
**PRINCIPLES OF MODERN MANAGEMENT IN THE
CURRENT GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION OF
THE LOCAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
A ROMANIAN CHRISTIAN ORTHODOX
PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

The present paper aims at exploring the presence of modern management principles in the nowadays governance and organization of the local Christian Orthodox churches from a Romanian Christian Orthodox perspective. The paper performs a bibliographical study based on normative documents and handbooks accredited by the Romanian Orthodox Church. The findings demonstrate that largely-accepted management principles and approaches of industrial organizations are operating in the local church organizations as well. Although the research is limited to the Romanian Orthodox Church, its implications may easily be extended to the local churches of other Orthodox countries, as well as to Roman-Catholic and Protestant churches. The originality of the present paper lays in the inverted approach as most researches have so far tried to explore how management benefits from approaches described in the sacred writings of the great contemporary religions of the world. With other words our research aims at finding out to what extent Management science provides support tools to religious organizations in order to accomplish their institutional tasks and to achieve higher efficiency and effectiveness.

Keywords: management principles, governance, organization, local Christian Orthodox churches

1. Introduction

The most recent management literature deals courageously and incisively with recently disavowed themes, namely the various interferences between modern management and various religious systems of the world. Be it

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Christianity, Judaism or Islam, today it is not uncommon to find papers in prestigious scientific journals, lectures at conferences, or even management books of higher pretention claims, covering topics of modern management, and at the same time taking examples from the holy books of worldwide coverage religions or traditions. Such papers speak about organizing business on Benedictine rules, about leadership inspired from Moses' memorable character, or about business ethics based on the Islamic value system. The abundance of these studies, it is true that most of them just conceptual and less validated by empirical research, motivated us to take an approach from a reversed perspective, namely to investigate the extent to which not only management benefits of a conceptual support came from religious writings, but also, to see from a new critical perspective whether well-consolidated principles in the current field of Management science provide support tools to religious organizations in order to accomplish their institutional tasks and to achieve higher efficiency and effectiveness.

In the strict terms of the Church it would be but a rough approximation if we didn't mention that through its double valence, the material (or the visible) and in the same time the spiritual (the unseen) valence, it differs greatly by purely secular organizations. This distinction is based both on the fact that it was created as a 'holy settlement founded by Jesus Christ', and on its objective, namely to lead the believers to salvation. By this it transcends both the foundation and mission of a secular established organization. Our justification for making an approach on the proposed subject lays in its material aspect of the "Christian communitarian institution, made up of believers and organized by religious and moral ordinances specific to Christian faith", respective of a "religion based society, a communitarian organized body, consisting in several categories of members, established in organized units of many kinds, with special leading bodies..." [1].

2. Management principles vs. principles of Church governance and organization

2.1. Principles of modern management

Since the dawn of the first management approaches of the late 18th century, the science of Management has accumulated by scholars and academics, has distilled in the melting pot of management practice by the practitioners and has produced an impressive amount of management approaches, principles, systems, models, methods and techniques. Some of them are seen as obsolete, others are showing their strength even in the computer era of organization. Let's review some of the most important management principles, that have passed the test of the several Management schools, beginning with the actual "managerial awakening" [2] and ending with the contemporary vision on the future of management, masterly exposed by Peter F. Drucker or Gary Hamel. In this development of the managerial thinking, we find

the subject of managerial work principles that are in the attention of many management ‘gurus’. We must firstly lay the stress on the principle of division of labour whose benefits were praised already by Adam Smith [3]. Then, the founder of ‘scientific management’, Frederick Taylor, applying this principle to separate the workmen labour from the management, emphasizes the importance of the principle of harmony, rather than the discord between the two, and also the principle of cooperation instead of individualism [4]. It was Henry Fayol who clearly specified a set of 14 management principles more from the management point of view, many of them being also today in practice: division of work, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination of individual interest (to the general interest), remuneration, centralization (or decentralization), scalar chain (Line of Authority), order, equity, stability of tenure of personnel, initiative, maintaining a proper team spirit (Esprit de Corps) [5]. Not beyond the subject is the issue of power and authority. And indeed, the cited Canon Law Handbook, states it clearly in a distinct chapter. So, tracing again the history of management thought, it was Max Weber who presented the types of leadership and their source of power and authority. Coming back to the managerial principles, Claude George stated that “the principles of organization employed by all great leaders throughout history must surely be the same” [2, p. 138]. And indeed, the present knowledge of Management science and its future trends emphasize the principle of universality of management. Continuing in this idea, speaking about the new postulates of management, Peter Drucker stated the need of grafting the management approaches on the cultural, social and political traditions, of each country, on its own development condition [6].

