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**THE CHURCH: AN IMAGE, A SYMBOL AND REALITY;  
A HISTORICAL EXCURSION**

**By**

**REV. FR. OKPALIKE, CYRIACUS OZOEMENA<sup>1</sup>**

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**PREAMBLE**

The nomenclature “church” has become so commonized, if not bastardized that every other person appears to know too much about it to the extent that it has been presumed as an all comers affair. The choice of this topic for this great audience is to incite a continued discussion and research into what we are all involved in that we may not continue to neglect **WHAT WE ARE** to those who either **WANT TO BECOME** or **WANT TO DIVERT** or **USURP**.

The official usage of the term to denote a people, a gathering, a location or building has very much deeper significance as well as implications to be as extensive as it is intensive an expression. This paper accordingly looks at the concept of church from its etymology as a nomenclature and its foundations, extension and expressions; hence as **IMAGE, SYMBOL and REALITY. As an image, the church exists to reflect a greater reality; as a symbol, it points to a beyond and as a reality, she endures through its imagery and symbolism which it continues to manifest in existence.**

This delivery, is limited to a historical excursion to appreciate how this term “church” has evolved through the ages until our own time in anticipation of where it is intended to lead the adherents to.

The church, seeing herself rooted in God, has a function which makes her understand self in that line of relationship through history, developing imagery and symbolism and eventually manifest a change of a sacramental relationship and existential imagery whereby she continues to express herself.

Through an etymological survey, we are lunched into a historical cum theoretical/theological development of a foundation that eventually brings us to considerations whose implications expose what reality the church manifestly reveals about her foundation.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev Fr. Cyriacus O. Okpalike is a priest of Awka Diocese. He majored in Architecture and is a lecturer at Enugu State University (ESUT)

## A. DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 1. CHURCH (ETYMOLOGY)

Etymologically, the English term “Church” is a proper noun with other denotations and referentials; ecclesial, ecclesiastical, ecclesiological, et cetera, in such derivatives, pointing to another word *Ekklesia*. Its root is *ΚΑΛΣΙΥ* (*Kalein*) meaning “to call out of” – a convocation, an assembly. The original profane Greek (*Εκκλησία*) officially implied an assembly of citizens as a political force (cf Acts 19: 32 – 41). It however came into religious use in the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE Septuagint (LXX) to render the general assembly of the Jewish people convoked for religious purposes most especially by the Deuteronomists (Deut. 23: 23), the Biblical Chronicler and the Book of Psalms (Ps. 21:22)<sup>2</sup> or Torah (Deut 9: 16).

Such usage was to render the Hebrew *qahal* (81 times) or its derivatives (4 times) – Neh. 57, Psalm 25/26:12, 67/68:27). The Septuagint also used (*Εκκλησία*) as a synonym to *συναγωγή* (*SUNAGOGE*) which however more frequently rendered Hebrew *ēda*<sup>3</sup> (a gathering) J.J. O’Rourke suggestively concludes that both the “assonance and similarity in meaning” of *qáhál* and *Εκκλησία*: “that which is called forth”, influenced translators who produced the Septuagint (LXX).

The Greek, *το Κυριακον* (thing or place pertaining to the Lord) through the Gothic was ultimately delivered to English as ‘Church’ and German as *Kirche*. The Romance languages followed the Latin ‘transliteration’ *Ecclesia* to derive *Eglise* (French) and *Chiesa* (Italian).

In the New Testament, *Εκκλησία* became of much use as it appeared 61 times in Pauline Corpus (including Hebrews), 23 times in Acts of the Apostles, 20 times in the Apocalypse. Of the 11 times it appeared in the remaining books, the meaning is derived from the context<sup>3</sup>.

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Beyond the Koine Greek in use at the time of Jesus, Aramaic was the spoken dialect and rendered the two Greek translations differently; *ēdtā* or *Kristra* for *συναγωγή*, and *q’hala* for *Εκκλησία*.

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<sup>2</sup> J.J. O Rouke, “Church in the Bible” in the *New Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. III, 1967.

<sup>3</sup> J.J. O Rouke, “Church in the Bible”

J.J. O'Rourke suggests that Jesus, since he established a new covenant and a new people of God in continuity with *qahal Yahweh* would not have given a name to this new people in Aramaic. Historical revelations are awaited. Whatever be the case, it is notable that when the break up between Christians and Jews occurred, *Εκκλησία* became a purely Christian term while *συναγωγή* became Jewish.

