

Learning to Think Systemic in Faith Groups: A Case Study.

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ABSTRACT

Undoubtedly, it is a challenge to provide a practical guide to solving complex problems in faith groups. In practice, leaders and managers are to avoid unintended consequences of their actions as they aim to achieve lasting results. Organizations in the time of unprecedented complexity should be a learning organization. With the aid of this report, the leadership of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Worldwide, will have a big picture yet rigorous analytic of CAC. They will be able to model, describe, and analyze the behavior of the organization. In this paper, I will also explain, analyze the recent developments in systems and leadership theory to improve understanding and decision making in CAC for positive social change.

Keywords: Systems, leadership, social change & managers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Systems are all over, in nature and the public arena. An objective of systems theory is to investigate and search for properties, standards, ideas, patterns, models, and approaches that are regular to frameworks of diverse sorts. In other words, a system, in the abstract, is a collection of agents or nodes connected to other agents or nodes by links or relationships (Boulding, 1956). In practice, the understanding of systems theory gives knowledge into concrete frameworks, even though that might be obscure to individuals (Von Bertalanffy, 1972). Theories, models, ideas, and such when developed into a body of knowledge for learning organization could help leaders and managers to clarify and anticipate things. The body of knowledge associated with an organization is imperative to the roles of those charged with the leadership and management of such organization. (Mele, Pels, & Polese, 2010; Oshry, 2007)

In theory, there is diverse perspective to comprehending the behavior of social and natural systems. The perception could be general systems theory, organizational systems, systems thinking, systems archetypes, networks, complex adaptive systems, complexity leadership, distributed intelligence, and complex evolutionary systems. With different perspectives, it is common that systems contain organize structures in addition to standards, assets, and procedures. The standards remain set of rules that exist within the interconnectedness of a system. (Boulding, 1956; Denning, 2004; Laureate Education, 2014; Von Bertalanffy, 1972)

With proper engagement, the executive leadership of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Worldwide will see that some common patterns found in the organization include systems archetypes, such as limits to success, shifting the burden, tragedy of the commons, escalation, and eroding goals just to mention few. These archetypes or abstract patterns are easily found in CAC and offer strategies for conflict resolution and complex problem solving. Apparently, CAC and its various components are set up with goals to bring children of God to His glory. Some of the services provided by CAC to wider community underscore positive social change.

The congregation through social activities gets included in exercises that make enhancements in the lives of people and groups, locally and around the globe. The activities are, for instance, volunteering or service; donating money, goods or services; educating others about a particular issue or cause of specific events. CAC have different parts to all divisions or other areas of the organization. There could be an indication that standards in the church could be exploited by the remainder of the structure and clichéd if there are no rules or boundaries in place to avoid the misfortune.

The leadership of the church should understand that CAC is a complex adaptive system (CAS). CAS are those systems that are containing networks of a several number and type of agents (nodes) and connections (relationships), and properties of nonlinearity, self-organization or emergence, and adaptation or learning, among others (Newman, 2003; Laureate Education, 2014). Complexity can be viewed from several perspectives: the number of details or parts, the number and variety of interactions, the degree of diversity, and much more (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). As complexity increases, leaders and managers need to adjust and change to address new dangers and openings. In the meantime, they could oversee organizational shortcomings while enhancing qualities. It is a call for continued management innovation. (Hamel, 2007)

Innovation is a recurrent procedure. CAC leadership can take the initiative to manage complexity via a collective or distributed intelligence approach. It is a model that embrace the collective behavior that emerges from a set of agents or people. It is a swarm intelligence, and through its application, the CAC executive leadership can involve employees and even other stakeholders to contribute ideas for improvement and innovation (McKelvey, 2008; Bonabeau & Meyer, 2001). It would provide the executive leadership of the church the enablement to gain a better understanding of the CAC culture while being immersed in another, resulting in a greater tolerance for difference, a better understanding of the learning organization, and a deepened appreciation for a full commitment to positive social change agenda. (Laureate Education, 2014; Stroh, 2015)

With various recommendations in this paper, faith groups executive leadership might decide to apply a model of improved management innovation. The recommendations if followed could help the CAC leadership to build a learning organization model for the overall activities of the church. Following the paper' supporting research and recommendations could help the leaders in the assessment of the CAC resilience as well as identifying primary stocks and flows within the organization. With this report, there is an opportunity for the CAC executive leadership to building a network model of the structure using the systems thinking approach for positive social change.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL DESCRIPTION

One can ask, what does a system resemble? There are various constructs to represent a system or for representing an organization. A system could be hierarchical, organic, as a thing can be sorted by type, size, estimate, shading, topography, alphanumerically, or sequentially. However, one regular path is to compose a system by a chain of command; that is, seeing a system as containing subsystems and arrange in a top-down fashion. In this section, I will take a gander at Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) Worldwide, my choice of organization for this consultancy report.