2.2. The legal and internal regulatory framework of local churches

Having in view the legal framework of the local churches we have to notice on one hand the No. 489/2006 Law on religious freedom and the general regime of religious denominations. Romania legally recognizes nowadays 18 Churches: the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Serbian Orthodox Bishopric of Timisoara, the Latin Church, the Romanian Church United with Rome (Greek-Catholic), the Archdiocese of Armenian Church, the Christian Church of Russian Old Rite in Romania, the Reformed Church in Romania, the Evangelical Church C.A. in Romania, the Lutheran Evangelical Church in Romania, the Unitarian Church of Transylvania, the Union of Christian Baptist Churches in Romania, the Evangelical Church in Romania - Union of Christian Evangelical Church in Romania, the Romanian Evangelical Church, the Pentecostal Union - Apostolic Church of God in Romania, the Adventist Church of Seventh-day in Romania, the Federation of Hebrew Communities in Romania, the Moslem religion, the religious organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses [7].

On the other hand, we have to take into account the fact that at a lower level, the local churches (for instance the parishes of many of the above mentioned Christian denominations) are legally organized as NGO’s, as they are

declared as being voluntary associations of members, and so, being subject to the Foundations and Association Act.

Besides the external legal framework, for every Christian local church, the principles of their organization are laying on each officially approved status by their leadership on national level, as being: Status of the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church; Code of Canon Law of the Roman-Catholic Church; Canon Code for the Eastern Churches for the Greek-Catholic Church; Organic Statute of the Evangelical Church C.A. (Confession Augustan) in Romania; Status of Baptist Christian worship in Romania; Status of organization and functioning of Pentecostal Cult - Apostolic Church of God of Romania, to mention just a few of them.

Last, but not the least, the local church organization are subject to the large collection of canon principles, as they have been stacked during two millennia of Christianity, usually presented in the handbooks on canon law.

2.3. Brief review of the canonical principles of the Christian Orthodox local churches

Canon Law handbooks usually present the collection of canonical principles in organizing the Christian local churches. From a teaching point of view they are divided into two subsets, i.e. on one hand in canonical principles with dogmatic and legal background, and on the other hand in canonical principles with only legal background. The setting of both sets has been made either by foundation on canon texts, or by legal customs. The first group is represented by the *ecclesiological-institutional principle* (states the visible aspect of the Church, as an establishment organized on both religious and human norms of social cohabitation), *organic or Church-constitutional principle* (views the Church as an integrative body), *hierarchical principle* (the whole organization, work and governance of the Church is shaped by the clergy hierarchy of divine establishment), *synodal principle* (the upper governance of the local Church units are collegial bodies), *dispensation principle* (the ecclesiastical authority, holding the ecclesiastical power, is in the position to decide on administrating this power on its own), *external autonomy principle* (shows the autonomy of the Church in religious matters) and *loyalty against the state principle* (reflects the respect and honour attitude of the church towards the State, and its non-interference in state affairs). The second set of canonical principles with only legal background comprises the *autocephaly principle* (states that a hierarchic, synodal and territorial determined Church unit maintains governs itself completely independently against other similar Church units, but keeping the dogmatic, cultic and canonical unity), *internal autonomy principle* (though some Church units are governed by their own bodies, they are subject to the supervising, control and guidance from upper hierarchical ecclesiastical bodies), *mixed legislation (of both Church and State) principle* (the Church is governed by both secular and their own norms) and *territorial principle* (the

territorial Church follows the territorial organization of the state where they are located) [1, p. 191-206].

