

A Return To EKKLESIA GOD'S WAY

My Testimony of How I Came into the Vision of a Credible Alternative to Denominationalism

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PART ONE

Hello there! For those who don't know me, I am Temidayo Adeyemo, resident in Ile-Ife, southwest of Nigeria. I wish to share a bit with you, what I believe God has called me into which, by the grace of God, is my singular pursuit in life. Every other thing are accessories to facilitate that one thing.

Some 43 years and 10 months ago, I was born into - not a Christian family; rather - a very troubled home that would later split up less than 3 years later. My father was (should I say is) a Muslim and my mother a nominal Christian (she is now a believer). I grew up only knowing my father and not my mother; she would come from time to time to visit her kids but my father was always trying to frustrate her efforts to connect with us.

Not being raised by a Christian parent, I used to see myself as somewhat disadvantaged. However, I later realized that it is actually an advantage for me because I wasn't brought into any particular denominational affiliation as a kid. With separate parents and one of them constantly trying to plant his own bitterness into his kids against the other, I certainly couldn't have realized that that was the first attempt at bringing me into a denomination.

But even as a kid, I would still want to know my mother and look out for her. I would later realize that it was an independent mind placed in me by God, because of His assignment for me later in life.

I will never forget that word I heard from a senior friend about 22 years ago: ***"the hand of God upon a man makes the man; the man makes the message and the message makes the ministry."***

In other words, the situations one went through in life were carefully crafted by God to build into one what they would need to fulfil Heaven's mandate for their life.

Growing up in the city of Ibadan, my first exposure to Christianity was through a Baptist School (Oritamefa). Then I moved into the interdenominational Chapel in University College Hospital, UCH, where statements were constantly made which gave the idea that this church was being set apart as truly a non-denominational assembly/fellowship. That was where I got the earliest impressions in life that denominations and denominationalism might be questionable.

Then firstly through my secondary school fellowship in Loyola College, Ibadan and later through Sword of the Spirit ministries, I got exposed to raw Pentecostalism (way beyond the conservative Pentecostal flow of my UCH Chapel) which had a lot to say about "Orthodox churches."

We were told that the orthodox churches were denominational and denominationalism is not a good thing, that it divides the body of Christ. In fact, most - if not all - the Pentecostal fathers never wanted to start new churches. They went into it so reluctantly because they didn't want to be denominational. They wanted to be available to the entire church and once you started a denomination, you became limited. They also told us that denomination was when you have many branches and a rigid form of service that didn't allow for the flexibility of the Holy Spirit.

But then, before our very eyes, we began to see those who had just one congregation began to multiply into several branches and repeat several things within the so-called orthodox system.

Gradually, it became clear that denominationalism was not about how many branches you had. Even if you had one branch, it was still a denomination.

I was a very hungry boy. Even as a member of the UCH Chapel, I would still attend several meetings where I saw that the correct word was being preached. Ditto for when I crossed into Christ Life Church (Sword). I would leave my own church and attend special programmes in other places. It soon became apparent that I couldn't be tied down to one church or group.

The more I saw our Pentecostal structures evolve into full-fledged denominations, the more this question welled up within me: what exactly is a denomination?

This agitation was aggravated by a meeting I attended in 1991. It was the inauguration of a fellowship in UCH called Praise Temple; the preacher that night was Brother Victor Adegboye. He preached from Gen. 11, highlighting the power of unity. Oh, what a message he preached that night. And for the first time in my life, I heard the song:

God is building a people of power
And He's raising a people of praise
That will move through this land by His Spirit
And will glorify His precious name

Chorus

*Build your church (Ekklesia) Lord
Make us one Lord
Join our hearts Lord
To your Son
Make us one Lord
In your Body
In the Kingdom
Of Your Son*

That line, "Make us one Lord in your Body" would not leave me. Even at that early age (I was about 15 at the time), I became inflamed with the passion to see the church (Ekklesia) united. I also began to see the myriads of problems associated with denominationalism: empire building, rivalry, inability to work together, hierarchy and so on. All these are direct derivatives of denominationalism.

PART TWO

I also observed something very troubling. I saw that young men and even many of the arrowheads of the Pentecostal revival who were inflamed with the spirit of finishing, bringing back Jesus, seeing the much-awaited greater glory, advancing the Kingdom, the outbreak of the last day revival, etc., once they went into this thing they call “church”, they soon began to cool down and expend their energy on building their own church.