2.1 Organizational Diagram

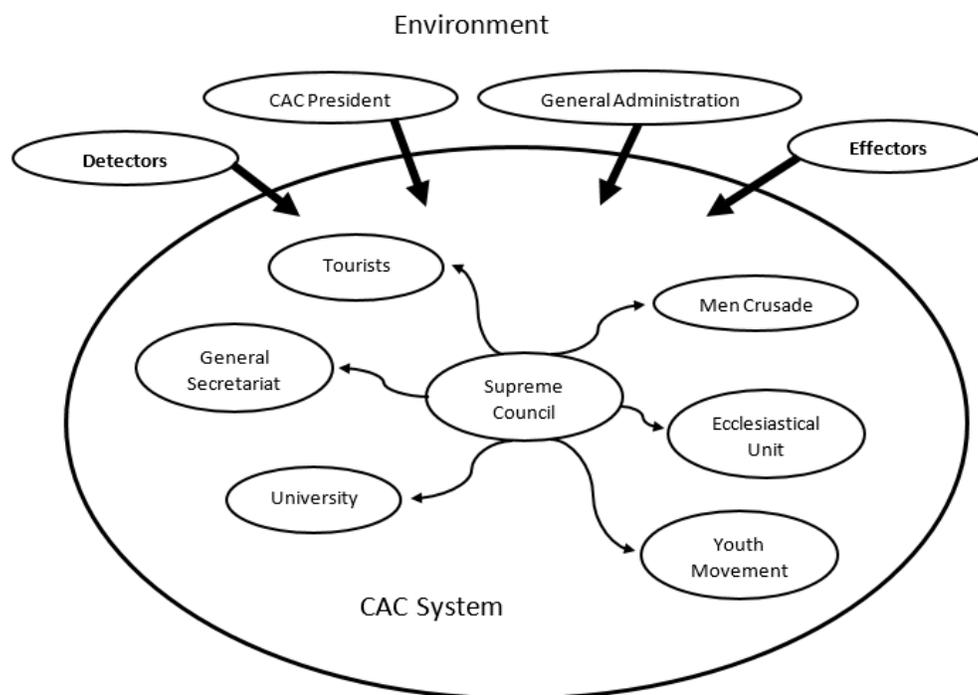


Figure 1: The CAC System

2.2 Organizational Description

The CAC structure depicts a typical Christian industry as a system. Archetypally, the structure is more of a functional hierarchy. It is particularly with the management of the subordinate in a light of reality concerning the systems model (Boulding, 1956; Oshry, 2007; Senge, 2006; Von Bertalanffy, 1972; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). With a partial view of the CAC structure, it is possible to see an Episcopal Church governed by central secretarial organs (Ademola, 2016; Viola, 2009). The crises that engulfed CAC culminates to some tipping points. The first tipping point was the separation of the Executive arm of the church from the Supreme Council (SC) in 1991. Olowe (2007) noted that the division was due to internal rebellion by some leaders. Evidently, the division has a significant impact on the leadership of the church subsequently. According to Viola (2009), typical of the non-organic structure in churches is such tipping-point of the division. In other words, the energized insubordination made the detachment possible as some leaders saw the CAC structure as too machine-like to accommodate the needs for a change.

Frequently, it appears that when some relevant issues are modeled inadequately, the outcomes pose some leadership and management challenges. In other words, it is essential to see the bigger picture of CAC regarding the structure and the prevailing leadership culture. It is about understanding how various parts of the CAC systems relate and function as a whole body of Christ (Figure 1). Due to the hierarchical structure of the CAC management style, it is challenging to see how the whole system work together (Figure 1). The various crises that engulfed the church remain an indication that the leadership should cultivate a holistic view to understanding the behavior of the organization. There might be a need for an application of the reframing model and systems design to improve leadership and management outcomes. (Ademola, 2016; Bolman & Deal, 2013; Bolman & Deal, 2014; Morgan, 2006; Viola, 2009)

3. SYSTEMS THEORY

Leaders and managers must fully engage with subordinates and motivate them at every level of the organization. Employee engagement is input to improving performance and meeting the overall objective of organizations. Nonetheless, with the several tasks underscored at the operational and tactical levels in CAC, leadership, and congregants of CAC could work together to anticipate an expected accomplishment (i.e., output). (Boulding, 1956; Oshry, 2007; Senge, 2006; Von Bertalanffy, 1972)

Apparently, leaders in Christian work as a system could grasp the notion of tipping points and accentuate tasks within the CAC organization. It is about developing a succession plan as a means of sustaining the values creation subsystem of the church. Today's leaders and managers should work towards a heathen church. In other words, the church should create leaders for the future as well as bring people into the fold. In achieving this objective, there are distinct challenges to navigate. Leaders and managers could resolve difficult problems by comprehending the behavior of the church. It could be an accentuation of seeing the church as a complete system.

CAC as a church is a system, which consists of various components (Figure 1). For instance, the parts of the CAC system are of seven different subsystems: the ecclesiastical unit, the university, the general secretariat, the youth movement, the men crusade, the tourist, and the supreme council. There exist interactions within the systems. By systems thinking, the behavior of the church could be fully comprehended. The leadership of the church could engage the service of a consultant to do a holistic system analysis and make recommendations. In other words, with systems thinking, CAC leadership could see the big picture of the church. (Brown & Gioia, 2002; Davis, 1997; Drath, 2001; Meadows, 2008; Oshry, 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2006)

3.1 Supporting Research

Viola (2009) recommended various approaches to finding an organic structure for churches. A natural style could channel opportunity for servant leadership that CAC needs for improved organizational performance. Uhl-Bien and Marion (2008) presented various fundamental concepts to advancing leadership and management with the use of complexity leadership theory. It is a resource that could useful to support the leadership of the church with a cutting-edge thought on the paradigm of complexity leadership.

3.2 Systems Dynamics

The application of systems thinking could help leaders and managers of organizations to understand the behavior of their organizations. Such organizations could be company, community, city, or family. There are many definitions of systems, but most include the physiognomies of some interacting parts (a network) that perform some function. In other words, an organization as a framework is similar to a city or country.

Also, it could be a person as well as religion group. (Forrester, 1969; Meadows, 2008; Oshry, 2007; Woodlock, 2009). Apparently, this unit elaborate on the concept of systems dynamic (SD) and how is used to describe how things work in CAC. It includes how the ideas may influence leadership and management of the church. It concentrates on the exploration of the SD within CAC. In other words, the section provides an analysis of the effect of thinking in systems as well as SD for CAC organizational leadership and management. Also, it could serve as an opportunity to provide an evaluation of how stocks, flows, and feedback loops may affect decision making in CAC (Figure 2).