2.4. The specific power and authority of ecclesiastical organizations

Before going on with the subject, the notions of power and authority have to be presented briefly from the point of view of the ecclesiastical organizations. According to the cited Canonical Law Handbook, the ecclesiastic power is defined as the *sum of religious means, moral and material nature that serves the Church in order to conduct its saving work* [1, p. 215-216]. In terms of the religious means, they serve for continuing the Saviour's work in the world, so that the Church work has thus a threefold aspect: a teaching (preaching/prophetic) one, a priesthood (sanctifying, hierarchical) one, and a leading (pastoral, royal) one. Now, in order to fulfil the threefold work, it is also rational that each of these threefold aspects are underpinning on their specific teaching, priesthood and leading power. According to the dogma of the Christian church, the source of authority lays in Triune God Itself. So, the teaching power has been given clearly by Jesus Christ in the Gospel (Matthew 28.19, Mark 16.15); the power of sanctifying the life of the believers by administrating the sanctifying grace (Matthew 28.19, Mark 16.16, John 20.21-23, Matthew 18.18) [1, p. 215-216]. In this respect, it has to be mentioned that a bishop holds the entire sacramental power of the Church, while the priest only partially and the deacon even less. It is important to emphasize this aspect, because as it will later be seen, the priest fulfils its office by making use of the delegation principle from the hierarch (i.e. the bishop). Even of greater importance for our subject is the leading or jurisdictional power, commonly divided into three functions: legislative, judicial, and executive. It is also supportive of our subject to note that one who wears the ecclesiastical power has rights and obligations resulting from holding this office.

2.5. The local units of the Romanian Orthodox Church

According to the Status of the Romanian Orthodox Church, there are four main levels of local units in the Romanian Orthodox Church, in order of their size and importance as follows: the parochial level, deanary level, bishopric level and metropolitan level. We took out here the monasteries and the special case of the vicary level.

The present paper has as a goal to briefly present the organization and governance of each level.

2.5.1. The parochial system

On the first level lays the parish, both in the countryside and in cities. According to the Status for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church, the parish is defined as being "*the community of Orthodox*

Christians, clergy and laity, placed in a certain territory and subject to the diocesan centre in terms of canonical legal, administrative and patrimonial, led by a priest appointed by the Diocesan Bishop (Archbishop or Bishop) of that eparchy” [Status for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 37, http://www.patriarhia.ro/ro/documente/statutul_bor.html].

