

## **Eucharistic Fellowship and Its Relevance to Human Relationship**

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### **Abstract**

*Man is naturally a social animal. For no single human being is an island, and simply put, no one is completely sufficient. Man thus naturally relates, and in this human relationship, personal interest, sentiment, bias, desire e.t.c, comes in and thus problems ensue. Man has also devised various academic means to resolve the problem, these means or ways include sociology, psychology, anthropology, history and international diplomacy and religious studies. Among the world known religions which of course speak peace and good human relationship, Christianity seems to stand out. Christianity, a religion traced to Judaism and the life and activities of Jesus Christ, gave man veritable tools of sustaining good human relationship. The importance of human relationship or the need for harmony, oneness and unity is showcased in the African Traditional Religion(ATR) among the Umunna in the Igbo community is demonstrated by the practice of "Oriko" which exemplifies unity and also is synonymous with the Christian Eucharist fellowship. Having considered qualitative and hermeneutical methods, this paper is of the view that the Eucharist in the New Testament depicts strong lessons of love, peace, hospitality, acceptance, unity, harmony, forgiveness and sacrifice, faith/trust in God and in fellow man among others. If these are learned and practiced as explained in Eucharistic fellowship teachings by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, the challenges encountered in human relationship will be a thing of the past.*

**KEYWORDS:** Eucharistic Fellowship; Human Relationship; Man

### **Introduction**

Human Relationship for a very long period of time has faced whole lot of challenges, possibly due to ignorance or lack of proper understanding of the concept. This paper seeks to address this issue from the New Testament background: Eucharistic Fellowship and its importance and contribution towards a better harmonious or homogeneous society.

### **Origin of Man**

Charles Darwin (1859:76) has it that man, evolved from lower animals and after a long process of growth and maturity became human being, but he has not been able to state where this evolution continued and where it will end. However, he and many other scientists "then" held this to be acceptable. This is called the evolution theory "of man". According to Wilbur O' Donovan, (1996:81-84) in his book titled Biblical Christianity in African perspective, Chindo in a dialogue with Garba, agrees with the African perspective

of human origin, which has it that the soul of man had been created by the Supreme Being “God” from the onset and these souls dwell in the spirit world and enters the belly of pregnant mother and this comes out with new body and different behaviour, but a part of such soul remains with the spirit world and acts of the persons ‘guardian angel’. The soul returns to the spirit world when the bearer dies and thus returns again about seven times. This process is called reincarnation.

However, they could not identify the location of the human spirit world and its ruling principles except for the fact that the spirit and soul were created by God from the very beginning. Again continues O’Donovan, both the Bible and modern science indicate that the human personality and soul is formed at the moment of conception in the womb. Modern science also explains the reason for so many of the evidences given in support of human pre-existence.

All religions of the world directly or indirectly believe and own supremacy to Almighty God, despite the different names they call Him and of course their own creation story as ascribed to the Supreme reality. Succinctly we shall thus concern ourselves with Christian religious view on man’s origin.

### **Origin of Man as Held by Christianity and the Inception of Human Relationship.**

The Christian Bible does not only have an extensive and elaborate credible story about the history of the origin of man, but also puts the answers to the questions that were left unanswered in both the evolutionary and African myth stories. The Bible tells us that God created man out of dust of the earth (Gen 2:7). By this He created man’s physical body. Then God breathed the “breath of life” into the physical body he had made and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). When God breathed life into Adam’s body, he (Adam) became a living soul. “The LORD God said, it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” (Gen. 2:13). This marked the start of human relationship, as Eve was made from the rib of Adam, and the (sexual) union of Adam and Eve led to the inception of procreation as God willed.

From this, God instituted and ordained marriage first, human relationship second and then sex in the marriage institution third. This puts to rest the ambiguity of the origin of man and human relationship, as from then till today, man has been on earth and has been relating with his fellow man and of course the marriage institution has also remained. According John Stott (1995:17 ) God, dignified man by addressing them in such a way as to assume their understanding, by giving them permission and prohibition, God allowed man to have moral choice/freedom, by asking Adam to name all things. He gave man a sense of creativity and responsibility, by giving Adam a wife, he instituted, love, marriage and companion among men, by visiting them in the cool of the evening, He created fellowship, union, re-union and spiritual worship. Hence, understanding, moral choice, creativity, love and fellowship were instituted by God for the benefit of man.

