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**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES RELATED TO
THE WAY AUTHORITY AND CHARISM ARE
EXERCISED IN THE CHURCH WITH REFERENCE TO
THE MEROPOLITAN ARCHDIOCESE OF IBADAN IN
NIGERIA**

Supervisor

Very Rev. Prof. Patrick Mwanja, CSSp.

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the
Requirements for Master's Degree (M.A) in Theology**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved parents **KPATCHA BASSAMAN PROSPER** and **KAPO POUSOUNAWE JOSEPHINE**. It was through them that I knew the way of God. Through their help, I gained insight in life and the courage to embrace religious life. May God bless them, protect them, provide for their needs and grant them their hearts' desire and long life.

EPIGRAPH

“For the nurturing and constant growth of the people of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. For the ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brethren, so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation.” (**Lumen Gentium, 18**).

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STUDENT’S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my own personal readings, scientific, intellectual and critical reflection.

It is thereby submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the Degree of Masters in Theology (M.A Theology). I equally declare that it has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit. All sources have been cited and fully acknowledged.

Signed.....

KPATCHA KOFFI MANZAMESSO, M.Afr.

DATE.....

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University college supervisor.

Signed.....

Very Rev. Prof. Patrick Mwanja, Cssp.

Date.....

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ABBREVIATIONS

CCC.	Catechism of the Catholic Church
Col.	Colossians
Cor.	Corinthians
Dt.	Deuteronomy
DeV	Dominum et Vivificantem
Eph.	Ephesians
Ex.	Exodus
Ez.	Ezekiel
Gal.	Galatians
Gn.	Genesis
GS.	Gaudium et Spes
Is.	Isaiah
Jn.	John
Jg.	Judges
<i>LG</i>	<i>Lumen Gentium</i>
Lk.	Luke
Mk.	Mark
Msgr.	Monsignor
Mt.	Matthew
<i>NA</i>	<i>Nostra Aetate</i>
Ps.	Psalms
Pt.	Peter
Rom.	Romans
Sm.	Samuel
SMA	Society of African Mission
Ti	Titus

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1 Background of the Research

Today and all along the history of humanity, the question of authority remains actual in all sectors of society, be it social, traditional, political, cultural as well as in the Church. Societies need to organize themselves for the good of individual persons in particular as well as for the good of the community in general. For, there is no human society which functions without the minimum of means and discipline to attain its purpose and goals.

Talking of the organisation of the Church, it is more and more evident that the principal problem that has cut across the life of the Church from its beginning up to today is nothing different from the question of authority in its relation to Charism. Vatican II inaugurated a new and fresh view on the relationship between authority and charism in the Church and its mission. It remains until today one of the biggest challenge contemporary cultures address the Church after more than fifty years of Vatican II. It is evident that authority in the Church has different aspirations from the authority in the secular societies for the simple fact that the Church is both human and divine and her ultimate purpose transcends both the material world and its history.

The Church as established by Jesus found its strength from the resurrection, when the risen Lord himself encouraged and commissioned his followers to carry on his mission. The encounter of the disciples with the glorified Jesus, led them to a deeper experience of faith in Him as the expected Messiah. The encounter of the disciples with Jesus transformed them and made of them new people. They, who were terrified by the tragic death of Jesus became bold and courageous and expressed their faith without fear. The conviction they had after the risen Lord had manifested himself to them prompted

them to open new Christian communities to new believers from every nation, culture and tribe.

The period just after the resurrection of Jesus, was not so easy for the Apostles and their followers. For the new movement which was Christianity was seen as an illicit religion with regard to Judaism seen as the main stream religion of Israel. Thus the first Christian communities experienced persecutions from the members of Judaism.

Facing such difficulties, the Church grew in membership and in organising herself in order to clarify the question regarding her identity and authority. The image of the Church as the People of God found its foundation in the letters of the New Testament. Leonardo Boff in his book *Church Charism and Power* highlights that since the fourth century the Church has fallen victim of a kind of power that had nothing to do with the gospel values. The historical realities, preserved in the monarchical model of the Church, gave a different image of the Church regarding her organisation. The monarchical model of the Church was given a different direction by Vatican II, which redefined the Church as the people of God.

The Church as the people of God became the central reference during and after Vatican II Council. Such image led the Church back to its primitive dynamics of community where cooperation between authority and Charism is seen as service. The Church as the People of God is organised through its charism and through the exercise of its authority to be at the service of the community.

Therefore, the aim of this present research is to explore and expand on, the Challenges and opportunities related to the way how authority and charism are exercised in the Church and its mission as it was intended by Christ and see how this Church of Christ had evolved in her identity and in her organisation. Moreover, in its development, this research will elaborate on the opportunities and challenges related to the way authority is exercised in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese according to Christ's mandate to his followers. Furthermore, this research will try to see how the charism can operate in the proclamation of the kingdom of God on earth vis a vis the opportunities and challenges of our contemporary time. And finally we would try to study how the

cooperation between charism and authority can be seen as a complementary services rather than domination and oppression.

0.2 Relevance of the Research

Our main focus in this research is to elaborate on the opportunities and challenges related to the way authority and charism are exercised in the Church: case study of the Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan in Nigeria. The relevance of this research is based on the instruction given to the first Christian communities by the apostles with the view to ensure and guarantee the communion of the believers as Christ intended it during his time. It is true that the riches of the grace of God through the Holy Spirit raised up the charism of ministry whose role is precisely the service to the community. Ministers receive their authority from Christ. In the exercise of their authority, they may demand obedience only to the extent that it is necessary for the preservation of the communion of service among the members. The correlation between authority and charism is service. Therefore, those in the position of authority in the church, must preserve and respect the right of all members of the community. Christ being the reason of Christians coming together, the source of the authority and charism is firmly grounded on Him in order to be successful in His mission.

However, a good number of people to whom the responsibility of taking care and promoting the mission of the Church right from the beginning up to today, fall short or forget most of the times that they are only servants of God's mission. This misconception led some leaders astray from the demands of the mission given to the Church by Jesus. Noticing this fact, cannot but raise awareness from both those who received the authority from Christ by the virtue of their office as ministers to carry on the mission of the Church in our world of today and from all the members so that the mission entrusted should not suffer because of personal problems. Knowing the demands and the challenges of our society in this twenty first century with regard to the organisation of the Church, it is good to raise awareness in all the believers and in a special way in those to position of authority in the Church that their authority is nothing different from a participation in the salvific work of Christ. It is true that during Vatican II and after, many people have called for this

awareness. This work cannot therefore claim to bring something which was unheard of before; but it will be one voice more stressing on the need to be aware that we are all stewards who have the duty and responsibility to continue the mission of the church according to the will of Christ.

0.3 Aim and Objective

The problem of authority and charism in the Church had been a great concern in the history of the Church. Vatican II was instrumental in finding a common ground for the Church to function according to the will of God. More than fifty years after Vatican II, there is still no proper guarantee for the collaboration between authority and charism in the mission of the Church. This concern calls us to investigate the question of the relevance of authority and charism in the mission of the Church today with reference to the Church of the Archdiocese of Ibadan.

Therefore, this present research intends to study the role and the relevance of authority and charism in the mission of the Church today in Ibadan Archdiocese. Furthermore, the research will offer some strategies that will help a good cooperation between authority and charism in the mission of the Church in Ibadan despite the strong influence of its traditional organisation. Finally the research will suggest some basic attitudes that will enhance the collaboration between authority and charism in order to promote the mission of the Church according to God's will.

0.4 Personal Motivation

I develop the interest to write on the opportunities and challenges related to the way authority and charism are exercised in the mission of the Church after been challenged and marked by the way some Church leaders of some dioceses exercise their authority over the members of the Church. I was inspired by the fact that, in the Church, the problematic of authority is not just a simple matter of organisation, but it is also theological. For those in position of authority find pleasure to legitimise their power to the will of God. Their assertion of exercising their authority in the name of God and the idea of leading their members according to divine truths, imposing a certain demand of obedience from their members. Thus, they claim to exercise their authority in the name

of God. But the life lived by some of those in position of authority in the Church raises some critical question whether the authority exercised in many cases really comes from God or from their own ideology.

I became particularly attracted to know more about how the authority and charism remain a challenge to the mission of the church despite many efforts made in this sense. In my research, I have realized that, from the fourth century up to Vatican II, the authority and the leadership of the church was mainly reserved for the clergy. The clergy was the centre of all attraction concerning the relationship of the members with God. Vatican II in its objectivity brought a new understanding where authority and charism are called to cooperate in the service of the members. Vatican II open the door for the lay faithful to exercise their role in the Church on the basis of their baptism. For the fact that through Baptism, they receive gifts from the Holy Spirit which they can put at the service of the Church. This new approach of Vatican seems to be accepted theoretically, but practically it still remains an issue in many local Churches.

It is true that the Church stress the need to make use of the various gifts of the Holy Spirit which is given to all baptised member. But the collaboration between charism and authority remains a big problem. More than fifty year after Vatican II, the collaboration between charism and authority remains a challenge. Authority is still an important and constructive reality in the life the Church. For, when there is less authority the Church is in danger of disintegration. And when there is too much authority concentrated in the hands of Clergy, the members lose their freedom and dignity of been Children of God. The way in which authority is seen and exercised in the Church, tells of the way how member praise God and relate to each other in living together. Developing this research, I am convinced to some extend that I may touch those in position of authority by virtue of their office and those in position of guiding the Church by virtue of their baptismal gifts to collaborate for the wider proclamation of the kingdom of God.

0.5. Limits of this Research

The question on opportunities and challenges related to how charism and authority are exercised in the Church which remains a concern for our contemporary society. This question is crucial, broad and actual. It has been tackled from many angles, but the questions it still raises are real and of important value. If the question concerning the opportunities and challenges related to the way how charism and authority are exercised in the Church in our present time seem to be of actuality, this is a clear sign that it corresponds to a certain need of the Church. In fact, seeing what is happening in many local Churches regarding the way charism and authority are exercised, we see that we are, and we have already been confronted with the problem of the renewal of how charism and authority collaborate in rendering service to the Church of today.

It is clear that, the diversity of responsibilities in the Church calls on the development of new strategies in order to respond to the various needs of the local Churches. This responsibility is left to those in position of authority by the virtue of their office to find suitable approaches to facilitate the collaboration with those who participate in the exercise of their office by the virtue of their baptism. For the Church needs leaders, not only those who are preoccupied by the present challenges, but those who act properly and make sure that the consequences of their actions yield positive fruits in the future. Unlike what is observed in many local Churches, this work calls on those who are in position of authority in the Church to be conscience of their responsibility as leaders and develop proper skills with the intention to make all the baptised participants in the organization of the Church according to Christ's Will through their own example of service.

It is evident that many local places had their own traditional organisation, their own traditional ways of making all participants in ruling or governing of their villages or kingdoms. The Church came with its own system of governing and ruling. It is good, but in many places, the Church took it for granted that the place where the Church is being implanted had its own believe and traditional structure before. And the members of the Church are the people who are rooted in their own traditions and way of life. In some of the places, the local system is not a fertile ground for the Church to rely on. So the Church

brought in its own system without proper inculturation. This was the cause of many oppressions and dominations of some local Church leaders in some places. This is seemingly the case of Yoruba tradition in Ibadan area and its surroundings. Vatican II did what it could have done to make all baptised participants in the exercise of authority be it by the virtue of their office or by the virtue of their baptism. This research will lay more emphasis not only on the collaboration between authority and charism, but also on the collaboration between traditional system and organisation and the structures of the Church in order to help the members to follow Christ effectively and in truth.

0.6 Methodology

In order to be relevant in the elaboration of this topic, the data of this long essay will be obtained from both written and non-written sources. The non-written materials consist of my own experience as a missionary. As a procedure, we will start by going from the available written material to the research as literature review. Then we shall put together the collected information into writing. Last, but not the least, in composing our reflection, especially in the last part, we will try to suggest as much as possible our own opinion and analysis in order to authenticate the point in question in the topic.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CATHOLIC METROPOLITAN ARCHDIOCESE OF IBADAN

1. 1 Historical Background of the Catholic Church in Ibadan Archdiocese

From the geographical and the political point of view, Ibadan is located in the South West of the federal republic of Nigeria. Ibadan derives its name from “Eba Odan”¹, which means “between the forests and the plains and it was surrounded by seven hills, it functioned as a sacred area for the fighters that fled the war”. It is an ancient city of the ancient western region when Nigeria was made up of only three regions.² Today, Ibadan is the capital of Oyo; one of the thirty six states of Nigeria.

From the religious point of view, the Catholic Church started in Ibadan area in the early nineteenth century with the arrival of the Catholic Missionaries, namely the SMA.³ Slowly, the Catholic Church held a special place over the constantly developing city of Ibadan. The Catholic Church saw the development of the city from the colonial rule up to the eras of independence and modernization, to become initially regional and later on a state capital.⁴ From its insignificant presence in the city, the Catholic Church has grown slowly with the city to become one of the noticeable religious institutions. The Catholic Church of Ibadan is considered as the foundation of the Catholic faith in the region. It is

¹F. ADEJOJU, “Let’s Talk History: Brief History about Ibadan.”

²SUURULERE. “Interesting Facts You May Not Know About Ancient Ibadan.”

³SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSIONS LINK. “Ibadan Archdiocese.”

⁴SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSION LINK. “Ibadan Archdiocese.”

from Ibadan that the missionary activity developed to reach the other parts of the region. Up to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in Ibadan was still a mission foundation under the diocese of Lagos with the aim to reach out to the rest of the area of Ibadan and beyond.

In 1952, however, the Catholic Church of Ibadan was considered mature to stand and administer on its own as a Prefecture Apostolic with Monsignor Richard Finn as the Administrator of the new jurisdiction. Six years later, the Catholic Church of Ibadan was judged worthy to be brought to its final stage of formation. So it was made a diocese with Msgr. Richard Finn the first Bishop.⁵ As it was developing with its pastoral demands, in 1971, Msgr. Felix Alaba Job was consecrated Auxiliary Bishop. In 1974, he took over from Bishop Richard as the new Bishop of Ibadan.⁶ In 1994, Ibadan diocese was raised to the status of an Archdiocese with Most Rev. Felix Alaba Job as the first Archbishop of Ibadan; the seat of Ibadan Ecclesiastical Province with the dioceses of Ekiti, Ilorin, Ondo, Oshogbo and Oyo as suffragans.⁷ The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan (Archdiocesis Ibadanensis) is the Metropolitan see for the ecclesiastical province of Ibadan in Nigeria.⁸

The current Archbishop of Ibadan is Most Rev. Gabriel Ojeleke Abegurin. He took over from Archbishop Job since 29 October 2013.⁹ The total catholic population of the Archdiocese of Ibadan is estimated at 5, 564,000; and this represents about 8.1% of the number of Catholics in Nigeria. The Archdiocese covers 7,000 square kilometers or 2,703 square Miles. The Archdiocese of Ibadan counts forty eight parishes and three Mass centers organized under five deaneries. The Archdiocese counts sixty nine diocesan priest, sixty six religious priests, four hundred and forty four religious men and ninety three religious women. The total number of priests in the Archdiocese is estimated at one

⁵ SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSION LINK. "Ibadan Archdiocese."

⁶ SOCIETY OF AFRICAN MISSION LINK. "Ibadan Archdiocese."

⁷ WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA. "Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan."

⁸ WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA. "Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan."

⁹ WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA. "Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Ibadan."

hundred and thirty five and the number of religious is five hundred thirty seven. The above data are stated according to the statistics of 2014 on the Archdiocese of Ibadan.¹⁰

1. 2 Traditional Religion of Ibadan People before Christianity

Traditionally and culturally, Ibadan people belong to the great family of the Yorubas who are found in Nigeria, Benin Republic and partly in Togo. In Nigeria, Ibadan is the state capital of Oyo State. Historically, Ibadan is one of the ancient cities of Nigeria and even of West Africa, where traditional religion has strong roots and finds expression.

From the traditional religion point of view, the Yoruba people are filled with a deep religious spirit which is translated in their daily activities. First of all, the Yorubas believe in the existence of a self-existent being who is believed to be the author of creation and care for the wellbeing of the universe¹¹. This idea is clearly highlighted by Joseph O. Awoalu when he says that:

Among the indigenous Yoruba people, the existence of the Supreme Being is taken as a matter of course. It is rare, if not impossible, to come across a Yoruba who will doubt the existence of the Supreme Being or claim to be atheist. If there is anyone like that, further investigation will reveal that he has been exposed to non-African cultural influences. In other words, we are suggesting that the indigenous Yoruba has a belief in the existence of a self-existent being who is believed to be responsible for creation and the maintenance of heaven and earth, of men and women, and who also has brought into being divinities and spirits who are believed to be his functionaries in the theocratic world as well as intermediaries between mankind and the self-existent Being.¹²

For a meaningful understanding and worship the traditional religion of the Yoruba people made a clear distinction between the Supreme Being and the divinities who assume communication between Him and the created world. From the Yorubas', conception of their traditional religion, the role of the almighty God is different from those of the divinities.

The Yorubas refer to the Almighty God as "Olodumare."¹³ 'Olo', which means owner or Lord; 'Odu' which means head, principal, fullness or very large. When these two

¹⁰ D. M. Cheney. "Archdiocese of Ibadan". 3-4.

¹¹ Cf. B. I., KARADE, *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts*, 2.

¹² J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 3.

¹³ J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 12.

aspects are combined ‘Olodu’ plus the suffix ‘Mare’ it will then mean one who owns power and authority. The supreme head who has the fullness of all things. Apart from being considered as the creator of all that exists on earth and in heaven, Olodumare is known to be Stable, Reliable, Dependable, Unique, Immortal, Transcendent, Omniscient, Majestic, King and Judge.¹⁴ This shows his Supremacy over earth and heaven.

The Yorubas hold the belief that as God brought to existence heaven and earth and the human race, He also created divinities and spirits who are estimated to be one thousand and seven in number, classified in five groups. On one hand, we have the primordial divinities that are:

‘Obatala’, is the arch-divinity of the Yorubas.¹⁵ He is well known in Yoruba land and is called by different names by various communities. He is said to have been active in connection with the creation story and the molding of human form.¹⁶ His worshippers are called to be clean and to maintain a certain uprightness of heart.

‘Orunmila’, who is said to be the errand mate of Obata with the command to give him necessary guidance.¹⁷ After the completion of their mission of perfecting creation, he decided to be moving between heaven and earth. Thus his name ‘Gbaye-gborun’: the one who lives both on earth and in heaven. As for his role, he is believed to plead before ‘Olodumare’ for the wrong doing of humanity.

‘Oduduwa’ is seen as a primordial divinity and as a deified ancestor.¹⁸ Yoruba tradition sees Oduduwa as a controversial figure among the divinities because of his ambiguous status. Due to the controversy of his status, some consider him to be the wife of Obatala. This brings more confusion to the point that his worship is limited in Yoruba land in general.

‘Eṣu’, who is said to be the Instructor of Orunmila.¹⁹ He is seen as the darkness, but not in the sense of Christian understanding. For in Yoruba religion, there is no

¹⁴ Cf. J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 12-16.

¹⁵ B. I., KARADE, *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts*, 24.

¹⁶ B. I., KARADE, *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts*, 25.

¹⁷ J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 22.

¹⁸ J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 22.

¹⁹ J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 28.

dualism. As one of the functionaries of Olodumare, he is considered as that part of the divine which test and tries out people. He tries out what lies in the heart of people to see and Judge what their real character and personality are.

‘Ogun’ is viewed as a primordial divinity and a personified ancestor.²⁰ He is said to have been the one who paved the way for the five divinities when they could not make their way to the earth because of the resistance they faced. From that time, all the divinities are called to honor him for his hard work. His name ‘Osinmale’, meaning chief among the divinities.

From the point of view of traditional religion, apart from the Supreme God and his functionaries, the Yoruba religion holds on to a belief that heroic men and women who have influenced their life and their culture are deified.²¹ The worship of the ancestor is based on a firm belief that the spirit of a human being, after it has left the physical body, never dies but continues to influence the life of the community. Yoruba people believe that a person’s spirit exists even before one is born into the world and naturally continues after death. When alive, the spirit resides in a person’s body and then survives a person when he or she dies. Those who died as outstanding persons in the community are regarded as presiding ancestors. Their function is to preserve the family from dangers and preside over the welfare of the family or community.

There is a widespread belief among the Yoruba people that their ancestors have extra human power in the afterlife, and it is this power that enables them to intervene in the lives of the living members of the society. This power puts them in a position to act as intermediaries between God, the divinities and people. So, they are considered as the unseen presidents of both the family and tribal meetings. Sometimes, they perform the duties of Guardians and they are the policemen of societal morality. As policemen of morality, they punish those who disobey the norms of the society with crop failure, infertility and different kinds of illnesses.

Finally, alongside with the belief in the Almighty God, the primordial divinities and the deified ancestors, the Yoruba believe in the existence of some spirits who are

²⁰ B. I., KARADE, *The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts*, 26.

²¹ J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 33.

associated with some natural phenomena such as the earth, rivers, mountains, trees and wind.²² They are not so distinctive in character as the divinities. Some of them are known to be good and help people to reach the Supreme God while others do evil things.