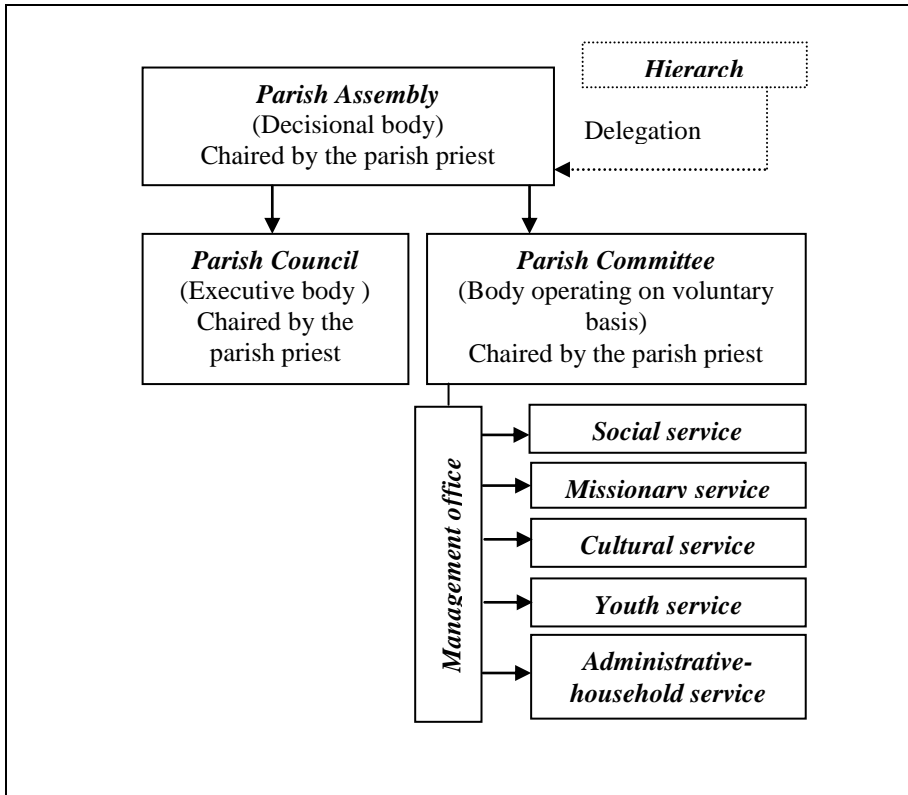


Figure 1. Organizational chart of a Romanian Orthodox parish.

In order to fulfil its mission, the governance and organization of each parish is carried out by several bodies (Figure 1): *the Parish Assembly* (Art. no. 54 - Art. no. 58) as deliberative body; *Parish Priest* (Art. no. 50 - Art. no. 53) spiritual shepherd of the faithful of the parish and also the leader of the parish administration, chairman of the Assembly parish, the Parish Council and the Parochial Committee by delegation from the Hierarch; the *Parish Council* (Art. no. 59 - Art. no. 63), as executive body; the *Parish Committee* (Art. no. 66 - Art. no. 68).

An excerpt comprising only the managerial tasks is given in Table 1 [Status for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 37-51]. The *Parish Committee* is a body established on a voluntary basis, subordinating the several services: a. social services; b. missionary service; c. cultural department; d. youth service; e. administrative-household (Figure 2).

Table 1. Overview of the tasks of the parochial organization and government bodies (excerpt).

Tasks of Parish Priest	Tasks of Parish Assembly	Tasks of Parish Council	Tasks of Parish Committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performs the <i>duties of head</i> of of the parish administration, the president of the Parish Assembly, of the Parish Council and of the Parochial Committee; - Exercises the <i>threefold priestly ministry: the teaching, the sanctifying and the pastoral-missionary</i> (administrative) one; - <i>Prepares and carries out</i> the provisions of the <i>annual pastoral-missionary program of activities</i>; - <i>Manages</i> the parish patrimony, in accordance with the decisions of the Parish Assembly and Parish Council; - <i>Controls</i> the good management of cultural, social-philanthropic and church-foundational institutions of the parish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elects the members of the Parish Council and the Parish Committee and approves their activity reports and the annual budget of the parish; - Decides with regard to the erection, repairing, restoration and maintenance of buildings (church, rectory and other buildings); - Decides the establishment of funds for the church, cultural or social-philanthropic aims and lays down rules for acquiring financial resources of the parish; - Submits for the approval of the Diocesan Council the transmitting of any use or ownership title Parish Real Estate (by sale, purchase, lease, exchange, etc.); - Approves measures to manage movable and immovable property of the parish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepares the parish budget, report execution account and financial balance sheet of the parish, the annual report on the activities and aims of the implementation of the budget; - Approves the priest's proposals on equipping the parish church with different specific endowments (vestments, icons, objects of worship, religious books, etc.) and carries out an appropriate allocation of funds; - Ensures the provision of the parish church with the needed materials and objects (candles, calendars, books and objects of worship and spiritual edification prints, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Coordinates</i> the five services: social, missionary, cultural, youth and household-administrative; - is supported by a <i>management office</i>, comprising: program coordinator, secretary and cashier; - Each of the five services is headed by a <i>coordinator appointed</i> by the management office.

2.5.2. The deanery

Going upwards, the immediate next level is the deanery. To the deanery belong several parishes located on the same Diocese. The Deanery is headed by a dean priest and is served by an office with clerical and non-clerical staff. The Dean priest has to accomplish several duties according to the Art. no. 73 of the above mentioned Status.

