

## **CHI AND CHRIST: THE SEARCH FOR THE UNIVERSAL ESSENCE OF GOD IN IGBO AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHTS**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper has most consciously directed its search (research) attention and curiosity towards and through the key word-compositional ties. This paper is a careful look through the Igbo religious-cultural-cosmological-linguistic loops that symbolize and signify the Igbo daily affairs of greeting and salutation codes. The said greeting codes are common, general, particular and peculiar to Ndi Igbo (the Igbo race). When this paper speaks from the 'universal essence of God in Igbo and Christian thoughts', it wishes to establish the common dividends, truth-conditions and criteria, through which the 'Igbo Chi'- and the 'Christian/Christ'- thoughts, build and exist on common intellectual and theological adequacies. The propositions of this paper stand on the common platforms of Christian faith and the Igbo 'Chi- logical Christian-use conditionality and constitutions. The practical approach to the issues of this paper will be presented as diptyches and 'symbolic forms' for the relational common faith-appreciations of Chi- and Christ-Christianity. This paper stands to present as 'true' the fact that 'Chi is Christ' and 'Christ is Chi'.*

**Keywords:** Chi, Christ, Essence, Universal, Igbo, Christianity, Religion

### **Introducing the Universal Essence: The Little Worry**

From the general understanding of philosophy as such, and its implicit system of logic, essences of universal values expose their phenomenological gains especially from: (a) their methodological comparisons; (b) through the ways and mean of their descriptive functions; (c) through their possible common worlds and (d) their world-hoods that guarantee their expositions.

The said general understanding, fundamentally and equally stand on the basements created by the functions of the various and varied languages and linguistics that must compulsorily inform their use characters, human characters, relational characters, pragmatic characters and operational characters etc.

It is also important to note here that the different minds of philosophers and theologians, can freely communicate with one another if and only if they care to do so. It is also a veritable fact that if such a community of communications and communicators is established, the communicated facts and figures would most definitely adhere to the projects of the depth-grammars of similar applications. The result of such a possibility will to a large extent minimize the apparent existent misconceptions, differences, differentiations and thereby provide fruitful synergies and dispositions for learning from one another as a mutual-fraternal commerce (*commercium fraternae*).

We may also recall at this initial instance that Pope Paul VI in his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* proposed a new language formula of unity as the best sign for the common interpretation, understanding, appreciation and application of the *Incarinate Christ* among the tribes and tongues of both the old and the new 'Babel-Genesis- Language and Linguistic-Crisis' of our times. Based on the above instantiations, this short paper is seen by the author from its main trust and little worry, as the search-instrument and aid towards the 'source-out-and-sort out-possibilities' that may strike an evangelical-pastoral-unitary-balance between the *Igbo-Chi and the Incarnate-Christ* in Igboland as the given pastoral geography. This short paper is very much conscious of the facts that the methodology has to take a shape of an intercultural manner whereby the local language will bear on the Christian language of the missionary extractions.

This paper is also very much conscious of the fact that language (human language) is the most curious phenomenon that reserves itself as the pointer to history as well as the conduits for the determination, shaping and transformational *tool of tools* for the many diverse and often opposing manners of human-being-ness and at the same time maintains its inseparability at every facets of human cultural and religious experiences, even when man as man –the '*homo-logos and religiousus*' is often not aware of its operational, oppressive and influential presence. It is a *factum* therefore, that every history of civilization and religious compositional mixtures e.g. Igbo traditional religion and the Christian missionary meeting points, can be reduced to the themes of language and socio-linguistics-theological and exegetical genesis.

It is important at this point to note that the early Christian philosophers and theologians were very conscious of the above point. Isidore of Seville in his *Etymologies* wrote

extensively about grammar, dialectic and rhetoric as linguistic instruments for human knowledge of philosophy and theology. St. Augustine of Hippo was known for his theories on human language and human acquisition of knowledge of both God and the things of nature. Peter of Spain wrote the *Suppositionibus* to distinguish between *significatio* and *suppositio*. Church history is also conscious of the contributions of Lorenzo Valla, Peter Ramus, Juan Luis Vives etc. who were writers on the relevance of language and grammar for philosophy and theology. The philosophy of language has remained as the pivotal *instrumentum laboris* and the most veritable loop for all themes for the ‘Linguistic Turn’ of the twentieth-centuries’ religious consciousness because it is said that the Church of Christ is constantly and consistently in the moods of reforms.

### **The Concept of Chi and Christ: The Universal Essence of God**

One of the fruits of philosophical investigations is the clarification that truth can be met through the applications of ‘grammatical analyses’. Philosophy has since the 20<sup>th</sup> century taken the said linguistic turn which made the engagements of Wittgenstein for example, to come to this point as a necessary methodology, and presented his ideas as:

1. Knowledge as acquaintance;
2. Knowledge as the immediate experience and;
3. Knowledge as a phenomenological primary language.

For Wittgenstein, the central idea to this philosophical approach is by ways and means of the clarity of setting the ‘rules in the use’ of any given natural human language correct. The rules in language use therefore have become the sign-posts, notable and notational symbols in every human language as function/functional ‘labels’ for the naming of all objects of realities and facts in the ‘world’ that are all the case.<sup>1</sup> A name is for Wittgenstein the relevant word that is embellished by the rules puzzled out of the ‘depth grammar’ whereby the name serves as the very pointer that qualifies to pick the named out of the plenitudes/penumbra of objects as a real object of reality, a genuine object and the ‘stuff for use’ in the human world and hood.