3.3 Stocks and Flows

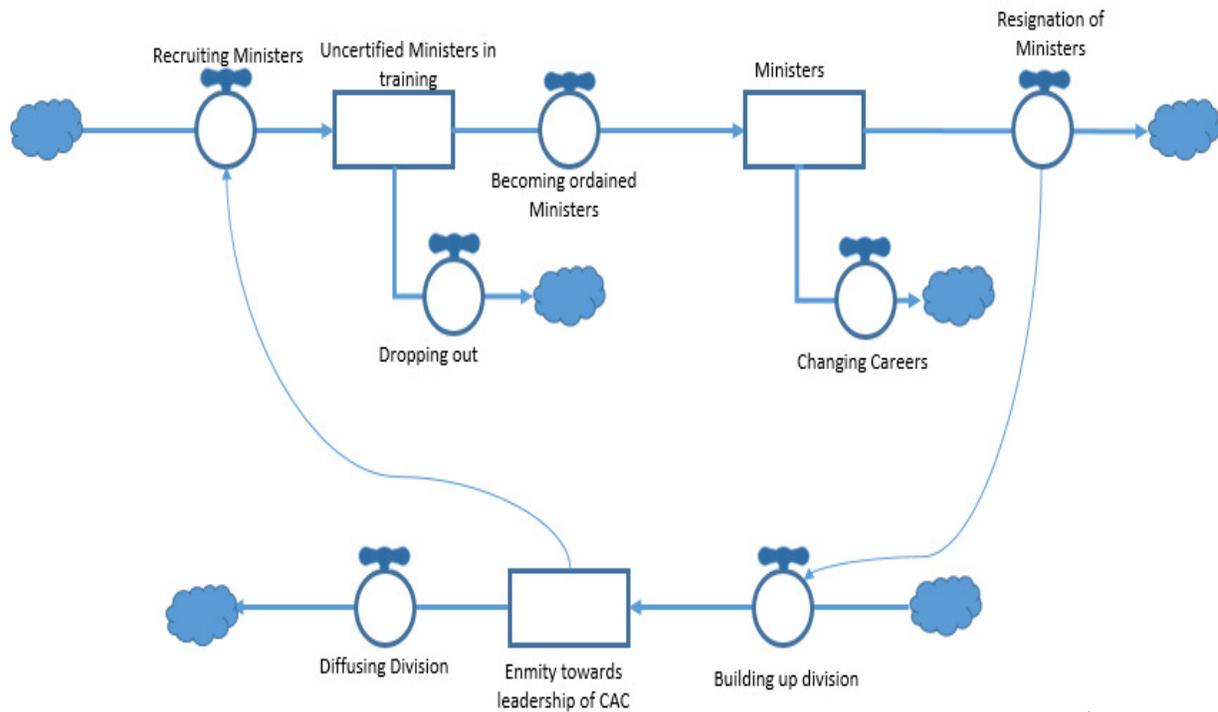


Figure 2: Stocks, flows, and feedback loops

CAC has various stocks and inflows embedded within the system (Figure 2). In other words, ministers (e.g., prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) are stocks that have some assets embedded as well as giving feedbacks within the whole system. In CAC, uncertified pastors in training, ordained or certified pastors, school of prophets, school of evangelists, choristers (e.g., missionaries in training), are foundational elements of the church. As such, they are stocks. CAC in once every three years recruits ministers to the fold through the training of the uncertified pastors. Ordained or certified pastors are the leaders and managers of each of CAC assembly. They could serve in any of the components of CAC (Figure 1) depending on their experience and qualifications. The number of ordained pastors could change over time through retirement; resignation, death, deflection to other denominations. In a similar trend: Prophets (i.e., the eyes of the followership of CAC) are attractors of new members to the church through the exercising of the spiritual gifts of prophecy (1 Corinthians 14 King James Version). Thus, the number of ministers could decrease or increase mainly through inflows or outflows.

The SC regulates the number of pastors, evangelists, prophets, elders, in the church. For instance, if the SC decides to reduce the number of intakes to the seminary (i.e., the number of uncertified pastors in training), this will decrease the number of ordained pastors. In particular, if the number of dropped out is also minimal. (Meadows, 2008; Woodlock, 2010)

3.3 Feedback Loops

Feedback is an important idea in SD, and absence of proper criticism is frequently a reason for framework disappointment. For instance, during marriage counseling, there could exist numerous feedback between couples and ministers. Depending on the nature of the criticism, counseling may continue or terminate. If there is a need to change cause in the marriage counseling procedure, it is a negative feedback, even though its consequences might be positive. It could be a negative feedback because it provides information enabling the system to act against any deviation from the desired state. It is a system approach that could help CAC leaders and managers to establish proper objectives (e.g., Christian home). It is a synergy for effective collaboration between followership and leadership. (Oshry, 2007; Senge, 2006) Negative feedback loops are goal seeking or regulating approach. Regulation of the number of intakes to participate in the uncertified ministers in training could fall or rise. It depends on the control from SC. Outcomes of ministerial evaluation serve as input to the decision-making process of the SC. In other words, a negative feedback loop could be the upkeep of stock and staffing levels. (Meadows, 2008; Woodlock, 2009; Woodlock, 2010).

3.4 Recommendations

Apparently, an understanding of how stocks, flows, and feedback loops work, could help to prevent CAC from institutional failure. For instance, in 2010, about 50 pastors were killed by terrorists in the northern part of Nigeria. Such event could generate feedback that might help the SC to improve the decision making on given urgent attention to the needs of both pastors and members in that region. In other words, the understanding of stocks, flows, and feedback loop will help SC in taken decisions that would contribute to navigate complexity, mapping and implementing change successfully.

3.5 Supporting Research

Maani and Cavana (2007) suggested different perspective into understanding change and complexity. Also, Morecroft (2007) accentuated a feedback systems approach to business dynamic. They could be helpful resources for leaders and managers of CAC, supporting them to gain further knowledge of SD and its application. Furthermore, every cited resource will provide further insight to facilitate scholars and professionals' outcomes in research and development.

4. SYSTEMS DISCIPLINES

The organization's unique changing environment is informing the pace of complexity and transformation within organizations. Consequently, insightful leaders increasingly recognize various tools to help in adaptation and innovation. Some of the models failed to solve the persistent problems as well as causing them. It implies that a lack of adaptability could lead to trailing in competitiveness as well as shifting consequences to the overall organizational behaviors. (Meadows, 2008; Reeves & Deimler, 2011; Sterman, 2000; Sterman, 2002). In practice, the complexity of systems life is many and mostly prolonged. Thus, making the surrounding managerial issues extensive at an unprecedented rate. In other words, either with problem solving or managing messes, there is essential knowledge of organizational life that put pressure on managers and leaders for continual adaptation and innovation. (Ackoff, 1981; O'Connor & McDermott, 1997; Oshry, 1999; Sterman, 2000)

4.1 Disciplines

According to Senge (2006), there exist a disciplined worldview that could channel leadership and management as a representation of the moment of truth. It is a connection between designated powers that impact on leadership. It recommends transformational change as an alternative to strategic processes improvement in actualizing a learning organization. Senge (2006) suggested that the fifth discipline model highlights the requirements to fulfill the desired change. The five disciplines interface and bolster each other to create a sustained learning organization. (Walton, 2010)

By design, the interfaces underscore the learning disciplines. The systems theory, for example, is a logical structure that makes plans clearer and helps individual to perceive how things interrelate and how to change them. It is for seeing interrelationships that underlie complex situations and interactions. It empowers groups to disentangle the recurrently obscured elements of change in mapping and enactment. With system theory, leaders and managers are entirely conscious of the interconnections behind the changing features of their organizations.