2.5.3. The eparchy

More parishes grouped in deaneries, together with the monasteries in a given territory form an eparchy (archbishopric and bishopric) [*Status for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church*, 59]. In terms of its management, an eparchy is governed by a *bishop (archbishop)*, by the *eparchial assembly* as decisional body and by the *eparchial council* together with its *permanent core*, as executive bodies. The decisions taken by the eparchial assembly cover all issues of administrative, cultural, social-philanthropic, economic and patrimonial nature. In order to ease its work, the eparchial assembly elects five permanent work commissions, as being the administrative-religious commission, the cultural and educational commission,

the economic, budgetary and patrimonial commission, the social and philanthropic commission and the organizational, legal and validation commission (Figure 3).

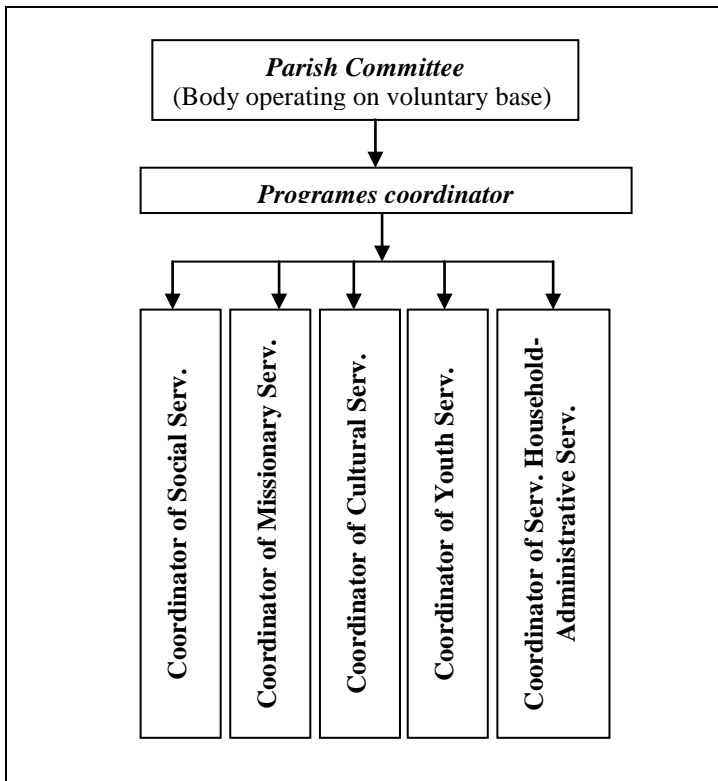


Figure 2. Organization of specialized services of a Romanian Orthodox parish.