On this same note therefore, religious objects or experiences and their applicable mystical experiences that have names (including Igbo names) as identification notes, cannot be easily be declared in clear-cut linguistic terms as mere hallucinations and uncivilized sub-standards. It is also important at this very moment to call on Martin Heidegger who said that anything that has no word to represent it does not exist.

Based on the above issues, *Chi* and Christ are facts of experience both from the Igbo religious phenomenological experience and Igbo-Christian religious phenomenological

experience too. In Igbo language and people, *Chi* exist and Christ too. This paper makes bold to say at this point that *Chi* and Christ are as old as the creation of the Igbo human race and language as proof, Jon.1: 1-5 has the answer.

This paper stands to apply at this point too, that the rules of grammar can also be called the rules of the language that owns it and the gain thereof is all about clear information that this paper calls the ‘universal essence of language’. This universal essence in language reflects the identification-note that both the rule and the language have given all languages their common objects of common but universal identity. The Babel story of the bible in Gen. 11:1-9 records the overweening act of pride due to the use of only one language for all. That state of affairs of Babel at that time was the identification of/for language equality-in-diversity. Due to this Babel scenario, what emerged was the instance of what this paper calls the **linguistic-dispersion** that followed the Babel history. This same bible description stands as the proof that no human language is more *linguistic* than the other which is also to say that all languages are equal and none is more lingual and useful than the other in spite of all local ‘false claims’ of superiorities.

Alejandro Tomasini Bassols says, based on the above note, that the rules of depth grammar present the universal essence of the objects immediately one conceives the object from the perspective of the use of the words and the way and manner the words are relationally identified by the speakers. It is therefore evident that to assert a word to an **existent** constitutes the objectification of the thing itself even when it may sound absurd for a non speaker.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the above facts, the Igbo word ‘Chi’ from its phenomenological experiential component of the Igbo essence of God commands also the same use characters, human characters, relational characters, pragmatic characters and operational characters with the Christian God that is Christ also. This paper underlines in strong terms that for the Christian Igbo speaker (tongue), Christ is Chi and Chi is Christ.

### **Concept of *Chi* and Christ: The Universal Essence of Theophany and Theopathy**

From the Igbo phenomenology of God and its Igbo language/linguistic everyday praxis, it is easy to identify that Chi and Christ have the same cognitive aims and unity. Based on the Igbo depth grammar, Chi and Christ have both the same cognitive and explanatory conceptions. From the Igbo depth grammar Chi and Christ have moral, relational, pragmatic and operational characteristic registers in common. The Igbo semantics of Chi commands the daily practical experiences of the knowledge of God (Christ) explainable from the Igbo world of daily life of Igbo ‘**morning greetings**’. The following Igbo praxis

of ‘morning greetings’ present summative tripartite major registers of/for the ‘universal essence’ of theophany-theopathy for both concepts: Chi and Christ.

Following the tables A&B below, this paper will paint diptyches that hope to assist design and at the same time hinge Chi and Christ together and stand as proofs for their relational communion in a universal essence of God-theophany and theopathy in view of and for an *Igbo Chi-Christian-Christology*.

#### **A. Summative Tripartite Universal Essence of Igbo Chi-Light-(phos)-Theophany-Theopathy**

These are:

1. { *bqqla Chi*;
2. { *saala Chi*;
3. { *foola Chi (Chi efoo)*

Theophany as we all know is of the Greek language origin, ‘*theophaneia*’ which etymological commands the inherent contents of two other Greek words; *Theos* (God: *Chi*) and *Phaneia* (Face: *Ihu*) and this is to say that God’s real presence for the human face and/or with the human face- *Epiphaneia* is a possibility. We may appreciate at this point another aspect of the ‘Igbo faith’ that ‘*Madu bu Chi ibe ya*’: Man is God and God is man/ *Chi*-the Christ-man, (cf. Joh. Chp.1: the incarnation of the word that makes God personally and visibly present and Christ’s appearances to Mary of Magdala and the disciples also cf.Joh.20).

Theophany on one hand, simply means the apprehension of the ‘appearance of God’ and/or the manifestation of a Deity within the world-hood essences of humanly relational, pragmatic, operational and sensible life-forms and life-cataclysms endowed with humanly visible ‘halos’ of divine presence and appearance.’ Theophany can be seen as a glorious benevolence of divine presence of God that can effect and affect the parts and pathways of human historical events. In a summative manner *theophany* means that God appeared with a human face which the word *Incarnation* also projects.

On the other hand theopathy is seen also as a religious reality powered through formidable emotions that make themselves manifest through mental and meditational thoughts of God that can also gain deliverances through mysticisms and ecstasies that also stand as proofs of/and for the essences of God-*Chi* in and within human world-hood realities as stated above. It is also very important here and now to draw our attention to the Igbo depth-grammatical instrument ‘{ -(G)You’ that commands the speak-able

communicative, competent and per-formative contents and controls of the tripartite connotations that inform the greeting codes of the Igbo as presented above.

Just as Martin Buber in his religious work called 'The Way of Man', the Igbo people believe that human persons can establish relationships with *Chi*-God based on the preconditions that they human persons can affirm relational transformations with *Chi*/God for the sake of:

1. *Chi*/God; 2. The self; 3. The other, and 4. The world that is the guarantor and presenter of vocational responsibilities (*Akara-aka-Chi*).