For the Yoruba people, it is clear that the world was created and cared for by the Supreme Being who communicates his power to the created world through the divinities, the spirits and the deified ancestors. For one to enjoy life in its fullness, Yoruba people believe that keeping close connection with the Supreme Being is very important. Since He is the author of life and the one who determines destiny, by maintaining the various avenues of regular link to the supernatural world and the earth.

1. 3 Social Life and Cooperation among Ibadan People

One interesting feature of the Yoruba way of life which is highly practiced in Ibadan area is the fact that they tend to live together in large towns and centers. Most of the Yoruba towns and cities are overcrowded. This is a clear indication that the strength of the social life of the Yoruba people is based on the idea of living together in close friendship and bound by the family ties. In Yoruba land, the social life is strongly based on the family ties where friendship is experienced and shared. This portrays the values of unity, solidarity, participation and co-responsibility. These ideas are clearly highlighted by Emmanuel O. in his book *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West Africa Novel* when he says that:

Traditional life in pre-colonial Africa subsisted on the collective solidarity of the people who shared common customs and beliefs and an identical world-view, were linked by blood or marriage ties and were, by close-knit nature of their social relationships, deeply involved in one another's personal lives. We find that the value which sustains the society is a collective responsibility, the responsibility of the group for the lives and well-being of the members.²³

Among the Ibadan people and in the other areas of the Yoruba land, the values of fraternity, cooperation and collaboration, mutual support and mutual trust are the rules that guide their social life. This happen because life is seen and esteemed as sacred and

²² J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 45.

²³ E. OBIECHINA, *Culture Tradition and Society in the West Africa Novel*, 219.

therefore needs to be shared. The coming together, relationship, community living and various celebrations are considered as the core values that keep the community moving. For the Yoruba mentality, life is given and grows in a community in relationship with all the members. That is why anyone outside the communion with the community is considered lost or dead.

As such in Yoruba land, individualism is highly discouraged and people put their efforts and resources together for the advantage of all the members. For the Yoruba understanding: “the individual is rich or poor according to whether the society is rich or poor. This means that the poor cannot starve, since they can depend on the wealth of the community of which they a member. Traditionally, the Yoruba are strongly social people. This is shown in their belief in the idea of collective effort as put across by P. Sofola when he says that: “If he is rich, it a collective richness and when and if the wealth is distributed and reaches everyone, leaving him openly, all that he has left is collective poverty... For whom will the African be in the midst of riches that could watch his extended family suffer want and deprivation and yet have peace of mind.”²⁴

From the traditional point of view, Yoruba community is self-sufficient in the sense that they produce their own food and most of their basic needs like shelter, clothes furniture and tool. The value of collective worship is also seen among the Yorubas where all the members of the community worship the same divinity. They come together as a community to venerate common ancestors, partake in the same rituals, ceremonies and celebrations. Thus in the context of Ibadan people and in the effort of shaping their society, the people commit themselves to a certain positive assertion of the beliefs, values, rules, and some minimum practices shared by members that they depend on for meeting their human needs and to which they consequently owe an obligation of social conformity and mutuality in affection, socialization, cooperation and in religion.

²⁴ P. SOFOLA, In: G. O. EHUSANI, *An Afro-Christian Visions. Towards a More Humanized World*, 222.

1. 4 Emergence of Christianity in Ibadan Area

The actual implantation of Christianity in Ibadan area had known a lot of resistance from the indigenous for a long period of time before its slow settlement. The success of the implantation started in the second half of the nineteenth century. This became finally fast because of the misconduct and the attitude of mistrust reported from some of the leaders and some priests of the traditional religion.

According to K. Olabimtan, the Yoruba land into which Christianity came in the nineteenth century was a land which experienced a good number of indigenous cults. The traditional religion was practiced together with Islam long before the coming of Christianity. Before the arrival of the missions, traditional religion co-existed with Islam in a syncretic relationship. Islam was accepted by the people as another faith to which divinity they could add the many existing divinities. Therefore, the syncretic relationship between the traditional religion and Islam was not seen as an issue. For the people the two religions appear as a devotional means of solving the many existential problems faced by the citizens.²⁵

The ancient Yoruba country to which Christian mission made its way was a religiously fertile ground in which the various practices of the traditional religion have marked the life of the people. This idea is clearly underlined by D. T. Abiolain his article titled *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, when he says vividly that:

Yoruba people have been known to be highly religious even before the advent of Christianity. They have their indigenous beliefs and practices. Their religion combines principles of unity and multiplicity, transcendence and immanence, into a single system. The Supreme God is one omniscient, omnipotent, transcendent, creator, father and judge. Often there is in Yorubaland the concept of 'ase' by which all things have their being. There are divinities and spirits that are known through personal encounter as living agents who directly affect people's lives. This religion permeates every gamut of the people's lives.²⁶

The religious predisposition gotten from their traditions brings a clear understanding in the mind of the Yoruba people who place creation and its care in the hands of the Supreme

²⁵ K. OLABIMTAN, "A Yoruba Evangelist encounters the Faiths of His Ancestor"s, 37.

²⁶ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 142.

Being. The traditional religious heritage of the Yoruba culture and the co-existence of Islam in Ibadan some hundreds years before Christianity paved the way for the establishment of Christianity despite the resistance it experienced.

The entrance of Christianity into Ibadan area was neither arbitrary nor accidental.²⁷ It was the result of the hardworking of the first missionaries who associated themselves with the people and created Christian communities with the significant evangelization of the chief and his surroundings. The privileges and the benefits that the missionaries brought in Ibadan area were appreciated by a good number of people who eventually accepted the implantation of Christianity against the will of those who saw Christianity as a threat to their interests. With the settlement of the missionaries in Ibadan area and its surrounding, Christianity started taking shape not only in the cities and rural area but also in the life of the indigenous who started seeing and enjoying the goodness of accepting Christ. As Christianity was taking root, those who were opposing the settlement of Christianity, found themselves abandoned by their people after they had experienced the changes and the liberation that Christianity brought into their lives and in their city as the continuation of the manifestation of God's presence in their midst. Those who opposed it, could not but allow Christianity to be implanted, for a good number of people were opened to Christianity.

According D. T. Abiola, another significant factor which contributed to the coming and the implantation of Christianity in Ibadan area and in Yoruba land in general was the prediction of 'Ifa' (oracle) in favor of the missionaries.²⁸ This was because when the Ifa (*Oracle*) was consulted, he foretold the coming of a power from overseas to the Yoruba land. On the words of the Ifa (*Oracle*), the people were waiting to see how this power was to come.

So when the people saw the first missionaries coming to their land with the word of God, they remembered the words of Ifa (*Oracle*). Those missionaries were kindly received and were allowed to stay according to the words of Ifa (*Oracle*).²⁹ This is another

²⁷ K. OLABIMTAN, *A Yoruba Evangelist encounters the Faiths of His Ancestor*, 47.

²⁸ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 144.

²⁹ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 144.

reason why Christianity was embraced and the Yoruba people showed a cordial and good relationship to the missionaries. But when the missionaries settled down, some of them proved to be destructive to the people's culture and traditional religion. They regarded the local people as pagans and held the opinion that they were culturally, traditionally and religiously backward and barbarous people.³⁰

The goodness of the implantation of Christianity is that it has liberated the minds of the people. Also education opened the mind of the people to the realities of transformation and self-awareness. Thus the missionaries implanted hospital, schools, agricultural farms for cash crops, children homes, etc. As time was moving, people saw the impact of Christianity on their lives and the changes that it had brought in the development of their cities and towns. With time, people also realized that Christianity revealed itself as a mean to acquiring wealth, new status, and education and to make contacts with the rest of the world. Also, conversion was assisted by the failure, the misbehavior of some traditional religious leaders in certain areas.³¹

1. 5 Effects of Christianity on the Traditional Religion and on the People of Ibadan

It is true that Christianity took a long period of time before its eventual establishment in Ibadan area in particular and in Yoruba land in general. There is no doubt that Yoruba people in general and Ibadan people in particular have been known to be highly rooted in their traditional religion before the coming of Christianity. Nevertheless, Christianity through the hard work of its missionaries significantly influenced the traditional religion and the people of Ibadan area. For no change can ever take place without interaction between human being.³² The transformation of the people and their religion were made possible through the developmental and creative determinations of the missionaries. The missionaries did not only uproot the people from their traditional religion to Christianity, but also they transformed the Yoruba people from the political, social and technological aspects as well. The coming of Christianity affected the value,

³⁰ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 14.

³¹D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 145.

³² A. T., Dopamu, *God and Social Change in Yorubaland*, 28.

culture, customs and beliefs which are essential and advantageous in the Yorubaland.³³ This is highlighted by Adewale in his book named *Sodeke's verdict in Favor of Christianity in Abeokuta in 1842 and its Impact on Other Religions*, by saying that: I am not blind to the fact. The fact is that the present state of Abeokuta is not what it was ten years ago, for, instead of war, there is peace. The second is that Christianity is really a powerful religion, for its effects upon the minds of people are so well marked that we shall admire it ... it is their peace we now enjoy.³⁴

There is no reservation to affirm that Christianity has greatly contributed to the growth of education, health and economy of Africa. Seeing and analyzing the transformation that Christianity brought in their land, some Yoruba elites affirmed that: Christianity was presented as the embodiment of western culture in the cloak of religion.³⁵ For Christianity, represents one of the major factors that contributed to the socio-political development in Ibadan and its surroundings. Through the efforts of educating the minds and forming the conscience of the people, Christianity was able to touch the fundamental aspects of the life of the people.

In addition to the above assertion, medicine and technology came as other factors. The modern medicine came through the efforts of the missionaries with its technology and innovations to boost the wellbeing of people. This was greatly welcomed and made significant impact on the life of the people. For some of the traditions remedies were not so active in responding to the challenges people face in their daily living. Though limited in some of its approaches, the modern medicine had brought some advantages health wise in comparison to what is known to them before the innovation of modern technology.

The changes brought by Christianity in the life of people such as: the way western education formed the people in their way of thinking and reasoning and the innovations brought by modern medicine and technology in the life of the people. This made many indigenous to see Christianity as a new reality which had opened new doors in the life of the people in terms of their wellbeing and their communication with God. Bishop Philips

³³A. T., Dopamu, *God and Social Change in Yorubaland*, 28.

³⁴S. A., Adewale, *Sodeke's verdict in Favour of Christianity in Abeokuta in 1842 and its Impact on Other Religions: Faith-In-Interaction*, 63.

³⁵D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 146.

in the same line confessed in one of his reports that: “He was filled with joy on the day when he witnessed two young people from Ondo boldly and openly renounced the gods of their fathers and professed faith in Christ.”³⁶ This kind of move was a push for those who were still doubting or were afraid to engage themselves in the new faith brought to them by the missionaries. With the experience of what they were enjoying as converts to Christianity, some of the converts composed some songs in their local language to mock the traditional religion and demonstrate the uniqueness and the goodness of Christianity.³⁷

According to D. T. Abiola, traditionally, Yoruba people are polygamous. The reason of polygamy is economic, social and religious. Therefore marrying and having many children was seen as a sign of wealth. The more children and wives that one gets gives one a certain status in the society. This practice was seen later, with the belonging to Christianity, as an action against the plan of God. The missionaries, in the name of the Gospel forbid polygamy, and those adhering to polygamy cannot be admitted to the Church.³⁸

Gradually, the missionaries proposed a different way of dressing to the people of Ibadan as it was in many African cultures. With this, the traditional dresses were abandoned and traditional names were substituted with Christian names at baptism.³⁹ Traditional names were considered to be unholy and unreligious. In this view, Christianity proved itself to have entered the core value of the people and managed to transform them from within. As such, the rigorous yet liberal values for which Christianity was known gradually became what now defines the people’s lives and beliefs. In some ways, Christianity was seen as liberating the people from the high and heavy demands of some practices of the traditional religion. It took time before Christianity could make its way, and impart its values in the lives of the indigenous of Ibadan area and its surrounding. For the traditional religion was in some extend seen as a burden on the people. That is why the opening up of the people to Christianity was seen

³⁶ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 147.
S. A., ADEWALE, *Sodeke’s verdict in Favour of Christianity in Abeokuta in 1842 and its impact on other Religion: Faith-In-Interaction*, 68.

³⁸ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 147.

³⁹ D. T., ABIOLA, *Secularization, Christianity and the African Religion in Yorubaland*, 147.

as a means to escape from their tradition which was imposing a lot of burden on the people. At the same time, it was a loss for those who were manipulating the spirits for their gain and survival. With regard to this, Christianity proved itself to have been able to uproot the people's traditions and offer them the salvation of Christ which does not oppress.

1. 6 Traditional Organization and Ruling System in Ibadan Area

Politically, the actual Ibadan belongs to the great Yoruba Kingdom which encompasses all the cities and towns of the Yorubaland. According to Yoruba tradition, the Yoruba kingdom was created with the arrival of Oduduwa in the Land of *IleIfe*.⁴⁰ Before his arrival, there were a certain number of groups of tribes that had settled already in *IleIfe* and had organized themselves into a loose union. Upon his arrival, Oduduwa settled among them and consequently, he dominated them and imposed his authority over them. The existing tribes resisted against the occupation and the ideas of Oduduwa. But Oduduwa maintained his idea of uniting them under his power.⁴¹ And eventually, he managed to impose himself until the success was attained in the 14 century.

With the new formation and cohabitation with each other, the new Yoruba community started discovering itself in terms of its relationship with each other and with the neighboring communities. In addition to the challenges related to the new grouping of the people and in their efforts to understand themselves, there came the challenge related to a prolonged drought that caused famine. As a result to such situation, the people started moving to other regions where they could find better facilities to manage their lives. This condition forced the Yoruba to spread all over the western part of Nigeria.⁴²

Aware of being descendants of Oduduwa, who was the founder of the Yoruba kingdom, each of the scattered communities built their own kingdom bearing in mind the former preexisting kingdom of *Ife* and instituting a political system designed after its ideal, however with some changes.

⁴⁰ B. OJUMU, Pre-Colonial Political System in Nigeria (Yoruba Traditional System).

⁴¹ B. OJUMU, Pre-Colonial Political System in Nigeria (Yoruba Traditional System).

⁴² B. OJUMU, "Pre-Colonial Political System in Nigeria (Yoruba Traditional System)".

In their relocation from Ile Ife, the center of the Yoruba Empire was the metropolitan Oyo, the home of the Yoruba who used the Oyo dialect and shared the same realities of the people of the Old Oyo. From Oyo, many provinces and kingdoms were created around the metropolitan city of Ibadan. It is from these formations that Ibadan was founded in the 16th century. The Yoruba community of Ibadan managed to impose itself and took control over the affairs of the city only at the beginning of the 19th Century. Most, if not all the Kingdoms of the Yoruba land has the same system of ruling because of their common origin which is related to Oduduwa.

In Ibadan and like in all the other kingdoms of Yoruba land, before the coming of the British and the missionaries, Yoruba kingdoms maintained an orderly and unified system which is still effective up to today despite some slight changes.⁴³ The Yoruba kingdoms were made up of the headquarters of towns which were considered to be the residential area of the King commonly called *Ilu Oba*.⁴⁴ Then come the other towns and villages which are under the authority of the *Oba*. The king (*Oba*) of the headquarters is the one on whom is bestowed the ancestral crown according to the legend from Ife. And his town is defined as the crowned town to differentiate it from the other towns in the kingdom. These other towns and villages are strongly connected to the headquarters where the life of the kingdom is planned and then shared in the rest of the kingdom. The Kings of the towns and villages under the *Oba* are required to pay annual homage to the central King. And any misbehaving or misconduct from the lower ranked kings be sanctioned by the *Oba* and they can be relieved of their post.

According to B. Ojumu, the political administration of the Yoruba kingdoms has a decentralized structure. The power was constantly shared from all political sectors of the kingdom, starting from the highest and going to the lowest level.

The administrative structure of the Yoruba kingdoms starts from the *Oba*, who is the political head. Then come council of chiefs, who are his advisors. Now come the kingmakers who were in charge of choosing and installing the king. The army of the king and the religious cult ministers of the kingdom. As such, the Yoruba society is highly

⁴³ E. O., *ABIOLA*, "Pre-colonial Political Administration in Yorubaland. "

⁴⁴ E. O., *ABIOLA*, "Pre-colonial Political Administration in Yorubaland. "

hierarchical and great importance is attached to old age and to those who hold position of authority in the society.⁴⁵

Kingship in Yoruba kingdom was not hereditary. The children of the king cannot succeed him in power. They can only assist their father in the administration of the affairs of the kingdom. If it happens that the king dies, a new king is chosen from his lineage or from a different family. The choice of the king is left to the king makers, made up of a council of elders. They hold their council in consultation of the gods before the king can be appointed. In a way, they act upon the will of the gods and crown the one who has been accepted by the gods. Based on this, the king is called to administer the affairs of the kingdom according to the will of the gods since they are the ones who appointed him. In case he would ignore the will of the gods and does his own will he is punished by the gods. In support of this, J. O Awolalu confirms that:

In Yoruba political set-up, the King (Oba) is the traditional head of his people, the *pontifex maximus*, and the representative of the ancestors. In secular and religious things, he has the final say. Many, if not all festivals begin and end in front of the palace or the market of the King (Oja Oba), and in the principal ones, the king has certain vital rituals to perform. Even when he is not physically present, there are those whom the tradition has appointed to act on his behalf.⁴⁶

Based on the above assertion, we can say that the rule of the kingdom in the Yoruba perspective is closely related to the religious practices. As such, unlike nowadays, in the ancient Yoruba traditional system, the king was not free to do things in the kingdom as he wished. He had to be opened to the will and decisions of the gods.

It is in this kind of structure that Ibadan areas and most of the Yoruba cities and town developed and formed their conscience in respect of the will of God and the common good of the whole kingdom. That was why the Yoruba society maintained a certain hierarchy and system of governance which seems complex and well-structured with the priority given to those in position of authority before the rest of the community. That is why there is a great sense of respect for the kings and their collaborators. For, they are seen as the representatives of the gods. Thus, the community is called to follow and

⁴⁵J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 17.

⁴⁶J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 17.

obey their decrees and deeds as coming directly from the gods for the betterment of the community.

It is worthwhile to note that the political administration was also based on the famous principle of check and balance.⁴⁷ This means that each administrative stage can be proved wrong or right, challenged or the actions of the other stages declared invalid, irrespective of their administrative hierarchy. This obliges everyone on power to give the best of him in matters that touch the life of the community.

1. 7 Effects of the Christian Organization on the Traditional Organization in Ibadan Area

Before the coming of the British and later on and Christianity in Ibadan Area, the traditional ruling system was the center of all the activities. The traditional kings and their collaborators were in charge of all activities of all the sectors of the life of their kingdom. The local king and his collaborators were the head of the religious, the political, the social and the economic affairs of the kingdom. With such accumulation of powers, many things were not going on well. Be it in the political, social, religious or economic system, there were a lot of troubles because of the domination the traditional leaders had over the people entrusted to their care.

This led to some selfish attitudes reported about the local leaders. This selfish behavior of the traditional leaders caused distrust from the people who saw them not as people who were at their service but as people who demand a lot from their subjects. With this situation, there was a lot of groaning of the people to get out of such an oppressive system which was highly hierarchical as well. So Christianity came at a time where people were expecting something new that would make a difference in their live and gives them new hope. That is how Christianity gained popularity though it was not easily accepted by the leaders who sought to protect and hold on to their power.

The subsequent implantation of Christianity in Ibadan area, after its gradual and slow beginning, can be understood as an additional extension of the political, religious, social and economic changes that had already taken place with the arrival of Islam and

⁴⁷ Cf. WAIDIGBENRO, "Yoruba Pre-colonial Political System".

later of the colonization. These changes came with the political destabilization, the population movements, the reorganization and modification of the traditional system of Ibadan and, above all, because the obvious failure of the traditional system to respond effectively to the needs of the people.⁴⁸ All this gave room to Christianity to find its way and give new hope to the people by reorganizing their lives based now on the Gospel values as willed by Christ.

The admission of Christianity in such situation went together with challenges, pain and suffering for the traditional leaders. The missionaries who brought Christianity did so not by imposing new ways of doing things on people. It was done in a spirit of accompanying the people gradually so that they could come to appreciate the patience and collaboration that the missionaries used as a method to implant faith in their midst. This method and approach provided the people with many opportunities that could make their conditions better than what the traditional ruling system offered them. People appreciated the effort of the missionaries who brought faith to them. The people perceived the benefits of having missionaries among them as guides and models, and this was greater than what they used to experience with their traditional rulers. After seeing the good works of the missionaries which were done not out of personal interest, but for love of God, the people of Ibadan and their kings experienced enough to trust the missionaries and their religious aspiration as liberating them and opening new opportunities for them.

The implantation of the Church in Ibadan area did not happen as an isolated action. The Church came with its ruling methods and organization so as to make its effects felt in all the sectors of the life of the people concerned. As such, the implantation of the Church took a gradual process till it reached the understanding of the values that the people concerned held dear. As *Nostra Aetate* suggested it that:

Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing “ways” comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life those precepts and teachings which, though different in many aspects from the one she hold and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men. (*NA*, 2)

⁴⁸ K. OLABIMTAN, “*The Phases in the Translation of Christianity into the Yoruba Milieu*”, 38.

