

Full Length Research

# Archives Administration in the Redeemed Christian Church of God Lagos State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the role of archives administration in the Redeemed Christian church of God. It was discovered from observation that Redeemed Christian Church of God. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a sample of two hundred and fifty (250) subjects including the Pastors, staff and members of the mission in the international office and province I-IV in the church Head Quarter, Lagos state, Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire for the variables in the study. Nine research questions were drawn and answered. Data were analysed using simple percentages (%), frequency distribution with the aid of SPSS Version 21. The study revealed that the archive has a significant role to play in the life cycle of the church administration and that the records must be properly handle by higher authority. Based on the findings, it concluded that all sources of records must be highly regarded for the use of the future which is the noted orbits of the ministry

**Keywords:** role of archives, church administration, Redeemed Christian church of God.

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## INTRODUCTION

The church is both the body of Christ and a human institution. Because of its unique and dual nature, the church requires both spiritual and organizational management. Church administrators, often, face the perplexing challenge of fulfilling a spiritual mission through organizational management. Confusing the two is the constant danger, which we witness almost all the time in various church conflicts (Dairo, 2006). No doubt, Jesus is not building His Church with supermen, any more than when He chose rugged fishermen to be His disciples and apostles. He will not also build his church with angelic beings, but with ordinary men and women, people who are just like us.

The church is prompted to respond and act to visible human need by God's love that sets her free to care deeply about others. In so doing the church is clearly pushed into the public arena, however, Simon (1984) reckons notwithstanding the fact that the church has the theological basis and resolution, the church seems to fail to act on the crucial matter of influencing policy making decisions with regard to administration. The word, 'administration' is developed from the Latin, administrare, meaning, "to serve". Administration is not just a mere activity but purposeful activity in a particular field of endeavour business, education church and so forth. The specialized concepts, knowledge and skill of administration are necessary for increasing the professional capacity of an administrator. Some people have viewed it as a practical exercise, requiring no special effort, while others feel that it is a discipline existing in theory and in the minds of people. Some other groups of people regard it as a technology, which requires not only sound theory, but also specialized principles and techniques (Dairo, 2006).

Lyons (1991) defines administration as the guidance, leadership and control of the efforts of a group of individuals towards some common goals. Adam sees administration as the capacity to co-ordinate many and conflicting social

energies in a single organization so adroitly that they shall operate as a unity. From the perspective of Gulick and Urwick, administration has to do with getting things done with the accomplishment of the defined objectives. Hence, the science of administration is the system of knowledge whereby man may understand relationships, predict result, and influence outcomes in any situation where men are organized at work together for a common purpose. However, we should note from the onset that Church administration as we have it in the Redeemed Christian Church of God is not to be compared with the contemporary management philosophy and principles of secular business world. It is based mainly on the basics of the gospel: steady nourishment from the word of God, pursuit of godly life and the priority of mission.

Hence a church administrator has a greater task to perform. This is apparent from its peculiar and broad duties and responsibilities. The titles “elders”, “stewards”, “shepherds” given to church administrators suggests the nature of their office. The qualification in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are not arbitrary but are related to their work. Church administration is unique in the sense that “the work of the church is the largest, the most important and permanent business on earth (Dairo, 2006). A careful canvass of archival literature shows that the professional definition of the term “archives” has been, and is still, a subject of spirited debate in which national practices and individual preferences becloud the issues (Alegbeleye, 1984). The Oxford English Dictionary definition which gives the dual meaning of “archives” as: a place in which public records or historic documents are kept: a historical records or document so preserved is unfortunately of little assistance in clearing the web of confusion. The term “archives” is a collective noun derived from the Greek word “archeion” (that which belongs to an office) and was originally applied to government records (public archives). Today, however, the term has been extended to include not only the records of public institutions but also private organizations. In many cases the term has also been applied to records of families and individuals generally described as “private” or “personal papers.”

‘Archives’ in the popular sense of the word can be almost any historic documents. Quite commonly, they are also called ‘records’, although this term also covers items which are still in daily use. To distinguish these from the historic material, we sometimes call them modern or current records. Today, this documentation might be represented partly in photographs, audio-tape or film or in a computer-readable medium, as well as in paper. It is not the form or medium that dictates whether or not a particular item is of archival significance, but its context: in particular its ‘provenance’ or link with the creator of the archive, nor is age, necessarily a factor: archives can be of recent origin, nor, finally are archives solely the product of the official activities of bodies such as central or local government: they are generated by organizations of all kinds (businesses, churches, schools, charities, learned bodies and so on) and by individuals and families.