Based on the above notes, it is important to state here also that there are three euphemisms that stand on grammatical relations for both singular and plural referential contents: I and others which Martin Buber<sup>3</sup> in the above cited work supplies as follows: (a) Here where one stands; (b) Beginning with oneself and; (c) Not to be preoccupied with oneself.

In (a) above, *iboola Chi* greeting reflects a rhetorical informative and questioning expectant/expected- reports from the individuals that are in this relational (greetings) exchange for proofs that:

God (*Chi*) dwells wherever man lets Him in. This is the ultimate purpose: to let *Chi* in. We can let *Chi* in only where we really stand, where we live, where we live a true life and that we maintain holy intercourse with the little world entrusted to us, if we help the holy spiritual substance (*Chi* Light-Essence) to accomplish itself in that section of creation in which we are living while establishing, in this our place, a dwelling for the (*Chi*) divine presence.<sup>4</sup>

In (b) above, *isaala Chi* greetings reflect also the same rhetorical informative and questioning expectancy reports from both individuals engaged in the same relational exchange that:

There is thought, speech and action and that thought corresponds to one's wife, speech to one's children and action to one's servants and that whoever straightens himself or herself out in regard to all the three will find through the light of *Chi* that everything prospers through the hands of *Chi* and depends also on the person who opens himself or herself in dutiful acceptable worship of *Chi*.<sup>5</sup>

In (c) above, *ifoola Chi (Chi efoo)* greetings reflects the same rhetorical informative questioning expectancy form the dialoging individuals that:

Through the (*Chi*-God-light) that has dawned for you and all that *Chi* is making serious demands from you and us and that this *Chi* is asking from you and us three major actions that should represent our article of faith in *Chi*.

These things are that the interlocutors are:

1. Not to look furtively outside oneself;
2. Not to look furtively into others; and
3. Not to aim at the individual selves.

These expectations conversely mean that everyone should firstly preserve and hallow his own soul in its own particularity and in its own place and not envy the particularity and place of others. Secondly, everyone should respect the secret in the soul of his fellow-man and not with brazen curiosity, intrude upon it and take advantage of it and thirdly, everyone, in his relationship to the world, should be careful not to set himself /herself as the absolute and final aim or end.<sup>6</sup>

In tandem with the above positions and since this paper is solely concerned with the search for the presence of the universal essence and reality (theophany-theopathy) of Chi and Christ, this review will not go into the Old Testament theophany-theopathy but will contain itself within the references of the New Testament Christ only for this exercise. It is important to state here also that there are uncountable NT-explanations, citations and expressions of the said theophany-theopathy, but this paper is going to sample only seven instances to instantiate the above Igbo language/linguistic dimensions of the Chi and Christ theophany-theopathy. This paper has styled the said theophany-theopathy search in *Chi* and Christ with the diptyches A and B below.

### Diptych A

<p>1. <b><i>iboola Chi</i> (the light -phos)</b> (in the sense and equivalence of <i>ibo anu</i>—opening up an animal/victim)</p>	<p>2. <b><i>isaala Chi</i> (The Light)</b> (in the sense of washing oneself clean)</p>	<p>3. <b><i>Ifoola Chi</i> (<i>Chi Efo</i>)(The Light)</b> in the sense of the calling of someone’s name(Vocation) (<i>Ifo Aha</i> or <i>Ikpo Aha</i>)</p>
<p><b>A call to open up the self/selves for the benedictional/prophetic/vocational duty-dialogue with the giver of light in order to:</b></p> <p>Let <b><i>Chi</i></b> as the universal essence of Light -God/ our God and the personal God- in and into the one greeted and all:</p> <p>1. As the sole universal sense and essence of the light of being and life. It is the light <b><i>Chi</i></b> that x-rays in whose presence nothing can stand hidden;</p> <p>2. As a sign of a universal</p>	<p><b>A call to open up the self/selves for purification and the worthiness for the joint meeting with humanity and <i>Chi</i>- the dwelling of purifying light in order to:</b></p> <p>Let <b><i>Chi</i></b> as the universal essence of Light -God/ our God and the personal God- in and into the one greeted and all:</p> <p>1. As a precondition to be worthy of <b><i>Chi</i></b> the provider of the light of the day that dawned for all;</p> <p>2. As an appeal for the sincerity</p>	<p><b>A call to open up the self/selves for the transmission, revelation, covenant-plans and human responses in the light <i>Chi</i> in order to:</b></p> <p>Let <b><i>Chi</i></b> as the universal essence of Light -God/ our God and the personal God- in and into the one greeted and all:</p> <p>1. As a total submission of the personal life and being as a caretaker for <b><i>Chi</i></b>- the benevolent owner and giver of life in the light of his eternal wisdom. The following fact are identifiable through many Igbo names: ( <i>Chijindu</i>, <i>Chinwendu</i>,</p>