### **The Problem of Human Relationship**

Due to individual differences, personal interest, quest for self-satisfaction, diversities and world policies, human relationship has posed a huge challenge to all the facets of human life. Scholars have written about

man in his various distinguished (unique) spheres, hence Keith Thomas in John Stott; contemporary Christianity collected a number of quaint suggestions in his book man and the world. He points out that human being was described by Aristotle as a political animal, by Thomas Willis as a laughing animal, by Benjamin Franklin as a tool making animal, by Edmund Burke as a religious animal, and by James Boswell the Gourmet as a cooking animal; Others focused on the physical features of the human body, for instance Plato made much of our erect posture, saying that other animals look down, but man looks up to heaven. One thing is certain in all these, man's interest hugely differs, and when one is extremely consumed by any (good or bad) interest, desire, quest or ambition it turns human relationship and other social structures apart, because at this point it has become an obsession. For instance, a good pastor who is wholesomely dedicated to God and the church may be lagging behind seriously, in his legal family duties and vice versa. From the foregoing, it is obvious that human relationship and indeed fellowship (both spiritual, physical or social) was directly instituted by God himself, but, this relationship has been hampered by man starting from Adam, due to the type of "moral" choices we make which affects us and our fellowship or relationship with our fellow human beings and God. Thus, it is obvious that human choices and obsessions has become a threat to human relationship. We shall thus look at various attempts made to rekindle good human relationship.

### **Attempts Made to Rekindle Human Relationship**

In as much as political science, Economics, Biology, Management, Psychology, Guidance and counseling amongst others are some of the fields of human relations is mainly one of primary interest of humanities faculty, which principally include Religion, Philosophy, Ethics/morality, History and International relations etc.

While philosophy will try to ask questions about and seek wisdom on why and how humans relate, ethics/morality tends to study intensively the right and wrong conduct of human beings and how best to better it. For history and inter-state (international) relationship, and how nations can best cohabit.

However, our focus will be on religious tools and attempts towards fostering good human relationship. To clearly understand religious attempts geared towards solving the problem of human relationship, it is imperative to briefly look at the meaning of the world, Religion.

### **The Concept of Religion**

Like economics and many other relative courses, religion has no single generally accepted definition. While a sociologist will see religion from its institution and social functions, a philosophical approach will tend an abstract identification, a psychologist will see it from the Emotional feeling of dependence, a theologian will tend to go one direction and neglect other world religion's view, a phenomenological approach tends to search for physical visible characteristics of religion. Thus it has no universally accepted definition.

According to Obilor, in his book many religions one God (2010) there are three basic approaches to the definition of religion. These are etymological, scholastic and pedagogical.

Etymological approach to the definition of religion, religion is derived from the Latin noun *religio*. The beauty of this latin word is that it is most closely allied to other three verbs: *religere* which means “to turn to constantly” or “to observe conscientiously”, *religari* which means “to choose again”. A closer scrutiny shows that the three verbs point to three possible religious attitudes and thus a purely etymological probe can tell us much about religion and can also help to resolve most of the difficulties often associated with religion.

The scholastic approach: We can now no consider some of the definitions offered by scholars. According to A.D. Gilbert (1980:5), religion is describes as any system of values, beliefs, norms, and related symbols and rituals, arising from attempts by whether in this world or any future world, by means wholly or partly supernatural.

Baptista Mondin (1989:629) adds to this definition the ideas of knowledge, actions, norm and structure with which man expresses his true recognition and dependence upon the sacred (God).

Alston W. P. (1967:140) takes religion to mean the belief in an ever living God that is, in a Divine mind and will, ruling the universe and holding moral relations with mankind.

