the zenith, followed by his wife, and then the Continental Overseers. Following in the hierarchy are the Deputy Continental Overseers, Assistants to the Continental Overseers, and then the Intercontinental appointments (see section 3.3.2.4).

Similarly, the authority structure of the *KICC* places the senior pastor, Matthew Ashimolowo, at the head of the church, followed by his wife, who acts as the resident pastor 1 of the headquarter church, and then their son, Tobi Ashimolowo, the resident pastor 2 of the headquarters church located in Kent (see section 3.3.3.3).

It is interesting to see that the various grades of dependence between Paul and his co-workers are similar to authority relations among some senior leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London and the other leaders in their respective ministries.

6.2.2 HIERARCHICAL APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

The Apostle Paul ran an itinerant ministry and he was responsible for the establishment of many of the early churches (see sections 5.2; 5.4.2). It is important to note that he was not tied or limited to a single congregation (see section 5.4.2). The evidence from his letters reveals that Timothy, Titus and Epaphras worked with Paul and represented him in the churches associated with him (see section 5.3.2). It should also be highlighted that the partnership between Paul and his co-workers reveals a clear hierarchical separation between these workers on the one hand and the community on the other (see chapter five). Nevertheless, Paul provided his congregations with necessary resources and gave them freedom to lead their communities by themselves (see

section 5.4.2). Significantly, the apostle does not attempt to interfere with the freedom of these churches by passing any elaborate rules (Machen [1976] 2009, 350).

In conjunction with this, some senior leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London such as Adeboye and Ashimolowo, assumed the leadership of many churches globally (see chapter three). In a similar vein to the Apostle Paul's working partnership with his protégés, there are numerous leaders in the *CAC* such as a district superintendent, his assistants and a DCC Superintendent, who are intermediaries between the principal officers of the denomination and the local assemblies (see section 3.3.1.6). In like manner, the *RCCG* has individuals who are holding key positions such as Continental Overseers and Deputy Continental Overseers; their role is to coordinate different spheres of the church's life and the administrative machinery (see section 3.3.2.4). Also, the *RCCG* gives room for their parishes in the UK to adopt policies that best fit their own circumstances before adopting any of the templates designed by the central office as a parish policy (see section 3.3.2.7). In the UK, every *RCCG* parish is a legal entity, albeit each assembly is connected to the church headquarters in Lagos, Nigeria (see section 3.3.2.7).

However, unlike Paul who ran an itinerant ministry, the leaders of the Nigerian-led mega-churches in London run their ministries from their respective headquarter churches and therefore employ the centralised pyramidal governance structure. It is a way of maintaining their specific Christian identity worldwide (see sections 3.3.1.9; 3.3.2.5; 3.3.3.3). Thus, unlike the pyramidal leadership revealed by the ministry of Paul, some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London are using the centralised hierarchical structure because they oversee their ministries from their respective headquarter churches. This can be seen as a contrast between the governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London and the examples observed in the itinerant ministry of the Apostle Paul.

6.2.3 DIFFERENT LEVELS OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

In section 5.2, the discussion on the summit meeting that was held in Jerusalem between the delegates from the church in Antioch and the leaders of the church in Jerusalem reveals an intangible and immeasurable expression of Paul's power. The Jerusalem council seems to show that the Apostle Paul belongs to the elite group of apostles of Jesus Christ, who are privileged to have some power and authority (see section 5.2). As a pioneering father, Paul had a certain authority relative to all the churches he had established (see section 5.4.1). He tends to see himself as a man with considerable authority in that he described himself as a conduit for the demonstration of God's power (see section 5.4.2). It should also be noted that he did not hold a position of unopposed power (see section 5.3.1) neither did he exercise absolute authority (see section 5.4.2). In fact, he had to argue repeatedly for his apostolic authority (see section 5.4.2). Also noteworthy is the fact that the apostle was not the only authority in his churches; neither did he claim his own authority as superior to that of other appropriately qualified fathers (see section 5.5).

In the same way, the governance structure of *CAC* is not centred in one person. The president exercises his authority as the highest officer of the church but there is a separation of power in the denomination: the presidency and the General Executive Council (GEC) are partners. The

president is accountable to the GEC (see section 3.3.1.9.1). All relevant officers of the church derive their authority from the GEC (see section 3.3.1.7.2). Like the *CAC*, the *FOP*'s governance structure is not centred in one person, but authority is shared among the church leaders, albeit the church has a senior pastor who also serves as the spiritual head (see section 3.3.4.2).

Unlike the Apostle Paul, Adeboye, the general overseer of the *RCCG*, exercises unchallengeable authority and absolute power. For instance, he reports to no one except God (see section 3.3.2.5). LP13 (2022, personal interview), a member of the *RCCG*, opines that “*we are trained not to question the authority of the pastor*”. LP17 (2022, personal interview) and LP7 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview), added that once you raised a question as a member, the leadership will label you a rebel. In like fashion, L4 (2022, personal interview) argues that the pioneer of *Church 5* has unchallengeable authority and exercises absolute power within her ministry (see section 4.9.1). These two actions: unchallengeable authority and absolute power of some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London are directly opposite approaches to the leadership observed in the itinerant ministry of Paul.

6.2.4 USE OF POWER AND AUTHORITY

It is quite clear that Paul exercised power and authority over the churches he had founded. For example, he moved around his churches as a distinguished apostle and he was responsible for providing authoritative teaching: advice which was closely followed (see section 5.4.2). However, Paul refused to lord it over his assemblies. His power and authority have not been demonstrated in a manner which could be interpreted as suggestive of a patron to his clients (see section 5.4.2). The same section shows that in dealing with his congregants, Paul preferred exhortation and appeal to command or decree. He used the term “*parakalein*” (“appeal”) some twenty-three times in his letters. Section 5.4.2 also reveals that he exercised his power and authority when needed to stop individuals who were challenging his authority within his churches. Moreover, on many occasions he referred to himself as a servant. As a humble servant, he adopted the servant leadership model that was demonstrated by Jesus, who came to serve (see section 5.4.2). Paul reminds his members in the Corinthian church that Christian leaders are servants, not objects of worship (see section 5.3.1).

