Church and Its Role.

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From the centuries, the Christian church is defined to be a house of God. People gather in a church seeking the truth, God and remembering God for the confession of sin. The church is not just a building used for Christian religious activities and worships but also it is the whole body of the faithful and people believes. In the modern world, it is important to understand the significance of the church to structure people's faith in God. Church brings good news to all the people and is responsible for bringing the fullness and connection between God and man, restoring communities, social justices, redeemed institutions, and peace. The church is within us and it has a different form to appear as a body of Christ and gathering or assembly of citizens. We feel connected with God when we are hoping for good in the name of God and that is what church is for. Therefore, Church is not just a building or a structural foundation, it is a house of God and a place where we are aware of God and be connected with God seeking for salvation and the importance of church is to spread the message from the God, and bring unity among the social, external world and promote faith and charity into practice and assisting in culture, social and political dimension according to God's design.

The definition of the church arises from the old testament. We look back to the old testament Genesis 28: 11-15 where Jacob was traveling toward Haran, and he stayed in the certain place for a night, and he put a stone under his head to sleep, and he dreamed a ladder was set up on the earth to heaven from where the angels of God were ascending and descending. "16. Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was unaware of it". And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; This place is the gate of Heaven!". This verse of the bible suggests that no matter whether a church is small as a stone or a big structure, it is always a place that connects God's kingdoms and earth with the people. Furthermore, it explains the actual definition of the church when Jacob became aware of God in that place which indicates that church is a place where we are aware of God's existence and get connected with him. On Genesis 28:18 "So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of the city Bethel (house of God), but the name of the city was Luz at first." Then Jacob set up the pillar with the stone and made a vow that if he returned with the help of God then he would come to the same place and set up God's house. As the presence of God is everywhere but the specific place where we feel that we are connected to God or aware of God's presence is a house of God and that place is the church. It was only possible for Jacob to build a house of god if he returns with the help of God. God wants his believer to return to his place by helping them. Oxford bible commentary for Genesis 29:11-22, agree the beginning of the Bethel place (house of God) and the stone used by Jacob as a pillow which was erected as a pillar and consecrated with oil marked the holy place where God had revealed himself and expected to come again. In concluding the promise of God's guidance into concrete and worship him.

The existence of Jacob's ladder evident on the new testament of John 1:51 "and he (Jesus) said to him (Nathanael), "Truly, truly I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angel of God ascending and descending on the son of man". According to the Oxford bible commentary interpreting the verse, in future the reader will witness the opening of heaven and the angels of God ascend and descent on the son of man not on the ladder who is linked with the father and the world of humankind and the community will see the unique revelation of the son of man. The future possibility of a mediator between God and the human connection by a place where heaven is open, and the place might be a church. Mathew 21:13 "It is written, 'my house shall be called a house of prayer, but you make it a den of robbers' and the blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them". Oxford biblical commentary mentioned the symbol of national identity and through prophetic work and scripture word, declare the divine disfavor. This disfavor was directed to the corruption and God's place is praised by powerless and help for the helpless. Theologically, the church is a house of God and a gateway to heaven but practically, according to the gospel of Mathew, the church is for the people who pray for their wellbeing. It is not a place for trade and corruption but a place for purity and good faith people which cannot be compared with money or assets so the robber should be abolished from the church. It is a place where we have to offer rather than to give. Modern church must understand that the faith of people should not be compared with the possession of assets as the church role is purely charitable and for the good being.

The church as the mediator of the gospels and the place where the scripture exists, interpret, transfer, write, dictate, and distribute. The journal written by Charles Whitney Gilkey (liberal theologian and first dean of the University of Chicago), explains the function of the church and how the church must be in this contemporary world. This article was published before Vatican II. After the industrial revolution and in this changing world, the Church must regain her prestige and influence which was lost late yearly and may rise to the new demands of the modern ages. Dealing at that time (1914) Church was a social group formed by the union of Christian people and common worships and service which was typically based on the gospels but these groups could be some informal company of Christian seeking God or an organized local audience joined with other such local groups into denomination or it could be national and international organization with supreme power over the small churches. The function of the church in human life is about spiritual growth and experience and church makes them realize that they are self-sufficient to live life happily relying upon God. The church is not simply that religious men are deeply dependent upon God and cannot exist without him, but it is a two-sided relationship that discovers our moral, as well as religious lives and the existence of God and humans, depend on one another. Human beings are social interdependence on the higher life and church shows permanent necessity and support of spiritual interest of human society. Church shows a moral and religious path to the individuals so it can be fairly called "an ark of salvation" for the struggling swimmers on the sea of spiritual experience (Gilkey 1914). Church itself is like a social organization which develops a corporate life of its own which is different, and stronger than its members and helps to develop the unity among its member to make it wider and deeper and mightier. Also, this institution essentially connects all Christian sources and religious experiences, the bible which is also called a church book. Though the bible and the sacred scripture are not written in the church, it remains collected, transmitted, preserved and interpreted and handed down through church. God becoming human (Jesus) and trustworthy, life becomes sinless, and the kingdom of heaven is a present and the future hope, memory of God, God's portrait, his teaching and his spirit all are kept alive within the church. The church was following God's old verified promise of lifting all men unto God. It is the descending of God within the reach of a man agreeing with the bible verse of John 1:51. Before Vatican II and after the industrial revolution people favor materials and estimate in terms of monetary value and the cost to keep themselves alive and focus on prosperity rather than human welfare. Within this change, the function of the church is to witness to the reality and power of things and make them realize their supreme importance. The church insists that it profits neither man nor a nation anything to gain the world's word and lose its soul. In this case, the church's role is to make conscience, both society and people authoritative in the lives and affairs of men and of communities. Church's role is developed and cultivate the social conscience among the people and focus on human welfare and make them qualify the individual to enter the kingdom of God.