The pedagogical approach: Considers religion from two perspectives explicit religion and implicit religion: Explicit religion is that aspect of religion which comes from outside – learned or taught – revelation, belief system, holy books and persons, which often are based on authority. Every religion that has a founder belongs to this class. Implicit religion is man’s natural search for the beyond a humanly driven drive – that comes from within and is not imposed from outside. The truth of the matter is that man has a religion because he is religious. It is not true that man is religious because he has a religion. Religion is a product of man’s religiosity.

From the foregoing, religion here is seen as the fundamental outward practice worship of the supreme reality as apprehended by man and “belief” in his ultimate search for the transcendent. Every world religion makes an effort to bring people together, under one harmonious umbrella.

However, among the world religions, we shall concern ourselves with Christian religion and how it attempts to make for good human relationship. The word fellowship is variously used in different contexts, but mostly, it is used within the religious circle.

However, for a more direct and articulated use in this work, we shall first consider the word “fellowship” from its etymology. The word fellowship is derived from the Greek word *Koinonia* and it means having a share in, participating in or giving a share.

J Keathley II in *Anukam Nneji* defines fellowship as having or sharing with others certain things in common such as interest/ labour privileges and responsibilities, experiences and concerns. Fellowship can mean a partnership that involves working together and caring for one another as a company of individuals like a company of soldiers or members of a family. *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* defines fellowship (Greek *Koinonia*) as companionship or partnership and communion with others on the basis of something held in common.

From the above, it is quite evident that they are various kinds of fellowship social or club fellowship, party or political, economic or financial, religious and other forms/levels of fellowship. However, we shall direct our focus to religious fellowship in general and Christian fellowship in particular. Religious fellowships are

those communions, worship or union in which adherence of same spiritual faith share their most spiritual belief together knowledge and doctrine about the ultimate reality as is grasped.

To this end, various world religions have their own patterns of fellowship and this various patterns of fellowship inform the way their assembling centre is structured and furnished.

## **CHRISTIAN: Eucharistic fellowship**

Christianity is known as a religion of love as depicted by Jesus Christ, it also preaches and practices the Golden Rule “do to others as you will have them do to you” (Mac Gr e.g. or 1989:198, in Obi Des 2013:29). Of course worshipping is an indispensable aspect of the Christian fellowship.

According to Anukam Nneji, Christian fellowship can be considered in two ways; the vertical “I” representing man to God fellowship and the horizontal representing man to man fellowship. In the meantime, we shall consider the various types of Christian fellowship.

A careful observation of the bible shows that there are five kinds of fellowship or sharing enjoined by Christians, (Pfeiffer 2005:398, in Anukam Nneji 2015:18). We have communion or fellowship together at the Lord’s Supper (I Corinthians 10:16-21), in which the believer professes his faith in Christ’s atoning blood and shows forth His death till He comes again (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Paul gives very careful instructions concerning this fellowship and warns Christians to examine themselves before taking part in it. This is referred to as Eucharistic fellowship (1 Corinthians 11:27-28), shared by members in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ established in the New Testament church (ecclesia) or body of called-out believers, on the public profession of Himself as Saviour (Mathew 16:18). In Himself He established a vital unity, making of both Jew and Gentile one new “man” and body (Eph.2:14-16). He loved it as His own bride and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25f) in the local churches or assemblies, Christians are to be nurtured (Heb. 10:24-25; cf Mal. 3:16) and to enjoy fellowship in the word and prayer (Acts 2:42).

Giving is another form of fellowship which is commanded (I Tim. 6:18; Heb 13:16) and may consist of systematic giving on a regular basis (Rom 15:26; II Cor. 8:4; 8:13, or it may occur in the gift of large sums or even all that one owns at a particular time (Acts 4:36-37, 5:1-11), in this case, the gift is entirely at one’s discretion (Acts 5:4) for example (the rich young ruler, in Luke 18:18f).

Ministration to the saints, such as relief funds for other churches (Acts 11:29; Rom 15:25), to help Christians in need (Rom 12:13; II Cor. 8:4) and perhaps others as well (Heb 13:16), and sharing other peoples burdens Rom 15:1). And finally, fellowship in suffering; this refer to suffering as a member of Christ’s body, partaking in the fellowship of his suffering” (Phil 3:10 cf Col. 24).