In summary when the word "Church" appeared in the New Testament, three main meanings are derivable:

1. The entire body of believing Christians throughout the world (Matthew 16:18, 1Cor. 15: 9, Gal. 1:10, Phil. 3:6).
2. Believers in a particular area or local community (Acts 5:11, 1Cor. 12, 16).
3. The congregation meeting in a particular house: i.e the liturgical assembly, what came to be known as the "house church" (Rm. 16:5, 1Cor. 11:18, 14:19-28, 34, 35) also the location/building for worship.

The two dimensions, universality of Matthean tradition and particularity of Pauline tradition, became of great significance when one thinks in the direction of *agere sequitor esse*, such that:

The *Εκκλησία* is the assembly actually gathered here and now in the immediacy of space and time... that this space and time are transcended both in memory and eschatological in accordance with the dynamics of the history of salvation, the mystery of which the assembly celebrates and in doing so experiences and proclaims.<sup>4</sup>

It is within this context of space and time that "semantic ambivalence"<sup>5</sup> allows the word "church" to be used also for the Christian building for worship. If the church is what we have seen, her existence is to worship God and therefore liturgical. An excursion into what liturgy means will give us a much greater highlight.

## 2. Liturgy

Liturgy is derived from the Greek *λειτουργία* (*Leitourgia*), a compound word;

<sup>4</sup> Cettina Militello, "A Theology of Liturgical Space" in Anscar J. Chupungco OSB (ed) *Liturgical Time and Space – The Pontifical Liturgical Institute Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, Vol. V. (Liturgical Press, 2000), p. 398

<sup>5</sup> Cettina Militello, "A Theology of Liturgical Space"

1. *λειτός* (*Leitos*): an adjective meaning “pertaining to the people” (*laos* - *laos*)
2. *Έργος* (*ergos*): a noun meaning “work”.

Liturgy would imply any service rendered for the common good/welfare of the people. For the Greeks, such a public service could be at personal expenses or without remuneration and they were mainly education, entertainment and defence. Such an action must have repercussions at the social and political sphere and would even include forced labour done for the common good.

The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament introduced liturgy to revealed literature to render almost exclusively, the worship of YHWH – the chosen people’s prime purpose for existence, because it used it less frequently for something done for the state (1Kg. 19:12, 2Chr. 17:19, 22:8) and was thus adopted by the New Testament.

The New Testament naturally adopted the Septuagint translator’s sense of liturgy. Synoptic Luke simply reported Zachariah’s liturgy in the Temple – a priestly function to burn incense in the *noas/hekal* -holy place (Lk. 1:8ff). Pauline use of liturgy is more diffused; referring to himself as “the liturgist of Jesus Christ to the gentiles (Rm. 15:16), his usage would include collections taken up for the poor in Jerusalem (2Cor. 9:12) as well as the services to his own person (Phil. 2:30).

The Letter to the Hebrews (8:1-6) restricts liturgy to the priestly work of Jesus Christ, whereby he is a minister (*λειτοργος* – liturgist) of the holies where he performed a superior ministry (*λειτοργιας* – liturgy). In the time of the Church “this is properly the work of the Christian people of God for through Christ’s liturgy, they are able to offer acceptable worship to God and receive from him the fruits of Christ’s redemptive work”.

While Christian antiquity used “liturgy” to refer to prayer and sacrifice in general, writers of Early centuries in the Didache (15:1), Clement of Rome (Cor. 40: 2-5), Synod of Antioch (chapter 4) mean by liturgy “an official or community service” as opposed to devotions of purely private piety. While the East restricted it to the Eucharist, the West in the Middle Ages preferred terms like *ministerium* (ministry), *munus* (work), *servitus* (service) and *officium* (office). The Renaissance simply adopted “liturgy” in the

titles of collections describing the Church's worship, a consistency maintained since then.

The nature of the liturgy, complex as it may sound, is a sacramental worship, whereby signs and symbols are used to express two related realities

- (a) To express the divine life offered the Church by Christ,
- (b) Offering God, the Father, the homage and worship of his people (the Church) through Christ.

The foundation of the sacramental quality of liturgical action is the 'Incarnation' – God became man in Christ, as St. John puts it – And the Word was made Flesh And dwelt among us (John 1:14). In Christ is the union of God and man (Hypostatic union); Christ is the sacrament of God.