<p>reverence that includes the one who extends the greeting and the one that is being greeted;</p> <p>3. As an appreciation of the free gift of the dawn (<b>Light</b>) of a new day as a religious commandment, responsibility, commitment etc.;</p> <p>4. As a commandment of faith and communion with one another-the sign of ‘one mind and one soul’ (<i>cor unum et anima una</i>) in <i>Chi</i>; cf. Act. 2:42-47);</p> <p>5. As a sign of fraternal love, charity and gratitude in obedience to be the brothers’/sisters’ keeper;</p> <p>6. As a sign of our common share in a common humanity;</p> <p>7. As a fulfillment of the common tripartite moral and ethical call of <i>Chi</i> through the light of the dawn on human persons to teach (<i>munus docendi</i>), sanctify (<i>munus santificandi</i>) and administer (<i>munus regendi</i>) the world of <i>Chi</i> (the creator – <i>Chi-neke</i> or <i>Chi-okike</i>) etc.</p>	<p>of hearth according to the ordinances of <i>Chi</i> for the readiness to accept one another and neighbors;</p> <p>3. As a beatific manifestation of the divine universal share of the essences of the beauty of <i>Chi</i> (the light of the benevolent day);</p> <p>4. As an expression of virtuous intentional simplicity for the readiness to accept the personal responsibilities of the day as an article of faith as provided by the light of <i>Chi</i>;</p> <p>5. As a modest prayer of encouragement for a qualitative social climate for the day that has been provided by the light of <i>Chi</i>;</p> <p>6. As an internal and external vision for the battles in existence according to the provisions of the imminent ‘day’ that is the concern of <i>Chi</i> the light-provider of each day;</p> <p>7. As a conscious communication and responsive invitation for the benefiting individuals that the day <i>Chi</i> that has dawned is a supernatural gift whereby <i>Chi</i> has made it possible for human persons to come over from the darkness of evils into the light of a new dawn etc.</p>	<p><i>Chinedu, Chikere, Chimere, Kasarachi, etc.</i>);</p> <p>2. As a total understanding that <i>Chi</i> gives life as a call to responsibility for the performances of deliberate human actions in accordance with his light and will: (<i>Chikamma</i> (<i>Chikammele, Chikamkpele, Chimaobi, Chima, Chinele, Chilebe, Chinaelo</i> etc.))</p> <p>3. As a code of conduct in the human and world-hood relational affairs and circumstances in view of punitive measures (<i>Chigere, Ikpechi, Odinakachi, Chikaodinaka</i> etc.)</p> <p>4. As a law for the human conscience and mind as the messenger of <i>Chi</i> who witnesses all human acts and the acts of man (<i>Chimaobi, Chigaekwu, Chiaka, Chinweizu</i> etc.)</p> <p>5. As a mandate to be virtuous in right reason in human action, to be prudent in justice, in temperance, grace and fortitude (<i>Chikammele, Chigozie, Chinwe</i> etc.)</p> <p>6. As the exercise of hope and charity in fraternal correction and commerce (<i>Chigekwu, Chinturu, Chigaemezu</i> etc.)</p> <p>7. As faith as a gift and the fruit of patience, self-control, goodness and peace (<i>Chikamso, Lebechi, Mlemchi, Odinakachi</i> etc.)</p>
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**B. Summative Tripartite Universal essence of Christ-Light-Theophany-Theopathy:**

These are:

1. God the Father
2. God the Son (Christ)
3. God the Spirit

The reference of the summative tripartite universal essences of Christ as light (*Chi*) is very comprehensive based on the Trinitarian dogma of the Christian faith. The catechism of the Christian church teaches the Trinitarian (tripartite) universal, undying, unfading, essence and relational light of love of the Father, Son and the Spirit as the divine unity

that is ‘Triune’ (tripartite). The church uses the terminology essence to designate this light of divine and triune unity and relation as to also designate the truth of their distinction-Father-Son-Spirit-the qualifier of the relationship of each to the others – the divine economy/ fraternal commerce.<sup>7</sup>

In the text of the ‘Apostles’ Creed (also known as the ‘Niceno- Constantinopolitan Creed’) the church also proclaims Christ (as light- Chi) as follows: God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation (pragmatic character) he came down from heaven (theophany), and by the Holy Spirit (the symbol of light) was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man (human character-theophany). Based on the above, the following table hopes to establish the closeness of the Igbo Chi-light concept to bear on the Christ-light concept. This aspect will be taken from seven New Testament references to substantiate the above Igbo Chi essence and the expected realization of the universal essence in Christ’s theophany.

**Diptych B**

<p>1. <b>(The light of Christ and the Lamb-slain) Iboola Chi, Ka Chi boo</b> (in the sense of ibo anu) that is the way of emptying the self for Chi (kynosis)</p>	<p>2. <b>(Christ The Light) Isaala Chi</b> (in the sense of washing oneself clean</p>	<p>3. <b>The Light of Christ as Ifola Chi, Ka Chi Efo</b>, (in the sense of the calling of someone’s name as a sign of invocatory prayerful benediction-<i>Ifo mmadu aha oma or Ikpo mmadu Aha oma</i>)</p>
<p><b>A call to open up the self/selves for the benedictional/prophetic/ vocational duty-dialogue with the giver of light (Christ) in order to:</b></p> <p>Let <b>Christ-Chi</b> as the universal essence of Light -God/ our God and the personal God- in and into the Igbo Christian:</p> <p>1. As an act of relational kenosis (Phil.2:6-7) for the preservation of unity among the people and humanity which in Rev.21:22-23 is proclaimed as: The Lord God</p>	<p><b>A call to open up the self/selves for purification and worthiness for the joint meeting with Christ and humanity - Chi- the dwelling of purifying light in order to:</b></p> <p>Let <b>Christ-Chi</b> as the universal essence of Light -God/ our God and the personal God- in and into the one greeted and all:</p> <p>1. As an act of purity of heart and a sign of personal socio-moral consciousness towards the other person or persons. In Mt. 15: 19 Christ- <i>Chi</i> teaches</p>	<p><b>A call to open up the self/selves for the transmission, revelation, covenant-plans and human responses in the anticipation of the light of Christ-Chi’ in order to:</b></p> <p>Let <b>Christ-Chi</b> as the universal essence of Light -God/ our God and the personal God- in and into the one greeted and all:</p> <p>1. As <i>Nunc Dimittis Ifola Chi, Ka Chi Fo</i>, and <i>Ka Chi boo</i>- the signs of the darkness of the night that is coming or the</p>