So after the implantation of the Church in Ibadan area was done and the values of the people examined, the Church kept what was positive in the tradition of the people and spotted what was not compatible with the Gospel values and transforms them for the benefit of the people.

1. 8 Advantages of the Traditional Organization and Authority in Ibadan Area

Traditionally, the ruling system and organization in Ibadan area has known a lot of shifts in the way it was exercised over the years. The traditional organization and authority had experienced some moments of empowerments and some moments of weaknesses through the coming of different traditional political systems. Before the coming of Europeans, be it the colonizers or the missionaries, the traditional ruling system was seen not only as the political organization of the kingdoms but also the protector of the history, culture, religious and economic life of the kingdom and its people. In general, different traditional systems of Ibadan area had had positive influences on the life of their people in particular and of the kingdom in general.

Despite the challenges faced here and there, the traditional organization and authority of Ibadan area had maintained a very orderly and coherent political system which was relevant and found meaning in the life of the people and the kingdom.

As the traditional rulers were chosen according to the customs of the kingdom and the will of the gods, they maintained the kingdom united to its traditional roots and created also unity among the people. As such, they were seen as the people God used to organize and maintain stability in the kingdom. They managed to serve the needs of their people. They brought about peace and harmony in the kingdom. Based on this and seeing what is happening nowadays in most places in Africa, the ancient traditional system of ruling is still valid even though it faces some challenges as the people are in contact with various modern systems.

As agents of God's message to their people, the traditional ruling system, brought somehow about cohesion and order in their various communities. The rulers kept their communities united and close to each other. They played a role of true links among their various communities and people saw in them the representatives of God through their

lives and deeds. They took active participation in the worship of God almighty in the shrines and motivated their communities to do the same. The good collaboration which existed between the traditional political, social, religious and economic system in the ancient Ibadan area was a great asset which helped the traditional leader to respond to some extent to the needs of their people.

1. 9 Limits of the Traditional Organization and Authority in Ibadan Area

The positive points mentioned above about the traditional organization and authority in Ibadan area does not mean that there were no challenges related to the way the kingdoms were ruled.

As mentioned above, Yoruba society is strongly hierarchical. Though the kings and the leaders were somehow close to their people, all the same this closeness was regulated by the laws of the hierarchy. The kings had a special place in the society. As such they were surrounded with all the powers. And no one could dare tamper with their power. In case of interfering with the power of the king, those involved were compelled to commit suicide or were forced to go in exile. Such view of hierarchy affected the society to the point that the elders and the aged had always the first and the last word to say in every instance. In such situation, there was no doubt that there were cases of injustice as result of the rules and regulations of the traditional organization and authority.

As the traditional organization and authority concentrates power on the king and his surrounding, it follows that those who were in charge of helping the kings in the administration of the kingdom has a certain privilege position over the citizens of the kingdom. And in the name of such privilege, some of the kings and their collaborators exploited severely their people. In such situations, the people at the grass root level had no say for if one would speak against the king that would be equal their death.

In the name of the hierarchy and respect for the elders, there was some oppression in Ibadan kingdom on the political, social, religious and economic levels. Due to the hierarchical structure of the Yoruba society all the citizens were not having the same status in the kingdom. Thus the king in the traditional system of ruling kept the people somehow captive and in a certain way living with fear. And any lack of respect in follow

what was prescribed by the traditional rules would be severely punished and it could even cause permanent exile. Looking critically at such traditional organization with regard to what is experienced in some of the modern systems, one can say that people were following what the tradition prescribed to some extent not because they saw themselves as active members of the kingdom who had a say in its running, but because the consequences attached to any disagreement to the rules of the kingdom were heavy.

With the above analysis, it goes without doubt that a system which keeps its members in fear and in a rigid structural organization easily falls when it is faced by any other system which proves itself to be liberating and gives people freedom to participate in the organizational affairs of the kingdom. That is why the coming of the colonizers and later on Christianity in Ibadan Area were found as liberating factors for the people. Though, the traditional rulers did not want to lose their power and privilege over the people. But since the people were getting fed up with such system and they quickly welcomed the new system with passion. As the rulers found themselves alone, they had no chance but to comply with the new system.

Conclusion

From the study of the geographical background of the Ibadan Archdiocese, one can say that Ibadan has known some political destabilization before its actual settlement. This reality somehow affected and shaped the beliefs of the people. Furthermore one can affirm with conviction that Ibadan people have a religious system which is well structured. This religious system recognizes the centrality of the Supreme Being who is the creator and the ruler of the universe. In his action of ruling the universe, He collaborates with some divinities who act on his behalf in the theocratic world.⁴⁹

As such, the divinities only do things that are permitted by the Supreme Being. Thus, the divinities exist with the aim to bring the Supreme Being closer to the created world. In their turn, the divinities collaborate with the kings and their collaborators, who bring down the will of God to their people. In connection to the above reality, the local traditional and political system were highly affected by the conviction that all the

⁴⁹J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 15.

undertakings of the king were directly related to the will of the Supreme being, since it was believed that the king acts and exercises his authority with the power and the permission of the Supreme Being through the divinities. This in some ways was the cause of some abuses and dominations wrongly done by the kings.⁵⁰

The coming of the Catholic Church in Ibadan area was not easy at its beginning, because the traditional rulers tried all their best to keep their domination going over their people. Christianity came at the moment where the people were overwhelmed by the way the traditional system operated. So, it was welcomed with enthusiasm, in order to have a better life. Since the traditional religion of the people was closely connected to the traditional ruling system, it was difficult to separate them. In the line of bringing the Good News of Christ to the people, Christianity made its effects felt in all the sectors of their lives. Christianity and western education made great impacts on the religion and on the traditional ruling system of Ibadan area. The impact Christianity made on the local systems apparently helped its implantation.

As time went, it happened that, what the Church was reproaching to the local system, she did fell in the same trap. For some of the leaders of the Church did exactly what Christianity condemned in the way the kings were ruling some years before. This made the Church lose somehow its moral and spiritual authority. This was because some of the leaders of the Church have inculturated so much of their culture and tradition to the point that their actions were not different from the traditional systems.

It is true that the Catholic Church in Ibadan had made great impression on the culture and tradition of the people. As the Church preaches both righteousness and holiness, this should be the most important foundation of what guides the Church. In doing so, the Church in Ibadan will readjust its leadership system together with the people in search for the truth. And so she will guide the people on the right way of salvation.

⁵⁰ J. O., AWOLALU, *Yoruba Beliefs and Sacrificial Rites*, 15.

CHAPTER TWO

AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH WITH REFERENCE TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF IBADAN

Introduction

Our task in this chapter is to elaborate on the way how authority is exercised in the Archdiocese of Ibadan with reference to the Universal Church. As we are living in a society where authority is more and more perceived as mere functional and where freedom and interdependence have become the center of discussions, our point of reference in carrying out this research will be based on the Christian and secular understanding of what authority is. This is necessary because the exercise of authority in the Church as a whole has some divine and human implications. According to the Random House Dictionary of the English Language, authority is defined as the power to determine, arbitrate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes, jurisdiction; the right to control or command or determine. From this understanding, we can say that the exercise of authority in this perspective is concerned with enforcing obedience to the law and regulations of the state.

In its understanding of ecclesiological authority, *A Catholic Dictionary*, sees the Church as perfect, sovereign and independent. So she has supreme spiritual authority over her members, legislative, judicial and executive, by divine law. So, authority in the Christian perspective is the power to influence belief and conduct. With these understandings of the exercise of authority, we shall try to see first how the universal

Church accommodates these two realities and later on analyzes the way how authority is exercised in the Archdiocese of Ibadan.

2. 1 The Concept of Authority

The concept of authority is an old reality in the world. Etymologically, the word authority comes from the Latin word ‘*auctoritas*’, which in itself is derived from *auctor* meaning cause, sponsor promotor, surety.⁵¹ In its understanding which originated from Rome, authority is somehow related to the society, and so with the state. As such, the notion of authority is strongly linked to social facts in all societies of the world. Therefore the problem of authority is of universal dimension.

Similarly in Church’s life the problem of authority has been as well a reality. It is as old as the Church. From its historical background, according to Bernard Hoose, authority pertains to the source of something that is, what brings something to existence.⁵² From the analysis of this understanding of author, the main types of authority usually referred to are: *de jure* authority and *de facto* authority. The *de Jure* notion of authority is the notion of authority which is acquired by right. This means that the authority that is concerned in this case is the one that is lawfully acquired by investiture or because of rights which are attached to a particular authority. The *de facto* understanding of authority is the one which means *what actually is the case*.⁵³ It is the authority which one has in fact which aims at accomplishing its goals and aspirations. This kind of authority is well understood in political philosophy when it states that authority is strongly related to the concept of society. For the end of any authority if it is well lived and executed starts and end in the context of the society.⁵⁴

From the understanding of terms and their implications, whether authority is acquired in the spirit of *de jure* or in the spirit of *de facto*, its ultimate end is to create a situation where all the members of a given society may have their rights respected and respect the laws that regulates their lives.

⁵¹ B. Hoose, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 20.

⁵² B. Hoose, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 20.

⁵³ B. Hoose, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 20.

⁵⁴ B. Hoose, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 20.

Contrary to the above realities, the question of authority has become a matter of concern in many societies even in the Church. The question of authority is seen by many with negative connotations. It is perceived as a reality which brings in the mind of people a threat to freedom, to right and even to individual conscience. As such, the term authority has commonly become a term which suggests oppression and domination. This reality is not only experienced in the secular world, it is as well experienced in many Churches in the world today. Bearing these facts in mind, Bernard Hoose says that:

I wish to argue that the reason for this, though many, can usually be traced either to a misunderstanding of what authority entails, or to a misuse indeed, often an abuse of authority by some invested with power it entails. Although, once again this is true in general, it is especially in the Church that one can witness this demise, which has even been described as a crisis of authority. The question must be asked whether or not clinging to an outdated conception of authority, indeed to a corrupted and erroneous idea of authority, actually leads to the loss of all genuine authority. What remains may be something which, sufficiently dressed up in the trappings of office, may bear some resemblance to authority, but, in actual fact, is merely an empty husk' devoid of effectiveness.⁵⁵

It is true that the problem of authority in many cases today is more a question of the way how those who are invested with power understand it and exercise it. The greatest problem is about all the misapplication of the theories of authority and the abuses which are experienced in most societies and Churches. As such, the question of authority is as relevant as the realities of our societies and Churches are concerned. With the above assertions in mind we shall try to see how the issue of authority can be understood in order to create a society which understands itself in terms of responsibilities and rights where everyone's freedom is respected and protected.

2. 2 The Origin of the Church's Authority

Before expounding on the origin of authority in the Church, it is worthwhile to clarify whether Jesus Christ founded the Church. The question whether Christ founded the Church or not, has been one of the ecclesiological questions that brought a great debate among the scholars in the course of the history of the Church. Obviously, Jesus' role in founding the Church is of central conviction in the Christian faith. The catechetical

⁵⁵ B. Hoose, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 19.

materials used by Christian Churches assert that Jesus instituted the sacraments and by extension the term has come to be applied to the Church.⁵⁶ As such, Jesus has been described as having founded the Church during His life time. This idea that Jesus founded the Church is a spontaneous insight of many Christians. Many find the answer to the question “Did Jesus found the Church?” so evident that the question actually seems unnecessary. This declaration shows that, of course, Jesus founded the Church and that the Church is the supreme legacy of Jesus to the world.⁵⁷ In supporting such view, the Neo-Scholastic theologians said that it was considered to be the Historical Jesus founder the Church. Moreover, the Neo-Scholastic emphasized that the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus Christ was not only eschatological, spiritual and interior, but it exists on earth and is visible. And so, the founding of the apostolic college of the twelve was understood to mean that Jesus passed on to the Apostles complete authority, so that He may be viewed as the Founder of the hierarchical society which is called the Church.⁵⁸ In affirming the foundation of the Church by Christ, they reacted against the point of view he view the Modernists of the 20th Century who do not agree to the idea that Jesus really founded the Church.

It is true that many passages of the Bible give a proof that Jesus founded the Church, but still the answer to the question whether Jesus founded the Church is a complex one. It is true that there is no easy answer to such question. The answer is ‘No’ if by found, we mean a direct deliberate and single act by which Jesus establishes a new community of his followers.⁵⁹

The answer is ‘Yes’ if by ‘Found’ we mean “lay the foundation for the Church”⁶⁰ in various implicit and indirect ways. In this case it will be better to speak of the Church as having its origin in Jesus rather than as having been founded by Him. This, if we think of the coming into existence of the Church in terms of a process in several stages, which go back to the whole Christ-event then, our answer is expressively yes, the origin of the

⁵⁶ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 29.

⁵⁷ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 29.

⁵⁸ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 30.

⁵⁹ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 33.

⁶⁰ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 33.

Church finds its origin in Christ rather than as having been founded by Him.⁶¹ When we think of the Church coming into existence in terms of a process in several stages which go back to the Christ-event, then our answer is yes.

The proof of Jesus' direct intention to found the Church was provided for the tradition theology by appeal to the famous passage in the Gospel of Matthew where Jesus confers the keys on Peter and promises: "on this rock I will build my Church" (Mat 16, 18). This New Testament proof text was later strengthened by quoting the words of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to Peter during which the risen Christ, after triple questioning of Peter, instructs him to feed and tend His Sheep (Jn 21, 15-17). With these ideas, it becomes clear that traditional theology sees the origin of the foundation of the Church in the Jesus Christ.

The understanding of authority in the Roman Catholic Church is rooted in the understanding of authority by Jesus Himself. Firstly, when Jesus started his public ministry, He chose 12 apostles among His followers who were to be close to Him. Among the 12, Peter, John and James were treated with a particular attention. In Mathew's Gospel, the mission mandate entrusted to the 11 was to carry on the mission of proclaiming the Good News to all the nations (Mt 28, 15-17). This shows that Christ intentionally created his Church in order to continue his mission in the world. And He promised that He will not leave His Church alone; so, His presence continues to be felt through the working of the Holy Spirit. To ensure the continuity of His mission, Christ Himself Gave His Church the power to teach, govern and sanctify the people with His own authority. Therefore, the origin and the foundation of the Church's authority is none other than Christ's continuing presence in His Church. Here the aim of the Church's authority, as intended by Christ, is to transmit the truth about Him without error. That is why in His Words of Commissioning, Peter Jesus said: "So I now say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my community. And the gates of the underworld can never overpower it." (Mt 16, 18; Jn 21, 15- 17). In this passage, it is clearly demonstrated that, among the apostles,

⁶¹ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 34.

Peter was nominated as the head, the rock on which the Church is founded. This idea is clearly illustrated in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church when it states that:

That divine mission, entrusted by Christ to the apostles, will last until the end of the world (Cf. Mt 28, 20), since the gospel they are to teach is for all the time the source of all life for the Church. And for this reason the apostles, appointed as rulers in this society, took care to appoint successors... Bishops, therefore, with their helpers, the priests and the deacons, have taken up the service of the community, presiding in place of God over the flock, whose shepherds they are, as teachers for doctrine, priests for sacred worship and ministers for governing. And just as the office granted individually to Peter, the first among the apostles, is permanent and to be transmitted to his successors, so also the apostles' office of nurturing the church is permanent, and is to be exercised without interruption by the sacred order of Bishops. (*LG, 20*)

Furthermore, Peter was commissioned by Jesus to tend the sheep. In this context Peter is given a specific responsibility which none of the disciples has ever been given. Jesus the Good Shepherd has extended his task and power of caring for his sheep to Peter. Moreover, in Lk 22, 31-32, Jesus told Peter that He has prayed for him so that his faith may not waver and that he is to strengthen his brothers.

With reference to the instruction of Jesus to the apostles, the Church, after the apostles, was governed by the bishops who are the successors of the apostles. The Apostolic succession is the guarantee of the transmission of the tradition of the Church. The Pope is therefore seen among the bishops as the successor of Peter. Consequently, he is given the same authority over all the bishops and their followers. The primacy that was given to Peter over the Apostles is also vested in him. At the same time the individual bishops are shepherds of their dioceses but they are to be in communion with the Roman Pontiff as the Vicar of Christ.

2. 3 Biblical Meaning of Authority

Throughout the history of humanity, God had willed to communicate his goodness and share his blessed life with the created world. That was why, since the advent of creation, the spirit of God had never ceased to guide and direct the world. So the meaning of the authority that lies behind the Scriptures is not different from the authority of God Himself. Based on the above assertion, the understanding of authority is the freedom to

decide or a right to act without limitation for the common good of the world. As such, this kind of exercise of authority belongs only to God. For God does whatever He wills freely for the good of the world. This reality echoes in the Letter to the Romans when it says: “Everyone is to obey the governing authority, because there is no authority except from God and so whatever authority exists has been appointed by God. There is no such other authority apart from the authority of God.” (Rom 13, 1).

The almighty Creator of the universe and the one who gave life and meaning to all the created world established all things by his divine authority and placed its continuation and its care under the control of humankind (Gn 2, 15). That is why the authority of humankind is nothing different from the delegated authority which is given by God to the world with the aim to rule and to lead. That means all authority to act, to decide, to command and to judge is none other than the authority given by God. All authority on the earth is the gift from God. That is why, all are called to pay heed to all governing authorities, since there exist no authority on earth except the authority which comes from God. Therefore the authorities which exist are established by God. As a consequence of this, anyone who disobeys an authority is rebelling against God’s ordinances; and rebels must expect to receive the condemnation they deserve (Rm 13, 2). This idea has been also well put across by St Matthew in his Gospel when he says that: “So I now say to you: “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my community. And the gates of the underworld can never overpower it. I will give you the key of the kingdom of Heaven: whatever you bind on earth will be bound in Heaven, whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Mt 16, 18-19). Matthew brings more light in the understanding of biblical and doctrinal concepts of authority in the Catholic Church. This also demonstrates vividly that the plan of God to continue his action on earth is real and manifest in the life of those He, Himself has chosen to carry on his will.

The supreme and eternal authority of God has marked the history of the Bible in various manners. In the life of the people of Israel, the authority of God was reflected in all their experiences (Ex 15, 18; Is 40, 12; Ps 93, 1-2...). This authority of God encompasses not only the providential and historical realities, but it also demands

obedience and responsibility from humanity vis à vis his commandments and his orders contained in the Scriptures and in the Traditions.

The perfect manifestation of the authority of God is shown in Jesus Christ His Son. As God and Man, Jesus manifested his power in a double capacity. On hand, Jesus manifested his authority as the Son of God who does all things as He has seen his Heavenly Father doing them. And on the other hand, He acts as the incarnated Son who is human in respect and obedience to the will of God His Father. As such, Jesus Has the power to do his own will but he abandoned his will in honor and obedience to the will of God His Father. This idea is explained in the motivation of Jesus when He says: “*The Father loves me because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it again, and this is the command I have received from my Father*” (Jn 10, 17-18). Jesus in all his declaration talks about his authority as acting on behalf of God the Father. In such a manner He performs the miracles which God does, such as: forgiving sins (Mk 2, 5-8); healing the sick (Mk 1, 34); casting out demons (Mk 1, 27); having control over the forces of nature (Lk 8, 24-25); raising the dead (Lk 7, 11-17 and Jn 11, 38-44); teaching with authority.

While Jesus was doing such wonders He called on the people to obey His authority. For His authority was the authority that was communicating His being, it was communicating His personality through the service He was rendering to humanity. So by obeying the will of his Father and by living up to what He promised to the Father, Jesus manifests the authority of God which is nothing different from being at the service of the people. Therefore, all authority in the heavens and on earth is given to Christ to exercise his messianic role as He reveal the authority of His Father which is mostly manifested in living in right relationship with Him. The meaning of authority that is portrayed in the Bible is the authority which is lived in a spirit of godliness and good deeds. Such attitude of authority is the one Jesus recommended to all his followers in order for them to make manifest the plan of God for humanity so that they may come to know God personally. For the authority of God manifested in the passages of the Scriptures is the one that is based on His perfect righteousness and goodness.

It is always for the goodness and blessing of the people that Jesus exercises his authority. This kind of attitude is what Jesus willed for all his followers as they take up responsibilities in the Church. Jesus wanted His followers to continue living the mind and the authority of God that He left to the world. This idea is well elaborated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in this way:

Those who exercise authority should do so as a service. Whoever should be greater among you must be your servant (Mt 20, 26). The exercise of authority is measured morally in terms of its divine origin, its reasonable nature and its specific object. No one can command or establish what is contrary to the dignity of persons and the natural law. The exercise of authority is meant to give outward expression to a just hierarchy of values in order to facilitate freedom and responsibility by all. (CCC, 9)

Authority understood in the biblical sense and as exercised in the Church stresses the importance of service as the foundation laid by Christ. Christ, in accomplishing the will of God His Father, has inaugurated the Kingdom of God on earth by revealing its mysteries in obedience and by bringing salvation to the whole world. So the Church which is the manifestation of the reign of God, operates in the world by the authority of God which is not different from her service to others.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church emphasis the importance and the need of authority in all societies for its good organization. It says further that: *“the authority required by moral order derives from God: let every person be subjected to the governing authorities”* (CCC, 1899). Jesus understood his authority as the authority that was liberating. That is why its effects were felt by all and in all the places he went. His style of authority is what is needed in our Churches and in our world today.