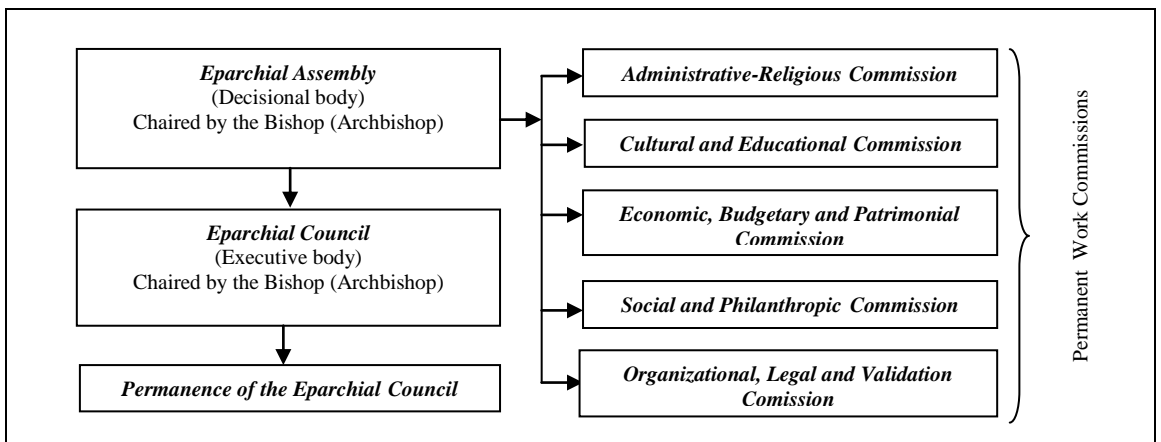


Figure 3. Eparchial organization chart in the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Analysing now the executive bodies of the eparchial assembly, we have to notice first the eparchial council, being the competent body in ecclesiastical-administrative problems, cultural, social, philanthropic, economic, patrimonial and foundational issues of the entire episcopate. In order to ensure the continuity in the work of the eparchial council, it is supported by its permanent core (permanence of the eparchial council). In the same spirit, in order to exercise his duties, the bishop (archbishop) is supported by a deputy (vicar), by the eparchial administration and by the eparchial chancery (Figure 4).

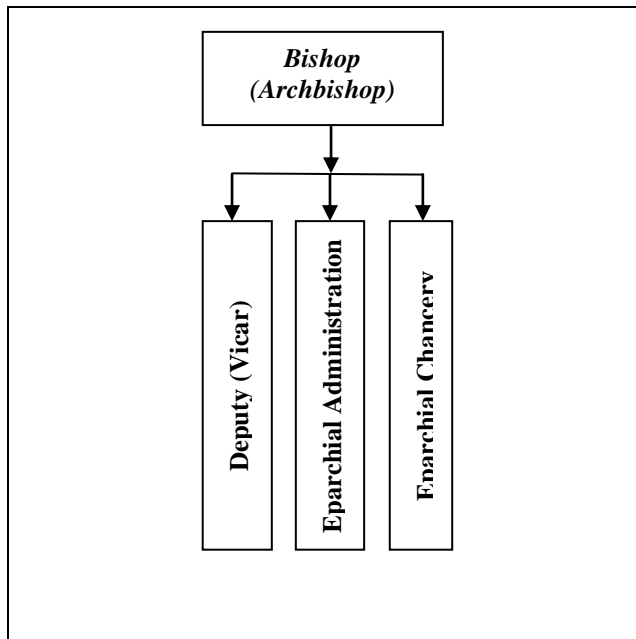


Figure 4. Bishop's supporting bodies.

The *eparchial administration* has to put in practice the decisions of the decisional and executive bodies coming from the central and Episcopal level. The common branches of this administration cover Church-administrative, education and youth, cultural and media communications, social, philanthropy and missionary, economic and financial, patrimonial and church construction, and monasteries issues. In its organization, there are several departments and offices which are commonly established, such as: library, the museum, the HR office, the accounting office, the technical office, the publishing house, the printing shop, the workshops, etc. Finally to the eparchial organization, its chancery has several departments, as Hierarch office, secretariat, registry, archives offices, canon-legal office, inspection and control body, communications and public relations office.

2.5.4. The metropolitanate

From canonical and administrative point of view the episcopates and archiepiscopates are grouped together in metropolitanates. The Church governance is ensured on this level by the metropolitan synod, composed by the metropolitan, along with the archbishops, bishops, as well as auxiliary bishop and vicar bishops from suffragan eparchies [*Status for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church*, 72-75].

3. Discussion

Before asking ourselves whether and to what extent the principles of Management science can be found in the organization and governance of local Church, we believe it would be of advantage to complete the proposed subject of debate by emphasizing a number of similarities between the functions of the various steps of the Church hierarchy and those of managers. It is interesting that the binomial differences between the leading and operation positions of the secular organization are also found in the organization of the Church, in terms of the very popular syntagma of 'clergy and people'.

Then, the similarities between the administrative register of the parochial office and the managerial function seems to be justified and seems to result with great evidence from the administrative role as head of the parish, as chairman of both parochial Assembly and parochial committee. Based on these functions, and according to the same mentioned Statute, the parish priest is the representative of the community of believers in relation with the court, facing the local authorities and many others. The figure head mentioned by Mintzber when speaking about the ten roles of a manager is obviously clear [8]. As Mintzber puts it, another role played by the parish priest is that of a liaison within his community of believers. And so it is, without doubt.