## **The Concept of Eucharist**

The term Eucharist is etymologically derived from the Greek words “Eucharistein” and “Eulogein” respectively as used in numerous scriptural texts to recall the Jewish blessing that was proclaimed especially during a meal, depicting God’s work of creation, redemption and sanctification. In the New

Testament, the term Eucharist is not used for this same Rite; However, a related verb is found in the New Testament account of the last supper or Holy Communion (New Dictionary of theology).

The origins of the Eucharist are found in the Last Supper. "in order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, Jesus instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and resurrection, and commanded his disciples to celebrate it until his

return; 'thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament'"

(1337). In the context of the Last Supper Jesus instituted a new memorial sacrifice. As a perpetual memorial to his death and Resurrection, in the course of the Passover meal with his disciples, he took the bread "blessed and broke it and gave it to his disciples and said 'Take, eat, this is my body'" (Matt. 26.26). In like manner he took the ceremonial cup of wine "gave thanks and passed it to his disciples saying 'this cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Lk. 22.20). Finally, he commanded them: "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11.24).

Christ is present in a sacramental form under the appearance of bread and wine to become the spiritual food of the faithful. The communion of: literally, a participation in. By means of the cup we realize our share in the benefits wrought by Christ's precious blood shedding. The cup is at once a symbol and a medium. The blood of Christ: of which the wine is the sacramental symbol. By rightly drinking the wine, we spiritually partake of the blood of Christ; we become sharers in his Divine life. The bread; perhaps rather, the loaf, which was apparently passed from hand to hand, that each might break off a piece. Is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The best comment on the verse is John 6:41-59, in which our Lord taught that there could be no true spiritual life without the closest union with him and incorporation into his life.

Jesus established this ceremony at the last supper with his disciples (Mat 26. 26-28, Lk. 22:17-20), Apostle Paul called it the Lord's supper in I Cor. 11:20. According to Oral R. (1981:108) it is not a mere ritual but another powerful contact that God provides for as many to renew our faith in the new covenant.

For O' Donovan (1996:169), in Anukam Nneji 2015:14), the term Eucharist is popularly used by the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. According to Ugochukwu (2000:11), The Eucharist assumes a threefold significance namely. Sacrifice, communion and viaticum. The Eucharist is referred to as a sacrifice because it is the commemoration of Christ's passion. It is also called a communion because it is an ecclesiastical bond shown in the sharing of one bread and one cup. It is designated as a viaticum which strengthens the participants in their eschatological journey. For Wilson (2003:3-4) the Eucharist bears other names like Communion, Mass, Manudy Thursday, The Breaking of Bread, Divine liturgy, the table of the Lord, sacrament, ordinance or fellowship among others.

Having seen what Eucharist and fellowship means respectively, what then is Eucharistic fellowship? it is not out of place to put the two concepts together and thus define Eucharistic fellowship as one of the most important Christian communion, ordinance, mass or sacrament, meant with the sharing or one meal (bread

and wine-representing body and blood) in remembrance of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ known as the passion of Christ (I Cor 10:16-17).

Eucharist fellowship is a sacrificial communion of Christians which in practicing helps to bring them together in love, unity, worship, service and thus help them to pursue the same goal faithful life.

### **Exegesis of the Text (I Corinth. 10:16-17)**

Exegesis is an attempt to bring out the original meaning of any writing for easy understanding. It will unfold understanding and increase the knowledge of the topic through the text. It will cover the following sub-headings, the content, the text, the exegesis of I Cor. 10:16-17, the structure, the context and the critical analysis and interpretation of the text.

### **The Content of the Passage**

English Version (Revised Standard Version)