Personal mastery is the high state of capability in a subject or aptitude area of leaders and managers. It is all about managing self and being the face of the anticipated change in a sensitive manner. During the change, individual belief systems and values could face different challenges. Leaders expectedly should be sensitive in handling every challenge to personal belief systems and values.

With mental models, leaders and managers might profoundly imbue presumptions that impact on how individuals could comprehend the world and how to take action on relevant issues. Practitioners through shared vision could see to the future in an attempt to encourage the honest and goodness duty. It is an awareness to synergize together for common goals of the organization. Team learning helps to align and develop the capacity of a team to create the expected organizational performance. Overall, with the right attitude of applying the five learning disciplines, peak accomplishment could soar for the organization to discover its soul. (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Senge, 2006)

4.2 Inform Leadership

In CAC, the systems thinking model could help SC in the decision to avoid the tipping points of many divisions in the church. It will also contribute to transforming the CAC organizational structure or provide direction towards a new culture strategy. The personal mastery approach could assist the CAC ministers to align to the belief systems of the church. With the use of the mental models, the SC and GEC will facilitate the art of self-awareness as well as embrace a management style that is open to creativity and innovation. Expectedly, the shared vision of CAC is to unite all the followers of Christ Jesus as one fold, under one shepherd. However, it was tough to discover where team learning happens in CAC, noted that SC is the only decision-making subsystem.

4.3 Recommendations

With systems thinking maps and archetypes, the leadership of CAC should delineate and dissect circumstances, occasions, issues to discover better alternatives for social change. The tools of perceptual positions, reframing models could help to expand the form of collaboration and affiliation within and outdoor of the church. The Church leaders could employ the use of the ladder of inference, reflective inquiry models to take a shot at making their mental models clearer and to embrace shared perception. (Ademola, 2016)

The CAC leaders should use the concept-shifting, values-alignment model to help in making the shared vision work for all. It could also be helpful to forge common focus and communal approach to meeting the learning targets. With team learning, the common understanding could attract standard commitment. The SC should figure out how to utilize leadership tools to form straightforward replication attitudes as well as explore the learning disciplines to improve organizational learning.

4.4 Supporting Research

The application of Bolman and Deal's (2013) reframing model and the metaphor approach (Morgan, 2006) could help to facilitate a nurturing learning organization environment. Stroh (2015) provided a practical guide to solving problems, qualified mapping plan for the organization and social change. The fifth discipline model (Senge, 2006) could help to analyze the learning disciplines, as well as aid in the managerial evaluation of the effects of learning, focusses on leadership, management, and decision-making in CAC.

5. SYSTEMS ARCHETYPES

Systems Archetypes (SA) are forms of conduct displayed by social, regular, or simulated frameworks. Analyzing archetypes and archetypal behaviors found in organizations could be helpful. SA as lenses includes eroding goals, escalation, growth and underinvestment, limits to success, success to the successful, tragedy of the commons, fixes that fail, and shifting the burden. (Senge, 2006) In practice, application of systems archetypes could succeed in business, faith groups and much more. CAC leadership could use the lenses of shifting the burden, the tragedy of the commons, and escalation to make sense of the organizational behavior. Systems archetypes are progressive approaches that could help practitioners in comprehending corporate practices.

5.1 Archetypes

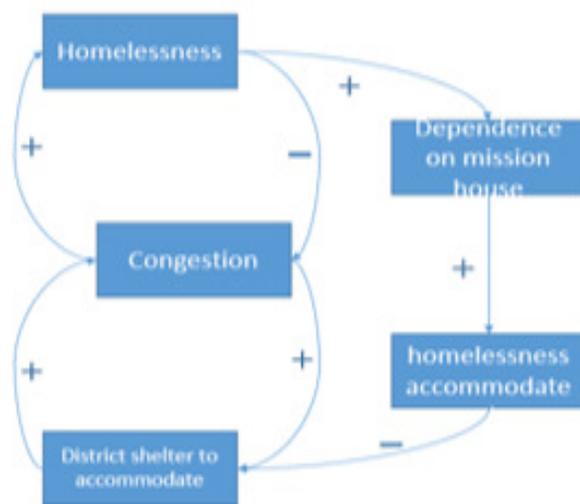


Figure 3. CAC homeless unit as an illustration of the shifting the burden archetype

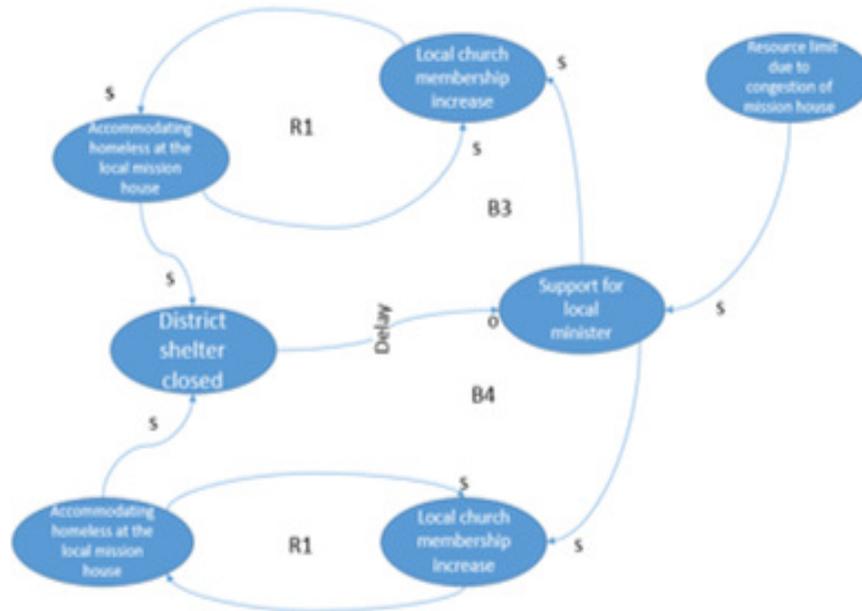


Figure 4. CAC district shelter provision as an example of the tragedy of the commons