Archives can also be defined in terms of document, i.e. those records accumulated through the natural process which have been selected for permanent preservation and in-fact preserved in an Archival repository because of their enduring value. Archive is a place or a building, repository where records of permanent values are kept. Richard, (2000) Archives therefore as perceived by many, are not overwrought manifestations of bureaucratic red tape. They are not as has been generally perceived in Nigeria, ‘dusty old papers primarily of interest to historians and genealogists supporting their efforts to give contemporary audience a sense of what happened in the past. What should be recognized is that records and archives are sources of evidence of human agency (Sanya, 2010).

Wallace (2004) described archives as ‘social glue’ which holds together, sustains and sometimes unravels organizations, governments, societies and individuals. In its singular form, archives refer to specifically to the whole body or group of records of continuing value of an organization or individual. Not all records generated by an organization are worthy of preservation. Some records are ephemeral in nature, even though they had been generated in the course of the daily transaction of an organization. According to Richard, (2000) Preservation is a generic term, an umbrella that includes all the managerial, financial and staffing considerations that help to prolong the long life of materials. A proactive approach is taken to protect such material so that they don’t deteriorate.

It is pertinent to know that we have national archives and special archives. Examples of national archives are archives own and operated by the national government of countries like National archives of Nigeria; National archives of Ghana; Public Records and Archives Administration Department of the United States of America and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The National Archives of Nigeria was established by the National Archives Decree, 1992. The Decree empowers the establishment of the National Archives; The Preservation and Management of Public Records; Preservation And Management of Records of Private Bodies, Individuals and Companies and Miscellaneous Appointment of the National Archives Advisory Council among others. We also have state archives, like the Lagos State Records and Archives Bureau; Abia State archives; Imo state archives; Delta State archives among others. (Lasrab, 2008). Special archives are those operated by individuals or business organizations. Like the archives of United Africa Company Plc; First Bank archives; Union Bank Archives; Stanbic Bank Archives etc.

Records of activity are valued and used by their creators and other individuals and organization for a variety of current social and organizational purposes. They enable informed planning and decision making and support continuity, consistency, and effectiveness of human actions. They are vehicles of communication and interaction. Society’s current

record keeping requirements or expectation are formalised in our legal systems and in ethical codes of behaviour or practice. Records of activity provide evidence of rights, entitlements, and obligations, and support the role of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. In some cases, they constitute legal instrument, e.g., Title or deed, adoption order, or committal document to a mental institution. They also support information reporting, audit, review and accountability, mechanisms, including the role of society in watch dog – Parliament, Royal Commissions, the Ombudsman, administrative, appeals tribunal, auditors, and regulatory authorities. Thus, they play a vital social role. Above all they provide for continuity and accountability, (Ellis, 1993).

In Nigeria today, there are less professional archivists in archival institutions. Many of those who are working as archivists are not professionally trained and do not possess the necessarily academic qualification and training. Access to materials may also be restricted due to reasons other than the content of the collections. The poor physical condition of the materials may cause some materials to be restricted. However, archivists usually employ all means to ensure that such materials are eventually opened for use either through their photocopy, microfilming or digitization (Schwartz, & Cook, 2002). Church archives are collections of all documents of the church that have enduring and continuing value; it may be financial, evidential, historical or administrative value of its members and general activities. Documents and materials that show and state the origin of the church, memberships, births, marriages, deaths, properties, minutes of meetings, policy documents, affiliations, building plans, maps, registration documents, baptisms, annual events and title documents among others are safely kept in the archives.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God was founded by Rev J. O. Akindayomi in 1947. He started a daily prayer group in Cherubim and Seraphim Church in Ibadan Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos in 1949. He later changed the name of the church to "Redeemed Christian Church of God in 1952. Worship began at 9, Willoughby Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos. Rev. J. O. Akindayomi died in November 1980. Before he died, the church had grown to 42 parishes and many of the parishes were in South-West Nigeria. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1981 Pastor Enoch Adejare Adebayo, a Doctor of Philosophy degree holder in hydrodynamics took over as the general overseer after it was confirmed by the late Akindayomi as his successor. The Church as experienced, astronomical growth in terms of members and infrastructure development across the country. The Church has a private University called Redeemers University of Nigeria (RUN). Henderson (1955) defines church archives as "Documents and records that have a value which cannot be measured by money at all, they are the ultimate material on which a study of the church is based and if they are lost cannot be replaced. English archivists see church archives as: "Records and document as rich and as valuable as artefacts, priceless and rare. He also explains that they are unique creation brought into being for a specific purpose"

It is a fact that the work of religious archival and historical depositories is still very much in its early stage, even though some historical societies, like the Evangelical and Reformed Church, have celebrated centennials. Churches and religious organizations with emphasis on their background, history, heritage and theology have done better than others in this direction. Dietrich (1961) states that "There can be no question of the value of church records to church historian of a local congregation or of the entire church. But these records are also goldmine of information for the social and economic historians. Few other bodies of records give so complete an accurate a picture of the backward community."