Vatican II held in 1965 brings a major change in the concept of the church's role. Focusing on the important document Dei Verbum, which explains the passing down on Divine revelation. Church keeps the gospel alive and whole forever and has the authority to hand over the sacred scripture of both old and the new testament and keep moving forward toward the fullness of divine truth until the word of God reach their complete fulfillment in her (Dei Verbum 8). The authority to interpreting the bible, word of God is given to the teaching of the church and all those must implement in the name of Jesus Christ. The connection of sacred tradition, sacred scripture and teaching authority of the church is God's design for the salvation of the soul. Dei Verbum answers what interpretation of God's word is true or whose interpretation of the bible is divine. These sacred scriptures are written under the inspiration of the holy spirit and the task to better understand and explanation of the meaning of sacred scripture is subject to the judgment of the church. Before the Vatican II, the sacred scripture was interpreted in Latin and Vatican II handed the major role to the church to translate and interpret it in many different languages with its correct translation focusing on the meaning of God's word. "But since the word of God should be accessible at all times, the Church by her authority and with maternal concern sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made into different languages, especially from the original texts of the sacred books." (Dei Verbum 22). The change in history and the advancement of human life, the culture and social transformation brought distress and change in attitude which encourages them to focus on themselves rather than God and human welfare. In this case, the church plays an important role in maintaining the bond and adjust the change and stay beneath the reality which could not be changed keeping the foundation and belief of God forever. According to Gaudium et Spes, Church opens to the world and shedding light to co-operate in finding the solution to the problem of modern time. Church guide all the people whether believers and non-believers to work for the rightful betterment of this world focusing on the future kingdom that God had promised. Church after Vatican II protests the distinction made between believers and non-believers with prejudice the fundamental right of humans and restore the hope to many people yet believing that church is the shortest path to heaven. Church believes that Jesus saved all humanity and even non-Christian have the god rested upon them. God created human beings, not for the isolation but the social unity and that unity should be brought by the church and the unity should be among people not based on religion but based on humanity. It defined church as "a visible association and a spiritual community" (Gaudium et Spes Chapter V. 40). Church in this world help to connect and strengthen human society holds in high esteem and helps to prepare the world in the ground of gospels which consequence in helping the growth of human society. God has set a mission to the church is the religious and make humankind better but due to the time and change in the world, the church recognized the worth element today, unity, socialization and economic realms that connected the unity of the whole human race. "Thus, she (Church) shows the world that an authentic union, social and external, results from a union of minds and hearts, namely from that faith and charity by which her unity is unbreakably rooted in the Holy Spirit. For the force which the Church can inject into the modern society of man consists in that faith and charity put into vital practice, not in any external dominion exercised by merely human means". The work of the church is purely based on faith and charity being connected with God. The church has not been bound to any culture, political, economic or social system but the church is willing to promote and assist all these factors which help to extend the service associate with God's mission and for the betterment of humanity. The single intention of the church is to pass the whole human race to salvation and benefit humanity. "Church is "the Universal sacrament of salvation" simultaneously manifesting and exercising the mystery of God's love"(Gaudium et Spes).

The church plays the most important role in shaping the modern world. From the bible, the church is indicated as a place where the angels of God ascend and descend based on the old testament. The idea from the genesis 28:11-22 describes that the church could be anywhere when you are aware of God's presence. The commentary and my interpretation of the existence of the house and God are similar, but I called that house of God to be called a church and commentary do not mention it. Commentary made it clearer about Jesus and his relation to the Church. As we can see Jacob's ladder where the angels of God ascend and descend, and connection of heaven and earth is not a physical ladder, but it was Jesus Christ (son of man). John 1:51 and the commentary advocate that the church is a part of Jesus Chris and a gateway to heaven is through Jesus (ladder). On the other hand, from the Mathew 21:13, Church is symbolized to be a place of helpless and powerless who seek to live their life. Also, the commentary and my point are similar to that church or the temple of God disfavor corruption and trade. This place is purely charitable and for help. The view of the church before and after Vatican II was similar but the implementation of view on the church was different after Vatican II. It was not that the church committed to the human before Vatican II but after the Vatican II church began to look closely with modern thinking and promote human dignity. From the journal published before Vatican II gave the role of the church to serve as an involving system of the channel in the modern group, each local church acting as single and all together carrying the divine faith till the spiritual power is experienced by everyone. Also, the church is a co-operative attempt to realize an essentially social idea. The two documents of Vatican II (Dei Verbum and Gaudium et Spes) and the journal by Charles Whitney Gilkey had a similar conception of shaping the church. Vatican II document focuses on the human unity through church and spreading the God's word throughout the world and focusing on the element like politics, social, the economy of the world to make society better being in the relation with God. The journal focusses on the charitable work of the church and shows the direction of humans towards humanity making a church a house of God where scripture is transmitted to generations. Both Vatican II and Journal had a common point on how the church should act in this contemporary world and share the common idea of unity among the people focusing on the relation of humans with Jesus. Hence, the church is a place where we are aware of God's presence being connected with God and the church helps for the improvement of humanity believing that God has rested upon all humans.

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