<p>Almighty and the Lamb as the temple, and the city therefore has no need of the sun or the moon for light but the radiant glory of God and the Lamb (Christ-Chi) as lighted torch;</p> <p>2. As a vocational and benedictional-dialogue through which the giver of light (Christ-Chi), as 1Pt. 2: 9 proclaims: But you are a chosen race, the kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people to be a personal possession to sing the praises of God who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light;</p> <p>3. Christ-Chi proclamation of God made man as the light of the world and life for followership (<i>Mmadu bu chi ibe ya-</i> Man as God to man) as in Jh.8: 12, <b>:Ego sum lux mundi-</b> I am the light of the world, anyone who follows me will not be walking in the dark but will have the light of life. Christ-Chi is the giver of the light of life for anyone who accepts his call as a vocational-greeting;</p> <p>4. The ‘word’ that came into the human world Christ-Chi is the giver and provider of truth for the life of the world is a call for a personal involvement. And a failure or rejection of this ‘word’ (greeting) becomes a life in darkness, cf. Jh. 1: 1-5.</p> <p>5. Christ-Chi is a new birth that is implicitly a new dawn-the light of the day. In this dawn of the new day, the world is born again as a new creation and gratification that</p>	<p>that whatever comes out of the mouth (even the greeting <i>Isaala Chi</i>) should come from the heart, and it is this that makes someone clean or unclean because from the heart comes evil intentions like: murder, adultery, fornication, theft, perjury, slander etc.</p> <p>2. As an act of a supreme blessedness and felicity which Christ-Chi proclaims in Mt.5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see (Chi)-God</p> <p>3. As a sign of a common and communal faithful share of orthodoxy of faith in truth and mutual love- Christ-Chi-cf. Titus:1:15; 1Tim: 1: 3-4; 2 Tim: 2: 23-26</p> <p>4. As a precondition for seeing the glory of Christ-Chi as an informed instrument and powered by the acceptance of the other/the neighbor which also serves as the identification of a manifestation of divine beauty immanent through the light of the dawning day as a holy duty, Jh.8:12ff.</p> <p>5. As a sign of the culture of modesty, prayer, simplicity and temperance in search of the faithful end of the human person as a fulfillment of the will of God –Christ-Chi cf. Col. 1:10; Rom. 12: 2.</p> <p>6. As a sign of warning against the human pride in dealings</p>	<p>darkness of the last night now overtaken by the light of the new dawn. The Christ-Chi implication is that of the New Testament passage compounded in Lk.2:29-32 as the tripartite-triplet information and identification notes about Christ and the <i>Chi</i> Theophanous.</p> <p>2. As the presentation of the natural course of all humanity including the Igbo through the personification and representation of the figure called- Simeon-the upright and devout man on whom the Holy Spirit of God -the symbol of the light of God-Chi rested on, who is close to the dark night of death. His prayer as the devout servant of Christ-Chi can be called such Igbo names like Udochi/ Nkwachi (the peace and promise of Christ-Chi), cf. Lk. 2:29.</p> <p>3. As the tripartite-triplet universal essence of Christ-Chi mission of salvation for all who bless and worship Christ-Chi as the lord and savior of the world – including the Igbo world, cf. <i>Nzubechi, Amarachi</i> etc.,cf.Lk.2:30.</p> <p>4. As Christ-Chi the bringer of light to the gentile-world of which Igbo is part of, and also as the universal essence of glory to all the chosen people-a light of revelation for the gentiles and glory for your</p>
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<p>has provided the living the optimal appearances as man and not as ghosts to bear witness in a world-hood relation to Christ-<i>Chi</i> Jh.1:6-8;</p> <p>6. The day that appears through the light –Christ-<i>Chi</i>- is a special gift of a supreme-essence of God to the living and at the same time an article of faith (<i>actus credentis</i>) that has to be shared by ways and means of human relational works (<i>Mumus-Munera</i> as referenced above) Jh.1: 12 – the power to become children of God-<i>Chi</i>.</p> <p>7. Christ-<i>Chi</i> is a ‘covenant-dwelling amongst us’ for the co-dwellers to behold the glory of God through the pragmatisms of the kindness and exchangeable fidelity of Christ-<i>Chi</i> theophany, Jh.1:14- the word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory...from the father...full of grace and truth.</p>	<p>with the other/ the neighbor cf. 1 Jn.: 2:15-17 because the love of the world means to find no place in God –Christ-<i>Chi</i>.</p> <p>7. As the sign of an inward struggle in keeping with the law of Christ-<i>Chi</i> as the human-rescue-mission against death and disorder (Rom. 7: 14-25).</p>	<p>people Israel, cf. Lk. 2:32.</p> <p>5. As in the <i>Benedictus</i> of Zechariah through which Christ-<i>Chi</i> out of his faithful love bowels mercy and salvation as the rising sun (<i>Chi-Light</i>) that visits humanity from on high, (<i>Ihechi</i>) cf. Lk.2: 78;</p> <p>6. As Christ-<i>Chi</i> is the wondrous intervener and strength of his people, <i>Chinazo, Chimamnda, Ikechi</i>,cf.Lk.2: 78;</p> <p>7. As the victorious and mysterious visitation of Christ-<i>Chi</i> ‘the rising sun-light’ who heralds the day to dispel the darkness and the shadow of death as the guide into the way of peace, <i>Chiemelie, Udochi, Chibuzo, Chinedu</i> cf. Lk.2:79 etc</p>
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From the diptyches as presented above, this paper tries to look into the essence and use of language from the two sides of the issues inherent in the topic as given – the Igbo *Chi* and the Christian Igbo-Christ. This short paper is also very conscious of the facts that language functions through grammar that is on the daily practical tongue. It is also a fact that the Igbo word ‘*Chi*’ and ‘Christ’ are presently Igbo-tongue-tied concepts. When Socrates says that an unexamined life is not worth living, this paper makes bold also to apply that an unexamined language is not worth the speaking.