1 Corinthians 10:16-17

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

### **Literary Context of the Text**

1 Corinthians 10:16. The key-word of this passage; the Lord's Supper constitutes a "communion" centering in Christ, as the Jewish festal rites centered in "the altar" (I Corinthians 10:18), and as "the demons," the unseen objects of idolatrous worship, supply their basis of communion in idolatrous feasts (I Corinthians 10:21 f.). Such fellowship involves (1) the ground of communion, the sacred object celebrated in common; (2) the association established amongst the celebrants, separating them from all others; "The word communion denotes the fellowship of persons with persons in one and the same object". These two ideas take expression in I Corinthians 10:16-17) in turn; their joint force lies behind the protest of I Corinthians 10:20 ff, appealing to the Eucharist of Eulogia. The passage begins with "the cup" (cf. the order of Luke 22:17 ff.), the prominent object in the sacrificial meal (I Corinthians 10:21), containing, as one may say, the essence of the feast (cf. Psalm 23:5). Is attributive genitive (like "cup of salvation" in Psalm 116:13). Christ blessed this cup, making it thus forever a "cup of blessing"; this can be compared with the early sacramental phrases, in or in Matthew 10:25, and from the Catacombs. On this view, is no repetition of the but is antithetical to it in the manner of Ephesians 1:3, "the cup which gives blessing, for which we give blessing to God".

According to Dickson (2011:1461) the prevalent interpretation that makes the phrase a rendering of the third cup of the Passover meal, over which a specific blessing was pronounced (often identified with that of the Eucharist); referring to Luke 22:20, the fourth, which closed the meal and was attended with the singing of the Hallel, are by inverse relative attraction, not unknown, though rare, with the merging of these nouns

in the clause, the Acts of blessing the cup and breaking the bread becomes the real subject in each instant, “when we bless the cup, break the bread, is it not a communion?”.

In any case, the “communion” looks beyond the bare and to the whole sacred action, which they form the centre. “The bread” is “blessed” equally with “the cup,” but in its case the prominent symbolic act is that of breaking, which connotes the distribution of “many: of the “one the “one loaf.” Thus “the sacramental bread came to be known as the. Mayer (1992:53) observes: that the passage speaks out of the consciousness of the Christian fellowship, in which it is a matter of indifference who may be, in this instance or that, its administrative organ.” It is not a communion of (or in) the blood, the body, of Christ” – not “a communion with the blood, etc.” (Meyer 1992:61) is of the opinion that the stress lies on in both questions: through the cup and loaf believers participate together in Christ, in the sacrifice of His blood offered to God (Romans 3:25, Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 1:11), and in the whole redemption wrought through His bodily life and death and resurrection carries our thoughts from the incarnation (Phil 2:7), through the crucifixion (Colossians 1:22), on the heavenly glory of the Redeemer (Phil 3:21). The cup and bread are here styled “a communion in Christ’s blood and body”, in His own words (I Corinthians 11:25), “the new covenant in My blood,” – a communion on the basis of the covenant established by the sacrifice of the Cross.

I Corinthians 10:17 confirms the statement that the bread is a communion of the body of Christ. For it is one bread; one body are we, the many, i.e. for though one bread being eaten in the Supper, we Christians, although as individuals we are many, form together one (ethical) body. This union into one body through participation in the one bread could not take place unless this bread were of the body of Christ, which is just that which produces the one body – that which constitutes many into this unity. One is just the same, because (for), so common in argument, and there is no need whatever to substitute for it; is to be supplied after the two clauses are placed side by side asyndetically so as to make the passage and in particular, to bring out with more emphasis the idea of unity (compare Acts 25:12). Which follows leaves us no room to doubt how the asyndeton should logically be filled up (and therefore also); for this last clause of the verse excludes the possibility of our assuming a mere relation of comparison (as there is one bread, so are we one body. The too, forbids our supplying after for these words indicate the presence of another conception, in as much as, repeating the idea conveyed they thereby show that the *Aptos*(*απτος*) was aid of literal bread, “because it is one bread, therefore are we, the many, one body”. In that case either we should have a further exposition about the bread, no sign of which, however, follows; or else this whole thought would be purely parenthetical, a practical conclusion being drawn in passing from what had just been stated. But how remote from the connection would such a side-thought be! And would not Paul have required to interpose an or some such word, after in order to avoid misunderstanding? Interpreters would not have been taken themselves to a device so foreign to the scope of the passage, had they not took hostile assumed that I Corinthians 10:17 contained no explanation at all of what preceded it. “Because there is one bread, therefore are we, the many, one body,” but makes this not a subordinate thought brought in by the way, but an essentially new point in the argument: he does this, however, by supplying after “with Christ the Head” and finding the progress of the thought in the words supplied.