2. 4 Historical Development of Ecclesial Authority

The Catholic Church as we see it today is one of the oldest institutions in the world. It began in Jerusalem after the death and resurrection of Christ some two thousand years ago. It started as a small group of Disciples of Christ who believed in His resurrection. The spiritual authority of the Church was only strengthened and confirmed as she faced persecutions in her early days. Christianity spread first in the Roman Empire, then in Europe and later on in the rest of the world. The life of the first Christians was

marked by a great faith in Jesus as they expected the second coming of the Messiah and by the brotherly love they had for each other and which the world had never seen. As such, the early Church was strongly united under the authority of the apostles with Peter their divinely appointed head.⁶² The community sustained itself by the teachings of Christ and with His body and blood in the Eucharist which they shared in remembering Him.

By the end of the second century, the Christian Church organized itself as an institution with a defined system of authority which drew its origin from the Scriptures, its creed and its hierarchy of bishop, priest and deacon. The question of whether or not Jesus himself founded the Church and conferred authority over it through his apostles does not really matter. What matters now is the visible sign of the continuing presence of Christ in the Church.

History has clearly proved that from the beginning, the first believers formed a strong community and were aware of themselves being members of a unique fellowship with a distinctive sense of identity due to their belief in the risen Lord. Based on this belief, they called themselves the saints, the elected, the Church of God, the new Israel.⁶³ As she continued to spread across the world, the Church developed as a strongly organized body, which is headed by the Pope in Rome and the Bishops in communion with him. The Pope and the Bishops were in their turn helped by the presbyters and deacons. Then their authority was exercised in the spirit of service. Their spirit of holiness in witnessing to Christ made a great impression in the life of many people who decided to also become members of the Body of Christ. As the church was growing in Rome, it faced a lot of persecution which, in fact strengthened the faith and the unity of the Church. In addition to the persecutions, the Church faced also martyrdom. And the time of martyrs showed that the Church, like her founder, could transform suffering into victory.⁶⁴ All these events showed a distinct image of the Church's sense of supernatural oneness in Christ its head and founder. Up to here not much is said about the organization of the Church.

⁶² R. V. LAMLOR, *The Church's Amazing story*, 15.

⁶³ T. Bokenkotter, *A concise History of the Catholic Church*, 28.

⁶⁴ R. V. Lamlor, *The Church's Amazing story*, 34.

The traditional catholic view of the organization of the Church is that Jesus Himself organized His Church by appointing the twelve apostles and giving them authority to continue His mission in the Church after His death.⁶⁵ This idea of Christ as the one who founded and organized the Church is largely explained in the Gospel of Luke as he tried to elaborate on the origin and the organization of the early Church. Many scholars were not in favor of the idea that Jesus was the one who organized the Church the way it is today. In trying to propose something which will make more sense to people as far as the development of the Church is concerned, the scholars who rejected the idea of Jesus as the one who organized the Church, came up with the idea that:

The primitive Church only slowly organized itself and shaped its system of authority in response to a variety of situations that existed in the different localities. And in their view, it only gradually settled everywhere on the three-tiered structure – bishop, priest and deacon as the one most conducive to its mission.⁶⁶

By making such declaration, they see the Church as a body which tried to organized itself as far as its needs were concerned. Those who hold such view, agree with St. Paul who held the view that the Spirit is the one who organized the community. He says that the Spirit is the one that rules. For him, this simple means that love is the unifying and organizing force, and freedom is its characteristic quality. The various ministries needed to carry on and order the community were given directly by the Spirit sent by Christ.⁶⁷

The idea of Paul about the authority of the Church remained applicable as the Church was living in expectation of the end the world and the second coming of Jesus and as the original apostles were still alive and the guarantee of the accuracy of the oral tradition about Jesus was still sure. Based on the above assertion, the Church needed to reorganize itself in consideration of two facts. The first fact is that, as time went on, the second coming of Christ as expected was not as immediate as people thought. The Church grew in the awareness that she was destined to continue in history, may be for a long period of time. The second fact is that the original apostles started to die off.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 28.

⁶⁶ T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 29.

⁶⁷ T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 29.

⁶⁸ T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 30.

Then the Church was faced with a lot of challenges regarding how she was going to keep in touch with its origins and safeguard its unity and continuity with the eye witnesses of the Christ event. During this period, the Church was faced with a lot of heresies such as: the Gnostics for whom, Christ was not a true man but a particle of divinity who had assumed a human costume.⁶⁹ The Marcionists rejected the Old Testament as being the work of an evil, inferior demigod and professed belief only in the writings of Paul.⁷⁰

As the Church met these challenges, she gradually established a special commissioned ministry which was a system of governance by the elders and deacons which issued an authoritative list of apostolic writings and a rule of faith was composed. It is in such situation that the Church developed slowly up the time it became the religion of the empire with Constantine where she could develop in peace.⁷¹ During that period, the Church was like the light that was shining in all the parts of the Empire. As such, the Church made a lot of impacts on the world in terms of her organization and her authority. The Church at the time of Constantine reorganized herself better now that she experienced the air of freedom. Then the councils of bishops took place in various cities and the Christians were organized in formal dioceses and archdioceses in some bigger cities.

As the Church was both human and divine, the time that followed the time of glory was not so pleasant in terms of her influence and impact in the world. The Church had fallen in a kind of authority which was far from the Gospel demands. And the historical realities, which was preserved in the monarchical model of the Church was given a different orientation by Vatican II which saw the authority of the Church as service. The council states that:

For the nurturing and the constant growth of the people of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. Thor those ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their brethren, so that all who are of the people of God and, therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation. (*LG, 18*)

⁶⁹ T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 31.

⁷⁰ T. Bokenkotter, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, 31.

⁷¹ R. V. Lamlor, *The Church's Amazing story*, 35.

This understanding of authority defined by Vatican II, led the Church back to its initial understanding of authority as Christ Himself willed it. Thus the central dynamic of authority during and after the council was seen as service. The Church as the People of God is organized in its faith and in the exercise of its authority.

2. 5 Foundation of the Magisterium in the Church

The authority of Christ which is exercised in the Church is exercised through the power of the Holy Spirit. As such, the teaching authority of the Church is pneumatically and Christological grounded.⁷² This means that all the authority of the Church find expression only in and through Jesus. The Church is called to be organized in such a way that the lasting presence and the liberating authority of Christ should continue to shape the life of the apostolic Christian faith Community. As such, the fundamental norm that should guide the life of the Church should be based on the teachings of God our savior (Tt 2, 10). In this way the apostolic deposit of faith which was handed on to the Church should continue making impacts in the life of the followers of Christ at all times. They in their turn should be witnesses not of their own aspirations, but to the living word of God preached by Christ. As a pastoral service, the magisterium is subordinated to the content of this apostolic tradition.⁷³ This deposit of faith is the life of the Christian Community. As St. Paul noted that the deposit of faith should not be a document written in any official document of the Church, but it be first and foremost that which is written in the hearts of the followers of Christ. The magisterium, therefore, is appointed to serve the life of the ecclesial faith community. It serves now as always, on the basis and according to the direction of the essential, biblical writings on the life of Christ's first witnesses and followers.⁷⁴

According to L. Swidler & P. F. Franssen, there should not be a rapport of master and slave among the followers of Christ. It is clearly stated in the Synoptic Gospels that the Church should not be an entity which is to be with a structure of domination. That is

⁷² L. SWILDLER & P. F. FRANSEN, *Authority in the Church and the Scillebbeekx Case*, 14.

⁷³ L. SWILDLER & P. F. FRANSEN, *Authority in the Church and the Scillebbeekx Case*, 14.

⁷⁴ L. SWILDLER & P. F. FRANSEN, *Authority in the Church and the Scillebbeekx Case*, 14.

why Jesus warned his disciples that: “Whoever will be great among you, let that person be your servant, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20, 27-28).

By saying this, Jesus did not mean that there should not be authority and leadership in the Church. There is and there should be authority and leadership, but the kind of authority that should reign should be the one that guides the life of the Church and which liberates human beings and make them participants of the salvific history of Christ. For there is a strong belief in the Church that Christ, before going back to his Father, gave the Holy Spirit to the Church to continue His actions in the Church. And so, the Holy Spirit is present in the life of all the members of the Church who are in a position of authority or not. So the magisterium should be aware that the same Spirit of Christ who was at work in the life of Church at the time of Christ is still at work these days. This idea is well clarified by Vatican II when it says:

The entire body of the faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One (Cf. Jn 2, 20.27), cannot err in matters of belief. Thanks to the supernatural sense of faith which characterizes the people as a whole, it manifests its unerring quality when, from the bishops down to the last member of the laity, it shows universal agreement in matters of faith. (*LG, 12*)

The task of the Magisterium is to enlighten the Christian Community so that together with them the whole Church would be engaged in searching for the will of God in our world of today. In carrying out this task, the Magisterium is promised the guidance of the Holy Spirit who stands as their advisor.

2. 6 The Challenges of Authority in the Church

Through her history, the Church has faced a lot of challenges with regard to her authority and influence in the world. The action of the Church in responding to the challenges she faced was for a large part due to the centralization of her power. It is good to note with Leonardo Boff that Christianity is the fruit of revolution. And for Judaism, Christianity even up to today is a heresy.⁷⁵ With such situation, the early Christians appropriated the Good News of Christ in their lives not as the continuation of Judaism as

⁷⁵ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 49.

it was considered during the time of the apostles. The early Christians saw themselves as living in the new covenant which was inaugurated by Jesus. This attitude of the early Christians appeared as revolutionary as far as Judaism was concerned. Within this context of confusion and affirmation of its identity, the early Church tried to interpret and lay down the rules and regulations that would characterize the new Christian life. With this, the Communities that followed enjoyed peace as the result of the efforts of the early Christians who managed to overcome the challenges they encountered regarding the foundation of the Church.

The time that followed this apparent period of peace, was very tough. Things quickly changed with the conversion of Constantine. From this time, the Church changed from being the illegal religion to become the religion of the region. So Christianity became both the official religion and the sacred ideology of the empire.⁷⁶ The Church then ruled with a great power with all its implications as far as the history is concerned. With this new reality, the Church shifted from the Gospels understanding of the Church to comply with the political situation. The Church at this period, instead of facing persecution, face challenges of power from the evangelical point of view. And so, when the leader of the empire joined the Church, a paganization of Christianity took place, and not a Christianization of paganism.⁷⁷ The Church which up to this time saw itself as a movement now became an institution as practiced in the empire. Now the Church saw itself in terms of law, organization in dioceses and parishes, with authority and titles. This reality cut across the history of the Church and is still continuing in many places in the world even today. This situation needs to come to an end if is truly the Gospel that determines the authority of the Church.

The Church which understands itself primarily as the Community invested with authority together with the community deprived of power, now sees itself as hierarchy where the power becomes the way in which the Word of God can be accepted, appropriated and proclaimed. This situation continued like that in the Church up to the time she realized that she had gone away from the Gospel values and that something

⁷⁶ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 50

⁷⁷ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 50.

needed to be done. That was how many changes took place in the Church with Vatican II in the way she understood herself and exercised power in the line of the Gospel values.

2. 7 Authority in Ibadan Archdiocese

Authority as seen above from its etymological sense is a reality which aims at increasing the wellbeing of people over whom it is exercised. It is not only about exercising power over people but to facilitate the situation whereby the dignity and freedom of people are respected and preserved. It is about the rightful freedom to do what is genuine and right and to communicate good values to people over whom it exercises the power. This kind of authority is the one that is expressed in the writings of the New Testament and evident in the life Jesus who: “Came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20, 20). The authority of Jesus was an authority which exercised its power on the basis of moral virtues. He lived as a teacher and taught what he lived and lived what he taught. His teaching and actions made a great impression on people because there was coherence in His proclamations and His actions. The Church of Ibadan Archdiocese as the word of God which took flesh in Yoruba context is not exempted from the issues regarding authority. This part of our work will examine how effective these teachings and examples of Christ took root in the life of the Church.

2. 7. 1 Foundation and Exercise of Authority in Ibadan Archdiocese

Throughout the gospels, the authority that Jesus advocates is not the arbitrary use of a monarchic power over others. In many occasions, Jesus called the attention of his Apostles over their understanding of Power.⁷⁸ For He told them that the only purpose of authority is service; if anyone among you wants to be the first, let him be the servant of all (Mt 20, 27). During the last supper, Jesus lived up to his teaching and set an example for his disciples. If I the master can do for you, my followers, the task of a slave, how much more is expected from you my disciples in your mutual relationship with one another.⁷⁹ Through these words above, the kind of authority that transpires from the teachings and the actions of Jesus is the authority which has no other aim than to serve.

⁷⁸ Y. CONGAR, *Power and poverty in the Church*, 81

⁷⁹ Cf. Y. CONGAR, *Power and poverty in the Church*, 31.

The authority of Jesus is the one that empowers people. True authority is not to be imposed, it is only valid and relevant when it is freely offered, chosen and freely accepted.⁸⁰

However, Jesus did not deny the need of a juridical office of authority. What He asked was that such juridical authority should be exercised together with a moral authority. Thus he demonstrated this in the Gospel of Matthew when He recognized the legitimacy of the official authority of the Scribes and the Pharisees, but he criticized their dubious ways of living which lacked moral authority. That is why all through His life time, Jesus demanded of His followers to subordinate the exercise of their authority to the moral authority so as to reconfigure it before the Gospel demands.⁸¹

According to Peter Okafor, the demands of the Gospels stipulated that, the exercise of authority in the Church must respect the apostolic nature of the Church which is based on a two-fold heritage. The first is the apostolic community which implies the basic apostolic succession of the whole Church. The second is the special apostolic ministry which implies the special apostolic succession of the bishops in the ordained ministry exercise together with the clergy. The exercise of ecclesial authority must therefore be the reality of the Church as an apostolic community. As such, the understanding and the exercise of authority in the Church should be related to faithfulness to the gospel and the apostolic tradition.⁸² How much is the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese especially the bishops and the clergy men, respectful to this reality.

The general concept of authority which dominates the Archdiocese of Ibadan in particular and the Church of Nigeria in general is that stated by the Code of Canon law.⁸³ It is a juridical and institutional conception of authority, which puts more emphasis on the exercise of power than that of service. The understanding of such authority is the one which sees the Church as if it is made up only of a hierarchical society and a visible

⁸⁰ Cf. M. KINNAMON, *Authority in the Church: An Ecumenical Perspective*, 201.

⁸¹ R. R. Gaillardetz, *Teaching with authority*, 134.

⁸² P. OKAFOR, *Authority as a Service in the Nigerian-African Challenges of the Twofold Heritage*, 113.

⁸³ P. OKAFOR, *Authority as a Service in the Nigerian-African Challenges of the Twofold Heritage*, 114.

institution. It is true that this kind of understanding of the Church recognizes the spiritual community and the mystery, but its main concern is its order, conformism, submission and the visible structure of the Church. The nature of this kind of Church is Clericalism. According to the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, there is clericalism when the clergy men feel they have the monopoly of knowledge, attention and power in the Church, and ignore the role and contribution of the laity.⁸⁴

The consequence of seeing the Church and authority mainly in terms of jurisdiction and powers of the clergy men is that, it can lead the church astray from the evangelical demands of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. This way of living as Church was denounced by Leonardo Boff when he said that:

Its legitimacy comes not from below but from above, from the will of God. The higher someone is in this hierarchy the closer one is to God so has a greater share in God's divine power. To obey one's superior is to obey God (...) this style of authority is untouchable and not subject to any internal criticism. Criticism from within any of the orders is only possible from a higher authority. A questioning from below would be equal to a revolution in the universe. Thus, any thought of transformation is the same as an attack on God who is author of both the order and structure of sacred power.⁸⁵

This way of understanding authority in the Church gives one a personal and social satisfaction. It has nothing to do with the teaching of Christ who is the authority par excellence. Authority seen as domination is a pure stumbling block to the understanding of the Church in Ibadan. So as solution, the Church in Ibadan especially the leaders, need to reexamine their motivation and foundation in order to lead their people to Christ.

2. 7. 2 Problem of Governance in Ibadan Archdiocese

The Church as willed by Christ in commissioning his followers to continue his action in all the nations is about bearing witness. For the Church is prior and comes before every office or ministry that it composes. In the profession of faith of the Church, we all confess its apostolicity. This shows that the Church as a whole is apostolic in all her members ordained or not and thus all the members live in continuity of faith, life and

⁸⁴ CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT OF NIGERIA, *Church of Nigeria: Family of God on Mission*, 70-71.

⁸⁵ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and power*, 40-41.

mission with the apostles. And so, the Church is the successor of the apostles in the sense that through baptism all her members have received the charge to participate in the handing on of the original apostolic Tradition expressed in a fundamental way in the Scriptures.⁸⁶ Based on this above assertion, all responsibility held in the Church is for strengthening this basic reality of the Church as the People of God.

However, the Church in Ibadan Archdiocese had held and is still holding the structure of the Church which regards power as the only means through which the Gospel will be accepted, understood and proclaimed. With such conception of the Church which sees itself with authority centered only on those who are legitimately invested to organize it. In this case Christ, according to L. Boff, becomes the emperor, the cosmic Lord and not the Suffering Servant who stood against the powers of this world to the point of renouncing all earthly power and glory.⁸⁷

The problem of governance in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese is that a lot of power and authority has been invested in the Bishop and his assistants as the only people who can administer the affairs of the Church. They are seen as people who know everything and the faithful have to depend on what they say. In some ways they are seen as people detached from the community of faithful with the mission to search for the truth and communicate it to the rest. In such a vision, there is no place in the Church where there is a personal authority where the community is not called to participate. Authority in the Church as lived by Christ is never an exercise of one or a few persons on their own but always with others and in communion with the whole Body of Christ.

As such, the Church in the Archdiocese of Ibadan behaves like tyrant on the level of the diocese, a situation which is the same also in the parishes with regard to the attitude of many priests. As the clergy keeps as on one man rule in their areas of jurisdiction, the laity is obliged to play a passive role. Bénézet Bujo sees such situation of the Church as dangerous for Africans. He says that: “A priest or a bishop can turn into a lifelong oppressor of the ecclesial community, effectively dechristianizing it.”⁸⁸ He therefore

⁸⁶ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and power*, 51.

⁸⁷ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and power*, 40-41.

⁸⁸ B. BUJO, *African Theology in its Social context*, 98.

calls for a destruction of all forms of ‘clericalism and episcopalism’ wherever this is found in the Church of Christ.

It is true that the bishops in a strict sense may be considered as the successors of the apostles by virtue of their pastoral duties and membership of the episcopal college as well as the communion that it implies. But this reality alone is not sufficient as far as the faith and fidelity to the apostolic succession are concerned. This finds expression in what Pope John Paul II said that: “Bishops are successors of the apostles not only in authority and sacred power but also in the form of apostolic life, in apostolic suffering endured for the proclamation and spread of the Gospel, in their gentle and merciful care of the faithful entrusted to them, in their defense of the weak, and in their unremitting concern for the People of God.”⁸⁹ This exhortation of the Pope leaves no room for a mere juridical understanding of the ministerial office of the church. The first and foremost duty of the ministerial office of the Church is nothing but service.

2. 7. 3 Challenges Related to the Exercise of Authority in Ibadan Archdiocese

The greatest challenge of the exercise of authority in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese is clericalism. This comes as a challenge with regard to the double apostolic legacy of the Church which is an apostolic community and apostolic ministry exercised by people with special authority and responsibility within this ecclesial community.

As highlighted by Vatican II that, *in the Catholic Church, the apostolic ministry is exercised in the local Church first and foremost by the bishops who in the Catholic tradition are the successors of the apostles (LG, 18)*. The bishops are helped in carrying on their ministry by the priests and deacons. The Church which is apostolic in its nature and constitution as the people of God stands together as a whole in the apostolic succession.⁹⁰ The apostolicity of the Church as an entity means that it is within its context that the apostolic succession of the bishop can be understood through his apostolic ministry which he exercises with the collaboration and help of the rest of the clergy.

⁸⁹ JOHN PAUL II, *Pastores Gregis: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Bishop, Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the hope of the World*, 43, 2003.

⁹⁰ P. OKAFOR, *Authority as a Service in the Nigerian- African Challenges of the Twofold Heritage*, 103.

However, the emergence of clericalism in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese has created a kind of clerical body which seems to be detached from the rest of the People of God. As such, the body of the clergy is perceived as isolated from the community of the faithful. This gives the impression as if the ordained body of the Church is superior to the community of the faithful and that the clergy is the only body which received authority and has control over the apostolicity. As consequence to this reality, the clergy feel that their main task is to minister to the non-apostolic Church. Such a conception of the Church needs to be evaluated. The Church as founded by Christ needs to be defined by its twofold apostolic heritage in her mission, life and organization.⁹¹ The way the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese sees itself with regard to the above description, emphasizes only one of the two aspects of what she was called to be. The consequence of this way of the Church understanding herself is nothing else but dominating the community of the faithful, imposing things on them on the assumption that the clergy knows everything. This shows an exaggerated idea that the faithful do not know much about what the Church is supposed to be. Such a Church should not forget that it is to the entire Church that Christ gave the gifts of the Holy Spirit and not only to the bishops and the clergy. As it is the whole Church that received her mandate and mission from Christ, it follows that it is the whole Church that is in search for the truth and the will of God. Therefore, all should be involve in this undertaking. There is a sincere need of mutual exchange of gifts between the ordained apostolic body and the non-ordained apostolic body of the Church. This idea of the challenge related to the exercise of authority in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese in particular and in Nigeria in general is highlighted by D. D. Dodo in his book called *The Priest in Nigeria: Layman's Perspective* when he says:

Here is the problem, for the lay, the new dispensation brought about by Vatican II and the Code of Canon law in terms of its definition and the role in the Church are a welcome development and he is eager to be given the opportunity to perform, but for the priest, it is an intrusion, an invasion of the traditional power, and he is not ready and willing to allow the layman play his new role. This results in conflict of interest, confusion and suspicion.⁹²

⁹¹ P. OKAFOR, *Authority as a Service in the Nigerian- African Challenges of the Twofold Heritage*, 116.