All their fiery talk about the “anointing of the last days”, “completing the Great Commission” etc. began to give way to wisdom nuggets, packaging for performance, business secrets, achieving your dreams, getting to the top, relationship matters etc. I began to see that they were soon engrossed with the logistics of church building, running regular and special services, fund raising for special projects etc.

I also began to observe ministerial fraternization - the fact of caucuses and alliances. Ministers invited and exchanged pulpits with only those in their caucus. I saw how our senior brothers who taught us this way of the Spirit got bogged down with money issues, honorarium, making demands, classing themselves.

All these soon created the impression in me that there is something about the church system that corrupts the simplicity of brotherhood and Christian ministry. The ministry which is supposed to be a platform for selfless and thankless service is now an opportunity to be elevated above and served by the brethren.

Further, I saw certain things which confirmed my fears about this “*churchianism*” as some would put it. Most of those who did not go into church planting but remained in interdenominational ministry somehow retained their simplicity, accessibility, decorum and modesty. They are the ones who wouldn’t be offended if you did not address them by a particular title; who would easily give you their telephone numbers and open their doors to attend to “ordinary people.”

The same cannot be said of those who went into churchianism – particularly within the Pentecostal bracket. They, more often than not, assumed that “head and shoulder taller than the people” posture. All you need to grow wings and to be addressed as papa and G.O. is to have a congregation size of 200 and above. It became so clear to me that the “more successful” in churchianism you were, the more bureaucratic, more inaccessible, more distant, more exclusive you became. Of course, there are always a few exceptions but this is true of the majority.

Looking at all these, I became worried. And I knew I do have a right to be. Knowing fully well I also was called into the ministry, I began to seriously wonder what would be different in the way I conducted my own that wouldn’t run into these murky waters of denominationalism.

I also observed that while the Orthodox system of church somehow had protocols which did not allow for the indiscriminate setting up of churches, Pentecostalism had broken all restraints, making it easy for any Dick Tom and Harry to wake up one morning and start his own church.

Again, no thanks to Pentecostalism, it became increasingly difficult for assistants to remain in a church for too long. Everybody just wants to be a G.O. And that so quickly paved the way for monetization of the

ministry. To retain a loyal staff, you must increase his pay; to attract a good worker from another church, offer him greater remunerations – and so on and so forth.

I had asked earlier, what is a denomination? For me, it was a question that must be answered squarely if I am to avoid building a denomination which would invariably create more division in the Body of Christ. The Lord in His mercy took me to scriptures. From 1 Cor. 1:10-13, I saw so plainly that any group that is built on a man's vision or a particular doctrine is a denomination, a sect, a separatist camp within the body. Paul in his day said, "How can you say, I am of Paul, I am of Cephas, I am of Apollos, I am of Christ?"

If our brother were around today, he would have easily said, "How can you say I am of Adeboye, I am of Kumuyi, I am of Oyedepo, I am of Olukoya, I am a Wesleyan (Methodist)?" To call yourself an Anglican (member of Church of England), in the eyes of Paul, would be just like calling yourself Church of the Jews. In Christ, all differences have been abolished for there is no more Jew or Greek, only one new humanity!

Now, that scared me. Because, going by that definition, every single church that is started by a man and built around the man's vision, teaching ministry etc. automatically is a denomination. ***How then will we ever do "church" without it becoming a denomination?***

Dear child of God, this, I came to discover is an age-long problem. Every group in history who started as an informal gathering of believers have ended up metamorphosing into a church denomination. And because of this, believers today have come to accept denominationalism as a necessary evil. Some even say the problem is not denominations per se but the heart of men. To that I usually laugh. You underestimate the corrupting power of this system. You fail to acknowledge how pure their hearts were, some of our earlier brethren who eventually succumbed to denominationalism. You think more highly of yourself by presupposing that you have a purer heart than they.

I also began to wonder: but should the Head of the Ekklesia not have a clear building concept that will not be fraught with so many flaws? Surely, there must be a way by which we can do "church" without it becoming a denomination. There must be another way. Lord, you said you will build your Ekklesia and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. From what we can see, denominationalism is prevailing! Please Lord, show us your pattern.

PART THREE

The Lord is faithful. He will surely respond to a sincere seeker of His will. For a start, He made it clear that there is a pattern. The pattern is not “gradually evolving” as some like to believe. ***Or have you ever seen or heard of a builder who started building without first having a well laid out and unambiguous master plan?*** If not for us human beings, why then should you think so of God, the Wise Master Builder?