### **Statement of the problem**

The contemporary church administration has become very complex and varies from one denomination to the other. The division within the Body of Christ is not due to doctrinal difference alone, but to disagreements over which forms of administration to be adopted. These led to tensions, agitations and conflicts over church offices, title and paraphernalia of office. It is also noted that many churches in this country neglect their archives where it exists, through poor storage facilities and without adequate preservation facilities. Archives cannot be maintained and preserved without taking a proper role in terms of the church administration. The challenges facing the archives in church administration and due to some factors, such as, lack of well-trained archivists, relevant equipment, inadequate working materials, inadequate training, unwillingness to provide relevant information, inadequate motivation etc.

Churches then should not just establish archives, they have to build, furnish, equip and motivate the right and qualified archivist in terms of good salaries and working condition, to manage them. Therefore, the role of archives in church administration is very vital. It is against this background that this study investigates the role of archival administration in church development.

Furthermore, it was discovered in line with the poor record keeping which emanate within some churches, the act of keeping appropriate archive in the church is completely out of place. The identified problems among others include inappropriate handling of records needed in decision making, lack of proper preservation of records of the church which may lead to costly litigation and these sources of information will aid to preserve the identity of the church heroes and finally, the absence of a trained archivist will deny the church access to valuable and indispensable records.

## Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this study was to examine the role of archival administration in church development in the Redeemed Christian Church of God in Nigeria. While the specific objectives are:

1. ascertain whether there is an archive in the Redeemed Christian Church of God.
2. determine the sources of the archival materials in the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

## Research questions

The following research questions were drawn to guide the study:

1. Does the Redeemed Christian Church of God have an archive?
2. What are the sources of archival materials in the Redeemed Christian Church of God?

## METHODOLOGY

The research design employed for this study was a descriptive research design. The population for this study consists of 271 some officials of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. They will include the staff of the international office and those concerned with the management of church archival materials. The sample size of the study was 271 officials. Data for this study were collected using questionnaires, interviews, personal visits, email and phone calls. The data so collected were collated, coded, and analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequency count and simple percentage using SPSS Version 21

## Results and Discussions of Findings

The following Research Questions were answered using simple percentage count as follows:

### Research question 1: Does the Redeemed Christian Church of God have an archive?

**Table 1.** Statement of respondents either positive or negative

Statement	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
Positive	214	85.6	85.6
Negative	36	14.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The table above shows that 214 (85.6 %) of the respondents had said that Redeemed Christian Church of God have an archive while 36 (14.4%) had negative response to the question raised in the distribution of the respondents. Therefore, it was concluded that the mission has an archive for the management of the future used of his members.

### Research question 2: What are the sources of archival materials in the Redeemed Christian Church of God?

**Table 2.** Sources of archival materials in the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

Sources	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative (%)
Fiscal	7	2.8	2.8
Cartographic	11	4.4	7.2
Legal	9	3.6	10.8
Historical	31	12.4	23.2
Administration	192	76.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	

The table above revealed the various sources of archival materials in the Redeemed Christian Church of God as indicated above. 7 (2.8%) of the respondents believed that the church had fiscal source; 11 (4.4%) of the respondents believed that the church had cartographic source; 9 (3.6%) of the respondents believed that the church had legal source; 31(12.4%) of the respondents believed that the church had historical source; 192 (76.8%) of the respondents believed that the church had administrative source of archival materials.

## Discussion of Findings:

### Research Question 1: Does the Redeemed Christian Church of God have an archive?

The table above shows that 214 (85.6 %) of the respondents had said that Redeemed Christian Church of God have an archive while 36 (14.4%) had negative response to the question raised in the distribution of the respondents. Therefore, it was concluded that the mission have an archive for the management of the future used of his members. From all indication, based on the result above, the Redeemed Christian Church of God have an archive

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## CONCLUSION

The study contributes to the growing literature on the role of archive in church administration. It provides the empirical evidence to support theoretical models that prescribe a link between the studied. Based on the interest to investigate about the topic, it was concluded that record management for an organization like this must be prompt and accurate for its survival in the society and nationwide, Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATION

From the discovery made so far, the following are recommended

1. It is recommended that the church records must be kept in a descript order for safety in survival for the future of the ministry
2. There should be reinforcement of security measures in archives to avoid mutilation and stealing of documents.

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