Comparatively, the president of the Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC*) worldwide, cannot make decisions exclusively on his own (unless on a rare occasion) and the leader has to justify it by Scripture (see section 4.9.1). The president exercises his authority as the highest executive officer of the church, but his own thoughts or ideas can be challenged as the *CAC* constitution does not permit any officer to impose decisions on the church. The president leads the church, but there is a separation of power in the *CAC* (see section 3.3.1.9.1).

However, in contrast, one of the common features among some other cases among senior Christian leaders in some of the Nigerian-led churches in London that was studied, is the way they are acting like emperors and empresses respectively in their different ministries (LP4 2022, personal interview; LP3 2022, personal interview; LP6 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). LP4 (2022, personal interview) adds that some of these senior leaders move around with heavy security operatives. Moreover, some of these senior Christian leaders (such as Adeboye and Ashimolowo) are allowed to make decisions for their churches globally on their own, without

any input from other church members (see sections 3.3.2.5; 3.3.3.3; 4.9.2). It should be noted that this attitude of making decisions solely by the senior leader is not limited to the mega-churches. The pioneer of the *Church 5* (a family-like assembly with a membership of less than 100) makes decisions for her church totally by herself (see section 4.9.1). These senior leaders believe that making decisions on their own for the whole church is more expedient as it needs to be quick and decisive (L12 2022, telephone interview; L8 2022, telephone interview). Thus, this attitude of these senior leaders shows a gap between church governance in the Nigerian-led churches in London and the leadership exhibited by Paul.

6.2.5 APPROACHES TO CHURCH FINANCE

L2, the founder of *Church 5*, posits that even though some pioneers of the Nigerian-led churches in London may have wrong motives, not all Christian leaders are in the ministry because of financial gain (L2 2022, personal interview). For instance, the leadership officers of the Fountain of Peace Ministries of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (*FOP*) do not model their programs around consumeristic Christian needs only, but around ministries shaped to preach the Good News to the non-believer (see section 3.3.4.1).

On the other hand, chapter four reveals that financial gain is apparently influencing the proliferation of the one-person leadership model and the centralised leadership models among the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 4.4). For example, some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London, such as Ashimolowo, are overemphasising the doctrine of tithing; offering and the concept of the prosperity gospel to generate funds in their ministries (see section 4.4.2.5). The same chapter also shows that some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London (for example, L2) lack financial accountability towards their congregations (see section 4.5.1). That means that some Nigerian-led churches in London are not transparent about the way they are running their organisations (see section 4.5.2).

Conversely, even though the Apostle Paul emphasises in the Scriptures that God's workers need and deserve financial support and, in addition, that he himself, as an apostle, had a right to financial assistance from his churches (see section 5.4.3), he (unlike the other qualified fathers in the New Testament) waived his financial rights, preferring to work with his hands to provide funds for his personal needs as well as for ministry (see section 5.4.3). There are instances where Paul raised funds for the needy Christians, for example, in Jerusalem (1Cor. 16:3-4), however, we have no record of him using the concept of the prosperity gospel to raise funds for his ministry or for someone else. When he was raising monies for the Christians in Jerusalem, he did not handle the cash personally. Rather, he allowed the Corinthians to do that and keep the funds until he arrived, and then to choose among them trusted people to transport the gift (see section 5.4.3). Paul wanted to avoid a situation where the Christians at Corinth may be thinking that the Good News was something they had to pay for and, more significantly, he wanted to be 'above reproach' so no one could accuse him of raising money to benefit himself (see section 5.4.3). One can observe here that the approaches of some Christian leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London to church finance are significantly different to the Apostle Paul's approach on the same topic. Some of these differences include lack of financial accountability on the part of some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches towards their congregations. It also includes

overemphasising the doctrine of tithing; offering and the concept of the prosperity gospel by these senior leaders to generate funds in their ministries.

After a comprehensive assessment of church governance of the Nigerian-led churches in London through the lens of the leadership promoted by Paul, it is fair to say that there is some degree of similarity between authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London and leadership observed in the itinerant ministry of Paul, but also some significant differences. The evidence tends to show a similarity of pyramidal leadership and shared governance authority. Yet, the study also revealed four attitudes by some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London that clashes with the leadership of Paul:

- 1) Acting like emperors and empresses in their ministries respectively
- 2) Having unchallengeable authority and exercising absolute power within their ministries
- 3) Enjoying making decisions completely on their own for their churches
- 4) Overemphasising the doctrine of tithing and offerings and the concept of prosperity gospel to generate funds in their ministries.

These four actions indicate a significant gap between the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London and the leadership witnessed in the letters and ministry of Paul in the New Testament.

Because of these significant gaps, the third segment of this chapter will focus on discussing themes ranging from culture and leadership to specific calling and church governance; power distance; academic theological education and church government; the concept of the prosperity gospel; and the research methodology used.