Listen: the pattern is not something esoteric, mystical, to be received by some special revelation and different from one person or place to the other. No! I became unequivocally convinced that the pattern is already revealed in His word; and the pattern is one! The Lord is not building many churches; He is building just one Assembly. The pattern for the Galatian Assembly cannot be different from the pattern for the Ephesian Assembly. One faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God and Father over all, in all and working through all.

May we be humble enough to admit to the scriptural pattern, even if it is unpopular.

Now, in the New Testament, isn't it instructive that local assemblies were according to localities and not one particular man's vision/ministry? ***Because once you define an assembly based on a man, no matter how sincere, it is sure to become another denomination.*** So, what do we see in the N.T.? The Assembly in Ephesus, the Assembly in Corinth, the Assembly in Thessalonica etc.

I also saw that in scripture, none of the Assembly planters made the local assemblies an affiliate of their ministries. They planted the Ekklesia in a locality, laid the foundation of Christ there and then moved on. Oh yes, they came back after a while to point out elders and would also come back from time to time to strengthen those assemblies. If any of the assemblies were in serious crisis, the apostles could be invited to help address the matter. But the autonomy of each local assembly was sacrosanct and that became very clear to me.

How did I know that? I saw that although it was Paul who planted the Assembly in Corinth, other ministers like Peter and Apollos had unfettered access to them without going through Paul – to the extent they became a “competition” against Paul. Such is not possible in today's denominational arrangement in which churches are directly subordinated under the ministry of the founder. Thus, we have Christ Life Church, aka Sword of the Spirit Ministries, Living Faith Church aka David Oyedepo Ministries Intl., etc. No minister can go to Oyedepo's church without a clear approval from him, can they? That is the fact on ground today.

But we do not see this in Paul or any of the other apostles. Remember Paul rebuked Peter at a time? Yet Peter, in his letter to the believers he had been ministering to, encouraged them to receive Paul's ministry. Do we have such today?

Even when false apostles invaded the assemblies of Galatia, Paul didn't tell them, as from now and for your safety, before you receive anyone, you must get clearance from me. Did he ever do that? In fact, the highest human authority in the local assembly are the local elders, NOT the “founding” apostles. AND the eldership of the assemblies is ALWAYS plural!

So this spoke volumes to me: **that the assemblies in the New Testament were autonomous but interdependent. No assembly was a lone ranger.** I could see the connectedness when Paul instructs them to greet one another in Rom. 16 and when he asked them to exchange letters as in between Colosse and Laodicea.

Again, isn't it instructive that **they met in homes as neighborhood communities?** Could it be that the secret lies in that very simple fact without our realizing it? Was it something just peculiar to that time or could it be that God was showing us a clear example to be followed? You see, God does not speak always in very clear terms or direct instructions. He sometimes reveals His will in the form of a scenario and expects His people to see that example and follow suit. Let us understand this important principle. The examples shown to us in the New Testament are not just stories but set patterns for every generation. And we are not at liberty to change what is a divine pattern.

Why in homes and neighborhoods? I read Wolfgang Simson's "15 Theses for a New Reformation" where he pointed out a paradox: The easiest place one can fake spirituality is behind the pulpit inside the four walls of a church but the hardest place to fake spirituality is right in your home where you are your most natural self and your spouse and children know the real you beneath the garb of the Sunday-Sunday performance.

I also heard Dr. Mike Oye say that the home is the first "Church" (Ekklesia) and God reckons with our homes as the Ekklesia even more than He does with our churches! I also read similar views from witnesses like Watchman Nee and Gene Edwards – these are ancient men one must not dismiss their witness.

But as I read the greatest witness of all, the Scriptures, in Acts 2:41-47 and identified some of the essential characteristics of Ekklesia: continuing in apostolic doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, it then occurred to me that it was impossible to do this in a 'mega' congregation such as we have today.

If you understand that the word, 'fellowship' which actually comes from the Greek word, 'koinonia', means participation, contribution, communication, distribution and interaction, you then realize that such a 'fellowship' is not just possible in a big setting. The big settings that we have today in our church auditoriums, by default, can only have a few contributors and the majority as receivers or spectators. Thus, it changes the essential nature of Ekklesia from a family to a performance-based and service-delivery orientation. The spontaneity associated with a natural conversation which is aptly captured in 1 Cor. 14 cannot be brought into our church settings today without erupting into chaos.