⁹² D. D. DODO, *The Priest in Nigeria: A Layman's perspective*, 33.

This reality of opposition between the clergy and laity is a matter of concern in many dioceses and parishes in the Church. In many places, the clergy tries to get hold of all things as if it is only in them and through them that the Holy Spirit can operate. The Holy Spirit operates in all the People of God according to their status. So there is no way for personal authority in the Church where the entire community of the Christians is not called to participate. Also there should be no authority which is held alone, it is always held in communion with the whole body of Christ.

Conclusion

The exercise of authority had been a matter of concern right at the beginning of the Church and had marked the history of the Church. With regard to the issues of authority, the Church faced a lot of challenges and abuses here and there. Some of the challenges helped the Church to retrace her origin which lies in Christ who properly laid down the instruction on the way authority is to be exercised in the Church. Other challenges remained a struggle for the Church up to today and need more attention and reflection. The assurance is that the instruction of Christ to the Church made great impression in the Church as she tried to understand herself as from both human and divine origin. The challenges which had cut across the history of the Church are now still present in the local Churches. Some of the local Churches manage to respond well to some of the challenges but others still weigh some local Churches down. One typical example is the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese.

It is true that many things have been done in order to allow the Word of God to take flesh in the life of the people of Ibadan. The first missionaries tried their best in that matter. But the tradition of the local people still holds for a great part as far as the exercise of authority is concerned in Ibadan area. With regard to this reality, the local Church of Ibadan still needs to work more for the total incarnation of the Word of God in the culture so that those in position of authority in the Church may focus on the instruction given by Christ to all his followers.

For authority to be exercised as a service to the salvation of the People of God be it in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese or in the other Churches in the world, the

ministerial authorities of the Church must be faithful to the two-fold apostolic heritage of the Church. It is not so in many Churches of the world. The apostolic heritage here implies that those who exercise authority in the Church not only stress the hierarchy of the Church but also and especially the place and the co-responsibility of the entire community of the faithful. The exercise of authority in the Church must therefore be based on the principle of communion which will promote participation and co-responsibility at all levels of the Church.

CHAPTER THREE

REFLECTION ON CHARISM IN THE CHURCH WITH REFERENCE TO IBADAN ARCHDIOCESE

Introduction

The reflection on the Church in its relation to charism leads to the understanding of the Church as the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. This understanding suggests a consideration of the resurrection of Christ with all its implications and considerations; which in principle, goes beyond any institution. The Church as defined from its charismatic point of view, throws more light on the understanding of the nature and mission of the Church as intended by Christ. The relationship between charism and institution within the understanding of the Church leads to the idea of a participatory communion. This understanding leads to the connection and debate between charism and institution in the Church with regard to their respective roles. The emphasis on the Church as a participatory communion puts the connection between charism and institution and their roles within the biblically-based ecclesiology of Vatican II about the Church as the people of God.⁹³ Our task in this reflection is to elaborate on charism understood as the gift of the Spirit of God bestowed on all the members of the Church with the aim to building up the body of Christ.

⁹³ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 155.

The Christological emphasis given to the Church after its establishment on led the Latin Church to excessive institutional rigidity.⁹⁴ In a way the debates and reflection on the gospel which tried to relocate the Church back to its original understanding in relation to the joy of the good news and a message of liberation are also affected by such an image of the Church. In many instances in the past and even nowadays, many institutions, if not all, fail to translate these characteristics of the Holy Spirit to the Body of Christ which is the Church. As Leonardo Boff analyses it when he says that, the Holy Spirit has always been at the heart of all the great events of history: In creation, in the raising up of the people of Israel, in the calling of the prophets, in Jesus' conception, in His baptism, in the descent upon the apostles at Pentecost, in their decision to proclaim the Good News to the gentiles, thus given concrete beginning of the Church, in the Eucharist at the transformation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. This shows the importance of the Holy Spirit as He is given to all the members of the Church with the aim to build up the Body of Christ.

In the following passage of our work, we will try to clarify the understanding of charism in the life of the Church together with its implications. Later on we shall elaborate on the way charism is understood in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese. And finally we shall see the challenges related to its use both in the Church in general and in the Church of the Archdiocese in particular.

3. 1 Clarification of Concept

The term Charism comes from 'Charis or charisein';⁹⁵ word coming from the theological understanding of the Old and New Testament, which means gratuity and benevolence seen as God's gift to an individual or a group of people. The word charism generally indicates any good gift that flows from God's love to humans for the service of humans. It can also mean a spiritual grace and qualification granted to any Christian to perform his or her duty in the Church for the good of others.

⁹⁴ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 154.

⁹⁵ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 156,

The authenticity of charisms is well highlighted in the Old Testament. The power and the role of the Holy Spirit are exercised in favor of the liberation of people through Samson (Jg 13, 25). At the same time, kings were anointed and given special power for the service of their people (1Sm 11, 6). With this, we can say that the reality of the Holy Spirit is found in the creativity of the unreserved, in the change to something new on the level of the individual Christian.

Paul uses the word charism in reference to the context of the organization of the community. For him, this supposes a personal and deep experience of the presence of the risen Lord and the Spirit as living and manifested in the lives of the individuals and in the communion of the faithful, who are living out the message of the gospel. Thus, charism is no longer extraordinary or unexpected but a common rule for the structure of the community.⁹⁶ With regard to this understanding of charism, the Church becomes a sign and an instrument of the now living and risen Christ, through and in, the Holy Spirit. Paul makes of the charism the structuring aspect of the Community.

The theology of Paul on charism finds expression in the conception that: "with the appearance of the Church the end of time had begun."⁹⁷ That is why the breath of the Spirit has given power to all. Here charism simply refers to the practical action every individual of the community exercises for the good of all (1Cor 12, 7; Eph 4, 7). For the Church is a body made up of many members, all flow from the Spirit, and each with their unique role for the growth of the community. That is why Paul in his elaboration on charism asserted with more comprehensive understanding that the Church is the Body of which is made up of many members, all originating from the Spirit himself and each with their specific role holding the body together. With the above assertion, it follows that:

Charisms are to be accepted with gratitude by the person who receives them, and by all members of the Church as well. They are a wonderfully rich grace for the apostolic vitality and for the holiness of the entire Body of Christ, provided they really are genuine gifts of the Holy Spirit and are used in full conformity with authentic promptings of this same Spirit, that is, in keeping with charity, the true measure of all charisms (CCC 800).

⁹⁶ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 157.

⁹⁷ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 157.

As such, all the members function on the basis of a specific gift. There is no member who does not possess the gift of the Spirit, no one is useless in the community and waits to enjoy the service of others. Each and every one of the members of the community has a specific place and each member serves the others for the good of the Body OF Christ which is the Church (Rom 12, 5).

The Church as understood from this perspective gives equal right and privileges to all the members which represents the Body of Christ. This suggests that there is no possible room for any privilege in the unity of the body of Christ. This way of understanding the Church comes in opposition to a hierarchy which claims the centrality of the life in the Church and calls the rest of the members to obey and not to ask any question. This way of living as the Church is only a complete subordination and domination of the other members. With this, the hierarchy considers itself to be the only fundamental charism, forgetting that the Church, the family of God, is founded on the apostles and the prophets (Eph 2, 20). The hierarchy, as Paul is only one charismatic aspect in the Church, one which must not see itself in any other perspective than to be at the service of the other charisms that the Spirit raises in the Church.

For Leonardo Boff, the Church is alive where the Spirit is fully active in all the members through their various responsibilities. Diverse charisms abound, creativity flourishes and makes the message of Jesus to be ever a good news to the Church. People become true members of the Church, not simple members who are only to listen and to obey. It should not be that way, all the members are called to feel part and parcel of the development of the Church. This means that the charism they received from the Spirit is active and is placed at the service of the Gospel and of all the people. The charism is active and effective where individual members of the Church place all that they are, all that they have and all they can do at the service of God and their neighbors. Their gifts come from the Spirit and they are to become fruitful for the good of the Body of Christ.

This way of living as the Church promotes the integrity and the dignity of the members and avoids domination and excessive appropriation of power. Consequently, love has to be the driving force of the community. This is well understood by Paul when he says that charism is the most important element in the life of Church. He continued that

one must search for an ever better way to live as the Church (1Cor 12: 31); he then begins his hymn of love, with the necessary virtues for daily community life such as: patience, kindness, overcoming pride, envy, ambition, irritation and suspicion, seeking love alone and its interest (1Cor 14, 4- 8). This very true and simple love is the charism of charisms, the service of all services, extended to everyone (1Cor 13, 13).

With regard to this, charism can be seen as a manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the members of the community, causing everything that they are and do to be done and ordered for the good of all.⁹⁸

3. 2 Role of Charism in the Church

According to Hans Küng, charism can be defined as the call of God, addressed to an individual, to a particular ministry in the community, which brings with it the ability to fulfil that ministry.⁹⁹ From this definition it follows that charism, in its ordinary as well as extraordinary understanding comes from God and the Holy Spirit with the mission to build and to serve the community. In the Church, the role of charism is linked to the Spirit of Christ who always continues to inspire the community of the faithful to carry on His salvific action in the world. This signifies that the charism is not linked to the desire for self-affirmation, geared towards one's own glorification and interest but to the common good.

The proper understanding of charism is service, it is a function. It is not like any function, but a disinterested function for the common good of the others. The Spirit always gives its gifts to each individual according to his or her capacity to serve the others. So, there is not only one type of charism, there are different types of charisms, but all charisms aims at the same mission to serve the need of the community according the mind and will of Christ. This means that there is a certain relation among the various charisms in the Church and each charism according to its place, function and capacity strives to reflect the image of Christ to the other members of the community in the way Christ Himself did.

⁹⁸ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 158.

⁹⁹ Cf. L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

As such, all the members of the Church have something proper to them that they offer to the Body of Christ. There are no passive members in the Church. All the members with their particular gifts work for the consolidation of the mystical body of Christ which is the Church. The role of charism in the Church is found in each person, within the Body of Christ, exercising their function. Every Christian is called to be charismatic; each one has his or her field, serving others.¹⁰⁰ Paul attests this when he says that: “each one has his own gift from God, one this kind and the next something different” (1Cor 7, 7); “The particular manifestation of the Spirit is granted to each one to be used for the general good” (1Cor 12, 7). Peter also agrees with Paul when he says that: “Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these varied graces of God, puts it at the service of others” (1Pet 4, 10).

From the above observations, we see that the gift of the Spirit is not received for any other mission than service for the good of the Church. As such, the good of the Church seems to be the main concern of Christ as He commissioned His followers to continue the salvific work he began. That is why in order to continue his good works in the world, He sent the Holy Spirit to comfort His followers so that they can be able to bring to fulfilment what He began.

It is important to note that charisms are not reserved for a certain group of people in the Church, such as the priest and the bishops. The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to all so that together with others, as the Body of Christ, could work for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Thus, no one can pretend to have all charisms. For all are apostles, all are prophets, and all are teachers by the virtue of our baptism.¹⁰¹

From this perspective, all Christians are invited to view and understand their functions, professions and abilities as gifts that have been received from God and that must be exercised in the service for the entire community.¹⁰² Charisms belong to the structure of the Church because it is the concrete way in which the Spirit and the risen

¹⁰⁰ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

¹⁰¹ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

¹⁰² Cf. L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

Lord continue to live in the world. Without charisms, the Church cannot be seen as a religious and theological reality in the world.

Charisms are the means that give rise to institutions and keeps them alive. Charisms are the permanent condition of the Church as a community with various functions and service. So, hierarchy is one of the charisms, but it is not exclusive. The Church of Christ was not founded on the institution or the hierarchy but rather it is the charism that is at the root of all institutions and hierarchies. Consequently, the Church of Christ has various gifts for the common good of the Church. Loenardo Boff confirms this when he asserts that there is not one group of those who rule and another group of those ruled; there is only one group of faith. Those who rule as well as those who are ruled must all believe. The charism of faith is the basic nature and the common factor which regulate communication and fundamental fraternal equality among all the members of the Church.

3. 3 Ministry and Charism in the Church

When one talks of ministry and charism in the Church, it initially sounds as if the two terms point at two different realities that oppose each other. In principle the two terms echo the same reality but expressed and exercised on different levels in the Church. If these two terms have been misunderstood in the catholic theology and in the Church at large, the reason lies fundamentally in clericalism and legalism which were at the center of many debates in the Church. In this regard, clericalism considered for so long that all real and decisive activities and initiatives are the privilege of the clergy. This understanding suggests that all ministries in the Church are reserved to the clergy. Thus, these things do not belong to the whole people of God. This legalistic mind mistrusts the free operation of the Spirit of God in the Church, the Spirit which blows where it wills and does not wait for the official permission of any authority.¹⁰³

For Hans Küng, another reason for not considering charism as properly relevant and efficacious in the life of the Church is that for so long many Catholic textbooks elaborated on an ecclesiology that relied mainly on the pastoral letters and the Acts of the Apostles and practically ignoring Pauline ecclesiology. As such, the many distinctions in

¹⁰³ Cf. H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 47.

the concepts of the Church does not give consideration to the Spirit or to the Charisms of the Holy Spirit.

He further said that the first writings of the New Testament, even before Mark and Matthew, are the First Letter to the Corinthians, together with the two Letters to the Thessalonians.¹⁰⁴ In these letters, Paul gave a very original and penetrating evidence of the interior and exterior set-up of the Church. He did not make any mention of the institutional structure of the Church. Nor did he make mention of ordination or laying on of hands. But he continually made mention of charism and the Holy Spirit which, according to him, are granted to every Christian in the measure of his God-given grace.

Based on this analysis, one can assert that the common reality that marked the life of the Church was nothing different from the gift of the Holy Spirit for the good of all. The Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit, is the normal place of the manifestation of the charisms. The spirit is given for building up the Church and empowering it. Vatican II confirms this by saying that: “The charisms, whether they be the most outstanding or more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation, for they are perfectly suited to and useful for the need of the Church” (*LG*, 12). It is true that there is a need for ministry in the Church. This reality of ministry has its place and cannot be compromised. It is necessary for the organization and the continuation of the Church as Christ intended it. But it must be noted that it is not only through the sacraments and the ministries of the Church that the Holy Spirit can sanctify and lead the people of God and enrich them with virtues. God in his infinite bounty allots the gifts of the Holy Spirit to everyone according to His will. God distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank.¹⁰⁵ Through these gifts, God makes the faithful fit and ready to undertake the various tasks and duties which in principle should contribute toward the renewal and building up of the Church, according to the mind of God.

From the elaboration on the ministry and charism in the Church, it becomes more and more clear that the two terms are not opposed to each other. In fact they are complementary in their essence. For there is a certain distinction and relationship between

¹⁰⁴ Cf. H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 47

¹⁰⁵ Cf. H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 46.

ministry and charism in the Church. Both of them are a service for the good of the Church. It is true that charisms are common to all by the virtue of our baptism, but the ministry in the Church requires a certain special grace apart from the gifts of charism. Following such appreciation of the ministry and charism in the Church, recognizing the participation of all in the charisms is beneficial as it eliminates the spirit of domination in the different bodies of the Church. It also helps to focus on the fundamental equality.

3. 4 The Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church

It is commonly admitted that the greatest gift that the Father had given to the world is Jesus Christ (Jn 14, 12). And Jesus throughout his life has been always guided by the Holy Spirit who inspired Him to do what He did for the salvation of the world. It is under the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus lived his earthly life to the full. It was through the guidance of the Holy Spirit that Jesus announced the Good News to the poor, proclaimed release for all those who needed his healing touch. As such, The Church, therefore, instructed by the words of Christ, and drawing on the experience of Pentecost and her own apostolic history, has proclaimed since the earliest centuries her faith in the Holy Spirit, as the giver of life, the one in whom the mysterious Triune God communicates himself to human beings, constituting in them the source of eternal life (DeV, 1).

For Jesus was aware that the Spirit of God rested upon Him in order for Him to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah (Lk 4, 18-19). As the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, one with the Spirit, Jesus did not need the Spirit to live out his mission¹⁰⁶. But the Spirit came down through Jesus in order for Him to regenerate humanity. Jesus, the new temple manifested in His person the Spirit to the world. And this manifestation started at His Baptism and continued during his public life and ended by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the Church through the mystery of His death, resurrection and ascension.¹⁰⁷

According to Etienne Sion, the community of the followers of Jesus became the Church at Easter, when the Spirit was given to them (Cf. Jn 20, 22). The Spirit did not come to regenerate an existing structure. The Church does not precede the Spirit. The

¹⁰⁶ E. SION, *The Charismatic Nature of the local Church*, 161.

¹⁰⁷ E. SION, *The Charismatic Nature of the local Church*, 161.

Church cannot live without the Spirit. The Spirit belong to the nature of the Church. The Holy Spirit is constitutive of the Church and is not added to an already existing body of Christ. Without the Spirit there is no Church. And the expression ‘temple of the Spirit’¹⁰⁸ suggests the idea that there is a fundamental union between the Spirit and the Church. That is why it is important that ‘in our own age, we are called anew by the ever ancient and ever new faith of the Church, to draw near to the Holy Spirit as the giver of life’ (DV, 2).

Since the outpouring of the Spirit on the followers of Christ at Pentecost, the Spirit continuously builds up the Church (1Cor 3, 16). As such, Christ is the corner-stone of the Church (1Pet 2, 7). For nobody can lay down any other foundation than the one which is there already, namely Jesus Christ (1Cor 3, 11). Based on this, in the Spirit, Christians are built up on Christ who is the foundation stone. It is the Spirit himself who, through them, builds the Church, placing each one in the place he or she is called to. They are built up and still they are building and as such, they are co-builders with the Spirit. It is not a passive but an active and dynamic action, for God respects human freedom.

For Leonardo Boff, the Church as institution is not based on the incarnation of the Word but rather on the trust in the power of the apostles who were inspired by the Holy Spirit who caused them to move from eschatology and the end of time to the present situation of the Church, and translating the teaching about the kingdom into the reality of the Church as the Body of Christ.

The Christian community is built up through offering a spiritual and acceptable sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ (1Pet 2, 5). All the work is done by the faithful, through the working of the Holy Spirit who is the guide and the continuation of the presence of Christ in the Church. For they work to complement the work of Christ. In this way in the Lord and in the Spirit, all the followers of Christ, are able to come into the presence of the Father (Eph 2, 18). This is well expressed by John Paul II when he says that:

The Holy Spirit was then better seen, through a meditation on the mystery of the Church, as the one who points out the ways leading to the union of Christians,

¹⁰⁸ E. SION, *The Charismatic Nature of the local Church*, 161.

indeed as the supreme source of this unity, which comes from God himself and to which St. Paul gave a particular expression in the words which are frequently used to begin the Eucharistic liturgy: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (DeV, 2).

And to belong to the building, to be a stone in that building, it is important to be in the Lord, that is to say to have been baptized, buried in Christ and raised with Christ to the new life in the Spirit.¹⁰⁹ The Lord is the foundation stone and the key-stone (Eph 3, 20). He is the beginning and the end. He is the one who holds the Church together and makes it a perfect temple for God the Father. The Church could not be without Christ and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be the Counselor of the Apostles and the Church, always present in their midst-even though invisible-as the teacher of the same Good News that Christ proclaimed (DeV, 4). The Church is not built up with ordinary stones, but with living stones. To be the living stones, the Church must live a new life in the Spirit. It is the Spirit who fits all the Christ faithful, scattered everywhere into the construction of the temple of God.¹¹⁰ This idea is supported by John Paul II as he says:

The supreme and most complete revelation of God to humanity is Jesus Christ himself, and the witness of the Spirit inspires, guarantees and convalidates the faithful transmission of this revelation in the preaching and writing of the Apostles, while the witness of the Apostles ensures its human expression in the Church and in the history of humanity (DeV, 5).

To speak of the Church as the temple of God, constantly build by the Holy Spirit, is not a contradiction. The one Church of God is not an abstract reality but a reality made concrete and visible through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

3. 5 The Church as Sacrament of Christ

Vatican II states clearly the model of the Church as Sacrament. In many of its documents, such as: *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church is presented as the Sacrament of Christ. Thus, Council goes beyond the previous models of the Church as the "City of God" or "Perfect Society" or "hierarchy". Vatican II recalled the original nature of the Church as the living sign of the Risen Lord

¹⁰⁹ E. SION, *The Charismatic Nature of the local Church*, 162.