6.3 DISCUSSION ON CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The scope of Nigerian culture is wide, reflecting the historical context of the country (Falola 2001, 25). Gibbs and Coffey (2001, 33) posit that “culture determines what is normative and plausible amongst persons of the same group according to its worldview”. The likes of the *CAC* and *RCCG* started from Nigeria, while ministries such as the *KICC*, *FOP*, and *Church 5* began in the UK (see sections 2.5.2; 3.1). There is a notion that, when people arrive in Britain, they came not only with their luggage, but also with the traits of their religious and cultural identities (Cruz 2010, 75; Adogame 2013, 61) and so do African church leaders operating in the West (Taiwo 2017, 220). Interestingly, what works in Nigeria culturally may not work in London (Jenkins 2007, 126; Jorgensen 2012, 50), as African culture is different from Western culture (Olofinjana 2010, 50). The same author writes that the democratic process is not really part of the culture in the BMC church group (see section 1.5.1.1). There is a clear indication of the influence of cultural issues in the way leadership is exercised in these churches in chapters three and four. For example, it tends to be a paradigm among leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London to make decisions totally on their own for their ministries (see sections 3.3.2.5; 3.3.3.3; 4.9.2). Therefore, it is helpful to find out whether culture plays a part in the attitude of some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London that clashes with the Apostle Paul’s teaching on church government. Stott (2002, 113) affirms that our governance structure is often influenced more by

culture than comparison to Christ. In a similar vein, Robinson & Smith (2003, 131) opine that the authority structure in the church will always reflect something of the culture that surrounds the church. Likewise, Kessler (2010, 544) postulates that our judgement of the right or wrong use of power is often influenced by the culture in which we grew up. Furthermore, several studies (such as the GLOBE research project, for instance) assert that power distance is a significant parameter for describing a culture (Northouse 2013, 387; Jorgensen 2012, 52; Kessler 2010, 545). Culture also influences our theological thinking (Gibbs & Coffey 2001, 33) and what we believe about the Bible (Malphurs 2007, 98). Nigerian culture is different from the British culture, and we have some Nigerian-led churches in London that started from Nigeria. Does Nigerian culture play any role in the choice of authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London? In order to answer this question, three themes will be discussed in the following section, and they are as follows: specific calling and church governance; power distance; and academic theological education and church governance.

6.3.1 SPECIFIC CALLING AND CHURCH GOVERNANCE

The data reveals that several leaders who were interviewed are concerned that young ministers in the Nigerian-led churches in London are losing interest in staying within the larger groups. This development is promoting a one-headed approach to leadership among the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 4.8.2). This trend can also be seen on social media, where some Nigerians are presenting themselves as prophets, claiming to have the calling of God on their lives (see section 4.8.2). This development is also prevalent in some Nigerian-led mega-churches (such as the *CAC*), where hundreds of pioneers are running independent ministries under the banner of the denomination globally. These founders claim to be prophets and state that God had spoken to them to establish their independent ministries (see section 4.8.1). By contrast, the proliferation of these independent ministries caused crises and divisions in the *CAC* since the early 1990s. Some pioneers of the independent ministries do not follow the laws of the church (see section 3.3.1.11). These independent ministers seem not to have any interest in staying within a larger group if it was not for the good reputation that the pioneers of the *CAC* had established when the denomination was started in the early twentieth century. L11 (2022, telephone interview) asserts that this attitude of these independent ministers is contrary to what happened during the 1960s and 1970s, when loyalty and honesty to the larger group could be taken for granted. For instance, Joseph Ayodele Babalola, a prominent healing prophet, was popular before he joined the Faith Tabernacle Nigeria in 1929 and at the time he raised a boy from death which caused a tremendous outbreak of faith among the members of the denomination (see section 3.3.1.2). Babalola's charismatic gifts and authority contributed to the growth of the *CAC* (see section 3.3.1.2), yet it does not alter the ecclesiastical structure of the church. The government of the *CAC* is built on shared leadership by men with varying God-given ministries (see section 3.3.1.8). This is one of the reasons L1 is concerned about who it is who are validating these independent ministries. He comments that there is a beauty in belonging to a larger group (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). L9 (2022, telephone interview) added that God's calling does not automatically mean one has to establish a church.

It is not the aim of this study to diminish the value of individual leaders, but simply to recognise that Scripture does acknowledge the use of teams as a viable leadership strategy (Barna 2001, 34). On the other hand, prior to establishing *RCCG*, Akindayomi heard a voice declaring that he

would be a minister of God. He started a prayer group, governed it and dictated its activities (see section 3.3.2.1). Also, Ashimolowo claimed that he heard the Lord telling him to secede from the Foursquare Gospel Church to start an independent ministry, known today as *KICC* (see section 3.3.3.1). If the assertion of the people claiming to have heard from God to establish their independent ministry is correct, it will be difficult to discourage the use of the one-headed leadership model in the church. A pattern that seems to be trending among Nigerian Christians is that they heard the voice of God to start their own independent ministries. This development started in Nigeria in the 1990s and, because of this, it seems that contemporary culture plays a part in the promotion of one-headed leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

6.3.2 POWER DISTANCE

Kessler states that leadership and power are attached to each other (Kessler 2010, 527, 529), and Russell (2004, 17) posits that it would be difficult for a leader to be successful unless he enjoys having power over his followers. The same scholar stressed further that “*each society defines what is normative and plausible among a group of people in their relation to power* (Russell 2004, 5). This is where the issue of power distance comes in. Hofstede (2001, xix) defines power distance as the “*extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally*”. According to Hofstede (2001, 83), power distance is to a considerable extent determined by the national culture. The distance to power in the West is often small (Jorgensen 2012, 53). Contrarily, most countries in Africa, including Nigeria, have great distances to power (Kessler 2010, 546). In cultures with little distance to power, the superiors and subordinates share equal power (Drury 2003, 49). However, inequalities among people and categories in the hierarchy are accepted in cultures with great distance to power (Jorgensen 2012, 52). Interestingly, hierarchical leadership models are prominent among the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 3.3.6). It is essential to note that power distance is estimated from the perspective of less powerful, ordinary people (Kessler 2010, 550). The lay-members that participated in the interview sessions think that absolute authority always resides in the person holding the highest office in the Nigerian-led churches in London (see section 4.2). LP5 (2022, personal interview) categorically states that Nigerians are used to an iron-handed style of leadership, therefore church leaders tend to rule the congregation in that way. Another participant remarks that “*we are trained not to question the authority of the pastor*” (LP13 2022, personal interview). In a similar fashion, LP17 (2022, personal interview) and LP7 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) observed that, once you have raised a question as a member, the leadership will label you as a rebel. As a matter of fact, the evidence tends to suggest that some Christian leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London are acting like emperors and empresses respectively in their different ministries. They also enjoy making decisions for their churches unilaterally (see section 4.9.2). There seems to be huge gap between these leaders and their congregants in terms of power and authority. It is observable during the interview sessions that the laypersons are not against subjection to the authority of their respective churches, but they are concerned that these church leaders are too powerful. The concerns of these lay members are not limited to the senior leaders, but also to some other leaders in their different churches. One can see that these congregants [possibly influenced by the British culture] want a church where questions can be asked of those in authority because they want to know the reasons why things are done in a