The Paschal Mystery (Christ's suffering, death and resurrection) is the internal content of every liturgical action; otherwise liturgical action will be an empty shell. Saving union with God comes only through Christ's redemptive work – all must participate in the resurrected body of Christ (the Church). The Church is the sacrament of Christ. In the sacramental, liturgical worship of the Church we are assimilated into Christ's risen body<sup>6</sup>.

We succinctly conclude with Ratzinger that "man himself cannot simply make worship. If God does not reveal himself, man is clutching empty space" (cf. Ex. 10: 26).<sup>7</sup> Liturgy implies a real relationship – that God responds and reveals how we can worship him and he gives our existence a new direction.

## **B. HISTORICAL EXCURSION**

### **1. Foundation**

The Semitic background to Christian origins, remote as it may be, has always been traced to her Jewish/Judaistic foundations. In the final analysis, the God of the Church, or of Christians, is the God and Father of Jesus Christ; He is traditionally the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob (Ex. 3:15); the patriarchs of the Jews and Judaism, who revealed himself to Moses as YHWH (Yahweh). The beginning, the link and the continuity come together in this Deity that can reveal himself, and is only known and worshipped as such:

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<sup>6</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC) 5-7

<sup>7</sup> J. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, (San Francisco: Ignatian Press, 2000), p.

by revelation and no other mode of discovery. This Deity is eventually identified as God the Creator (of the entire universe).

It is the continuity of this self-revelation of THE DEITY to the people that makes worship possible to the Church as a people or Christianity as a religion. This Deity is the Trinitarian God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit – a fullness of revelation in the Son, the head of the Church, to whom Church members (adherents, structure and organization, constitute the Body; hence a union of Mystical Body – head and members) called the Church.

Three levels of involvement/revelation furnish the historical, theoretical/theological and conceptual framework, namely:

1. The patriarchal revelation ratified by the Abrahamic covenant whereby the distinctive mark was CIRCUMCISION – All believers in this Deity become, *ipso facto*, the children of Abraham.
2. The Mosaic revelation and development ratified by Exodus Sinaitic (and Shechemite) covenant of *qahal Yahweh* that established Judaism
3. The revelations of Jesus Christ, ratified by the Calvary Covenant which established the Church of the Trinitarian God.

This tripartite continuity progressively identified a people with their location and finally the building in which they gather, with identical nomenclature – Church. There is a fourth, eschatological, dimension, the *terminus ad quem*. Accordingly this framework becomes historical, theoretical/theological and conceptual in the development of doctrine – a comprehensive approach that interweaves the three dimensions and points them to divine conclusion of the human course.

## 2. Historical Framework

The Jewish/Judaistic origin of Christianity is an assumption that has enormous implications. Christianity actually considers self as a fulfillment of Judaistic foundations, thus assuming herself as ordained by God since creation for eternal orientation.

Judaism is founded on Abraham (Gen. 12: 1-9) who got into covenant relationship with a Deity who promised him the land of Canaan and a numerous progeny. This made Abraham migrate from the northern Mesopotamian town of Haran, belonging to the Hurrian Kingdom of Mitanni to Canaan about mid-20<sup>th</sup> century

BCE. This Abrahamic, Patriarchal Hebrew family expanded to include his son and grandson, Isaac and Jacob respectively. God revealed himself to the patriarchs as El-Shadai (Gen. 17:1), El-Elyon (Gen. 33:20), El-Olam, El-Bethel (Gen. 28:18-19), El-Roi (Gen. 16:13).

This patriarchal religion, depicting the patriarchs as objects/subjects of God's blessing, protection and providence, demanded response in loyalty, obedience and cult-observance by way of sacrifice, vow and prayer before an altar, stone pillar, or sacred tree. Patriarchal descendants had a distinctive mark of circumcision. Thus was laid the foundation of a patriarchal religion on familial basis through personal ties to this Deity.

From Canaan, the Hebrew ancestors of the people of Israel, named after the patriarch, Jacob, by God (Gen. 32:28/29) migrated to Egypt where they ended up living in servitude of slavery and marginalization (Ex. 1:11). It was here and then that the Deity appeared to Moses, introduced himself as the God of the Hebrew ancestors/patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in a “Burning Bush” episode and called himself YHWH (Yahweh) – (Ex. 3:15). Through Moses, YHWH fulfilled the promise of the land of Canaan and a numerous progeny to the patriarchs, liberating the Israelites from Egypt and enacting covenant obligations at Mount Sinai about 13<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

It is worthy of note, that theological and scholarly presuppositions have introduced individual differences into the division of the millennia of Jewish history. The scripture in the Old Testament Genesis account of creation matures into Exodus accounts such that the history of a people, the Jews, emerged.