¹¹⁰ E. SION, *The Charismatic Nature of the local Church*, 162.

in the World. This is in accordance with St Paul's ecclesiology of the Church as "the Body of Christ." Christ the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals humanity to itself and brings to light its very high calling. It is no wonder, then, that all the truths mentioned so far should find in him their source and their most perfect embodiment (*GS*, 22). As such, the Risen Lord identifies Himself with all His followers, not only the clergy.

This idea is clearly elucidated by Matthew when he says: "I am with you till the close of this age" (Mt28: 20). That shows that the Spirit of Christ is present in all the Christians and inspires them to carry on His mission in the world. If Jesus is the perfect image of God the Father and reveals Him to the world, the Church as the Body of Christ in its entirety, points out to the Kingdom of God proclaimed and inaugurated by Jesus. With regard to this, the Church as Sacrament can only be understood in relation to Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the original Sacrament of God. Driven by the Spirit and sharing in the mission of Christ, the Church as a whole, not divided into clergy and lay, with boldness bears witness to the Risen Lord. Thus, she carries out the same redemptive mission of Christ until He comes again in glory. Christ, the one Mediator, established and continually sustains here on earth His holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as an entity with visible delineation through which He communicated truth and grace to all (*LG*, 8). It is indeed worth to say with conviction that if Christ is the original Sacrament of God, the Church as a whole is the basic Sacrament from which all other sacraments flow. For, Conformed to the image of the Son who is the firstborn of many brothers and sisters, Christians receive the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Rom 8:23) by which they are able to fulfil the new law of love. By this Spirit, who is the "pledge of our inheritance" (Eph 1:14), the entire person is inwardly renewed, even to the "redemption of the body" (Rom 8:23) (*GS*, 22).

According to the Council of Trent, a Sacrament is a sign of grace, a visible form of an invisible grace. From this etymological understanding of the term, the Church can be called as a people called out to gather together in order to be a visible sign and instrument of the sanctifying grace of God the Father as realized in Christ through the working of the Holy Spirit. With regard to this understanding, the conception of the

Church only from its hierarchical understanding is really limited in revealing what its real mission is according to the mind of Christ.

According to the teachings of Vatican II, Jesus Christ was sent by the Father into the world in order to raise fallen humanity to its divine life. For “it was in Him, before the foundation of the world, that the Father chose us and predestined us to become his adopted sons” (*LG*, 3). By revealing the love and mercy of God to the human race and reconciling humanity to God, Jesus Christ is the original and elementary Sacrament of God. He is God’s Self-communication to humanity. Jesus is therefore, the sacrament of human encounter with God. Therefore, our redemption consists in the union of our human nature with the divine nature of Jesus Christ.

All the members ought to be molded in the likeness of Him, until Christ be formed in them. For this reason we, who have been made to conform to Him, who have died with Him and risen with Him, are taken up into the mysteries of His life, until we will reign together with Him. On earth, still as pilgrims in a strange land, tracing in trial and in oppression the paths He trod, we are made one with His sufferings like the body is one with the Head, suffering with Him, that with Him we may be glorified (*LG*, 7).

That is why, the Church cannot be fully sacrament if it is not through the grace of the Son. In support to this, Dulles points out that “Jesus Christ is the Sacrament of God as turned towards man.”¹¹¹ If Jesus is the way to God, and as the Son is the image of the Father, the Church as a whole understands herself as the visible sign of Jesus Christ the mediator.

According to Brain Gleeson, The Church is the Spirit filled Body of Christ. The Risen Lord continues to share with his disciples his life-giving vision of the fullness of redemption. Through His Spirit, the Risen Lord vivifies the Church and makes his presence visible through the Christian community. This is what Paul experienced as he encountered the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus: “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (Ac 9: 4-5).

The Church as a whole is the living witness through which people of every generation encounter Jesus Christ and receive his sanctifying grace. According to

¹¹¹ B. GLEESON, *The Church as Sacrament*, 2.

Sacrosanctum Concilium, Christ is always present in his Church, in her liturgical celebrations, for He indeed “always associates His Church with Himself in his great work wherein God is perfectly glorified and men are sanctified” (*SC*, 7).

As the Sacrament, the whole Church is the bodily existence of the Risen and Glorified Lord, who gave His Spirit to his disciples and still continues to give the gift of the Spirit to all the baptized in order to proclaim Him through their actions and words.

In that Body the life of Christ is poured into the believers who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ who suffered and was glorified Through Baptism we are formed in the likeness of Christ: "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." In this sacred rite a oneness with Christ's death and resurrection is both symbolized and brought about: "For we were buried with Him by means of Baptism into death"; and if "we have been united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall be so in the likeness of His resurrection also." Really partaking of the body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with Him and with one another. "Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread". In this way all of us are made members of His Body, but severally members one of another (*LG*, 7).

By doing this, Christian community becomes also the body language and living presence of Christ in the world. For the grace received in the Church “impels all to prayer, confession, worship and other acts whereby the Church externally realizes its essence.”¹¹²

According to Boff, the Church as a whole is that part of the world that has accepted the Kingdom of God realized in the person of Jesus Christ, celebrating its presence every time and everywhere. The sacramental character of the Church does not mean that she is centered on herself or isolated from the world without being concerned with human sufferings and socio-economic justice.”¹¹³ The Church’s commitment and involvement in the matters of justice and peace, reconciliation and integrity of creation, is to bring about harmony and human brotherhood as realization of the Reign of God.

In this line, Gleeson concludes that the life of the Church is a preview of the destiny of the human race to become one with God. We are united to the Father through

¹¹² A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, 65.

¹¹³ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 9.

the Son and the Spirit.¹¹⁴ That is why it is only in and through Christ and His Spirit that the Church can function both as a sign and an instrument of unity and love in the world.

3. 6 Charism and the Organization of the Church

From the biblical perspective, charism is understood as a gratuitous and free gift of God that is given to an individual person for the good of others in a given community and set-up. This implies one's belonging to a community and a profound mystical experience of Christ and the Holy Spirit as the motivating factors in the life of the individual person and that of the community to which one belongs. For St. Paul, charism is rightly introduced in the context of the organization of the community.¹¹⁵

This reality is shown in the life of the first century Christians who lived as a group of people who had Christ as the principle of their coming together and organizing themselves according to his will despite the challenges they faced those days. They were sincerely dedicated to Christ whom they preached through their example of living the paschal mystery. Their vitality in organizing themselves in a community of the faithful was greatly admired. When we read the New Testament, we learn of their miracles, their acts of raw courage and explosive evangelism in the name of Christ. For they were the people of the Spirit. They were certainly preoccupied with Christ and they were very much alive to the presence of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁶ This dynamism of the first century Christians which involved all the members of the community into the organization of its life, was redefined as the Church tried to reorganize herself and fit into the new situation facing a lot of challenges along the line. Some of these challenges pushed the Church to understand herself as hierarchy where the faithful only had the privilege to receive from the hierarchy. As such, the bishops and the priests were seen as people called to receive all religious and spiritual inspiration from God. In their turn, they produced the religious goods which the people are called to consume, for it was believed that they had no direct access to God. This is the monarchical model, common in the history of the Church.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, 69.

¹¹⁵ R. A. N. KYDD, *Charismatic Gift in the Early Church*, 1

¹¹⁶ R. A. N. KYDD, *Charismatic Gift in the Early Church*, 1.

¹¹⁷ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 133.

This way the Church was understanding herself changed when the Church realized that the basic ecclesial community is not only a means for evangelization. It goes beyond this understanding, the Church evangelizes in and through Christ. This is clearly illustrated by Leonardo Boff when he says that:

A new way of being Church and of concretizing the mystery of salvation that is lived in common. The Church is not only the institution with its sacred scriptures, hierarchy, sacramental structures, canon law, liturgical norms, orthodoxy and moral imperatives. All of that is important, but the Church is also an *event*. It emerges, is born, and is continually reshaped whenever individuals meet to hear the Word of God, believe in it and together follow Jesus Christ, inspired by the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁸

This way of living as the Church also find expression in the ideas of Vatican II when it redefined the Church as the People of God. This was a great change from the past. It gives rise to see the Church as a living Church with flexible and appropriate ministries which leave out all theological privileges so as to live as brothers for the good of all. This brings to light the understanding that the different services done within the Church are manifestations of the risen Christ. And so, it needs a good dose of courage to live concretely as a Church where everyone's charism is allowed and motivated to grow. For sure, it is the Church of the people, which carries with it the values of the people, with their language, liturgical expressions and common expression of faith. Until very recently the Church has been a Church only of the priest for the people. It is now the era of being a Church of the people where all members by the virtue of their baptism are given equal opportunity to have a new experience of faith and to participate not only in the liturgy but also in decision making, committed to maintaining the Church and organizing it according to the will of God.

In supporting this, Leonardo Boff says that all are People of God. And since all share directly in the blessed life of God through the mediation of Christ, so all share in the service of teaching, sanctifying and organizing the Church of Christ. With regard to this, all are sent on mission and all are responsible in their own capacity for the wellbeing of the Church. As such, it is not that there is a need for everyone to do every task, but in

¹¹⁸ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 133.

organizing the Church, different services arise from various charisms in response to the concrete needs manifested in the Church of today.

3. 7 Challenges Related to the Exercise of Charism in the Church

It is without doubt that the early Christian communities were strongly influenced and motivated by the charismatic gifts of the Spirit which helped them to shape the Church. It is commonly admitted that charisms are gifts from the Holy Spirit given all for the good and the building up of the community. This understanding of charism had marked the first century of Christianity.

The period which followed the establishment of the Church brought a different understanding of what the Church is called to be. This situation raised some challenges in the conception and in the exercise of charism in the Church. The Church, which from its foundation understood herself in terms of the participation of all the members in the building of the community, shifted from this understanding to become an institution. With the emergence of the Church as an institution, the charism of the people was no more talked about. The Church at that moment was much more understood from the hierarchical point of view where the focus was no more on the participation of the people but rather on the structure. This way of being the Church gave rise to the centrality of the hierarchy which was considered as the instance of the Church which receives the graces from God and shares it with the people who have not much to say. The people in this context have the privilege only to receive from the hierarchy.

This shut the direct participation of the people in the building up of the Church. With such situation, the building of the Church was mainly the task of the hierarchy. The participation of the people was only in the liturgical activities. These challenges of the exercise of the charism in the Church lasted even up to the time of Vatican II. And this debate on charism was not an easy one even after Vatican II.

According to Francis A. Sullivan, the discussions on charism during Vatican II dwelled on two different understandings. The Church is aware that whenever the Spirit intervenes, he leaves people with some special mission. He brings about some fundamental newness; He radically changes humanity and history. This was the

remarkable renewal of Vatican II during which, under the help of the Spirit of God, the Church rediscovered the charismatic dimension as one of her constitutive elements of her very being and stated that:

It is not only through the sacraments and the ministrations of the Church that the Holy Spirit makes holy the people, leads them and enriches them with his virtues. Allotting his gifts according as he wills (cf. 1 Cor 12:11), he also distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank...He makes them fit and ready to undertake various tasks and offices for the renewal and building up of the Church (*LG*, 12).

Based on this, charism is seen on one hand as an extraordinary gift of grace which is only found in the lives of the saints and mystics.¹¹⁹ In this view, it is clearly shown that charism is not bestowed on all the Christians as initially thought. It is only for a few people. Such view was supported by Cardinal Ruffini who strongly objected the view that charism is bestowed on many of the faithful and that such people can make relevant contributions to the growth of the Church. On the contrary, he argued that such gifts today are extremely rare and altogether exceptional.¹²⁰ It is clear to Cardinal Ruffini that charism has got no important role to play in the life of the modern Church with regard to the challenges we face.

On the other hand, based on the teachings of St. Paul, it is asserted that charism is a gifts of grace which is freely given to people in the Church in order to equip them for the roles and ministries which they are to have in the Body of Christ. It continues that some of these gifts and ministries are extraordinary, but many are not. They are widely distributed among the members of the Body, as each member is intended to make some contributions to the life of the whole body.¹²¹ This opinion is more comprehensive and it give room to all the members of the Body of Christ to contribute depending on their capacity, to the growth of the Body of Christ which is the Church. This opinion was supported by Cardinal Suenens when he says that: “The Charism is not a peripheral or

¹¹⁹ F. A. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 10.

¹²⁰ F. A. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 10.

¹²¹ F. A. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 10.

accidental phenomenon in the life of the Church; on the contrary, it is of vital importance for the building up of the mystical body.”¹²²

At the end Cardinal Suenens’ opinion was the one that was accepted by Vatican II and its implementation was left to various local Churches. More than fifty years now after Vatican II yet the issues on charism remain a concern and a major challenge in many local Churches in the world with regard to the full involvement of the lay people in the up-building of the Church. Thus, Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men and to the needs of the world (CCC 799).

3. 8 Conception of Charism in Ibadan Archdiocese

The years that followed the end of Vatican II were good news to many African Churches. Many innovations were brought forth in order to integrate some local realities into Christianity which was already in some places present for more than fifty year at the time of Vatican II. Ibadan Archdiocese is one of the local Churches which benefited from such innovations. Many things were adapted. Some more easy and others came with a lot of pain and difficulties. The integration of charism is one of the issues of concern with regard to such changes. As it was difficult for the Yoruba people to give away their traditional religion to embrace Christianity, it was the same phenomenon when they were called to have a more participative presence in the new understanding of the Church according to the teachings of Vatican II. It somehow took time, first for the clergy to fully understand the goodness of making use of the various charisms bestowed on the faithful for the service of the Church. Secondly, after understanding the goodness of integrating charism the clergy did not find it easy to let go of some their power. In the following passage of our work, we will expound on the integration of charism in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese as well as the challenges related to such integration.

3. 8. 1 Integration of Charism in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese

The call of Vatican II which was addressed to the local Churches in terms of the integration of the various charisms of the faithful in the up-building of the mystical body

¹²² Cf. F. A. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 10.

of Christ found expression in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese. Since the Council described charism as a special grace through which the Spirit of God makes people able and willing to undertake various services in the Church, the local Church of Ibadan created some opportunity for the lay people to take constructive responsibilities in terms of the development of the local communities. There were mobilizations from the diocesan level to integrate more lay faithful in the ministries of the Church by recognizing and accepting their contribution to build up the Body of Christ.

The situation of the Church after the end of the Council encouraged the local Church of Ibadan to organize theological training for some lay faithful to enable them to be fully active in the ministries and decision making of the Church. There was the establishment of Saint Paul training center which trains lay people in order to equip them to work side by side with the clergy for a more integral and participative collaboration between them. There are many training centers for the catechists who work in many parishes of the Archdiocese of Ibadan. There is as well the provision of training the extraordinary Eucharistic ministers who support very much the pastoral activities of the Church in Ibadan Archdiocese. With all these innovations the life of the local Church saw the coming of many lay faithful who were able to enter into the structures of the Church and hold some influential responsibilities according to their capacity.

Vatican II wanted the lay faithful to be fully part of the up-building of the local Churches by virtue of their charism. By this, the Council made it clear that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not a privilege of any class of people or rank.¹²³ In following the instructions of the Council, the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese tried to leave aside her exaggerated concept of clericalism in some ways to come to the level of the people in order to be able to work with all. As it is the will of God for all to be united in Christ and work in collaboration so that God's will may reign as all the faithful work together for the edification of the Church which is the Body of Christ. The Council put a great emphasis on charism with regard to the way the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all in the Church. And the reason for which they are given to the faithful is service for all. As

¹²³ F. A. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 12.

for the way the Spirit gives grace to the faithful, it is special in the sense that it involves the active work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church through the use of the gifts. For this matter, the Council made a distinction between the way the Holy Spirit works through the sacraments and the official ministries and the way He works in distributing His gifts to all the faithful. For before any one becomes clergy man or religious, he is called first to be a Christian based on his baptism. As for the reason for the gifts of the spirit, the Council says that it is to make people able and willing to undertake various tasks or services for the renewal and up building of the Church.¹²⁴ This call of the Council was a good and valid point that motivated the Church in Ibadan Archdiocese to create the Laity Council of Nigeria to fulfill their rightful task in building up the Church in the whole country so that all might feel involved in being truly part of the mystical Body of Christ. Expressively, it may sound to be easy task but in practice it was not easy to let go of being in control. It is true that it is more than fifty years when this appeal was made to the whole Church, but it still remains a challenge in many local Churches in the world today. This shows that greater efforts are needed to overcome such a challenge in the Church.

3. 8. 2 Challenges Related to the Exercise of Charism in Ibadan Archdiocese

Charism in its definition indicates any good gift that flows from God's love to humans for the service of others. In other words, it is a spiritual grace and qualification granted to any Christian to exercise his/her duty in the Church for the benefit of the whole Church of Christ. This is an indication that charism is granted to all Christians as a gratuitous gift. It is not reserved to any specific class or group of people. In a certain sense, charism belongs to the structure of the Church. Meaning all the baptized share in Christ and Christ's mission without any mediation.

Unfortunately, when the Church defined herself only in terms of hierarchy, charism was no more admired as it was at the origin of the Church. Besides being hierarchical in her structure, the Church of the patristic period considered charism as peripheral to the proper structure of the Church. The Church became synonymous with hierarchy. The hierarchical partition of the Church into various levels influenced the role

¹²⁴ F. A. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 12.

and the exercise of charism as the gift of God. The cause of this was that the clergy was considered to know everything, and so the Christians were seen as being only on the receiving end. Since Christians were seen as people who don't have the proper knowledge of God's revelation, they are just to be obedient to the clergy. This very state of affairs which seemed far away from our time but it was and still is experienced in many Churches in the world today.

This is surely a challenge for the Church in Ibadan Archdiocese. In many instances, the contribution of the lay people is considered as secondary. Everything is in the hands of the clergy who exercise their duty without giving room to the faithful to put their graces and gifts received from God into practice for the good of the Church. This led to a certain form of withdrawal of the Christians and a reluctance to exercise their charisms in the Church. This situation puts the church of Ibadan Archdiocese in a certain form of impoverishment. Instead of the whole Church, both clergy and lay people putting their efforts together for the building-up of the Church, the clergy finds itself at the center of all the activities. It is true that the clergy have some special responsibilities in proper building of the Church. However, the active and participative contribution of the Christians by the virtue of their charism is of most importance. Christians have the right by the virtue of their baptism to take responsibilities in collaboration with the clergy to work for the good of all. Their role is not to be passive as if the Spirit of God cannot operate in and through them. The Spirit of God is at work in all the baptized.

As such, the charism exercised by the Christians is an expression of the gifts Spirit for the organization the Church. The purpose of these gifts is to render services for Church. According to the diversity and qualities of its members, all the gifts of the Spirit are for the service of the Church. In this perspective, there is no opposition between charism and institution.¹²⁵ In a certain sense, a ministry is normally the manifestation of charism and a permanent charism takes the form of a ministry of service in the community (1Cor. 12:4). Faith in the risen Lord remains central in the life of the believers. This

¹²⁵ C. DUQUOC AND C. FLORISTAN, *Charisms in the Church*, 10.

because it is through faith that the believers receive the gifts of the Spirit for the building-up of the Body of Christ.

St. Paul in his writings showed that charisms in the Church have their roots in the Lord himself. For Paul, the diversity of charisms is one of the elements of the Body of Christ. Charism is what determines which role each one of the members of the community can perform for the betterment of the community. Thus for Paul, charism is essential to structure of the Christian community.¹²⁶ As such, Paul in his writings insisted that there is no other principle of diversity in the Christian community than charism: no other basis for decision as to who is to be the leader, who is a teacher, who is an administrator, than the charism that each has received from the Holy Spirit.¹²⁷ From the above clarification, one can say that charism and the institution are not contrary to each other. They are pointing at the same reality which is the building of the Church of Christ. Instead of being a challenge in development of the Church, they called to be the essential constitutive elements that help for the organization of the Church.

There is a need of a proper collaboration between the institutional body of the Church and the charismatic body of the Church. Both of the charism and hierarchy are at the service of the same goal. And so, the institutional body is call to help the charismatic body of the Church for a smooth and coherent collaboration in carrying out the service of building-up the Body of Christ. This is a challenge for many Churches in Africa. So there is a call from Vatican II to the whole Church to see herself as a direct heir of the experience of the early Church for all generation. All are called never to lose sight of this fundament reality of the Church.

Conclusion

This reflection on the exercise of charism in the Church helped me to realize once again that charism is an integral aspect of the Church from its very origins. The early Church, through its charism was described as a dynamic group of the followers of Christ. Thus, they were united in Christ and committed themselves to proclaiming the Good

¹²⁶ Cf. F. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 19.

¹²⁷ Cf. F. SULLIVAN, *Charism and Charismatic Renewal*, 19.

News of the resurrection of Christ each one according to one's gifts. As such, the Christians are empowered with the gift of the Holy Spirit so that the Body of Christ which they represent may be built and shaped by their different charisms. With this understanding, it becomes clear that there is no member of the Body of Christ who is passive. All the members by virtue of their baptism, are called to exercise their function in the building of the Body of Christ. This is well illustrated by Paul when he says: "each one has his own gift from God, one this and another that" (1Cor 7, 7); "To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." (1Cor 12, 7). This shows that charism is not only the privilege of those in a leadership position in the Church. It is present in the life of all. No one should pretend to possess all charisms.¹²⁸

As time went by, the reality of charism was less appreciated and even not valued at all as the Church had become too much an institution. This shift brought a certain division in the Church where some people were seen as clergy with power and others seen as people who were mainly called to receive instructions from those in power. This reality held back the dynamism of the Church and suppressed the gifts of many followers of Christ. Such a challenging situation is very much echoed in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese which is the focus of my reflection. Vatican II brought a new dynamic vision but still a lot needs to be done for a fuller and integrated cooperation between the Charism of the faithful and that of the hierarchy of the Church.

