

**A HISTORY OF CHURCH ADMINISTRATION IN THE REDEEMED CHRISTIAN
CHURCH OF GOD, 1980-2019**

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RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The Redeemed Christian Church of God had less than 40 parishes in 1980 and over 40,000 parishes in 2015 (Tomori, 2016). The mission has constantly pursued administrative strategy geared towards church growth and membership retention. RCCG's leadership training for pastors, missionaries, deacons, workers and ordinary members is mostly patterned after academic, business, military, and government models. This leads to a pragmatic, secular, and management approach to establishing parishes twice in a year, building Churches in strategic areas and advancing the Kingdom of God. Much like other Christian denominations, the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) adopts administrative model that is historically found in the gospels. While there is plethora of published works on the RCCG, its formation, doctrines, liturgical practices and structure, no single literature has specifically historicised the administration of RCCG within the framework of advancing formal education in Nigeria. Therefore, this thesis seeks to historicise patterns of church administration in the RCCG and its implications for education especially in the areas of financial management, physical growth, training, structural development and supervision.

The motto of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) is “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever”. This is a text derived from New Testament book of Hebrew (13: 8). This text summarises the central rule of behaviour as well as organising principle of the church. However, the same “changelessness” which is attributed to Jesus Christ by the text of the church’s motto, cannot be said of the church itself. Established in 1952 by Reverend Josiah Olufemi Akindayomi in the suburb of Lagos, Nigeria, the RCCG has gone almost full circle through the vicissitudes of “days of small things” to periods of intense evangelistic fervour and search for doctrinal anchor and purity, to the present explosion into socio-political power, economic privilege and spiritual aristocracy (Allan, 2013). This study investigates and documents the changes that have taken place in the history of church administration in RCCG from inception up to 2015.

The bulk of research on the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) has taken place within two major academic areas: church growth and increasing membership (Babatunde , 2016). This study takes another dimension as it approaches the administration of RCCG from a historical perspectives and the implication it has on education.

The RCCG has its roots in the Aladura movement that started in Yorubaland in the 1920s. One persistent issue in the studies of this movement is its local cultural identity and continuity with Yoruba traditional religion. Some scholars maintain it is a syncretic movement. Allan (2013) writes that “the Aladura churches” constitute “a distinctive synthesis of Yoruba and Christian beliefs and practices”. More generally, Yoruba culture has been described as syncretistic in nature, that is, being able to absorb foreign influences. Olayiwola (2002) has described this syncretic nature of the Yoruba culture as a demonstration of creativity and strength in the search for survival. For him, the Yoruba have “an extraordinary capacity for synchretism” [sic] which accounts for the survival of their culture and identity (Adesanya, 2004). Since the RCCG has its roots in Yoruba culture and the Aladura movement, the study intends to examine the continuity and syncretic administrative processes in the history of the RCCG. Also, it examines in ways the church could be described as a local form of pentecostalism and its vitality be accounted for by its local rootedness.

In view of the development, from a small prayer group to an institutional church, and in view of the transfer of leadership from Josiah the founder to Adeboye his successor, it may be asked to what extent Max Weber’s theory of charisma and routinisation applies in the administrative history of RCCG. Can these concepts help to account for the emergence and the growth of the church especially after the death of its founder?

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