From the above presented issues, this paper stands to apply that *Chi* and Christ are already fundamental facts that have in both the Igbo and Christian thought-provisions, common and implicit relational custodianships and therefore both concepts are entangled and showcase-able through the committed language and linguistic rules of ‘use’ that signify what stands now to be called the ‘grammar of life and form of life’ for the Igbo and the Christian Igbo. The truth of this application is that once the rule of grammar is changed

the meaning becomes changed also because it is the rule that governs the nature of a language that permeates the life of both as Igbo or as Christian Igbo. According to Rush Rhees, 'the rules of grammar are rules of the lives (Igbo/Christian) in which there is language.'<sup>8</sup> Wittgenstein supports the above facts by stating that 'essence is expressed by grammar'<sup>9</sup> and 'grammar is searching for the essence that already lies open to view'<sup>10</sup>.

This short paper therefore appeals that Igbo *Chi*- language (thought) and Igbo-Christian-Christ language (NT-thought) are part and parcel of language rules that are imbedded in our everyday lives. In spite of the above presentations, this short paper cannot be concluded if there are no comments concerning the possibilities of some Missing -Links apprehensible within this review. The so-called missing links are to be showcased from very short provisions informed by the following two factors: 1. The Igbo traditional *Chi* missing links; and 2. The Christian Missionary missing links. Before going into some details on the two factors, this paper finds it eminent to sample the meaningful interplays of the concept of the 'missing-links.'

The works of Asouzu<sup>11</sup> have duly expanded this concept as the progressive interpreter of and for research and science. Missing links are both healers and creators of vacuums that proceed from investigating realities and they lead from the known to the unknown in a procedural and progressive continuity. He says that anything known, like in the case of this paper, the *Chi*-Christ theophany and theopathy, through the processes of scientific investigations invariably led to some platforms of the unknown and powers positive results for more and more actualization and perfectibility that led further into consequential harvests and scopes of new eyes for new advances into new theories.

A missing link according to Asouzu ...takes the form of the irrelevant, the strange, the embarrassing etc. and constitutes the main catalyst of scientific progress.<sup>11</sup> In the light of Asouzu, missing links close up missing links and open up new ones and form bridges for more comprehensive knowledge platform that become powered by the dispositions of communicative competences and this is precisely why this research paper.<sup>12; 13</sup>

### **C. The Igbo Traditional Religious Missing Links**

In the light of the above, this paper calls up the main missing link that describes the Igbo stand today. *Eji Igbo eme gini* (what is the value/use of Igbo language) commands the *fundus* of the missing link. This review is a signal that Igbo as a language has an 'equal validity'<sup>14</sup> based also on the Hegelian theory of the universal ground<sup>15</sup> which stands as grammar. Since Igbo has grammar, then Igbo language has an equal valid use,

communicative competences and performances like any other language-family-resemblances.

The theory of family-resemblances is one of the strongest arguments of Wittgenstein on issues of language use, proposition and essence.<sup>16</sup> Wittgenstein also made serious references to this same theory in relation to polytheism and monotheism more especially, with references to their common features and likeness<sup>17</sup> and gave more expressions of same in order to explain that there are no clear cut boundaries but rather more of alliances.<sup>18</sup>

The *Eji Igbo eme gini* impunities have therefore no valid application and argumentations while facing the concept of ‘depth grammar’ in Igbo language use as to further argue against the validity of Chi and Christ religious realities and relational-ties in theophany and theopathy, in spite of possible focuses on polytheisms. The above case (*Eji Igbo me gini*) stands therefore as the major missing link from the ambiances of Igbo traditional culture, language use and religion.

