INTRODUCTION

Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen. Leadership is not about organizational power or authority. It’s not about celebrity or wealth. It’s not about the family you are born into. It’s not about being a CEO, president, general, or prime minister. And it’s definitively not about being a hero. Leadership is about relationships, about credibility and about what you do.¹

The church just like every other formal organization, appreciates the relationship that exist between the members and the priest(s). This relationship matters in the sense that the members and the priest(s) form a leadership dynamic that affects the work and mission of the church. Regrettably today, the way in which the members and the priest(s) of a local congregation interacts is often times characterized by mistrust, anxiety, and hurtful behaviour.

Monocracy is a form of government in which the ruler is an absolute dictator (not restricted by a constitution or laws or opposition). It is a means by which the power or the dominion of many is not recognised, and/or fail to participate in power directly or representatively. It does not allow a participatory relationship where individuals are involved in the decision-making process to determine what needs to be done and how it should be done and by who.² It does not involve the distribution of power between the pastor and his/her congregation and thus reduce direct participation in decision-making by the laity or congregation. It is characterized by a top-down approach and does not allow a constant flow of information down the chain of command.

Monocracy is the opposite of democracy which members of the group take a participative role in the decision – making, the followers actively participate in the leadership process.³ It encourages creativity and team members are engaged in projects and decisions. The democratic

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³ Jürgen, 2011
leader plays three major roles; distributing responsibility, empowering others and aiding others in their deliberations\(^4\), though he makes the final decisions.

On the other hand, governance refers to the manner in which power is exercised between and among parties. Dwivedi\(^5\) viewed governance as the steering or controlling of state affairs. Fundamentally, governance is the process of decision making or procedure by which decision is taken by those who govern and are willing to improve the living conditions of others.\(^6\) It looks at the functioning of the given segment of the society from the point of view of its acknowledged stakeholders, beneficiaries and customers. It must have firm moorings to certain moral values and principles.

However, monocracy is against the Biblical principle of church administration and management. In first Peter chapter 5 verses 1 through 4 (1 Peter 5: 1-4), Apostle Peter in his writing to the churches in the New Testament area of Asia Minor admonishes the pastors of their leadership responsibilities and practices. These are shepherding, oversight, modeling, and sacrifice, which are some of the essential leadership practices has reiterated by the Lord Jesus Christ in John 21: 15-17, “shepherd my sheep.” As noted by Adams\(^7\), Peter understood that “God is concerned both to pinpoint the work and the sort of person who ought to be engaged in it.”

Also, Apostle Paul in Acts 20:27 encourage and reminded the pastors in the Ephesus of his own transparent testimony as a pastor that he had humbly evangelized the unsaved, taught believers, suffered persecution, and shared the “whole counsel of God”. Kent\(^8\) affirmed that the apostle reiterated that “the responsibility of the pastors or church overseers was the solemn one of caring for the church of God which had been acquired by the blood of God’s own One.

According to the Book of Hebrews (Hebrews 13:7, 17-18) the functions and practices of those who would lead are so germane to church governance and survival. "Within the body of Christ, pastors are to faithfully teach, carefully watch, and ultimately answer to Christ Himself." Leaders have unique function to perform, quality to maintain, and an accountability to anticipate.

\(^4\) Jürgen, 2011
In the context of the local church there is a reciprocal relationship for “just as church leaders are to rule in love and humility, those under their leadership are to submit in love and humility”\(^9\).

In light of where our country stands, churches in recent years has become a referendum on leadership, whether at the local church (circuit) or at the headquarter (Cathedral) level. Burns\(^10\) commenting in a prophetic way in which our current leadership struggles states that “The crisis of leadership today is the mediocrity or irresponsibility of so many of the men and women in power”. In line with this, George\(^11\) writes, “An enormous vacuum in leadership exists today – in business, politics, government, education, religion and nonprofit organizations”. In addition, with the drive for the private sector to please shareholders, it is imperative for organizations to practice effective leadership principles to accomplish the organizational goals and return a profit to investors.