But in this way the very point on which all turned would be left to be filled in, which is quite unwarrantable; Paul would have needed to write or something to that effect, in order to be understood correlative to the (compare I Corinthians 10:15; I Corinthians 10:19); the many who are fellow-participants in the Lord's Supper, the Christian multitude. The very same viewed however, in the aspect of their collective aggregate, not as here, of their multitudinousness, are the whole; compare Romans 5:15 and Romans 5:18. The unity of bread is not to be understood numerically but qualitatively, as one and the same bread of the Supper. The thought of the bread having become a unity out of many separate grains of corn is foreign to the connection. It is interpreted by some as if there were no "since we are all partakers of one bread".

This is contrary to the linguistic usage, for is joined with the genitive (I Corinthians 10:21; I Corinthians 9:12) or accusative, but never with and the assumption that Paul, in using was thinking of the verb (I Corinthian 11:28), is although arbitrary. The linguistically correct rendering is: for we all have a share from the one bread, so that in analyzing the passage we have to supply, the indefinite indication of a part, before. Bruce (1986:1356) gives the correct portative sense to the expression. The article before points back to the fact that we are one.

The passage I Corinthians 10:16-17, is an extract from the first letter to the Corinthians. This letter is said to have been agreed by historians, Christian theologians and scholars, that Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthians. Yamsat (2010:25) says that, "There is no contention regarding the Pauline authorship of first Corinthians. Scholars all agreed that Paul is the author of the letter. Paul's authorship was attested by Clement of Rome as early as A.D. 96.

However, the only place where scholars disagree is whether it is a composite letter or it is a single letter. The idea of composite letter is based for example, on passage like I Corinthians 5:9, where Paul made mention of an earlier letter written to the church. Secondly in 1 Corinthians 1:2, Paul mentioned Sosthenes as a co-author. Smith, (2005:10) says that this Sosthenes may be the man from Corinth mentioned in Acts 18:17, who was said to be the synagogue ruler, presumably appointed as the successor to Crispus in Acts 18:8, Crispus is said to be the synagogue ruler (I Corinthians 1:14) if so, then, Sosthenes must have become a believer after the incident described in Acts first Corinthians. Smith agrees that Paul's inclusion of Sosthenes as a co-author may have been motivated by the support that such a prominent Corinthians believer would lend to his letter.

Moreover, scholars who argue for single authorship based their argument on the consistent use of first person singular throughout the letter. This implies that he is the real author and Sosthenes' ancillary contribution is impossible to reconstruct. Based on I Corinthians 16:8-9, 19, the letter was written in Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey. The verses show that the letter was written between three to five years after Paul left Corinth, meaning that the letter probably was written in between 54 AD.

According to Muddiman (2011:1130) Four years prior to writing the letter, first Corinthians, the apostle had spent 18 months in Corinth, so he was intently familiar with the church and many of its congregants. The recipients of the letter must have understood the letter's significance, not only to their own circumstances but for the church worldwide in AD 95, Clement, the bishop of Rome wrote a letter of his own to the Corinthians, in which he invoked the authority of Paul's instruction in I Corinth only a few

decades after its origin this letter to the Corinthians had traveled out of Corinth and was considered authoritative beyond its initial Corinthian context.

Yamsat (2010:26) is of the opinion that the purpose of this letter can be classified into two. First is to exhort the church in Corinth on certain matters pertaining to the faith and the Christian life. Second to response to questions sent to Paul by the church regarding practical Christian life like, marriage, divorce, single life, spiritual gifts and the resurrection. Division, immorality, litigation in court of law, lack of consideration for the weak, head covering at worship and partaking of the Lord's supper, based on the status of the members and support for the needy in Jerusalem.