particular way. A number of scholars such as Jorgensen (2012, 83), Greenleaf ([1977] 2002, 83), and Robinson & Smith (2003, 126) have written against hierarchical approaches to leadership. For example, Greenleaf asserts that “*to be a lone chief atop a pyramid is abnormal and corrupting*” ([1977] 2002, 83). Adedibu (2012, 212, 229) has suggested “*that those churches that are using the restrictive and controlling hierarchical structures should change to the open network model which is empowering and missionally inclined*”. Interestingly, some Nigerian-led mega-churches (such as the *RCCG* and *KICC*), who happened to be utilising centralised hierarchical leadership models appear to be the most prominent Nigerian-led churches in London. The senior leaders of these churches are having unchallengeable authority and exercising absolute power within their respective ministries (see chapter three)

The *RCCG* seems to be the fastest growing religious movement in Britain with about 800 parishes and continues to plant over twenty-five new parishes each year (see section 3.3.2.7). Similarly, *KICC* is the largest single Nigerian-led mega-church in the UK with over 12,000 congregants (Kwiyani 2017, 14; Adedibu, 2013a, 100). Sturge (2005, 213) describes *KICC* as a beacon for what a successful church should look like. The evidence tends to suggest that there is a large power distance between some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London and their congregants. In spite of the fact that some participants are complaining about the excessive powers of some general overseers of the Nigerian-led mega-churches in London, these denominations (such as the *RCCG* and *KICC*) continue to experience numerical growth in London and beyond.

6.3.3 ACADEMIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The five chosen representative churches studied in chapter three have a Pentecostal orientation. However, one of the common criticisms of the Pentecostal movement is its lack of an adequate theology (Bradshaw 2013, 55). It is also to be noted that some scholars, such as Gordon Fee ([1991] 2010, 83, 86) argue that Pentecostals are not actually well-schooled in hermeneutics and that they are putting personal experience above Scripture. Similarly, Aldred (2013, 17) opines that the greatest fear of the black Pentecostals [including Nigerian Pentecostals] in the UK seems linked to academic theological studies. Olofinjana added that lack of theological education of some leaders of the Nigerian neo-Pentecostal churches may influence their interpretation of the Word of God (see section 3.2.5.3). He stressed further that “*the majority of African ministers value the experience that comes from ministering more than the academic study of theology*” (Olofinjana, 2010:57) and he comments that a number of leaders of the Nigerian Pentecostal churches are professionals in their fields, but some of them have never been to a Bible college and probably will never do so (see section 3.2.5.3).

On the other hand, this study can confirm that the situation described above is beginning to change as a number of Nigerian-led churches in London are currently led by theologians and Bible scholars. For example, Mark Amadi, the spiritual leader of the *FOP*, holds a PhD in theology (see section 1.5.1.5); L2, founder of *Church 5*, holds a Bachelor degree in Theology and Ministerial Studies (L2, 2022: personal interview); and, L1, a *CAC* pastor and Bible scholar has received his PhD from one of the most prestigious Universities in London. Other graduates include Ashimolowo, founder of the *KICC*, who attended the Foursquare Gospel Church Bible College, Lagos, Nigeria (Olofinjana 2018, 246, 247). He enrolled in the Bible college that has

American missionary links in January 1974, and he graduated in 1976 (Olofinjana 2010, 60). Furthermore, there is a common feature among the Nigerian-led mega-churches in London (such as the *RCCG* and *KICC*) to have Bible colleges in various parts of the world (Adedibu 2018, 6; see section 3.3.3.3).

Therefore, even though some scholars argue that black Pentecostals (including Nigerian-led Pentecostal churches) lack adequate theological education, such an assertion can no longer stand, as many Nigerian-led churches in London are headed by theologians and Bible scholars.

In addition to that this study learnt from the data provided by the participants that some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London are studying theology for a different reason. For instance, a trend that seems to be common among those that started independent ministries after losing their secular jobs, is that they usually go to a Bible college or seminary for six months or a year to study theology so that they can appear to their members as individuals who are actually called by God into full-time ministries (see section 4.4.2.2). If this claim is actually true, it may have a negative impact on their church governance, because they are studying for the wrong reason.

Furthermore, it is essential to note that an academic theological education does not guarantee uniformity of church government among the same group of people. For example, *Church 5* and *FOP* both have roots in Cherubim and Seraphim tradition, yet they differ in their authority structures. The former is governed by the founder, and no congregant is permitted to question her authority as she claims to be guided by the Holy Spirit (see section 3.3.5); whereas, the latter operates a collegiate system where each faculty or college has its governing body (see section 3.3.4.2). One can see here that many leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London are actually theologians, but the reasons why some of these leaders are studying academic theological studies seem to be questionable and this may affect the forms of governance structures in their different ministries.