**The Problem Statement**

Like any other human organization, the Churches are entangled with problems and perplexities some of which are doctrinal, interpretation of values and etiquette, spiritual leadership and administrative problem, continued exodus of members, illiteracy, disenchanted youth, financial and economic problems, among others, the aftermath of which resulted into monocracy and poor governance which had hitherto negatively affected evangelism and growth of the church.

In order to critically examine the topic, the following questions were raised and looked into.

(a) Does monocracy exists among African churches and pastors?

(b) Does African pastors make use of monocracy in church governance? If yes, why?

(c) Monocracy in church governance is more prominent among which denomination? And why?

(d) Is monocracy biblical for church governance?

**Methodology**


**Research Design:** This study adopted a survey research design. This survey design was preferred since the researcher cannot control the conditions experienced by the churches understudied.

**Study Population:** The target population covers the ordained (priest, pastors, apostles, and the elders), the laity (confirmed members of the church through baptism, confirmation, or any other means) and church members. This study specifically covers 16 major denominations in African setting. These denominations are: The Church of the Lord (Aladura), Anglican Communion, Christ Apostolic Church, The Apostolic Faith, Jehovah Witness, Redeemed Christian Church of God, Baptist Church, Deeper Life Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubum and Seraphim (C & S), Methodist Church Nigeria, Four Square Gospel Church, Winners Chapel, Catholic Church, and Methodist Church Eleja.

**Sample and Sampling Techniques:** Seventy-three pastors were selected through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques.

**Research Instrument:** Relevant information for this research were obtained majorly through oral interviews. This is a conscious effort being made by the researcher to have personal interview with the church pastors or priests within the church understudied.

**Method of Data Analysis:** The data collected in this study were qualitatively analysed.

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**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Interviewee Socio-demographic Data**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastoral positions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>5.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Educational Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Diploma/NCE</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master degree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastoral Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 5 years</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
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</table>
The participants' socio-demographic report shows that 73 pastors participated in the study. It was further revealed that both males (93.2%) and females (6.8%) hold pastoral offices; 49 (67.1%) were full time pastors while the remaining 24 (32.9%) were part time pastors. The majority (91.8%) of the interviewee were married, 2.7% were widowed, while 5.5% were still single. Thirty-nine (53.4%) of the seventy-three interviewees had first degree, 11 (15.1%) had master degree, and the remaining 2 (2.7%) had PhD. All interview participants had prior pastoral experience, 24 (32.9%) were with 16 years ministry experience, 22 (30.1%) with 6-10 years experience, 18 (24.7%) with 11-15 years experience, and 9 (12.3%) had less than 5 years experience. 64 (94.5%) went to seminary training/Bible College, while only 4 (5.5%) did not. The rest in this grouping had four or five assignments. Forty-seven (64.4%) of the participants were from Pentecostal churches while the remaining twenty six (35.6%) were not. On the number of congregations worshipping in their churches, 18 (24.7%) participants had over 100 worshipers, 33 (45.2%) had less than 100 worshipers, 15 (20.5%) had less than 50 worshipers, and 7 (9.6%) had less than 20 worshipers.

**Interview Presentation**

The four questions that guided the direction and formation of this paper were addressed through the design of a ten question open-ended interview. This researcher constructed and pre-tested ten questions that allowed the participants to tell their story in a somewhat unrestricted fashion while ensuring that the relevant, needed data was also extractable.

The outcome of the first question that stated "Does monocracy exists among African churches and pastors" was shocking and revealing. Forty-one (56.5%) pastors among the seventy-three affirmed the existence of monocracy among African churches, 15 (20.5%) said...
monocracy is not possible among pastors and church of God, the remaining 17 (23.3%) were indecisive of whether it exists or not.

One of the pastors from Redeemed Christian Church of God acknowledged the existence of monocracy among African churches and pastors, explaining that:

"More often than not, monocracy among African churches and pastors is used as a tool by prominent church founders and pastors to boost their own financial positions.” (Interview, 08.08. 2017).