Ratzinger in his corpus, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (2000), draws a lot of parallels which I dare to summarize and rearrange.

- A. He observes that the Genesis account of creation and Exodus Sinaitic regulations about Sabbath came from the same source and interpreted both together concluding that the goal of creation was to create space for the covenant, where God and man meet one another: creation becomes space for worship. Creation narrative ends with the Sabbath which in itself is a sign of the covenant between God and man, thereby summing up the inward essence of the covenant.

- B. The 7day work on the Tabernacle (Ex. 4:33ff) replicates the 7day work on creation (Gen.1:1ff) which completions, anticipating one another, unite heaven and earth as God dwells also in the world, giving the Hebrew word *BARA* (to create) two unitive distinct meanings
- (a) The process of world's creation, i.e. the separation of the elements through which the cosmos emerges out of chaos.
  - (b) The fundamental process of salvation history: the election and separation of the pure from the impure and therefore the inauguration of the history of God's dealing with men.

Without the covenant the created cosmos will be an empty shell. Creation history and worship are in a relationship of reciprocity: creation, looking towards the covenant which completes it, not simply existing along with it; worship, rightly understood as the soul of the covenant, not only saves mankind but also draws the whole of reality into communion with God.

The Sabbath is a vision of freedom, on which day, slave and master are equal because its "hallowing" is a rest from all relationships of subordination and a temporary relief from all burden of work. The Sabbath is a day of worship that brings out the unitive relationship between Liturgy, Cosmos and History.

### 3. Theoretical/Theological Dimension of The Framework

The people who left Egypt with Moses were not only Hebrews or Israelites, who already were bound to God by the patriarchal covenant. The people of Exodus, though in continuity with the people of Israel, exceeded the original children of the patriarchs. Hence the need for Sinaitic covenant to constitute a new people of God. The gathering assumed a new dimension. It was, therefore, "the array of the Lord" (Ex. 12:42, 16:6) that left the land of Egypt to become a covenant people at Sinai and is therefore officially designated *qahal Yahweh* – the assembly of the Lord being formed in the course of the journey to the promised land.

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI had identified two distinct goals of the Exodus:-

1. the reaching of the promised land, in which Israel will at last live on its own soil and territory, with secure borders as a people with freedom and independence proper to it.



2. that they may serve me in the wilderness' (op. cit) (Ex. 7:16) repeated four times with slight variation (Ex. 8:1, 9:1, 9:13, 10:3) in the meetings of Moses and Aaron with Pharaoh.<sup>8</sup>

Our theologian thus established a relationship between the two goals of the Exodus, viz, "The land is given to the people to be a place for the worship of the true God"<sup>9</sup>. With Ratzinger, we conclude that "the service of God, the freedom to give right worship to God, appears ... to be the sole purpose of Exodus, indeed, its very essence"<sup>10</sup>

At the threshold of the Promised Land, a covenant at Shechem (Joshua 24:25) and circumcision at Gilgal (Joshua 5:2-9) identified this *qahal*, preparatory to possessing the Promised Land - Canaanite Territory. Historical antecedents led to a re-enactment of the *qahal* YHWH in the exilic period of Jewish history by Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh. 8:1). **In theory, therefore, *qahal* YHWH is a worship/liturgical assembly that comes together specifically for the purpose of worship – the very reason for calling Israel out of Egypt, the very reason for the revelation to the patriarchs. This reason has persisted.**

#### 4. Conceptual Framework

The concept of Church as both people and location/building grows along historical and theoretical provisions and dimensions. The Sinaitic gathering eventually grew to give rise to such structures as the Ark of the Covenant, the Sanctuary, Tent of Meeting, The arrival and settlement at the Promised Land soon delivered the Temple. Historical precedents eventually created the synagogue alongside Temple liturgy. The Church finally arrived the scene as a final terminus of our concern. In summary, we can streamline along the lines of divine presence, viz, Ark, Temple/Synagogue and Church.