6.4 DISCUSSION ON THE CONCEPT OF PROSPERITY GOSPEL

One of the findings in this study is that some participants are not pleased with the way promoters of the prosperity gospel (PG) are preaching prosperity as a determining factor in judging the welfare of the church (see section 4.4.2.5). Asamoah-Gyadu (2013, 107) declares that the prosperity gospel “*is the popular teaching that material things and well-being constitute the only sure indicators of God’s favour*”. Scholars such as Jenkins (2007, 79), Olofinjana (2018, 241), Adedibu, Akindolie and Olujobi (2022, 2) argue that the majority of the neo-Pentecostal churches (for instance, the *RCCG*, Christ Embassy and Winners Chapel) are advocates of PG. Some of the interviewees, such as L4 (2022, personal interview) and L7 (2022, personal interview), have accused some leaders of the neo-Pentecostal churches in London of preaching wealth creation and materialism exclusively. LP6 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) added that some of these leaders are overemphasising the concept of the PG to their members and other people that are listening to their messages on the social media platforms. Moreover, some analysts have designated the concept of PG as an abusive theology that uses Scripture out of context, making promises to vulnerable people, with the sole aim of profiting its promoters (Sturge 2005, 138).

Conversely, Adu (2017, 243) affirms that PG is promoted by Pentecostal church leaders in Britain to empower their congregants who might be struggling with socio-economic needs. This view is corroborated by Olofinjana (2011, 145), when he remarks that PG must be understood as a form of liberation theology, responding to the socio-economic needs of the immigrants in Britain. Olofinjana (2018, 242) maintains that PG filled a gap that existed in migrant communities which was not sufficiently addressed by Western theology. In addition, Sturge (2005, 141) points out that prosperity theology “*has a significant sociological and physiological part to play in the life of the church*”. He continues: “*it generates what is often referred to as ‘redemptive lift’ which changes the socio-economic standing of an individual or family because they have made different life choices*” (Sturge 2005, 141). This view is supported by Adedibu and Igboin (2019, 5) when they remark that social deprivation theory is appropriate in describing one of the reasons of the prominence of the concept of prosperity gospel. For instance, the RCCG network of parishes in the UK is investing enormous amounts of resources in human, social and intellectual development within the boroughs in which they are located (Akhazemea 2015, 26). However, Gifford (2001, 62) posits that neo-Pentecostal churches in the UK are relying on PG to sustain their extremely expensive ministries. In support of this claim, Olofinjana (2010, 70) pointed out that frequent messages of prosperity by Ashimolowo play a vital role in maintaining the huge yearly budget of the KICC. In fact, the mega-church has the habit of buying properties mortgage-free for their ministries (KICC: *Our History* 2020, 3; Olofinjana 2018, 247; Osgood 2012, 114). Common features among Nigerian-led churches in London who promote PG is that they are rich and this factor has proved to be very attractive to the middle classes as well as the less-privileged (Jenkins 2007, 79). The RCCG, once a poverty-stricken church, is now a giant economic empire with a substantial business network connecting it with corporate organisations worldwide (Ukah 2008, 157). Therefore, despite some criticisms of various scholars, it is noticeable that adherents of the prosperity gospel are using the concept to change the social-economic life of their members and also relying on the concept to run their expensive ministries.

On the other hand, some informants argue that several Nigerian Christians in London have started losing trust in the concept of PG because some of the church leaders own private jets, while many of the church workers are struggling financially (see section 4.4.1). Also, some senior pastors of the Nigerian-led mega-churches in London have become celebrities and are living superstar lifestyles (see section 3.2.5.3). Some of the lay members who were interviewed even claimed that some senior leaders are the ones spending the church money to satisfy their own self-interests (see section 4.4.2.6). The data also reveals that some of the thirty-three interviewees left their previous churches because of overemphasising of prosperity theology while others have stopped attending Nigerian-led churches entirely because of the same reason (see section 4.4.2.5). Some of the participants understood that the church needs money to finance its expenses, but they think this should not warrant the denominational leaders to financially drain the congregants (see section 4.4.2.5). One can see here that these participants want transparency on all matters of church finances and expect financial accountability from their church leaders. If these senior leaders refuse to change their approach to methods they use in collecting money from their congregants, it is most likely that they will potentially be more vulnerable to the label of financial misconduct that has been attached to them by some Westerners (see section 1.5.1.6).

6.5 DISCUSSION ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED

The descriptive-empirical task

As previously stated, Osmer's (2008) research model was used as the framework for this project (see section 2.3). The first of the four tasks of his practical theological interpretation is descriptive-empirical task. Smith, a reviewer of the Osmer's (2008) research model, gives kudos to Osmer for his treatment of this task and its usefulness for theological students particularly first-time doctoral students in practical theology (Smith 2008, 111). He is correct in his conclusion because this task has helped this study to present an in-depth view of the typical forms of authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London (see chapter three & section 4.2).

The interpretive task

The second task is the interpretive task (Osmer 2008, 4). Commenting on this task, Smith (2008, 106) accuses Osmer of relying heavily on theories from the arts and sciences. He notes that "*if applied as Osmer designed it, the model requires that the researcher draws heavily on other academic disciplines during the interpretive and the strategic tasks*" (Smith 2013, 106). It does not appear as if Smith is against drawing insights from other disciplines into dialogue with Christian traditions, but he wonders how practical it is in this present age to expect a practical theologian to have enough knowledge of other disciplines to use their theories well (Smith 2013, 106). Also, Woodbridge (2014, 92) sees the placement of the interpretive task next after the descriptive-empirical task as a weakness on the part of Osmer's (2008) research model. He suggests that it would "*be more appropriate to combine the interpretive task with the literature review in the form of an exploratory task to gain better insight into the nature and extent of the situation and to seek explanations for observed problems in the situation*" (Woodbridge 2014, 92). The same author claims that this would assist the researcher to explain the situation by answering the question: *What has led to the present situation?* On the contrary, the interpretive task was used after the descriptive-empirical task in this study as suggested by Osmer's (2008) model. Moreover, the model was used in a way where thirty-three people were interviewed and the interpretive task enabled this study to interpret the data from the interview sessions. Information provided by these informants was substantial enough to answer the research questions (see chapter four). This study agrees with Osmer in putting the descriptive-empirical task before the interpretive task.