¹²⁸ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVALUATION OF CHARISM AND AUTHORITY AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

From their very understanding in the Church, charism and authority are closely related. The word charism is a theological term that refers to the extraordinary or ordinary graces given to an individual Christian or to the community of Christians for the good of others.¹²⁹ Authority is seen as a special task received from God for the service of the People of God. As such, in the Church, the Spirit given to the baptized is to continue the work of Christ in the world. So, in the Lord and in the Spirit, all the baptized are able to continue the salvific work of Christ in the world of today.

On the one hand, according to 1 Peter 2, 5-10, the Church is understood as a chosen nation, chosen by God to preach the Good News to all humanity.¹³⁰ With regard to this view the bearers of the Good News of Jesus are not a category of people, but the entire People of God. The purpose of this is the good of the entire humanity. We know that in the Church, all the Christians by virtue of their baptism share in the mission of Christ as priests, kings and prophets. In this sense, they are organized people, with the intention of serving the needs of all humanity. From this perspective, we can say that charism is the

¹²⁹ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

¹³⁰ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

gift that the members receive from God to be ministers of the Church in their own capacity.

On the other hand, the understanding of authority in the Church, finds its true expression in the call of Jesus to his followers to live as people guided by the Spirit of God. Jesus clearly told his disciples that their authority is to be translated through the service they render to one another. The Church draws her authority at all stages from the scriptures and all depend on each other in order to render good services. Thus, the authority of the Church exercised by the magisterium is to serve the life of the ecclesiastical faith community.¹³¹ This is vividly explained in the synoptic Gospels in this way: 'Whoever will be great among you, let that person be your servant' (Mt 20, 25-26; Mk 10, 42-43; Lk 22, 25). This is only possible if those in authority in the Church believe in the help of the Holy Spirit who keeps the Church in a correct, firm and non-ideological course. So, the Spirit is the one that consolidates the actions of the Church.

Charism and authority in the Church point out to the same reality in the sense that both advocate for the good of the community. The Church is the Body of Christ with many parts, yet as in the body, each part contributes accordingly (1Cor 12, 12ff). Yet there are those who are entrusted in a specific way to take care of the members of the Body of Christ. As such in the Church, the ordained ministers are the privileged bearers of the Spirit and the community is built up in cooperation around them.

All are first and foremost Christians and Christ's faithful, whether they are simply members or in a position of authority. Therefore, the purpose of the structure of the Church is to provide a broader based vehicle for recognizing the gifts of the community and to enable those with special responsibilities and those with the special gifts to contribute to the growth of the Church by their special charism. For the fundamental charismatic structure of the Church means that each individual has his/her place in the community.¹³²

In this part of my reflection, I will first give an evaluation of the relationship between charism and authority in the Church with reference to their biblical conception.

¹³¹ L. SWIDLER AND P. FRANSEN, *Authority in the Church and the Schillebeeckx Case*, 12.

¹³² L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159

In the second instance, I will expound on the understanding of charism and authority from the perspectives of Vatican II. Afterwards, I will show the rapport between the two concepts and see how they shape the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese in its different understandings with regard to the mission of the Church

4. 1 Relationship between Charism and Authority in the Church

From their biblical understanding, charism and authority suggest that their sources and their goals find expression in the will of God which aims at the desire to organize his people according to his plan for them. That is why the writings of the New Testament revealed in the person of Christ, unfolded the plan of God, announced by the prophets about the redemption, the purification, the gathering together, the bringing to perfection and uniting in Him a multitude of people from all the nations for the common mission of God. This is the Church, the community of the followers of Christ.

This community of the followers of Christ is founded on the preaching of Christ. Thus, all that they are to do is founded on the actions of Christ Himself. The Church is a divine institution handed over to the world by God to Christ who said: “I will build my Church” (Mt 18, 16). It is in such spirit that Jesus Christ during his mission on earth day after day incorporated to his Body those destined to be saved (Acts 2, 47). That was why, throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus gradually gathered various people himself and gave them different responsibilities to continue the work of building the Church. It was in this spirit that Jesus called some of his disciples to be apostles; some prophets; some, evangelists; some pastors and teachers in order to knit God’s people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ (Ep 4, 11-12). In this vision, by this intervention, God established in the Church different tasks for the building up of the Body of Christ. And those whom God has appointed in the Church are, first apostles, second prophets, thirdly teachers; then comes those who were given miraculous powers, the gifts of healing, helpful acts, guidance, various kinds of tongues for the building of the Church (1Cor 12, 28).

This was to equip different members of the Church with various gifts for the common good. All are given various gifts and responsibilities but they all aim at the same

reality which is nothing different than working for the wellbeing of the Body of Christ which is the Church. Thus, to insure the good continuation of this work of the building of the Church, Jesus gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to be the guide and the strength of the Church. It is in this way of understanding the rule of Christ in the Church that one can understand the relationship that exists between charism and authority in the organization of the community of the followers of Christ

Based on this biblical understanding of the way how the rule of Christ operates in the Church, one can apprehend the kind of relationship that is to reign between charism and authority in the Church. The relationship that exists between charism and authority in the Church is that of collaboration and complementarity. Since both charism and authority are strongly animated by the Spirit of Christ, their effects in the Church are nothing different than building up the community. The relationship between charism and authority is not only the ground that forges the common means for evangelization. It is beyond this dimension. It rather expresses the new way of living as the members of the same Body of Christ and a concrete way of manifesting the mystery of salvation that is lived in common. The Church is not only formed by the institutional structures. The structures in the Church are called to maintain a certain harmony and order in the Church. As such, the Church as a structure is called to collaborate with various charisms of the members in order to reflect the mind of Christ stated in the letters of St Paul. In this way, being the Church will not only be the expression of power, but the Church will be the community of true brothers and sisters, where all share in the common tasks.¹³³

Leonardo Boff stresses this reality when he says that such way of being the Church, sees all the members of the Body of Christ as fundamentally equal, but all the same not everyone can do all things necessary within the community. Therefore, there is a need to have coordinators to ensure the order and the organization of the Church and to care for the celebrations and sacramental aspects of the community. The relationship between charism and authority was well lived in the Church of the first centuries which

¹³³ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159

understood herself as the community of the faithful, with the participation of all the members in the life of the community.¹³⁴

It is true that the Church in the course of history defined herself different from such ideal and had become a hierarchal Church where sacred power was the principle of its structure, not the community. This type of organization marked the life of the Church. But unfortunately, in its exercise, it left no chance of cooperative participation in the development of the Church.

Fifty years after Vatican II, a lot of changes have taken place in many fields. So, there is greater need for collaborative participation in the functions of the Church. The laity is becoming more and more aware of their importance in the development of the Church. The relationship between charism and authority finds expression in the understanding that all the followers of Christ are successors of the apostles in the sense that all have inherited the apostolic teachings and are co-responsible for the unity of faith and the community.¹³⁵ This apostolicity is not the prerogative of some few members of the Church such as the clergy, but it is the prerogative of all the followers of Christ independent of their position in the Church. This apostolicity is shared in different ways in the activities of the Church. Some received it as an ordinary or extraordinary gifts for the building of the Church. Others received it as a special ministry to enlighten others. All are for the good of the community. That is why the relationship between charism and authority is not to be seen as opposed to each other but as collaboration for the same purpose of building up the Church of Christ.

4. 2 Authority and Participation

The question of authority in the Roman Catholic Church has been a matter of concern throughout the history of the Church. Authority in the life of the Church has been seen and interpreted from different angles depending on the concern which was to be addressed. It became more complex when it was linked to the participation of the faithful in building up the Body of Christ which is the Church. With regard to this understanding,

¹³⁴ Cf. L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

¹³⁵ Cf. L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 159.

there came a shift in the way how authority is exercised and understood in the Church with the advent of Vatican II. As such, Vatican II in its elaboration on the Church, comes with the idea of the Church seen as a community.¹³⁶ Authority in this context comes as it were within the community, as a ministry which is to be accomplished in the service of the community. This development of the concept of authority within the contemporary Church calls all the faithful to examine its biblical meaning and its implications in a more collaborative living as children of the same God.

As such, authority is to be seen and understood as coming from the community of the faithful. It means that those who hold positions of authority in the Church are called to be aware that the authority they have is granted to them for the community of the faithful. Therefore they are called to be at the service of the community. The reason for granting power to those in position of authority is to present them with the task of serving the community by promoting freedom, justice and love within and without the community. If this task is well done, it brings about the development and transformation of life in the community, thus enabling its members to actively exercise their authority in the Church in collaboration with all the members who participate in the exercise of such authority. In doing so, the members of the Church allow those in position of authority the opportunity to pave the way for a more open, and a self-critical Church.¹³⁷ In this way, those invested with authority are called to facilitate the participation of all the members in the decision making in the matters concerning the life of the Church. Authority understood from this perspective helps those in hierarchy to understand that the authority invested on them has no other objective than to simplify the participation of all the members of the Church for the good of all. For the general community is always the bearer of authority. Two-way model of authority which should replace any one-sided notion is there to foster the ultimate aims of the community, provided they are for the good of the whole.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ D. M. STANLEY, *Authority in the Church: A New Testament reality*, 556.

¹³⁷ B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 32.

¹³⁸ Cf. B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 32.

The Church understood as a community has given the opportunity for a new experience of the life of faith where the people are called to participate in the organization of the Church as a whole. In doing so, it calls for more commitment from all the members in order to participate and contribute to the growth of the Church. In this sense, there has been a positive decentralization of the Church where all the faithful participate in building the Body of Christ. It shows that the organization of the Church is no more the private property of those in position of the authority, but all the faithful participate and share in it. As such, the administration of the affairs of the Church is ever the prerogative of a given community which organizes her life according to its needs. Authority calls for a certain discernment that encompasses the history, the tradition and current life situation with its questions, in order to create a situation which gives a better hope for the future. Therefore, authority must be understood in the way Bernard Lonergan expresses it when he says:

Authority is that word that brings the achievement of the past into the present; it is that word that organizes and directs the whole hierarchy of cooperating groups in the present; it is the word that distributes the fruits of cooperation among the cooperating members; it is that word that bans from social intercourse those that would disrupt the cooperating society. In brief, the word of authority is the current actuality of the power generated by the past development and contemporary cooperation.¹³⁹

This way of seeing authority in the Church gives the opportunity to understand its roots from the history and the tradition for a more positive innovation that will be beneficial to all the members of the Church. Bernard Hoose expresses the same idea in saying that: There is no confusion concerning the authority of the Bible, seen as embracing a certain understanding of authority as expressed in the classical Christian tradition.¹⁴⁰ All the same, the Bible itself represents a component of authoritative tradition that needs a continuous interpretation and adaptation in order to be relevant to our world of today.¹⁴¹

From a theological point of view, the Church can be said to be the elected community of the faithful. Such community is prompted by Christ and the Holy Spirit in

¹³⁹ B. LONERGAN, *Dialectic of authority*, 6.

¹⁴⁰ B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 33.

¹⁴¹ Cf. B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 33.

order to celebrate and develop faith and deliberate on the life of the community in the light of the Gospel. Authority in this context will be a means to foster the relationship that exists among all the members as they try to organize themselves to reflect the image of Christ to each other. Authority in this context is more of participation where everyone feels that he/she belongs to the community before any kind of differences. At the start, everyone in the community is equal, a citizen of the Kingdom.¹⁴²In such a situation it become more and more clear that all the members of the community are called to participate actively in making the Kingdom of God a reality in the life of the community. The mission of God here is not only the task of a few members in the position of authority, but the responsibility of all the members; all are sent out to proclaim the Good News of the resurrection of Christ for a brighter future that brings about the Kingdom of God in the world.

According to 1 Peter 2, 5-10, the whole Church is a chosen nation, a royal palace, a priestly community, a holy nation, a people chosen by God to proclaim His saving act for humanity. Based on this view, the historical bearer of the revelation of Jesus and the Spirit is the entire people. They are an organized people, only if their organization is justified and benefitting for all the members. Therefore, one must say, as Vatican II did note, that collegiality involves not only the bishops and priests but also the laity. Like apostolicity, collegiality is a characteristic of the entire Church and not of only few members. So all are called to participate in the organization of the Church.

4. 3. The Raport between Authority and Charism in Ibadan Archdiocese

The Church in the Archdiocese of Ibadan seems dynamic and developing but the internal relationship between those in hierarchy and the rest of the members seems not to be productive. The Church is rooted in a certain understanding that those in the position of authority have a certain privilege over the rest of the members. Therefore, the rest of the members are called to be obedient to those in the position of authority. So, those in position of authority argue that they have been mandated with a specific mission of ministering to the faithful. As such, those in the hierarchy see the charism of the faithful

¹⁴² L. BOFF, Church: Charism and Power, 155.

as a peripheral or accidental phenomenon in the life of the Church.¹⁴³ With regard to such conception, it is obvious that the contribution of the faithful in most of the cases is seen as secondary. Based on such understanding, one can say that the rapport between the authority and charism remains a challenge to the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese. Vatican II in its approach tried to bridge such a gap, but still it remains a challenge for the whole Church of Christ. The fundamental concept that there is a basic equality in all the members of the Church needs more understanding for its fuller integration. According to Paul, we are all children of God and we are all immersed in the risen Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit (Gal 3, 26). This calls for a more collaborative spirit in all dimensions of the life of the Church.

In the following passage of this reflection, I will try to elaborate firstly on the incardination of the Church as the Body of Christ in Ibadan area. Secondly, I will develop the understanding of the Church as the people of God in Ibadan area. Thirdly, I will see how the Church developed in Ibadan Archdiocese as a community of the faithful.

4. 3. 1 The Church as the Body of Christ in Ibadan Area

In the Gospels, the coming of the Holy Spirit was the confirmation of the work of the Spirit of Christ in the Church. The event of the coming of the Holy Spirit brought about a new dynamism in the life of each individual and made everyone who accepts Christ to be part of His mystical Body. As such, the coming of the Holy Spirit has inaugurated a time of fulfilment where all who accept and confess Christ could consider themselves as redeemed brothers and sisters who are awaiting the end of time made manifest by the resurrection of Christ. And so, the pneumatic character of the Church is best seen by analyzing the expression ‘the Church is the Body of Christ’.¹⁴⁴ This expression, the Body of Christ, expresses the Spiritual Body of Christ after His resurrection. His nature and Body is no more restricted to any particular place or time but is, as a Spirit, free from all kinds of restrictions and attains a cosmic dimension, which is open to the totality of all reality.¹⁴⁵ In this way, the Church has become the Spiritual

¹⁴³ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 155

¹⁴⁴ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 150.

¹⁴⁵ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 151.

Body of Christ after His resurrection (1Cor 15, 44). His presence is manifested in all things. He is in all things and nothing that exists can exist without him (Col 3, 11). This reality is manifested in the commissioning of His followers when He said: “I will be with you till the end of time” (Mt 28, 20). Thus, the risen Christ destroyed all the barriers that divided the people and made of all, His Spiritual Body.

For St. Paul, the local Church represents the social manifestation of the risen Christ, every time the Eucharist is celebrated.¹⁴⁶ This shows how the entire church is incorporated in the one Body of Christ. It is the sharing of the Body of the risen Christ that makes the gathered People of God to become the Body of Christ. Thus, we were baptized into one Body in a single Spirit... and we were all given the same Spirit to drink (1Cor 12, 13).

Lumen Gentium in its elaboration asserted that by overcoming death through His resurrection, Christ has redeemed humanity and made it into a new creation and a new reality (Gal 6, 15; 2Cor 5, 17) (Cf. *LG*, 9). In doing so, Christ communicated His Spirit to all of humanity brought together to form His mystical Body. As such, in the Body, the life of Christ is given to all through the sacrament. As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so are the faithful in Christ (1Cor 12, 12). Also in building up the Body of Christ, various members and functions have their part to play. And so, there is only one Spirit who, according to His own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives His different gifts for the good of the Body of Christ which is the Church (Cf. 1Cor 12, 1-11). The unity of the Body is maintained through the power of Christ and the grace of the Spirit who calls for and produces the internal connection among the members. From this basis it is without doubt that the whole Body is connected. So, if one member suffers, all the members suffer and if one member is honored all the members rejoice (Cf. 1Cor 12, 26).

Based on this conception of the Church as the Body of Christ all the faithful should be members of the Church and should have their place within its visible structures. For no one is seen as outside of the Church, because through His death and resurrection

¹⁴⁶ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 152.

Christ has gathered all people to God in Himself. Though some individual may reject such an offer of Christ, even so, they do not cease to be part of Christ. There is always the possibility of their conversion, by accepting the salvation that has already been won for them by Christ.¹⁴⁷

For the Yoruba people, the existence of God is a matter of fact in their daily living and their rapport with Him is out of discussion. This fact is translated in the way they relate with each other as a community and as the same people bound by the same reality. And so, the coming of Christianity with its various conceptions of the nature of God found expression in the way they already understand God in their tradition. Prior to Christianity, the Yoruba lived as one Body organized around the King who is the physical representation of God on earth. Such understanding motivated their living together, their sharing and their care for each other. As such, the conviction of the Church as the Body of Christ enhanced the traditional understanding of the community organized around the King. This new understanding of their faith as being members of the Body of Christ marks and determines now their lives together as children of God through Christ.

4. 3. 2 Effects of the Understanding of the Church as the People of God in Ibadan Area

The understanding of the Church as the people of God finds its expression in the idea of the unity and the equality that exists between the followers of Christ based on their baptism and faith in the risen Lord. This understanding of the Church finds its roots in the writing of the Old and New Testament with their implications in the light of the history of salvation.¹⁴⁸

The idea of the Church as the people of God is characterized by the fact God chose them and they responded to God's call by entering into a covenant with Him. As such, God chose them because He loves them and made a covenant with them (Ex, 24, 8). On this basis, God becomes the God of Israel and Israel became the People of God (Dt 29, 12). The understanding of Israel as the People of God shaped their lives and their relationship with each other. Israel saw itself as an organized community with their

¹⁴⁷ L. BOFF, *Church: Charism and Power*, 152.

¹⁴⁸ G. KOCHOLICKAL, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 62.

institutions and with a clear vision of their destiny and goal. And in order to achieve such a goal, they were to be a community that worships the God of their ancestors and no other gods

The idea of the Church as the People of God in the New Testament finds its root in the promise made in the Old Testament about the new people and the new Covenant. With regard to such promises, the new people of God is characterized by the New Covenant of God made in the Blood of Christ (Ez 36, 26), and the universality of such a new people goes beyond the geographical limits of Israel (Is 42, 6).¹⁴⁹ So the life of the Church as the new People of God will be centered on the Christ event with its implication for those who accept Christ as their personal savior.

With regard to the above reflection one could say that the event of the new People of God marked the end of the Old Covenant. So, the Church seen as the new People of God finds fulfilment and expression in the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of humankind. Thus the Church as new the People of God is washed in the Blood of Christ. For they are justified by the Blood of Christ (Heb 13, 12); and have become members through faith in the risen Lord (Gal 3, 7). In so doing they are called the new People of God, a chosen race and a holy nation (1Pet 2, 9).

Vatican II in expounding on the Church as the People of God acknowledges the reality of the Old Testament community, and links it with the Church, seen as the new People of God. To elaborate on the idea of the Church as the People of God, it is stated that the Church is a pilgrim Church, it is both a visible and invisible reality, both institution and event. So, this constant tension cannot be ignored as we approach the Church as the People of God. In confirmation to this idea *Lumen Gentium* states that:

The messianic people has Christ for its head, “who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification” (Rom 4:25) and now having won a name which is above all names, reigns in glory in heaven. The state of His people is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in His temple. Its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us (Cf. Jn 13, 34). Its end is the kingdom of God, which has been begun by God Himself on earth, and which is to be further extended until it is brought to perfection by Him at the end of time, when Christ, our life, (Cf. Col 3, 4) shall

¹⁴⁹ G. KOCHOLICKAL, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 62.

appear, and “creation itself will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God” (Rom 8, 21). So, it is that messianic people, although it does not actually include all men, and at times may look like a small flock, is nonetheless a lasting and sure seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race. Established by Christ as a communion of life, charity and truth, it is also used by Him as an instrument for the redemption of all, and is sent forth into the whole world as a light of the world and the salt of the earth (Cf. Mt 5, 13-16). (LG, 9).

According to Walter Kasper, the Church seen as the People of God represents one of the dimensions of the communion, the communion of the faithful, as the participation and the co-responsibility of all the members is concerned. As such, it emphasizes the “horizontal dimension” of the Church over and against the “vertical one”.¹⁵⁰ Such understanding of the Church is an important value and has its foundation in the Old Testament. In support of this, Ratzinger points out that the Church as the People of God become the means of anti-hierarchy and anti-sacral idea of the Church.¹⁵¹

The Church of Ibadan Archdiocese like any other Church which is born out of the Christ event shares most of the elements of the Church understood as the People of God. This expression is shown in the way the people of Yoruba land see God as the almighty and the creator of the visible and invisible world. So they strongly believe in God and try to live according to his commandments prescribed in the Scriptures. This attitude is shown in the way how those who confess Christ and share life with each other as people with the same roots. The Church expressed as the People of God in Ibadan Archdiocese lives as a structured community which is arranged around their shepherds. This reality sounds challenging for the people because of some demands of their traditions and culture which had impacted some values which cannot easily be ignored as they approach Christianity and want to live as People of God.