archetype

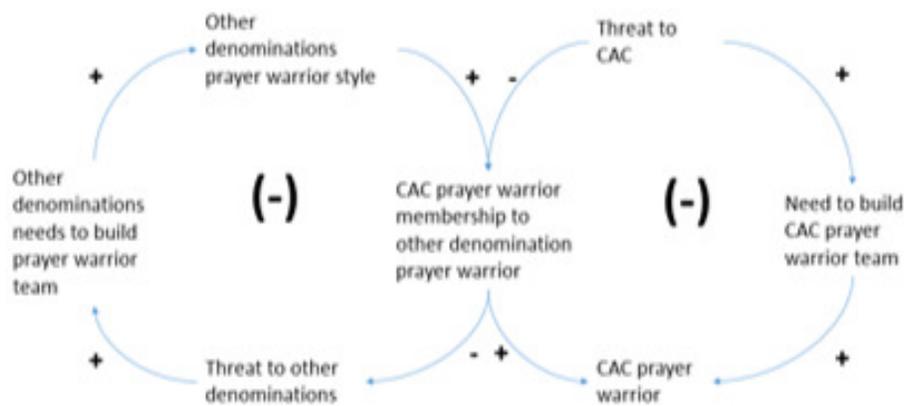


Figure 5. CAC prayer warrior as an illustration of the escalation archetype

In CAC there are mission houses and maternity homes at the local churches to accommodate the ministers as well as the pregnant women respectively. Both the mission house and the maternity house situated in one compound with the temples. At the earlier stage of the church, there were very few cases of homelessness in the communities. However, things change in the late 1980s as there were multiples cases of homelessness across the locations where the churches situated. The leaders of the church requested that there must be homeless shelter across the districts. Local ministers are to refer any case of homelessness to the area circuit. As very few cases of homelessness reported especially in the pre-1980s era, the leaders ordered that area homeless unit of the church ceased to operate.

Unexpectedly, mission houses became congested forcing local churches to rent homes for their respective ministers outside the church compound. The problem arises because the local churches instead of making use of the district homelessness unit, they chose to retain those who are homeless at the local mission houses for various reasons that include an increase in local membership. The archetypes of the shifting of burden (Figure 3) and that of the tragedy of the common (Figure 4) become noticed. In CAC, ministers accentuate the covenant storyline with utilizing two changing criticism. There was an apparent threat to CAC when a branch split and became a mountain of fire and miracle (MFM). MFM took away the people and culture of the prayer strategy of CAC to form the new ministry. Since the inception of MFM, several thousands of prayer warriors keep springing up. With this experience, the escalation archetype (Figure 5) is seen with the CAC prayer warrior. (O'Connor & McDermott, 1997; Peterson & Eberlein, 1994)

5.2 Recommendations

By referral service, the local ministers should indeed focus on the provision of the original solution of referring cases of homelessness to the district shelter unit for enduring accommodation (Senge, 2006). They should concentrate on learning the skills to improve the membership of the local assemblies by following innovative and creative management propositions. Also, leaders and managers of the local churches could create self-regulation and peer pressure models designed for cultivating followership. (Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994)

Notwithstanding the actual competition, CAC and MFM could collaborate. CAC could take advantage of being the first Pentecostal church in Nigeria to look for winning synergy to facilitate collaboration. If such partnership is possible, the expected outcome will be in the overall interest of the Kingdom of God. The outcome could be an exemplar of social change (Stroh, 2015). Alternatively, CAC could recourse to rebranding their prayer warrior. The vast land available to CAC could be an input of broad rebranding context in structure and culture. The outcome could help to defuse the threat from MFM. (Larsen, McInerney, Nyquist, Silsbee, & Zagonel, 2002)

5.3 Supporting Research

Apparently, the fifth discipline model could help to analyze systems archetypes found in organizations (Senge, 2006). Larsen, McInerney, Nyquist, Silsbee, and Zagonel (2002) suggested some helpful approaches in exploring archetypal behaviors found in organizations. The sources could support research in system analysis as SA are dynamic theories (Meadows, 2008). The resources referenced in this work could be useful in supporting further research.

6. NETWORKS

Networks are an arrangement of hubs and connections associated with the agents in some design. One of the conventional systems, which is natural to humanity is familial systems. As not all segments of systems are the same, there could be a need for network analysis to determine profound changes in culture and activities within networks (Allen, James, & Gamlen, 2007; Denning, 2004; Newman, 2003; Senge, Kleiner, Roberts, Ross, & Smith, 1994). In learning organizations (LO), leaders and managers should learn how to identify and evaluate networks for the purpose of decision making in organizations. In other words, leaders and managers should understand how different networks impact the way they and their subordinates decide on issues. (Kadushin, 1968; Kogut, 2000; Senge et al., 1994)

6.1 Networks

The CAC Covenant storyline helps in building shared meanings by exploring the interrelationship that exists within the church. The choir, the prayer warrior, the student association, the light of the world, are networks within the larger organization. The choir is a network of individuals' singers and musicians. The prayer warrior network is the central hub of interested church members who gather thrice weekly to pray for church and communities. The light-of-the-world group of the church is the Evangelical arm of the church.

The major groups of CAC are formal networks with the primary objective to hierarchically spread the shared vision of the church through prayers, music, evangelism, and so on. By translation, these are formal networks within the larger organization. However, the informal gathering also exists in the church that is not primarily concerned with the rules and directions of the church. The informal networks are causally responsible for spreading the shared vision through personal contact. They are communication channels where CAC members could talk easily and freely, eat varieties of food in fellowships, and are free to invite non-members, friends, and families to the informal networks. The house fellowship, love feast, awards-for-all gathering, are some of the informal networks in CAC. They serve the purpose of the free meeting for individuals and building of shared meaning.