The normative task

The normative task is the third of the four tasks of Osmer's (2008) model, and it was useful for this study. Smith (2013, 105) affirms that exegesis plays almost no role in the normative task of the practical theological interpretation. He was disappointed with Osmer's approach to this task because Evangelicals believe that "*sound exegesis of scripture needs to hold a central place in any attempt to decide what is normative for the Christian life*" (Smith 2013, 105, 106). By contrast, one of the three approaches recommended by Osmer in order to understand God's will for the present reality is the concept of good practice (see section 2.3.3). Smith (2013, 105) admits that inclusion of models of good practice under the third task is a valuable bridge between the normative task and strategic task. This study employs the good teaching of the Apostle Paul on church government to evaluate the Nigerian-led churches in London in relations to their authority structures (see

chapter five). This study acknowledges that Paul is not the only character in the NT from whom good practices can be learned. Nevertheless, the Apostle Paul was an elite apostle of Jesus Christ, a founder of many of the early churches and he wrote extensively on leadership and on the organisation of the primary churches (see section 5.1).

The pragmatic task

This study does not make use of the pragmatic task because it is not useful in answering the research questions. The final task is to decide how the church should respond to the deficiencies or gaps observed in the preceding tasks (Smith 2013, 102). As earlier stated in chapter two, Smith was disappointed with Osmer's approach on the pragmatic task because, instead of Osmer having to build on the three foundational tasks, he engaged himself on a discussion of how to lead a congregation through change (Smith 2008, 113). In fact, the pragmatic task as described by Osmer, does not seem fit to come up with strategies of actions that can fix attitudes of some leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London that tends to clash with Paul's teaching on church government. Nevertheless, the Osmer's (2008) model seems to be one of the most widely used models for doing research in practical theology (Woodbridge 2014, 90). This study can also point out that the Osmer (2008) design is straightforward, easy to apply and has the capacity to be utilised to carry out research at the doctoral level.

6.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The findings of this study indicate that more research is needed on the church governance of the Nigerian-led churches in London. Some of the areas that still need to be covered are as follows:

1. The current leader of the *RCCG* was single-handedly selected by the late founder, instead of following the letter of the constitution (see section 3.3.2.3). Following the selection and after the demise of the founder, the battle for the top office led to serious tension between the ambitious senior pastors who were vying for the position (see section 3.3.2.3). This trend seems to be happening in some Nigerian-led mega-churches as well as family-sized congregations. Leadership succession among Nigerian-led churches in Great Britain should be studied because it is a related subject to issues addressed in this study.
2. Some of the informants raised a number of negative comments concerning authority relations between mother churches in Nigeria and their daughter assemblies in the UK (see chapter four). For instance, a trend that seems to appeal to some senior leaders of Nigerian-led mega-churches is setting financial targets for the pastors working in their ministries (LP3 2022, personal interview; LP12 2022, telephone interview). This attitude of these senior leaders tends to be affecting their members and also the assembly pastors (see section 4.4.2.7). These senior leaders are also accused of failing to support their daughter churches in London (L5 2022, telephone interview; L10 2022, personal interview; L12 2022, telephone interview). Contrarily, this study cannot find much evidence to prove that these senior leaders are using methods such as the prosperity gospel concept to raise funds for their own self-interests (see section 4.4.2.5). This area seems to be under-researched and there is an ample opportunity for anyone wishing to do a PhD to write a thesis on this subject: authority relations between headquarters churches in Africa and their daughter churches in the UK.

3. L1 (2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview) laments that the Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC*) inherited the practice of not ordaining women as pastors from the church pioneers, but that does not mean the denomination has taken a formal position. He stresses further that the issue of women's ordination as pastors has not been addressed, therefore the issue becomes challenging for the latter generation (L1 2022, *WhatsApp* video call interview). Consequent to this, some prominent *CAC* women such as Mrs M. B. Odeleke have left the church to start their own independent ministries (see section 4.12). The significance or absence of women leaders in Nigerian-led churches in London is also a matter that can be explored at a doctoral level.

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SUMMARY OF THE THESIS (ENGLISH)

This thesis is a practical theological study of church governance in Nigerian-led churches in London. These churches have had a special place in the religious landscape in Britain since the late nineteen-fifties, but some of them have been linked to a series of accusations of abuse of office in their different authority structures within the community. This serious problem has motivated the research for this thesis with a view to establishing whether the forms of governance structures followed in these congregations accord with the examples of leadership seen in the New Testament.

In the empirical part of this study, a two-tier approach to sampling was used to select participants who will provide substantial and pertinent information, considering the research topic. The first tier was five separate representative churches from different networks. They are 1) Christ Apostolic Church (*CAC*), 2) The Redeemed Christian Church of God (*RCCG*), 3) Kingsway International Christian Centre (*KICC*), 4) Fountain of peace ministries of the Cherubim and Seraphim Church (*FOP*), and 5) one family-like congregation located in southwest of London (*Church 5*: anonymous). The selection of these churches shows the uniqueness of this research in relation to previous scholarship studies, because it explored the authority structures of both neo-Pentecostal mega-churches such as *RCCG* and *KICC* as well as small groups like *Church 5* and the *FOP*. The second tier was the thirty-three respondents (twelve leaders and twenty-one laypersons) who have had experiential knowledge and understanding of the authority structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London. This thesis utilises a semi-structured interview style to gather information from the participants, which was then used for empirical analysis. The first three tasks of Osmer's (2008) research design which comprises of four tasks were used, and they helped this study to answer the research question: how closely is church governance, as practised in the Nigerian-led churches in London, in accordance with the teaching of the Paul on this subject?