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#### 5. The Time of Christ

Jesus, the Christ, when he was on earth, was a Jew as well as active in Judaism such that he always pulled a large crowd from which he selected twelve apostles. Activities that identified him took place in

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<sup>8</sup> J. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 15

<sup>9</sup> J. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 17

<sup>10</sup> J. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, p. 20

the temple, synagogues, open spaces, private homes, shores of lakes, roadsides and would include teaching, preaching, praying, healing, feeding, blessing etc. His followership could be said to constitute a sect in Judaism (Acts 24:14); there were already the Essences, Pharisees, Sadducees, Publicans, Herodians, et cetera. They were specifically called Nazaereans or Nozorenes (Acts 26:9) or more specifically ‘the way’ (Acts 24:14). Of specific importance, however, are activities marking the end of Jesus’ sojourn on earth, namely the Last Supper, Crucifixion, death and resurrection which came to be regarded later by Christians as the Paschal Mysteries.

The Last Supper of Jesus with his apostles took place within the Jewish Passover meal – originating on the eve of the Exodus event in Egypt. It became a ritual meal in commemoration of the original Passover celebrated annually. A specific and definite nuance emerged to create a unique difference and hence a point of reference for a Christian establishment out of the original Judaism.

This happened on “the night before he suffered”. All the gospel accounts have the tale. The place of celebration was not named but described. At evening, they, Jesus and the twelve apostles, were already at table. Now at table also (Mtt. 26:20, Mk16) this ritual meal took place with a novelty both ritual and theological. Actions here would include:

1. Bread – blessed, broken and distributed.
2. Passover Lamb – Eaten really and ritually in a hurry standing, with bitter herbs – a walking stick on hand.
3. Cup – returned thanks, distributed and drunk as blood of the COVENANT.
4. Speech from Host – Jesus the Christ.
5. Psalms – The Hallel Psalms.
6. Departure for the Mount of Olives/Gethsemane Garden. It is from here that the arrest, judgment, crucifixion and death of Jesus would follow. The resurrection not only changed the story but added to it.

While Mark 16:14 reports a table fellowship of the apostles with Jesus after the resurrection, Luke (Luke 24:13-32) recounts the Emmaus experience of Cleopas and his companion; how the resurrected Jesus accompanied them on the way and joined them at home. “At table with them”, he “took bread, said the blessing, broke it and handed it to them” and their eyes were opened and they recognized him and he vanished from their sight. Within the

resurrection appearances, the apostles were further charged to evangelize the entire creation (Mtt. 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16) baptize believers, forgive or retain sins.

## **6. Apostolic Times**

Apostolic tradition after the ascension of Jesus, was aware of the memorial clause attached to the institution of the Eucharist at Christ's Last Supper, founded on the Jewish Passover (Family) meal and reinstated after the resurrection at Emmaus in recognition of the risen Lord, alongside the evangelical charge to teach, baptize and forgive because "As the Father sent me so I send you" (Mtt 28:20, Mk 16:16, 20, Lk. 24:17ff, John 20:21ff).

After the ascension, they reported back to the "upper room" in Jerusalem where they were staying (Acts 1:13). The experience of the Pentecost happened when "they had all met in one room" (Acts 2:1). Peter's speech this day added about 3,000 converts and this location witnessed either their baptism or its acceptance. Thus began the Ecclesiastical quartet (Acts 2:42) viz

1. Teaching (Didache) of the Apostles
2. The Brotherhood/Fellowship
3. Breaking of Bread (Eucharist)
4. Prayers.

Living together and owning everything in common (Acts 2:44) they went to the temple everyday as a body and met in their houses for the breaking of bread (Acts 2:46).

The portico of Solomon seemed a general meeting place for the Sanhedrin convocation (Acts 7) for the killing of Stephen also served the apostolic church. (Acts 5:12), also as a preaching arena (Acts 5:21, 25, 25, 42), yet they met as a community (Acts, 4:23) in a house of assembly (Acts 4:31) and in private houses (Acts 5:42).

Despite seeing themselves as adherents to Judaism, followers of Jesus the Nazarene knew themselves as keeping to 'the Way' and hence met "elsewhere" to celebrate the Eucharist as well as keep the Post resurrection evangelical mandate. The debates with Judaizers and attacks in the synagogues that often dragged to Tribunals and Law courts eventually led to separation, what with the Edict of Claudius which was issued by 49 or 50BCE expelling all the Jews from Rome. Christians continued to oscillate between the synagogue and the Church until a final separation that occasioned a malediction reported by Edward Foley as inserted into

one of the central prayers of the daily Jewish service by the year 80 CE.