With the house fellowship, people gather mainly to share views on issues of life, own assumptions and pray together. Some activities could also include local evangelism, singing of hymns and the likes. It appears as self-organizing, the initiator could apply community development principles, and hidden leaders and managers as volunteers. Within four years between 2000 and 2014, over 100 of the house fellowship centers across Nigeria launched as branches of CAC (Ademola, 2016).

At the love-feast, people bring food that is local to their cultures and shared with others. Members of the network learn how to cook dishes from different cultures. The group grows faster as people could share knowledge freely and there is no limit to encouraging individual participation. Furthermore, there exist several working connections between the house fellowships and the love-feast. Some of the practices led to the award-for-all gathering. At such events, excelling individuals in culture and operations received awards that aligned with the outcomes of self-contributions.

Through analysis, the result of the three informal networks might create knowledge that helps in decision making. It impacts on decisions on the expansion of the church and improved performance of the organization. It is an evangelism approach to strengthens the church. The church has to increase the numbers of ordained ministers to response to sustain the multicultural outlook of the church. It implies that most of the informal networks could yield formal networks with well-defined roles and functions in the church.

6.2 Recommendations

CAC should continue to see organizations as communities. The decision-making subsystem should not always assume formal authority over the fellowships. The church should see the public needs as its larger vision from a bigger perspective. Due to the multiple overlapping subsystems that exist within the church, every work team, every professional subculture, and every geographic entity should forge its shared sense of meaning. Everybody could bring an own unique sense of contribution to the whole CAC. Thus, reinventing relationships becomes a shared vision with informal networks provision (Senge et al., 1994). Furthermore, CAC should support the informal networks with social networking and conferences facilities.

In building shared significance, the church should use computer networks to facilitate contact points and analyze suppositions. Drawing a network map for the church may be necessary.

6.3 Supporting Research

Newman (2003) presented various structures and function of complex networks as material in the application of different network laws. There are needs to source for good ideas and their origins as permitted by system laws (Demming, 2004; Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, to analyze the influence of networks in organizations; Allen, James, and Gamlen (2007) provided different views on formal versus informal knowledge networks in research and development. In addition to these, researchers could use any of the material as parenthetically formatted to support their works (e.g., Denning, 2004; Newman, 2003; Kadushin, 1968; Kogut, 2000; Senge et al., 1994)

7. COMPLEXITY

According to Ademola (2016), CAC in Nigeria is experiencing a decline in followership. There are several reasons for this decline. It includes conflict within the leadership of the church, pressing issues with the structure of the church, and need to consider the missional objectives of the church. In this segment, I will be expanding the model (Figure 1) to include detectors, effectors, and networks. I will also widen the description of CAC as well as make some recommendations to the SC on the benefits of understanding CAC as a complex adaptive system (CAS).

7.1 Organizational Diagram

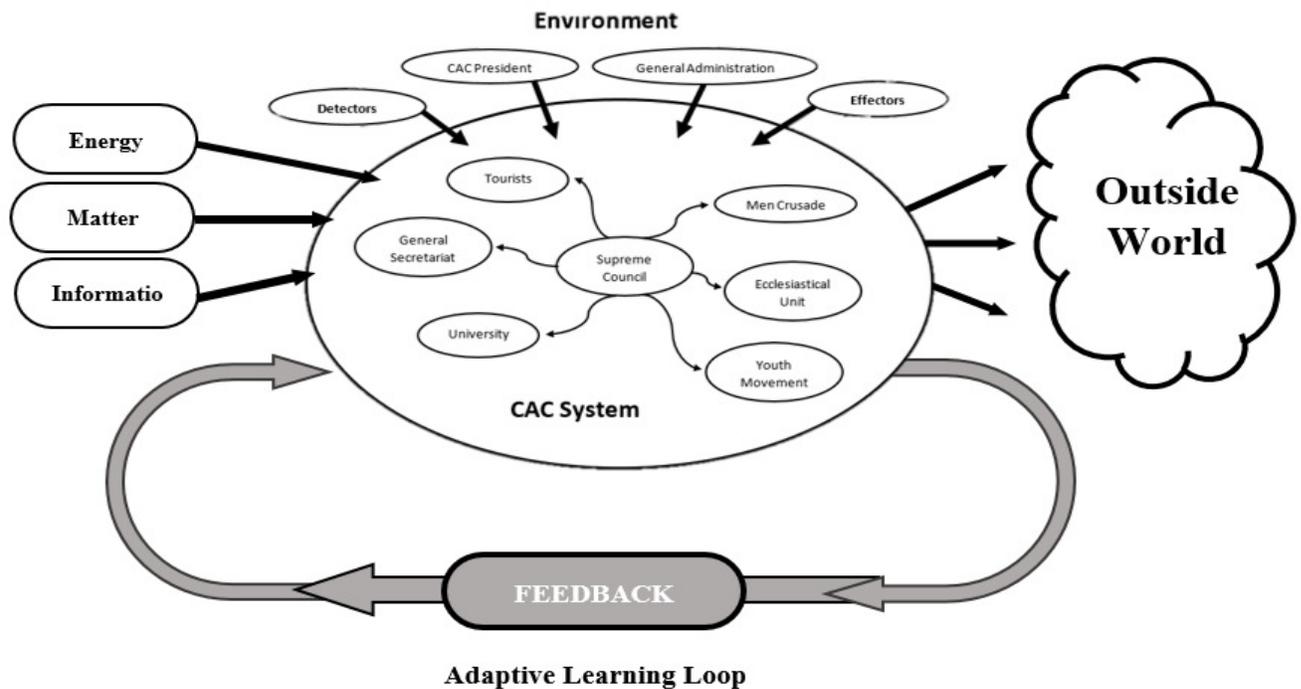


Figure 6: CAC as a complex adaptive system

7.3 Organizational Description

By translation, a complex system is a group of agents exhibiting peculiar attributes. The feature includes existing far from equilibrium, interacting through positive and negative feedbacks, forming interdependent, dynamic, and evolutionary networks. They are sensitive dependent, fractionally organized, and exhibit avalanche behavior (abrupt changes) that follow power-law distributions (Fichter, Pyle, & Whitmeyer, 2010). In CAC, there are several agents across the various networks. For instance, the evangelical network of the church (e.g., the Light of the World Society) recruit followership, teach members the statement of faith, prepare members for both rural and urban mission, and care to meet the needs of individual members. (Viola, 2009)

The agents are pastors, prophets, evangelists, and teachers. The agents are primarily leaders and managers of their various branches. They are mainly the operators of different networks in CAC. For examples, pastors and teachers serve as effectors. They prepare followership for the work of the mission (Ephesians 4:12). Mostly, the prophets and evangelists help to recruit members into the church. They act as detectors to sense the environmental impetuses. Nonetheless, pastors, prophets, evangelists, teachers are ministers in CAC working to care, strengthen, and prepare the membership of the church ultimately for the work of the ministry and eternal home (John 14:3; Ephesians 4:13-14).