The first task helps to present an in-depth view of the typical forms of government of the Nigerian-led churches in London. The interpretive task, however, was used to interpret the data from the interview sessions. Surprisingly, this study learnt that there is no direct instruction in the New Testament justifying the normativity of any one of the basic forms of church government examined. Consequent to this, this study decided to choose the Apostle Paul's teaching on church government as a model of good practice to discern God's will for how Nigerian-led churches in London ought to act regarding their governance structures. The evidence tends to show that there is some degree of similarity between governance structures of the Nigerian-led churches in London and examples of leadership seen in the itinerant ministry of Paul, but also some significant differences. The differences tend to suggest that some Nigerian-led churches in London are employing particular forms of authority structures that empower the senior leaders to act in certain ways that clash with Paul's teaching on the topic. The participants gave nine reasons for the prominence of such typical forms of church government among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Apart from these nine factors that were mentioned by the informants, the evidence also seems to suggest that contemporary culture plays a part in the promotion of a one-headed leadership model among the Nigerian-led churches in London.

Another significant finding of this study is the fact that there is a large power distance between some senior leaders of the Nigerian-led churches in London and their congregants. It does not appear that lay members in these churches in London dislike submission to the authority, but some of these congregants [possibly influenced by the British culture] have started to question the excessive power and authority of the leadership. Contrary to opinions of some scholars that are accusing black Pentecostals of lack of adequate theology, this study can categorically point out that such views can no longer hold water as the majority of Nigerian-led churches in London are currently led by theologians. However, some interviewees argue that some of these leaders are studying theology because of their own selfish interest. If this assertion is correct, it may influence the forms of authority structures chosen by these leaders.

The concept of prosperity gospel is another factor that has called the usage of the one-headed leadership model into question among the Nigerian-led churches in London. Finally, this study shows that Osmer's (2008) research model can be useful for doctoral research, albeit it has its own weaknesses.

Finally, these findings indicate that more research is needed on the church governance of the Nigerian-led churches in London as its possibilities are so wide: from leadership succession to authority relations between headquarter churches in Africa and their daughter churches in the UK to the significance or absence of women leaders in Nigerian-led churches in London.

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS (DUTCH)

SAMENVATTING

Deze dissertatie bevat een praktisch-theologisch onderzoek naar kerkelijk bestuur in door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen. Deze kerken nemen sinds eind jaren vijftig een bijzondere plaats in binnen het religieuze landschap van Groot-Brittannië. Sommige van deze kerken zijn in verband gebracht met een reeks beschuldigingen van machtsmisbruik. Dit ernstige probleem heeft de aanleiding gevormd voor het onderzoek van deze dissertatie, met als doel vast te stellen of de vormen van bestuursstructuren die in deze gemeenten worden gevolgd overeenkomen met de voorbeelden van leiderschap zoals die in het Nieuwe Testament te vinden zijn.

In het empirische deel is gebruikgemaakt van een twee-fasige steekproefmethode om deelnemers te selecteren. De eerste fase betrof vijf afzonderlijke representatieve kerken uit verschillende netwerken. Deze zijn: 1) Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), 2) The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), 3) Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC), 4) Fountain of Peace Ministries van de Cherubim and Seraphim Church (FOP), en 5) een gezinsgerichte gemeente in het zuidwesten van Londen (Kerk 5: anoniem). De selectie van deze kerken toont het unieke van dit onderzoek ten opzichte van eerdere studies, aangezien het zowel de gezagsstructuren van neo-pentecostale megakerken zoals *RCCG* en *KICC* als die van kleinere gemeenschappen zoals Kerk 5 en de *FOP* onderzocht. De tweede fase bestond uit drieëndertig respondenten (twaalf leiders en eenentwintig leken) met ervaringskennis en inzicht in de gezagsstructuren van de door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen. In dit onderzoek is gebruikgemaakt van semi-gestructureerde interviews.

De eerste drie taken van Osmer's (2008) onderzoeksmodel, dat in totaal uit vier taken bestaat, zijn toegepast, en hielpen bij het beantwoorden van de hoofdonderzoeksvraag: in hoeverre komt het kerkelijk bestuur, zoals dat wordt toegepast in door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen, overeen met Paulus' onderwijs over dit onderwerp? De eerste taak biedt een diepgaand inzicht in de typische bestuursvormen van de door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen. De interpretatieve taak werd vervolgens gebruikt om de gegevens uit de interviews te analyseren. Verrassend genoeg heeft dit onderzoek vastgesteld dat er in het Nieuwe Testament geen directe instructie is die de normativiteit van een specifieke bestuursvorm, binnen de onderzochte gemeenschappen, rechtvaardigt. Daarom heeft de onderzoeker besloten om het onderwijs van de apostel Paulus over kerkelijk bestuur als model voor goede praktijk te gebruiken, om zo Gods wil te onderscheiden over hoe door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen hun bestuursstructuren zouden moeten inrichten.

De bevindingen tonen aan dat er een zekere mate van overeenstemming is tussen de bestuursstructuren van deze kerken en de voorbeelden van leiderschap in Paulus' rondreizende bediening, maar ook dat er belangrijke verschillen zijn. Die verschillen suggereren dat sommige door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen gebruikmaken van gezagsstructuren die de senior leiders in staat stellen op manieren te handelen die in conflict zijn met Paulus' onderwijs over dit onderwerp. De deelnemers noemden negen redenen voor de dominantie van dergelijke bestuursvormen. Naast deze negen factoren die door de respondenten werden genoemd, lijkt ook de hedendaagse cultuur een rol te spelen in de bevordering van een eenhoofdig leiderschapsmodel binnen deze kerken.