4. 3. 3 Impacts of the Church as a Communion of the Faithful in Ibadan Area

Talking of the Church as a communion of all the faithful calls on the idea of a community of interconnected persons living in common what is the foundation of their

¹⁵⁰ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 91.

¹⁵¹ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 91.

belief. This concept can imply participation and fellowship.¹⁵² It refers to a connected relationship among the people which include the readiness to share one's belongings and resources with the other members. In general, it highlights relationships shared among many people. Thus in such relationship, 'love, acceptance, forgiveness, commitment and intimate sharing constitute the very foundation of life together. It is a community in which justice, peace and mutual love are realized.¹⁵³

The Church as communion calls the participation of all in the life of God through the Word and the Sacrament.¹⁵⁴ The Church as a communion was the central theme of Vatican II Council's understanding of what the Church is called to be after the example of Christ. As Vatican II put emphasis on the Church as a communion, many Catholic writers debated on such an understanding and came to the conclusion that through the unifying presence of the Holy Spirit, the Church can be seen as one great community made up of many communities. Thus, talking about the renewal of the Church, many will wish that the Church in our time could become a place where one can establish a sound and satisfying relationship that is true and founded on mutual understanding and love.¹⁵⁵

This idea of the Church understood as a communion of all the faithful invites each of the followers of Christ to go beyond the narrow conception of the Church which sees things only from the point of view of nation, race, language, color, belief and culture. The Church of Christ goes beyond all these realities. The Church embraces all with the love of Christ. She keeps all who accept Christ in close connection with each other and then with Christ the founder. This idea is highlighted by Yves Congar when he says that:

The Church is a community, communion and fellowship of human beings. He continued that there are two aspects of such understanding. On the one hand, it is a fellowship of men, women and children with each other and with Christ. On the other hand, it is as well the fullness by which the fellowship transpires and continues.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 181.

¹⁵³ J. FUELLENBACH, *Church*, 152.

¹⁵⁴ P. MWANIA, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 88.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, 43.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Y. CONGAR, *Diversity and Communion*, 78.

In such understanding of the Church, there exists a true relationship which transpires from the vertical level and affects the relationships on the horizontal level. This gives room for a relationship with God and a true sharing among the people. Jerome Hamer, in his reflection on the Church as the Communion of the faithful agrees with Congar's idea of the Church as a communion.¹⁵⁷ He then asserts that:

The communion flows from its being the body of Christ. There is an inward aspect to this communion, the active presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church, the life of grace and the virtues of faith, hope and love. There is as well an external dimension to this communion. It is seen in the profession of faith, in Church discipline, and in participation in the sacraments. The communion given by the Holy Spirit is also expressed in a network of interpersonal relationships of mutual concern and care.¹⁵⁸

As such, the understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ is the foundation of the Church as a communion. This conception finds its origin in the Scriptures and is closely connected to other biblical models of the Church as the Church as People of God and the Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit

St. Paul in his elaboration of the Church as communion emphasizes mutual union, mutual care and interdependence of all the members of the Church which is the Body of Christ. This expresses both the communion of the believers with the risen Christ and a participation in the life and blessings of Christ and, at the same time, the necessary relationship of mutuality that exists between all those who are in Christ.¹⁵⁹ For Paul, all believers are in a relationship of partnership with Christ (1Cor 1, 9). In saying this, Paul shows that the participation in question here is not the participation directly in God but, the relationship highlighted in this case is always a relationship to God through Christ as the only mediator.¹⁶⁰ And so, in Paul, the communion of the faithful finds its full expression in the last supper of the Lord. This is clearly expressed when he says: ‘‘the blessing-cup, which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ, and the loaf of bread which we break, is it not a sharing in the Body of Christ.’’¹⁶¹ Paul's concern in

¹⁵⁷ J. HAMER, *The Church is a community*, 204.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. J. HAMER, *The Church is a Community*, 204.

¹⁵⁹ B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 182.

¹⁶⁰ B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 183.

¹⁶¹ B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 183.

connecting the communion of the faithful to the scene of the Lord's Supper was to focus on the spiritual relationship that exists between all the faithful and Christ. So, it is a fellowship with Christ and with all the members of Christ's Body. Such a fellowship with Christ calls for a new style of life as it was lived in Israel in the time of Jesus. It calls for a life of reconciliation between humanity and between humanity and God as an anticipated participation in the life of glory that is yet to be fully revealed.

The communion of the faithful as understood by Paul is first and foremost a fellowship in the Spirit. This is well explained by Bernard Hoose when he talked of: 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.'¹⁶²This greeting shows the connection which exists between the triune God and Humanity. Thus, the Church as the communion of the faithful implies the grace of Christ which is God's love for the Church and which is manifested in the communion we live in the shared life of God's Spirit. Therefore the Church as the communion in the Body of Christ aims to open human beings to Communion with God.¹⁶³This comes as a communion with God through Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

With regard to the above description, the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese like many other Churches of the world needs serious adjustments in order for them to reflect its full communion with God. As mentioned above, the Church as a communion with God aims at creating a relationship that brings the faithful to unity with God and with one another. Such unity still finds resistance in the Church of the Archdiocese of Ibadan. This will only become reality in Ibadan Archdiocese when the authorities accept the Holy Spirit as the only one who transforms and makes all share in the blessed life of God through Christ. With this in mind, the leaders need to collaborate with all the members for the full realization of such concretization of the communion in all its dimensions in the life of the Church.

¹⁶² B. HOOSE, *Authority in the Roman Catholic Church*, 183.

¹⁶³ Cf. A. DULLES, *Models of the Church*, 50

4. 4. Challenges Related to the Effort of Collaboration between Charism and Authority in the Church of Ibadan

The question of collaboration between charism and authority has been a challenge for the Church right from its early period and is still continuing in many places today. The collaboration between the different bodies of the Church still has a long way to go to reach its full realization according to Christ's intention. Christ during His earthly life gathered many people around Himself and taught them all that He learnt from His Father in heaven. That was why, toward the middle of his public ministry, He told His followers that: "I shall no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the master's business, I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father" (Jn 15, 15). Such a quotation calls on a collaborative attitude from all the followers of Christ. For Christ our master and Lord, despite His authority and position as Son of God served his followers and gave them an example to follow as they live as one body in Him.

In the course of its history, the Church lost this fundamental and central concept of how the Church is called to live as the Body of Christ. In many places, the authority of those in leadership position in the Church is seen in the exercise of excessive power over their members, thus, going away from the way Jesus lived and practiced His authority. This attitude led to divisions of the Body of Christ in many places in today's world.

This reality is very much present in the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese, where the emphasis is much more put on the ministerial priesthood than the common priesthood. Such an attitude led the Church to see those in a position of leadership as higher and more important than the rest. In short, such an attitude gave rise to clericalism instead of being the unifying factor of all the members.

It is the whole Church that is in search for such realization of God's will. This is not only the privilege of only few members in the Church. All the followers of Christ by virtue of their baptism receive the grace to be witnesses of God's love in the world. Such a project can be successfully realized only if the different bodies of the Church influence each other positively. All are given the same Spirit, all are called by the same Christ and all have been transformed by Christ to reflect His image to the world. The infinite variety

of charisms is not only concentrated on a few persons such as the community leaders: the presbyters, the bishops and deacon but on all.¹⁶⁴Therefore, any attitude which divides and dominates, is in fact contrary to the will of God.

The misunderstanding between charism and authority is the misunderstanding of interest. Any attitude of excessive possession of power is the manifestation of the desire of self-affirmation which has nothing to do with Christ. The protective attitude of power is, in fact an attitude of not allowing the grace of God to lead His Church according to His will. For the Spirit of God not only sanctifies people, but He gives His gifts to everyone in the Church as He wills (1Cor. 12, 11). Such gifts are not for self-glorification, but it engages all to collaboration which aims at building up the Church which is the mystical Body of Christ.

If Vatican II fundamentally reacted to the idea of Vatican I which concentrated so much power on popes and their collaborators, it is because this attitude brought a lot of tensions in the Church. As such, one needs to keep an eye especially on the variety of gifts and those receiving them.¹⁶⁵ The charism and authority are not contrary to each other as far as their understanding is concerned in the Church. They are, in fact supportive to each other in the building up of the church.

With regard to the above description, it goes without doubt that the form of authority Jesus left to His followers is the authority understood as service. Authority is to be lived and practiced in terms of communion and collaboration among all the members of the Body of Christ. The collaboration between those in position of authority and the rest of the members is to be based on mutual support, mutual respect and its origin which lies in God. The administrative gifts in no way should lead to a kind of 'leading class' that stands apart from the community and rises above it to dominate it.¹⁶⁶ Instead, the books of the New Testament give a different understanding of authority where the Christian community is concerned. Because the writers were conscious that the secular understanding of authority is nothing but domination. On the contrary, the New

¹⁶⁴ H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 55.

¹⁶⁵ H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 55.

¹⁶⁶ H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 57.

Testament uses the term service.¹⁶⁷ St Paul from his part uses a more comprehensive idea of charism which describes the essence of all ecclesial services and offices (Cf. Rom 12, 6-8). This is a confirmation that the collaboration of authority and charism leads to service and not to domination.

Based on the above analysis and elaborations, it becomes clear that the collaboration of authority and Charism remains a challenge for the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese. This is because the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese like many Churches in the world fall short of the collaborative attitude which is to be the principle guiding the life of the Church. In Ibadan and in many local Churches, the hierarchy sees itself as above the others in the body of the Church. And so, the rest of the Church is seen to be subjected to those in position of authority.

The charisms of serving the Church are not limited only to those in a position of leadership. Charisms are granted to Christians communally and individually for service in the Church.¹⁶⁸ This comes as a call to all the Churches which are supposed to live after the example of Christ and so represent the true image of Christ to the world. For Jesus did not only preach the kingdom, He lived the realities of the Kingdom by laying down his life for the salvation of the world. This was not done in the attitude of domination and oppression, but it was done in the spirit of humility and total surrender to the will of His Father. As His followers on earth, all the local Churches are invited to be true witness of God's love to the world.

Conclusion

The evaluation of the relationship between charism and authority in the life of the Church shows that these two realities aim at the building up of the Body of Christ which is the Church. While a charism is seen as any gift that flows from God's love to a Christian or a group of Christians for the good of all; authority is conceived as the special responsibility received from God for the service of the People of God. With regard to such understanding, it follows that charisms and authority are closely related to each

¹⁶⁷ H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 57.

¹⁶⁸ H. KÜNG, *The Charismatic Structure of the Church*, 57.

other. The observation on these two concepts shows that they are not opposed to each other, but they are in a relationship of participation. Based on the understanding of each of the concepts, one can say that the distinction made by the Lord between the sacred ministers and the rest of the People of God entails a unifying purpose. The ministers are only ministers of the Word and other faithful are connected to them by the mutual needs.

It is true that the leadership of the Church was entrusted to some particular people by Jesus after His resurrection, but this responsibility is shared among all His followers. Everyone has something to do with regard to the building of the Church. All this is for the growth of the Church. All are called to participate in the mission entrusted to the Church by Christ. As the result of this, one can say that charisms facilitate the actions of the authority and authority is to liberate all the members in order to make them active in the building of the Church. All this is to be done in the spirit of mutual support for the good of the Church.

EVALUATION AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our reflection in this thesis was to elaborate on the exercise of authority and charism in the Church with reference to the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese. This thesis has been able to reflect on the traditional understanding of authority and charism from the cultural point of view based on the tradition of the Yoruba people from the western part of Nigeria. Through this reflection, we were able to notice that the Yoruba people have a well-structured system of leadership which is organized around the King. In elaborating on the traditional system, we realized that the traditional system of the Yoruba people is very hierarchical and gives all the authority to the King and his collaborators to have dominion over their people.

Reflecting on the charism with reference to the traditional and cultural realities of Ibadan people, we were able to see that Ibadan people have a high sense of solidarity and collaboration among themselves. This is translated in the way how they relate to each other and the way how they support each other in their daily lives. This reality is also shown in their sense of living together in towns and cities. Ibadan people, based on their traditional values, have a great esteem for togetherness, a sense of belonging and a sense of sharing among themselves as one people gathered around their Kings.

This sense of togetherness and oneness of Ibadan people is also expressed in their traditional religion. Traditionally, among the Yoruba people, the existence of the Supreme Being is evident. It is rare, if not impossible, to come across a Yoruba who will doubt the existence of the Supreme Being or claim to be an atheist. We have noticed that this sense of religiosity is manifested in their daily living. As such, the King is believed to be the physical manifestation of God to his people. That is why the king is held with

high esteem among the Yoruba people. Culturally and traditionally, this reality stands correct for the Yoruba people as the whole of their life is arranged around the King and his collaborators. Then in the exercise of his power over his people he communicates to them the will of the Supreme Being. The above reality had affected the social life of Ibadan people who collaborate with each other as one people.

The evaluation of such a practice and belief in relation with Christianity shows some defect in the traditional way of exercising authority, of organizing their religion and the way the charism is expressed in their social living. This poses a number of questions concerning the exercise of authority and charism in Ibadan area today.

In our evaluation, we realized that despite such system which seems to respond to the need of its people, the coming of Christianity was well accepted by the people who saw in their traditions and cultures a certain insufficiency. This very motivation was the fertile ground for the establishment of Christianity which was seen by the people as a system which promises a better life compared to what their traditions and cultures offered them. As Christianity found itself in a place where people organized themselves quite well socially, politically, religiously and traditionally, it tried to fit itself in such an environment with the intention of bringing the Good News of Christ to them. As the people were rooted in their culture and tradition, they came into Christianity with all their baggage expecting the best.

The establishment of Christianity in such context without a proper evaluation of the elements of the tradition of the people can only give rise to a system which will not have its basis really rooted in the person of Christ. That is why in its expression the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese carried with her some cultural realities of the tradition of the people which are not well evaluated and added to it the demands of the Church with its strength and challenges. This way of living as a Church with a mixture of systems which are not well integrated with each other will only reflect the idea of those who are in position of authority and those of the lower class are only then called upon to listen to those in position of authority who are considered as people who know everything.

In our evaluation of some models of the Church, we were able to lay down the foundation of what the Church is called to be on the basis of the preaching of Christ. The

Church of Ibadan Archdiocese will need to re-examine her exercise of authority and charism in the light of the Gospel Values in its connection with the tradition of the people.

For the *raison d'être* of all the Churches is to be true instruments of the manifestation of Christ to our world of today. This implies that the Churches at the first place are called to internalize the message of Christ which then they will need to link with the traditional values of the people. Only in this way they be able to reflect the message of Christ which then can be expressed in the local realities of the people. Such an enterprise is not an easy one. From the analysis of our reflection, it came out clearly that in many instances, the Gospel values find resistance from some traditional values. To be relevant to the people and their situations and at the same time to remain true to the message of Christ, the Church of Ibadan area is encouraged firstly to re-evaluate again the impacts of the Gospel message on their traditional values. Secondly, the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese is invited to see how the traditional values impacted on the effectiveness of the Gospel values. And finally, the local Church of Ibadan is called to make an evaluative report about the new way of manifesting the Church of Christ to its people, this time not only rooted in the Gospel values, but rooted in both the Gospel values and the traditional values of the people. This will be a new way of the entry of the Gospel into the culture and tradition of the people.

With regard to the above assertion, the local Church of Ibadan is encouraged to engage in a collaborative approach of its evaluation by implicating all the bodies of the Church into this enterprise of redefining the meeting point of the Gospel message and the traditional values of the people. For all the followers of Christ have receive a mandate from Christ by virtue of their baptism to be instruments of the manifestation of Christ to the world. This task is not only reserved to those in a position of authority. All the followers of Christ are called to manifest, announce and communicate the mystery of Christ. Christ being the one who calls and who sends His disciples to announce the Good News to the whole world. It is without doubt that “the center of the manifestation of the Church is always Christ.”¹⁶⁹This needs to be the conviction and the attitude of the Church

¹⁶⁹ J. E. BIFET, *Witness to Hope*, 55

of Ibadan Archdiocese as she is trying to respond to her call in the spirit of generosity and faithfulness. This conviction is to be manifested in the way she is structured as she stands to manifest Christ to the people. The definition of the Church which centers much on the hierarchy is to be abolished. The authority of the leaders is not the center of the manifestation of Christ. The Church is not meant to be a self-centered Church, she is called to be focused on the risen Lord. For all her activities are to be carried out in the name of the Lord and in collaborating with all the followers of Christ. Christ, in commissioning his disciples, commissioned all who were assembled together. So, His mission is to be carried out as a community of disciples. It is from this way of responding to the call of Christ that the participation of Christians finds its root and foundation.

The work of fulfilling Christ's mission as community calls on a sense of communion as Bifet states it: "Christ's mission is realized in the ecclesial communion. This is the characteristic mark, without which this communion, the mission of Christ, would not appear to originate from God's love."¹⁷⁰ The work of the manifestation of the Church of Christ is the responsibility of all the people who accepted Christ as personal savior. The work of those in leadership position is to help the members to respond generously to such a call through using their charisms.

The true and relevant manifestation of the Church of Christ is the manifestation of His love in communion with Him and with others. Therefore, the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese is called to realize once again that the task of each member of the Church to promote and live out this sign of communion is based on the love of God. Division among Christians will weaken the vitality of the proclamation of the Gospel and even become a scandal to the world, particularly when the Church appears to proclaim 'a Kingdom divided against itself (Lk 11, 17)¹⁷¹

As the Church in Ibadan Archdiocese is trying to follow Christ more closely and faithfully, it will be good for her to note that in appearing to His disciples, Christ did not only appear to the eleven but to all those assembled with them. This means that the task

¹⁷⁰ J. E. BIFET, *Witness to Hope*, 55

¹⁷¹ S. KAROTEMPREL, ed., *Following Christ in Mission: A Foundational Course in Missiology*, 154.

of witnessing is not only entrusted to the Apostles or to those in position of authority, while the other members are to close their hands without contributing. Consequently, all Christians are to be part and parcel of the witnessing task of Christ. For, through baptism, all Christians are incorporated into the Church and therefore are called to contribute to her growth.¹⁷² All the Christians have the duty and the privilege to manifest the risen Lord in truth. It is a call and a responsibility that all the faithful received in the Lord and which asks from them a commitment that transpires from the realities of their lives. In no way can one say that the mandate given to the Church by Christ regards only those in position of authority in the Church. The work of manifesting Christ to the world cannot be understood as the prerogative of the ecclesiastical hierarchy or a group of people separated from the rest. Since all are on the journey, all are called to witness to God's love manifested in Christ.

In following Vatican II, the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese, in the footsteps of Christ her master, is being reminded to emulate the example of Christ, who throughout His ministry dedicated himself for building up a community of disciples who will carry on His mission. Thus, it is impossible to be sacrament of God's salvation in our world today without entering into Jesus' plan. This implies the openness to the active presence of the Holy Spirit manifested in all the faithful by their various charisms. For what the world needs is the Church as sacrament. This is important because the Church is not a reality apart from the world, rather she is in the world, and the world is in the Church.¹⁷³ Thus, the Church needs to read the signs of the time in order to remain relevant to the needs of the people. It means that the actions of the Church are called to reflect on what the world is living at a particular time of its history. Reading the signs of the time is an exercise which involves both subjectivity and objectivity. Considering the call to prophetic witness of the Church, we can say that subjectively, the Church must be part and parcel of the living realities of the world. Objectively, the Church needs to challenge the world, especially when realities encountered in the world do not portray the Gospel values.

¹⁷² Cf. J. S. UKPONG, *Contemporary Theological Models of Mission: Analysis and Critique*, 168

¹⁷³ R. MCBRIEN, *Catholicism*, 78.

The Church of Christ, from its very foundations gave equal chance to all its members by the virtue of the baptism to carry on her mission in all generations. Based on this fact, from the theological aspect, every baptized person, by virtue of his/her baptism, received a special mission from Christ through the gift of His Spirit to carry out the salvific work of Christ in his/her own capacity. It is true that some members of the Body of Christ receive a special call from Christ to be in position of authority in the Church. Such responsibility given to them by virtue of their call is nothing else but serving the need of the other members. So, the attitude of excessive exercise of power and domination experienced in some Churches is not according to the will of Christ. For Christ Himself warned His disciples and gave them the example of how their authority is to be exercised in the Church.

The above assertion shows that from the will of Christ and from the beginning of the Church, charism and authority are gifts from Christ Himself and His Spirit. The historical development which complicated the flow of that relationship is only the failure of human beings to enter into the dynamics of God's plan for His people. This failure is explained in the context of the Church of Ibadan Archdiocese as the failure to integrate properly the Good News of the Christ event into the culture of the people.

With regard to this, the leaders of the Church are called upon to create forums which will be able to study closely the possibilities of manifesting the true Church of Christ which presents both the message of the Gospel and some elements of the tradition of the people. This must be done in the spirit of Vatican II which called the leaders of the Church to exercise their authority as service for the common good.

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