PART FOUR

When I saw all these (there are more), I thought to myself: no wonder it was extremely difficult for denominationalism to rear its ugly head in the pioneer Assembly generation. There was something about their structure that simply prevented the denominational system to come into operation. For example:

- The autonomy of the Assembly prevented a situation where a minister/Apostolic worker hijacks the assembly and makes it an affiliate of his/her ministry.
- The priesthood of all believers prevented a situation where the local elders hijacked the assembly meetings and converted them to their preaching platform and the rest of the brethren are passive listeners.
- The locality of the Assembly prevented creating denominational branches that inevitably creates hierarchy (I never saw things like The “Church” of Antioch, Philippi Centre).
- Plural eldership in the local assemblies prevented the situation where one man inadvertently becomes the centre and focal point of the assembly, consequently usurping the Headship, centrality and pre-eminence of Christ in His Body.
- Meeting in homes/small groups prevented each assembly being so large that it requires complex bureaucracy and administration. With the “smallness”, everyone is able to participate and the family structure of the assembly is enhanced.
- The pattern of Body ministry (i.e. ministry in the Assembly via that which every joint has to supply 1 Cor. 14:26, Eph. 4:16) being the norm/rule rather than the exception, is a strong catalyst for the maturing process because every believer is able to exercise their graces – which, again, prevents the creation of a clergy-laity dichotomy.

We could go on and on but these six observations will do for now. Anyone sincere enough would easily identify them in the New Testament Assemblies and I made my findings from history that it was this way till the end of the third century. I also discovered that despite the numerous disadvantages of this pioneer Ekklesia generation, they remain the reference point for all generations of Christendom, right up to our own generation – in terms of quality of Christian fellowship, ministry and impact. On this basis, I have personally dismissed the popular excuse that the pioneer assemblies were so because they were persecuted and not allowed to gather in buildings. Why then is it that after the assemblies moved into the buildings, we lost the simplicity, the fervor, the brotherhood and the spiritual growth?

However, let us cut the long story short; the focus of this write-up is not to decry the ills of denominationalism but to share how I came into the vision of a credible alternative. In the Part 1 of this write-up, I have shared a little of how both my family background and spiritual upbringing had prepared me for a non-denominational posture which I now have. I also mentioned in passing a material of a brother, Wolfgang Simson, “15 Theses for a New Reformation” which I read in 1998, coupled with other articles. Chief among them was Gene Edwards’ “Revolution, Story of the Early Church.” I would (8 years) later read Watchman Nee’s “The Normal Christian Church Life”. These books recast in my heart, that vision of the New Testament expression of the Assembly.

PART FIVE

In a previous post, I have equally mentioned how I seriously ruminated within myself on what I needed to do differently, knowing fully well the Lord has called me into His labor. Seeing how all those who had insisted that they were not out to start a denomination eventually succumbed to doing just that and thereafter began to jealously protect their own franchise.

This deep internal inquiry started in 1996 and continued up to the early part of the year 2,000 when the Lord dropped this revelation into my heart:

The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in the earth
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Africa
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Nigeria
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Oyo State
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Ogbomoso

The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in LAUTECH (my alma mata; I was still a student at the time)
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Faculty of Environmental Sciences (my Faculty)
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Urban and Regional Planning (my department)
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in 400 Level (my level at that time)

This breakdown of the Universal Assembly is from the angle of a student. From the angle of a resident in a residential neighborhood, from the level of Ogbomoso in the breakdown above, it changes to:

The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Stadium area (this was the local area where I lived back then)
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Opomulero street (I've forgotten the real name. But this represents the actual street I lived in, which had about 15 houses that was home to several students and local families).

For a civil servant working in a Government parastatal, the breakdown would look like this:

The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Oyo State
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Ibadan
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Oyo State Secretariat
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Ministry of Environment
The Assembly/Ekklesia/Body of Christ in Accounts Department (of the Ministry)

Believers in the smallest units in these different breakdowns (whether as a student, a resident or a worker) are then to bond together as God's Ekklesia in that local unit. The saints in these local units are not affiliated to any ministry or denomination; they are just the believers in that locality. Because the circumstance of life has brought them into a close knit circle (to study or live or work together), and being believers, ***an expression of the Lord's Body organically forms right in their midst and they become the testimony of His life before the rest of their unbelieving colleagues or neighbors.*** Their life of oneness, faith and love will be the most powerful force to influence their territory for Christ.