The questions on whether African pastors make use of monocracy in church governance and why showed a mixed report. While some pastors believed that in meeting the challenge of balancing both the managing and the shepherding of the church, monocratic leadership style may evolved. This according to the pastors will help them in administration within the church, management of time and ministerial effectiveness.

On the contrary, some pastors were of the opinion that though leadership and management skills are critical for the pastors to manage their church, but monocracy is not the best. To them:

"Pastors are expected to communicate clearly the purpose and direction of the church, manage and lead change, build and maintain the team of lay
leaders, and shepherd people in the church. And these could not be achieved through monocracy”

Also,

1 Peter 5:2-3 in New International Version of the Bible indicates that pastors must play very important roles in a church. These roles are not ones of dictatorial authority but rather ones of servant, spiritual leadership “not lording it over those entrusted to you. Likewise, Hebrews 13:17 shows the heavy responsibilities of pastors, and church members should respect their servant leader roles and relate to them in such a way that “their work will be a joy, not a burden”. Equally, the Bible in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 sets standards for deacons that they are to be seen as servants and not governors of the church.

The third research question which stated that "Monocracy in church governance is more prominent among which denomination? And why?" generated a lot of argument by some pastors for asking such a question. All the same, the pastors interviewed still responded to in spite of their earlier objections. Their responses about where the proliferation of monocracy in church governance tilted towards was categorised into two as (1) new generation churches, and (2) old generation churches.

As shown in figure 2 above monocracy in church governance is more prominent among the new generational churches compared to the old. And on why it is so, most pastors believed that it
might be as a result of the fact that most new generation churches are runned as one-man venture with a sole proprietor.

The aspect of this paper looking at monocracy and biblical justification for church governance revealed that most pastors cannot justified biblical justification for church governance through monocracy. The only reason that could be deduced from this finding is in line with what happened in the Gospel of John 13:13-14. Jesus showed a better way for church governance. He showed His Lordship and leadership, and expressed through His humility, grace, and love. Oliver\textsuperscript{12} observed that:

Spiritual authority and leadership come only through the path of suffering and sacrifice: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Jews were waiting for the victorious and powerful Messiah, liberating them from the Roman domination, but they could not, or did not want to understand the suffering servant Messiah predicted in Isaiah 52:13-53:12. The disciples wanted honor and glory, but without the cross and its humiliation. In Jesus’ response, "You don't know what you are asking" (v. 38), He laid a foundation for the instructions to follow—authority is entirely different from other views of leadership.

A pastor from Baptist Church said:

"My church do not believe in democratic or monocratic church governance. Both terms are political term that means “people rule” and "I rule people." For us, the ultimate authority for a church rests not in the people but in Jesus Christ. As stated in Ephesians 4:15 and Philippians 2:11, Jesus is seen as the head or Lord of the church. An appropriate descriptive term for Baptist church governance is “theo-democratic” meaning God’s rule through all of the people”.

**Conclusion**

I conclude this study by borrowing the idea of Oliver's Christian servant leadership model and training for the Adventist church in France:

From the Holy Bible and specifically in the Book of Genesis, God the father showed leadership example by sharing His authority and power with humankind. Human beings received the power to assume

three main responsibilities: a) taking care of the garden, b) protecting the garden, c) and sharing and multiplying life. From the creation, leadership by nature is about service. Jesus Christ came and demonstrated the perfect model of a spiritual leader: a servant leader. First, a Christian leader is servant, following Christ as the suffering servant at the cross, humbling Himself and giving His own life by love for human redemption. Secondly, The Christian leader becomes a spiritual leader, with spiritual authority from the resurrected Christ. Filled by the power of the Spirit, preaching the good news and healing people, Christian leaders walk in the footsteps of the glorified Christ. The whole church is called to serve God, as the living body of Christ through the cell’s interactions coordinated and led by a spiritual leader anointed by God and consecrated by the church. Based on a Christological and pneumatological foundation, the entire church is called to be a community of liturgia, koinonia, diacona and kerygma, for the unique purpose of the glory of God.

Therefore the credence for a Christian leadership model is Biblical based.

References