Een andere belangrijke bevinding van dit onderzoek is het feit dat er een grote machtsafstand bestaat tussen sommige senior leiders van deze kerken en hun gemeenteleden. Het lijkt er niet op dat de leken in deze kerken afwijzend staan tegenover onderwerping aan autoriteit, maar sommige van deze gemeenteleden [mogelijk beïnvloed door de Britse cultuur] zijn begonnen de buitensporige macht en autoriteit van het leiderschap ter discussie te stellen. In tegenstelling tot

de mening van sommige wetenschappers, die zwarte pinksterkerken beschuldigen van een gebrek aan degelijke theologie, kan dit onderzoek ondubbelzinnig stellen dat zulke opvattingen niet langer houdbaar zijn, aangezien de meerderheid van de door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen momenteel wordt geleid door theologen. Sommige geïnterviewden betogen echter dat sommige van deze leiders theologie studeren uit eigenbelang. Als deze bewering juist is, kan dit van invloed zijn op de keuze van de gezagsstructuren die deze leiders hanteren.

Het concept van het welvaartsevangelie is een andere factor die het gebruik van het eenhoofdige leiderschapsmodel binnen de door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen ter discussie stelt. Tot slot toont dit onderzoek aan dat het onderzoeksmodel van Osmer (2008) bruikbaar kan zijn voor een promotieonderzoek, hoewel het ook zijn eigen zwakheden kent.

Tenslotte geven deze bevindingen aan dat er meer onderzoek nodig is naar het kerkelijk bestuur van de door Nigerianen geleide kerken in Londen, aangezien de mogelijkheden daartoe zeer breed zijn: van leiderschapsopvolging tot gezagsrelaties tussen moederkerken in Afrika en hun dochterkerken in het VK, en tot de rol of afwezigheid van vrouwelijke leiders.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Church governance in the Nigerian-led churches in London: a practical theological study.

1. Invitation Paragraph

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate in this study it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information, please ask me. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

2. What is the purpose of the research project?

As part of the requirements for a PhD degree at the Theological University of Apeldoorn, I have to carry out a research study. The aim of this research is to explore how closely the governance structures of Nigerian-led churches in London accord with the models of church leadership in the New Testament.

3. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part in this research because you are at least eighteen years old and a professing Christian who has knowledge of the authority structures of Nigerian-led churches in London.

4. Do I have to take part?

No. You do not have to participate. It is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to take part in the research. You are free to withdraw at any time, and you are not required to explain a decision to withdraw. If you decide to withdraw you will be asked what you wish to happen to the data you have provided up that point.

5. What will my involvement require?

If you agree to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep, and asked to sign a consent form. As there needs to be consistency between the different interviews, they will be semi-structured and thus use a particular set of questions, but discussion beyond those questions will also be desirable as our conversation progresses. The interview should not take longer than one hour. For your interest I have listed some of the main areas to be covered when we meet:

- How would you describe the governance structure of your church or also of any other Nigerian-led churches in London?
- What factors have influenced the founders of Nigerian-led churches in London to choose their governance structures?

6. Will I be recorded and how the recorded media be used?

Audio recording equipment can only be used during the interview with your agreement. The audio recording of your activities made during the interview will be used only for research analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recording.

7. What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

I do not envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this thesis may provide helpful information about current practices to other individuals in the future who may be studying the leadership structures of the Nigerian-led churches. It may also provide some guidance towards appropriate models of church leadership for future generations.

9. Will what I say be kept confidential?

Any personal information shared during the course of the research will remain confidential. All data collected during the interview will be identified only by a code, with personal details kept in a locked file or secure computer with access only by the researcher. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous. The signed consent form and original audio recording will be retained in a secured location for a further two years after my degree has been conferred.

10. What if something goes wrong?

No harm is anticipated. Any complaint or concern about any aspect of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed. Please contact GST Central Office, 29 Howbeck Lane, Clarbrough, RETFORD, Nottinghamshire DN22 9LW. Telephone: +017777030058.

11. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be presented in the thesis. They will be seen by my supervisors and the external examiners. The thesis may be read by future students on the course and may also be published in some form in a research journal.

12. Who is funding the research?

Self-funding

13. Who has reviewed the project?

The project has been reviewed and approved by the Theological University of Apeldoorn.

14. Further information and contact details

If you need any further information, or wish to discuss your participation in the project in greater depth, please contact me: Olayinka Adetoyebi; mobile;; email:

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this research study.

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

This is an informed consent form dealing with the authority structures of Nigerian-led churches in London. The consent form is designed with qualitative research in mind.

I, _____, confirm that (please check box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	If applicable, separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Select only one of the following:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this research can be recognised. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I do not want my name used in this research. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant's Signature

Print Name

Date

Researcher's Signature

Print Name

Date

CURRICULUM VITAE

Olayinka Adetoyebi holds a Diploma of Higher Education in Theology from the University of Winchester (2012) and a Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Ministerial Studies from the Middlesex University (2014). In 2014, he enrolled at the Heythrop College University of London to study for a master's degree in Canon Law and he graduated with an MA Canon Law in August 2016. In September 2016, he proceeded to the University of Law and within five years, he was able to achieve Graduate Diploma in Law, Graduate LLB, LPC / LLM Legal Practice Course.

Olayinka is a servant of God, and he has had the privilege to share the Good News with a number of people across different continents of the world.

Olayinka has been living in the UK for over one and a half decades and he has both legal work experience and non-legal work experience. He is a father of two boys and a girl.