Beloved, the above breakdown completely engulfed my heart. I realized that this tallied exactly with the New Testament example: The Ekklesia that met in the home of Prisca etc. This exactly was why all the assemblies in the New Testament were labelled ONLY after their physical location and NOT by a man's vision or organization. ***I then saw clearly that once the Body of Christ is grouped under any other basis such as a particular vision, affinity for a certain doctrine, or a gifted personality, it can no longer be called the Lord's Assembly but a denomination.***

Furthermore, in 2008, in one of our meetings, one of the brothers, Femi Bello, shared something that made the above breakdown clearer. He said the bar magnet can be broken but not divided; all the properties of the whole can be found in every single fragment, no matter how many fragments it was broken into. Then, the Lord ministered to my heart: **My Assembly is broken up but not divided.**

Do you know what that implies? Check it out:

If the universal Assembly is ONE and it comprises every child of God on earth,

Then the Assembly in Africa is ONE and it comprises every child of God in Africa;

...

...

...

Then the Assembly in Ibadan is ONE and it comprises every child of God in Ibadan

Then the Assembly in Monatan (the area in Ibadan where I lived in 2008) is ONE and it comprises every child of God in Monatan

Then the Assembly in Adogba road (the road in Monatan where my house was situated) is ONE and it comprises every child of God in Adogba Road

Now, if within that small neighborhood where all the houses are within trekkable distance, the believers in that neighborhood do not know one another, are divided by their different denominations, are not bonding together to visibly express the ONENess of Christ in their territory, then that spiritual property that is true of the universal Assembly (her ONENess) is not found to be true in its very practical sense RIGHT WHERE IT MATTERS MOST.

Do you understand this?

It is easy to claim at the universal level that Christ's Body is ONE. It is easy to parrot: ONE Lord, ONE Faith, ONE Baptism etc.; if it cannot be given physical expression at the local level then the painful reality is that the Body of Christ is divided.

PART SIX

The above breakdown (of the Ekklesia from the universal to the local) also shows that every child of God, organically, is a member of two Ekklesia expressions: one in his residential neighborhood and another in his workplace (as a worker) or school (as a student).

This was really a Wow moment for me as I realized that instead of the denominational fellowships which have since become a sad reality on the campus (remember, at this time, I was still an undergrad), the ideal would have been to have strong and vibrant faculty fellowships, departmental fellowships, level fellowships as well as hostel fellowships all operating non-denominationally. The Christian Union which was about the only fellowship in most campuses back then in the sixties and seventies would have been an umbrella body to, periodically (say monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly) facilitate all-believers meetings. That way, the revival would have not only been sustained but intensified and spread.

And why? The Lord revealed to me that the unity among His people on campus at the time was the major catalyst for the revival that came to the country through the campuses. Unfortunately today, that vital ingredient has been lost in our campuses. In some campuses, there are as many as a hundred different fellowships leading to unhealthy rivalry, especially during the scramble for freshers at the beginning of a new academic session. In fact, the confusion that Christian campus fellowships have created has more often than not led to the university management sometimes placing a ban on all religious activities within the campus premises. And in spite of these heightened religious activities, there has been no appreciable increase in the general level of righteousness on such campuses.

Even worse, the denominational spirit has infiltrated the National Youth Service Scheme. The Nigerian Christian Corpers' Fellowship, NCCF, used to be the umbrella body for (and the pride of) all Christian corpers for many decades. That has changed in recent times with various denominations now carving out their own Corpers' Fellowship. It is a shame that some of our Pentecostal fathers who were direct beneficiaries of the revival that the unity on the campuses produced, have now with their own hands destroyed such a fundamental legacy. May they not be adjudged transgressors on the Day of reckoning (Gal. 2:18).

That revelation of the Divinely approved breakdown of the universal Assembly which hit me, since that year 2,000, has not left me. And each passing day, it gets clearer. It became so clear to me that that is the only way the Lord's Assembly can be structured without getting denominationalised. I have come across books (such as Watchman Nee's book which I mentioned earlier, and very recently, Henry Hon's book, ONE: a trilogy) which further amplified and reinforced my conviction. I have also related with some fathers in the land who were unequivocal in their stand against denominationalism.

One of such apex fathers in the land said, "Denominationalism was never of God; but it has come to stay and there is nothing we can do about it. So we just have to work with what is on ground." Others have called it a necessary evil. Against this background, thousands of believers and Kingdom minded ministers have continued to work within the denominational structure.