All the ministers are a transmitter of inputs to outputs. As ordained ministers, they served in various units of the church and permitted to administer holy communion to the members. In other words, detectors act as stimuli to sense the environment, processes transform inputs to outputs, and effectors express output to the environment. As the decision-making subsystem of CAC, the ministers in SC exhibit hierarchical relationships with the other ministers. The ministers in house fellowships and the evangelical arm embrace an organic form of relationship. They collaborate in recruiting new members to the church and prepare them for the work of the ministry. (Ademola, 2016; Nelson, 2005)

At the operational and tactical levels, ministers based on experience could assume a new position as superintendents. These take a form of hierarchical and chronological order when it comes to promotion and distribution of resources to ministers. Ministers get promoted base on the year of ordination. Thus, it is a first-come-first-serve tagging process. However, the evangelical arm is iterative considering the gospel network of the church. It is a process of admitting God, submitting to God, committing to God, and transmitting from God to the outside world (Figure 6). It is a holistic approach that enables leadership to see CAC as a complex adaptive system (CAS). The church, however, many parts, frames one body. (Grudem, 2000)

The feedback loop that exists in the CAC could be between ministers or between ministers and followerships. It could be non-linear especially between ministers and followerships and between ministers and new members in the House fellowship or the love feast sessions. New members may request to partake in holy communion or matrimony service contrary to the rules of the church. It could generate problems, which some new members could take offense and exit the church. Furthermore, the handling of the homelessness in CAC also create some feedbacks that are either positive or negative.

7.4 Recommendations

In CAC, it appears leaders must review the rising requests in what are sloppy frameworks. Some studies indicated that the leads to various divisions in the church caused by a lack of understanding by leaders of how and why coherence emerges in CAC (Viola, 2009). It seems the application of complexity theory to explain why membership decline in CAC Nigeria could be intriguing in its outcomes.

The adoption of an organic structure is recommended. The new model, in a sense, could consider why CAC should improve by delivering unconstrained, systemic occurrences of curiosity out of which new instances of behavior could develop. (Brownlee, 2007; McElroy, 2000). The new patterns emerging in CAC could enhance the system capability to adapt successfully to the modern changing environment. An understanding of this adaptive nature of the CAC could create improving values and competition advantages. With complexity theory, CAC leaders and managers could accentuate the character of the role of knowledge in learning organizations (Holland, 1995). The church is a living organism and thus could benefit enormously as a CAS. Members of the SC in CAC should be different thinkers. They are to think pattern management, think networks, and reinvent relationships. Also, all ministers in the church should be better learners. They are to be better listeners, volunteers, and post-modern students. With this understanding, SC and other representatives will help CAC to create shared values, competitive advantages, and thus assisting the organization to become the highly robust, and high-level performing learning organizations. (Battram, 2002; McElroy, 2000)

7.5 Supporting Research

Fichter, Pyle, and Whitmeyer (2010) helped with the strategies and rubrics for teaching chaos and complex systems theories. The accentuation will elaborate on the self-organizing, and fractionating evolutionary systems that CAS exhibit (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). These resources will support ministers in their understanding of complex systems. McElroy (2000) provided a CAS model that CAC leadership could adopt. The resource also presented paradigm for integrating complexity theory, knowledge management, and organizational learning. Viola (2009) provided a comprehensive guide to starting and sustaining authentic Christian communities. It is a guide that could help ministers in their comprehension of the church as an organic system. Elkington (2011) provided help with missional church model that CAC leaders could espouse.

8. RESILIENCE

According to Uhl-Bien and Marion (2008), leadership is shifting from the industrial age to the knowledge era. The underscored that leadership model of the last century had been products of top-down, bureaucratic paradigms accentuate the needs for further research into contemporary leadership theories. Apparently, some models are eminently efficient for an economy premised on physical production but are not well-suited for a more knowledge-oriented economy.

World Economic Forum (WEF, 2013) suggested that the new leadership model could help in risk mitigation and adaptation in particular with the emphasize on resilience. According to Zolli (2012), for resilience to thrive, leaders and managers should prefer risk adaptation mindset to risk mitigation mindset. It is imperative to use the WEF's (2013) matrix to explore resilience in CAC. It helps to describe the organization in a narrative presentation, regarding resilience characteristics and performance found in the WEF's (2013) matrix. The explanation will center on the concept of resilience and how CAC is or not resilient. Also, I will make some recommendations on improving resilience in CAC.

8.1 Resilience Matrix

Resilience is an ability of complex adaptive systems (CAS) to withstand, recover from, and organize in response to crises (World Economic Forum[WEF], 2013). The functionality within CAC as a CAS has a multifaceted dimension. However, the church is a body of Christ for the primary purpose of the mission. In other words, CAC is a living organism on a mission for God (Elkington, 2011). The accomplishment of the church centrally is on bringing children to glory (Hebrews 2:5-10).

Thus, the resiliency in CAC is intrinsically linked with the goal of the church to serve God as the light of the world. It is a concept that underscores both the resilience characteristics and performance.