On the other hand, there is a common idea in every management handbook that a manager has to fulfil four sorts of responsibilities, i.e. economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibility. As being stated in the Statute, the parish priest has certain duties in administrating the parish patrimony. His economic and legal responsibility is defined clearly: „*the parish priest is the administrator of the entire movable and immovable wealth of the parish together with the Parish Council, under the eparchial control and answers canon-disciplinarily and ecclesiastic-administratively in front it, and for vicious administration and mismanagement of the ecclesiastical estate he answers in front of civil courts, according to the civil and criminal legislation*” [*Status for the organization and functioning of the Romanian Orthodox Church*, 46].

Similarly with the above, the dean is the head of the deanery and of the administrative chancery.

Following the same idea, it may not be without interest for the proposed study to notice a couple of similarities between the functions of a bishop versus

the one of a top manager (CEO). So, the bishop is in right to ordain clergy (appointing department heads): appoints, dismisses and decides the transfer of clergy and non-clergy Church staff (appointing, transferring and dismissing personnel, both of management and execution positions), confers honours and ecclesiastical rank (granting awards to the employee), grants annual leave for the clerical and non-clerical staff (staff's annual leave approval), ensures the discipline of clergy (taking disciplinary actions on staff), receives complaints brought against the clerical and non-clerical staff (receiving petitions and complaints), etc.

Coming back to the managerial principles, as we've seen above, what makes our approach reasonable lays in the institutional aspect of the local churches, well-acknowledged through the *ecclesiological-institutional principle*. So, we are in right to bridge principles of human organization and leadership (the industrial organization is one of them) with the organization and governance of religious communities. And if it so, modern views and principles of organizational theories may be supportive for the organization and governance of local Churches. Starting with this assumption, we may easily recognize that both industrial organizations and the Church are seen as an integrative body (*organic-constitutional principle*).

But maybe the most obvious principle in use is that of hierarchy. The *principle of hierarchy* crosses like a red line through the religious organization since their inception while the hierarchical structuring of the management function is a common thing in Management science and practice that no one questions.

According to this principle we hope not to impermissibly force the clergy-manager analogy, by mirroring the three levels of divine established clergy (bishop, priest, deacon) with the three levels of management (top management, middle and line), as this analogy seems to us as being the direct result of the application of the hierarchical principle in both cases.

One could easily imagine that another two principles in use, both in management and Church governance (with few amendments) deriving from the principle of hierarchical organization, are the *principles of unity of command* and *unity of direction*. Otherwise it would conduct to confusion, disorder and waste of resources.

Another identified principle refers to the delegation. As seen above, the exercise of the administrative leadership in the case of the parish and dean is a result of applying the principle of management delegation from the bishop. This principle does not apply to the eparchy, though any bishop has all the power in the three coordinates, i.e. teaching, sanctifying and leading across his eparchy.

We have also seen above that both on the parochial and eparchial level, there are collective decision-making bodies, just like in the participative management system (the board of administration), headed by the clergy representative (parish priest, bishop), respectively the President or the CEO in the secular organizations.

Another interesting connection could be made between the metropolitan organization of the Church and the divisional organization type, as stated by Mintzeberg, „each division is given thus a good deal of autonomy” [9].

4. Conclusions

In the last decades, the connection between the world religions and the modern management approaches has gained more and more interest. So, a large amount of research covers leadership, organization theory, conflict management, or other management fields, being dedicated to explore how management benefits from approaches described in the sacred writings of the great contemporary religions of the world.

The present paper is aligned to the pursuits of finding out to what extent Management science provides support tools to religious organizations in order to accomplish their institutional tasks and to achieve higher efficiency and effectiveness. So, being aware of the universality of management principles like those of heirarchy, unity of command, unity of direction and delegation, we showed that these principles apply to the oraganization and governance of the Christian local church units, as well. Several similarities were also presented between the binomial relationship ‚leading-execution postion’ and the ‚clergy – people’ one, or between the Metropolitan church organization and the divisional organizations.

Future developments could cover both bibliographical research in the Latin or Protestant church, and empirical studies of how these principles are applied in practice.

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