I however differ from that position. And this is my conviction:

- (1) If denominationalism (a structure/method/an approach for believers' fellowship) was never of God, then no matter what, it will never birth the Lord's ultimate purpose. It may only work enough to bring people to the outer court of God's program for the initial conversion experience. But it will never facilitate the building and expression of the many-membered Body which is central to God's eternal purpose. Remember, without us arriving at oneness the world would not believe (John 17:21-23). Without our oneness, we cannot give expression the fullness of the life, power and glory of the One who fills all in all
- (2) If denominationalism was never of God, then God has His own original design/pattern. So instead of trying to force a system which was never God's intention to work, why not pay a little price to discover His original blueprint, which is not far-fetched? In fact, it is exactly what the Holy Spirit has helped us to consider in the last 2 or 3 parts in this series. And if He has His own original design, I choose to make it my life quest to seek it and build according to that Divine design.

This, my dear friends, was how I came into the vision of a return to Ekklesia God's Way. I am fully persuaded that even though an inaccurate system of doing Ekklesia has existed for about 1,800 years, we are right now in a Kairos moment for the Divine pattern to be given expression.

PART SEVEN (CONCLUSION)

And so, ever since the Lord imprinted that revelation of the divine pattern upon my spirit, it has become my driving force; my life's obsession – to see, in my lifetime, that order given expression. Although I, as a person, had so much potential within the Pentecostal bracket of the church system, though I have been offered juicy positions within the system, I have chosen to stay put because the Lord told me not to invest in a failing order. He asked me, *“Do you love me more than all these?”* More than:

- The joy/pride of owning a pulpit to preach from every week
- Access to the mainstream churches for ministrations with the attendant honorariums etc.
- Opportunity for international ministry
- A rank among colleagues in ministry
- Prospects of regular funding
- Greater ease in having foot-soldiers who are eager to run with your vision
- And so on and forth.

I have tried to answer as feebly as I can, *“Yes, Lord; I love you more than it all.”* For me, it wasn't that easy. All my life, I have been a show boy; how much I loved the limelight. By my own strength, I couldn't have resisted the pull of those things upon my soul. However, the gracious Lord saw my heart and has sustained me these many years. He has brought me into fellowship with many saints across the globe who are also on this same journey, who have dared to express their faith and devotion to Him outside the walls of institutional Christianity (Churchianity).

Do I have anything against God's people who are serving the Lord and advancing the Kingdom within the denominational walls? No, I don't. I love them and appreciate the good work many of them are doing. Yet I have come to understand that God's work of restoration is in phases. In the 16th century, He restored the truths of repentance from dead works and justification by faith. But the truth of Pentecost was not restored at that time; it came four centuries later - in the 20th century. So, each generation in whom truth is restored must be faithful to project what Heaven is revealing.

Today, the Lord has revealed the accuracy of His blueprint for the building of His Ekklesia. **He calls us to partner with Him in giving it expression.** And by His grace alone, some of us have answered this call. We now work with groups of saints to return to that simple pattern of the New Testament. Indeed, it is simple in the eyes of today's complex, sophisticated, bureaucratic and highly complicated world – and often scorned at – but the Lord uses the feeble things of the world to confound the mighty. The foolishness of God remains wiser than the wisdom of men.

Admittedly, it will not happen overnight. But the Lord is helping some of us to be resolute; to say 10 years from now, we will still be at it; 25 years from now, the Lord will find us still laboring over this vision – until this mustard seed grows to become a mighty shrub in the forest. He has told us from the word go that anything organic takes time. You cannot hurry the process.

Consequently, by His grace, we will remain patient, steadfast, immovable, consistent, resilient, tenacious, focused, resolute and strategic in this task of raising a credible alternative to denominationalism. So that in a few years to come, believers will have a choice whether to express their faith and devotion through

the structures of the denominational system or through the channels of organic Kingdom communities. The monopoly of denominationalism must be broken over the Body of Christ. The power of death must lose its sting. The Ekklesia must emerge on earth as one indivisible, glorious expression of the life and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord must return to find a people who are exactly His image and are giving expression to His will and exercising His authority, amen.

On this note, WHERE DO YOU STAND? Will you continue with business as usual or will you choose to also get involved in the labour to see the organic expression of Christ's Body according to the New Testament pattern? We are here to help you, should you opt for the latter, to navigate the process. It is perhaps the most exciting journey in this world, next to salvation in Christ. May the good Lord fill your heart with a dissatisfaction with everything else except His perfect will and design for your life, your family, your ministry and His Assembly. May you find your relevance in pursuing the Lord's eternal purpose.

Shalom!

Let me end by setting the records straight: the New Testament pattern of Ekklesia as described in this thesis IS NOT an alternative to the denominational system; it is the ORIGINAL template that Christianity deviated from. This move is simply a return to that original vision and template.

Ekklesia Arise!

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