Economically, the church is robust. Since 1992 up till date, the church demonstrates the ability to absorb and withstand disturbances and crises both from within and outside. In Nigeria, for example, CAC encountered three major crises that led to a division in 1992, 2003, 2010. The economic meltdown of 2007 and 2008 cut the primary income of the church drastically. The impact of the financial difficulty and the division due to the internal crisis was enormous. The resilience on this note is a typical value deployed by SC. SC on a weekly basis monitor and assess the fundraising unit of the church. The unit has reliably delivered even in difficult time due to effective monitoring and adaptive decision-making style of the SC. I perceive that the charisma, spiritual prowess, positive rhetorical skill, persuasiveness of followers to give to the work of the mission, all help in navigating this element of complexity.

With the economic/redundancy, because the church has a diverse of overlapping approaches, policies, synergies, to meet mission target, whenever any element of the infrastructure failed, the other units within the subsystem functioned to fulfill mission objectives and purposes. The SC achieved this economic/redundancy feature with the efficient usage of the specialized branches of the church. The particular branches are available to maintain the core performance of the church even in term of crisis. The SC provides for various sort of solutions in harmonizing assortment with proficiency and severance.

The church ability to adapt to different divisions remains an advantage. CAC response to the crisis is characteristically flexible as ministers in their branches are to dialogue with other parties where possible as well as momentarily involve the youth movement to deploy their skills creatively to promote resilience. It serves both as economic, environmental, and socially resourceful means of resilience in the church. The SC could achieve such high level of resourcefulness because the main emphasize within all the performance elements of the faith is trust. The trust dynamics help the church to self-organize and crucially enable others to influence the body as one under Jesus Christ (John 10:16).

Currently, the leadership of the church promoting innovation at the grass root of the church. The SC is improving trust dynamics as the bedrock of creativities and transformation. It is a notion that the church is viewing as a capacity to creativity and innovation. The SC perceives this as a useful input to resourcefulness. The trust that exists between ministers and members of the church could help to foster a resilience across all the components of CAC (WEF, 2013). The situation in CAC Europe is presenting a different outlook. In the region, thinking about resilience concentrates on the flow of refugees arriving at the gates of Europe poses new challenges to CAC Europe.

The challenges are in many areas: humanitarian assistance, poverty, inclusion, access to education, and jobs. These are annexures to societal approaches to resilience. The stream of refugees also raises important questions about resourcefulness and pose a significant challenge for CAC philanthropy. How will CAC deal with these problems? How resilient is CAC in Europe? Will the church as a nonprofit organization collaborate with other sectors to address these challenges? Overall, I perceive that the trust management focus could help the church to fulfill several goals and purposes of the mission. In other words, cultivating resilience through trust management could help the church to develop risks mitigation and adaptation mindsets.

In a time of outbreaks, CAC could mobilize especially the youth movement. The youth movement of the church partners with several organizations to develop models to help communities in term of epidemics. When there was an outbreak of Ebola in Liberia and Sierra Leone, CAC through the youth movement made available both financial and human resources. The responses worked well as a collaborative synergy of communication and trust that exist within the CAC culture. The youth movement makes available regular and viable information to the followership of the church and the members of the public in nations affected by Ebola. For instance, the communication and the full participation of CAC impact positively on the countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone ability to navigate this complexity via societal resilience.

Apparently, the degree of normality presently gained by CAC, having navigated over three major crises since 1992 and up till date could testify to the level of resilience in CAC. These could be social, economic, environment, governance, and infrastructural characterized. The performance of the church promotes the societal relevance of resilience. The current normality in the church in Nigeria, for example, provides evidence for the attributes that associated with the recovery ability from crises. Undoubtedly, to explore resilience in CAC under the 25 cells of the WEF's (2013) is engaging and intriguing. For the CAC leadership, understanding resilience could help them to foster a globally competitive approach to sustainable development (Fiksel, 2006). It could provide a rational approach to the understanding of care and trust management in a religion organization (e.g., CAC). CAC through its University could engage the academics with the functions to criticize the concepts, to examine empirically, and to probe policy of resilience. In other words, the church should continuously contribute to the awareness of the conceptual origins of resilience. The church should engender the accentuation of treating resilience not as a moral imperative within the faith communities, but as an experiential inquiry. The leaders of the church should think about the consequences of promoting resilience.

CAC as a faith group, notwithstanding, is resilient considering the resilience characteristics and performance highlighted in (WEF, 2013) matrix. However, to provide an adequate assessment and evaluation of an organization's resilience, one must explore how resilience could help to mitigate and adapt national and global risks. SC should endeavor to investigate the need for such assessment and evaluation. In other words, resilience could apply to religion organizations, but critically, practitioners should make a holistic assessment and evaluation. SC should consider further the resilience of CAC. Apparently, systems thinking could provide a bedrock for evaluation and valuation of CAC resilience through the consideration of its robustness, redundancy, resourcefulness, response, recovery as noted in the exploration described earlier.

8.2 Supporting Research

Mikes (2011) suggested an improved performance strategy to managing risks. The members of SC should explore the provision of the new framework and develop policies that will help the church to grow and improve performance by designing risks adaptation mindset within their decision-making strategy. Inevitably, the agenda of the church to cultivate risks adaptation mindset could lead to exponential growth as followership enjoys to stay where there are care and trust. Such growth could as well underpin the critical need for resilience. (Viola, 2009) Notwithstanding the challenges to leadership and management of the church, the church through its University subsystem should prepare to work across boundaries of scholars and professionals' fields (Comfort, Boin, & Demchak, 2010). According to Berkes (2007), it is imperative for today's leaders and managers to understand uncertainty and reducing vulnerability. The leadership of CAC could learn from these resources more lessons from understanding resilience. All the resources used in this paper could be entirely valuable to the decision making as CAC leadership continue to comprehend the behavior of their organization for improved performance.

9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, having considered the various element of the systems thinking model, it will not be difficult for an individual to appreciate that disjointed, haphazard engagement to solve complex problems are with accentuation unproductive. By taking after the different suggestions underscored in the report, the official authority of the congregation will pick up a superior comprehension of the CAC culture while being inundated in another, subsequent in a more remarkable resilience for distinction. It could be an excellent understanding of the learning association, and a developed gratefulness for a full responsibility to positive social change plan. Finally, the implementation of actions in this paper will give CAC executive leadership among other things the opportunity to build a system model of the CAC structure using the systems thinking approach for positive social change. (Laureate Education, 2014; Senge, 2006; Stroh, 2015)

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