As this paper professes and argues, *Chi* and Christ (*Kristi*) are already derivatives that surround Igbo language use and understanding from both the Igbo ‘surface grammar and depth grammar’. In the words of Kripke, surface grammar actually refers to all the formal grammatical rules while depth grammar refers to the circumstances and relationships that dictate language use.<sup>19</sup>

The paper is quite conscious of the fact that it is Wittgenstein who refers to ‘depth grammar’ in a connectedness with religious beliefs. In his ‘Lectures on Esthetics, Psychology and Religion’<sup>20</sup> he uses the word ‘God’ to compare other expressions of religious belief and on the serious note of the paper ‘*Chi*’ also applies. For Wittgenstein, the word God is ‘amongst the earliest learnt...the word is used like a word representing a person. God sees, rewards, etc being shown all these things, did you understand what this word meant?’<sup>21</sup>

Since from the above applications that the concept ‘God’ is amongst the earliest learnt and is used to represent a person, the depth grammar of the Igbo religious belief ‘*Chi*’ is a person and objects like *Oha-Chi* tree, *Ogbu-Chi* tree, *Ogirisi-Chi* tree and other objects like *Okwa-Chi*, *Uno-Chi*, *Omu Nkwu-Chi*, *Nzu-Chi* etc (Cf. Anusiobi<sup>22</sup>; Ezekwugo<sup>23</sup>; Okeke<sup>24</sup>; Obioma<sup>25</sup>) inform some of the missing links. The Igbo acquaintances with *Chi* concept, informed by the definition of depth grammar, tie together both the personal and general knowledge criteria for the *Chi*-Christ-light-universal essence in Igbo and Igbo-Christian religious thoughts. The above facts notwithstanding, the object-representational-

signs and symbols of *Chi* in the Igbo traditional religious conception based on the above references, may also supply new dimensions for positive progressive missing links in the God-light-Igbo-Christian thoughts. In support of the above missing link provisions as presented above, the Christian thought provides as follows that:

Human life, existence and world-hood cannot do without signs and symbols. Human spiritual activities are also evidenced through the expressivities of the spiritual activities by ways and means of both physical and symbolic forms. It is also part and parcel of human being-ness to communicate experiences through language, actions and gestures that are mutually comprehensive within the same speech communities even in the events of their interpretations and significations of their realities in God.

It is also a *factum* that God communicates with the human realities through visible created orders. The material ties of man in existence are also direct intellectual common goods for man as man in nature as means to confront the creator's courses as presented in the light of religious activities. These confrontational realities in nature gain impressions through religious rites. The missing links here therefore, as cited above, can be instantiations that may lead to new progressive missing links from other areas beyond the hereby presented depth grammatical ambiances for theophany and theopathy between *Chi* and Christ.<sup>26</sup>

#### **D. The Missionary Missing Links**

At this point, it is important to call to mind Christ's personal mandate and charge for the evangelization of the peoples. His personal charge and mandate called up in Mt. 28: 18-20 states: Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations....This mandate means that the gospel message has to:

...Break, inter alia, the boundaries of cultural, political, socio-economic, socio-linguistic, ecological and socio-psychological heritages and identities. This missionary mandate must reach all extensive possibilities embracing, collecting and connecting nationalities and peoples, with all the linguistic and cultural differentiations involved. This global, universal essential trans-continental and trans-national inter-flux of the message of Christ (*Die Sache Jesu*-the business of Jesus) presents the complications.<sup>27</sup>

On the above note, it is very clear that the assignment of evangelization is supposed to be a culture of synergic interface and not a one-way traffic proposal command. In line with this fact, Pope Pius XII<sup>28</sup> in his *Evangelii Praecones* (Missionary Encyclical) Article 66-7 addresses this missionary mandate and missionaries stating that:

The Church from the beginning down to our time has always followed this wise practice: Let not the Gospel on being introduced into any new land, destroy or extinguish whatever its people possess that is naturally good, just or beautiful. For the Church, when she calls people to higher culture and a better way of life under the inspiration of the Christian religion, does not act like one who recklessly cuts down and uproots a thriving forest. No. She grafts a good scion upon the wild stock that it may bear a crop of more delicious fruit.

From the facts above, this paper supplies here some of the missionary missing links with the following historical facts:

1. The earliest Christian missionaries tried to baptize the Igbo people and missed-out baptizing the Igbo culture as stipulated in the cited missionary Encyclical of the Pope Pius XII above<sup>29</sup>;
2. Igbo Land was called the ‘Citadel of Paganism and the domain of the Lord of Hell’ (cf. Jordan<sup>30</sup>; Okonkwo<sup>31</sup>;
3. Isichei<sup>32</sup> noted that the missionary Priest Rev. Fr. Lutz advised his colleagues during this early missionary ventures to note that this portion of ‘Dark Continent(Africa)’ was cursed and engulfed by the power of the devil;
4. Uzukwu<sup>33</sup> confirms this missionary era as oppressive and dominant and confirms such frame of mind that portrayed the Igbo religious language, culture and worldview as inferior and as such was due for replacement. To buttress this missing link further Uzukwu says that:

*The confirmation of this dominance came from fantastic stories peddled around by travelers and missionaries, and the selective way in which missionaries presented Africa (Igbo included) to the western world, especially when it comes to raising funds.*

*The...African (Igbo) cultural values were (therefore) glossed over.*

5. Such missionary postures as above, created more damaging effect on the Igbo surface and depth grammar which have until the present age, made the message of the Gospel to a large extent in Igbo land ‘tongue-independent’ as a ‘Latin-Engli-Igbo-Church’. This missing link has been noted by Okonkwo<sup>34</sup> as that missing link that is powered by also the glossing-over of the Igbo Folks- Media<sup>34</sup>; Oramedia<sup>35</sup> and community-media- language-systems<sup>36</sup> which represent the practical book of history of the people for the people (both social and religious) and also inform and involve the interplays of the Igbo people’s socio-fact, menti-facts, sensible world (*mundus sensibilis*) and the tongue-dependent sources of knowledge (*locus intellectus*).