For the apostates let there be no hope and uproot the kingdom of arrogance, speedily and in our day. May the Nazarenes and the Sectarians perish as in a moment. Let them be blotted out of the book of life, and not be written together with the righteous.<sup>11</sup>

The emerging Christianity said all prayers of Judaism but also withdrew to do very specific Christian things, namely the Eucharist (Acts 20:7-17), baptism, forgiveness of sin, scripture reading and interpretation in the light of Jesus the Christ (Acts 19:8). Evidently, the Church and synagogue existed one beside the other as seen in Ephesus (Acts 18:19, 19:8, 19:1-7).

Already at the primitive Christian Eucharistic celebration, variations were abreast: It has been taken out of the Passover context; from an annual celebration to a weekly one – Sunday, the first day of the week, supplants the Sabbath. The Eucharist and Sunday are united.

The Passover had the Jewish prayer of thanksgiving. The Eucharistic prayer now steps ahead to incorporate the Christian Paschal Mystery to fulfill the Passover expectations. The locale of the activities of the early Christians would include the family houses of Christians, and a broadminded synagogue; there could have been open places available to Christians' influences. With time some synagogues became property of Christians as well.

Earliest churches thus emerged as:

- (a) Dining rooms – typical of the last supper
- (b) Family houses – those that accepted evangelists, apostles and church communities to gather.
- (c) Synagogues – where Christians not only dominated but also converted other adherents to Judaism into Christianity.
- (d) New buildings – Christians were able to set up their own “churches” or “houses of assemblies”, or synagogues.

In each case above, worship was organized to suit the assembling persons. With James F. White our thoughts move alongside Christian's self understanding in the development of doctrine.

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<sup>11</sup> E. Foley, *From Age to Age: How Christians Have Celebrated the Eucharist*, (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publishers, 1991), p.7

It should not surprise us that a religion whose fundamental doctrine is the Incarnation should take space seriously in its worship. Not only did Christ enter our time, but he also came to dwell among us, occupying a specific and definite place on earth in Judea... A religion of the Incarnation has to have its feet planted firmly on the ground. God and humanity meet somewhere.<sup>12</sup>

It becomes clear with Christian alignment to Judaistic origins that the first churches, beside the household church gatherings, took after the synagogues. Typical synagogues increasingly took after the Roman Basilica in the time of the church, namely, the Greek-Roman times of Hellenism. Greco-Roman Basilicas were transformed into Christian churches. This leaves us with two kinds/forms of church buildings – The family house forms and the Basilican forms.

### **7. The Patristic**

To understand the church more, the patristic adjusted the history of salvation to get beyond scriptural division into the Old and New Testaments. Seeing the Old Testaments as a New Alliance they identified it with the shadow where evils will need more illumination. The Christ event was seen as the image which brought clarification to the shadow and cast more light towards the Apocalyptic revelation of what the Church will be when finally realized. This they called reality in this final Revelation of the heavenly liturgy; the New/Heavenly Jerusalem as a bride of Christ for the great Wedding feast of the Lamb.

And so the Church pays great attention to the design and furnishing of Church buildings for the final liturgy of the Marriage of the Lamb to come as the Heavenly Jerusalem. The Church expresses herself architecturally also as Sacramental Building.

## **C. CONCLUSION**

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<sup>12</sup> F. James, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, (Abingdom: Nashville, 1980), pp. 76-77

Since Christ has come to prepare a new humanity for God the Parousia now posit itself as a Wedding Feast of the Lamb with the Bride, the New Heavenly Jerusalem, revealed as a great edifice.

Permit that, I therefore conclude like St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians where he says: this mystery has many implications. I am saying it applies to Christ and His Church. It applies to the Church as a people in a building and I invite that you take church building more seriously whether as Living Stones (people of God) or as Dead Stones (Pieces of Architecture).

This excursion is from pre-history through the historical and unto the Apocalyptic that shows the Church emerge from the shadows (old Alliance) to manifest an image in the Christ event, looking towards a final Revelation as the Bride of Christ, the New Jerusalem from on High that will manifest for the Wedding Feast of the Lamb – the Eternal Banquet. Building up the Body of Christ whether out of Living Stones – (the People of God, the New Humanity), or Dead Stones (in Architecture of Church Buildings, Edifices) remains eternal and divine functions. The neglect of theological implications in architectural designs of churches could measure alongside neglect in the theological building up in catechesis and ecclesiastical commitment in creating a new humanity for God.