From the above, this paper is of the strongest opinion that to relate the gospel message to a people the preacher/pastor must learn to employ the natural species specific communication devices (especially the surface and depth grammar devices) in which and through which the receptor is responsive. To this effect therefore, all credible gospel messages must start from where the receptor is and not from where the pastor comes from. On this very note Uka says that:

The word of God effectively communicated, helps the community to understand 'who they are' and 'who others are' and also helps them to sort out their problems. The trouble with most sermons is that they give answers to questions the people are not asking.<sup>37</sup>

## **Conclusion**

To conclude this work, it is necessary to ask for an applicable mission statement that will underscore the synergic methodology that can stand as the possibility proof for Chi and Christ theophany and theopathy relational-ties on one hand. And on the other hand the expected synergic methodology hopes to bring to bear the practical realities of alternatives to the problems showcased at the meeting points of the Igbo-Chi-faith-thought-praxis and the Christ-Christian-Igbo-faith-praxis. This synergic methodology hopes also to be the very veritable standard that would have been applied at the very first points of contact between the two religious traditions as to solve the inherent confrontational face-offs exposed by the missing links and their dichotomies. This methodology would have heralded at that same meeting-points between the Igbo Chi and the Igbo-Christ religious intellections, the worthy harvest of one mind and one heart (*cor unum et anima unna*) religious theo-pathetic Christology. The method which this paper heralds is: (The Areopagus Method (Act.17.23-31)

Paul at this point of meeting, though he was so exasperated at the sight of Athens, an idol-ridden pantheistic city and people, he –Paul the missionary *per excellence*, did not *prima facie*, condemn neither the idols nor the people as in the cases cited in the above Igbo missionary missing links.

Paul's sympathetic, non-dominant and non-derogatory approach created a free and natural ground for his missionary-depth-grammatical-message-delivery. Paul went further with a secular wisdom and intellection and called the 'idol-ridden-pantheistic Athenians-a God-fearing and extremely scrupulous people in religious matters (Act, 17:23). Paul did not gloss-over their religious and cultural values but rather showered understanding to them in their freedom and accord with their lives and the laws of nature which he perfectly signed off with the Greek concept-*kata physin*. St. Paul after his polite and humane method of

meeting with foreigners – the gentiles, he still was vehement and firm in his solemn proclamations as the method *per excellence* for the condemnation of false gods and idolatry. His methodology is made manifest through his relational-human-theopathy of sermonistic intellections that the God he is preaching made the whole universe and has no need for a representational signification through things showcased in the above Igbo samples just like the Athenian temples. By the word intellection this paper means to state that for something to be meaningful it has to be objectified into a thing that is called a ‘universal essence since meaning is naming.’<sup>38</sup>

To know a word is to know its ‘use’. Language use is a linguistic copy of a word. At the same time, the God which Paul is preaching cannot be assimilated through material fabrications of human hands and Paul ended his sermon with the call to repentant-conversion to Christ-*Chi*-the light of the word-made man that was yet unknown to the gentile assembly like that of *Ndi* Igbo of the missionary era. Looking at Act.17:28-29, Paul presents Christ-*Chi* in a relational world-hood kinship with all men which is equally indicative of the application of this paper that Christ-*Chi* world-hood-*relationality* is akin to the religious confession of both Christian religious and Igbo *Chi*-religious forms of confessions whereby there has been a faithful LCM-(Lowest-Common-Multiple) that there is ‘One God, One Lord that is the author of creation and human salvation (cf. Cor.8:6). To confirm this Igbo *Chi* and Christ LCM-universal essence of God in Igbo and Christian thoughts, this paper takes serious referential notes on the common *Chi*-attachment to many Igbo proper names that have been used at Christian baptisms as presented through the diptyches above and uncountable Igbo Christian *Chi*-punctuated liturgical songs. We are all conversant with most of these songs like:

1. *Chi na emere oo,ona emere m ihe oma, ...ezi nnaa m onye obi oma...*
2. *Chi m na echere moo...obara uru na m na echere onwe m...*
3. *Chi m lee Chi m lee oyoyo Chi m lee...ihe ona emere m di m mma na ahu...*
4. *Chi moo Chi moo Chi moo...Chi m ututu, Chi m ehihe, Chi m abali...*
5. *Alleluya Chi m lee ... Alleluya Chi m imela ebe igworo m oria....etc. and so many Chi related names chosen at first and perpetual identifications for Catholic Religious Professions etc.*

In the face of the Igbo depth grammatical realities so far and the above Christian liturgical applicable realities also, this paper has the needed and necessary foundations to supply that *Chi* is Christ and Christ is *Chi* in spite of some missing-links and therefore, all in all, this paper stands out as a prayer addressed to all humanity as proof that is confirmable in the words of St. Paul-the missionary of the gentiles that says:

...But you do not live in the dark that the day should take you unawares like a thief. No, you are all children of light and children of the day; we do not belong to the night or to darkness...! 1, Cor. 5: 4-5).

## Endnotes

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