### **The Structure of I Corinthians 10:16-17**

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 1 Cor. 10:16-17(KJV)

Communion (Κοινωνία) is the key-word of this passage (see parls.); the Lord's Supper constitutes a "communion" centering in Christ, as the Jewish festal rites centred in "the altar" (1 Corinthians 10:18), and as "the demons," the unseen objects of idolatrous worship, supply their basis of communion in idolatrous feasts (1 Corinthians 10:21 f.). Such fellowship involves (1) the ground of communion, the sacred object celebrated in common; (2) the association established amongst the celebrants, separating them from all others: "The word communion denotes the fellowship of persons with persons in one and the same object" Evans [1489]. These two ideas take expression in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 in turn; their joint force lies behind the protest of 1 Corinthians 10:20 ff.—Appealing to the Eucharist—or Eulogia, as it was also called—P. begins with "the cup" (cf. the order of Luke 22:17 ff., and Didaché ix. 2 f.), the prominent object in the sacrificial meal (1 Corinthians 10:21), containing, as one may say, the essence of the feast (cf. Psalm 23:5). τ. εὐλογίας is attributive genitive case (like "cup of salvation" in Psalm 116:13; see other parls., for both words); so Calvin [1491], "destinatus ad mysticam eulogiam," and C. F. G. Heinrici's [1492] (see his note). Christ blessed this cup, making it thus forever a "cup of blessing"; the Acts of blessing the cup and breaking the bread becomes the real subject of κοινωνία in each instance. The action of blessing and breaking, of which the elements are the objects, makes them the κοινωνία. "The bread" is "blessed" equally with "the cup," but in its case the prominent symbolic act is that of breaking (see parls.), which connotes the distribution to "many" of the "one loaf." Thus "the sacramental bread came to be known as the κλασμός: so Did., § 9" T. C. Edwards' On the plural εὐλογοῦμεν, κλῶμεν, Meyer observes: "Whose was it to officiate in this consecration? At this date, when the order of public worship in the Church was far from being settled, any Christian man was competent. By the time of Justin (Apol. i. 65) the function was reserved for the προεστώς, but on the understanding that he represented the community and acted in communion with it (see Ritschl, Altkath. Kirche, 2 pp. 365 f). The pls. of our passage speak out of the consciousness of the Christian fellowship, in which it is matter of indifference who may be, in this instance or that, its administrative organ."—οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος, τοῦ σώματος, τοῦ Χριστοῦ; "Is it not a communion of (or in) the blood, the body, of Christ?" (cf., for the gen[1510] after κοινωνία, note on 1 Corinthians 1:9—not "a communion with the blood, etc." The stress lies on τοῦ Χριστοῦ in both questions: through the

cup and loaf believers participate together in Christ, in the sacrifice of His blood offered to God (Roman 3:25, Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 1:11), and in the whole redemption wrought through His bodily life and death and resurrection. τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ carries our thoughts from the incarnation (Php 2:7), through the crucifixion (Colossians 1:22), on to the heavenly glory of the Redeemer (Php 3:21). The cup and bread are here styled “a communion in Christ’s blood and body”; in His own words (1 Corinthians 11:25), “the new covenant in My blood,”—a communion on the basis of the covenant established by the sacrifice of the Cross. Paul names the cup first, not because at the sacrificial feasts men thought less about food than about a pleasant meeting primarily for enjoying wine (they came for eating and drinking), but because he means to speak at more length about the bread, and in connection with it, especially to discuss the Israelitic partaking of the sacrifices, as it suited his theme of the meat offered to idols. For this reason he begins here by disposing briefly of the point concerning the cup. In chap. 11 he does otherwise, because not regarding the matter there from this special point of view.

The cup, i.e. its contents as these are presented and partaken of, is the medium of this fellowship; it is realized in the partaking.

It is this communion which makes us all one: by partaking of one and the same bread, we are united and formed into one mystical body. “This account of the Lord’s supper, the apostle gave to show the Corinthians, that as by eating thereof, the partakers declare they have the same object of worship, the same faith, the same hope, and the same dispositions with the persons whom they join in that act of religion, and that they will follow the same course of life; so, in all reasonable construction, by eating the sacrifices of idols, the partakers declare they are of the same faith and practice with the worshippers of idols, that they have the same objects of worship with them, and that they expect to share with them in the benefits to be derived from that worship.”

Did not the joining in the Lord's Supper show a profession of faith in Christ crucified, and of adoring gratitude to him for his salvation? Christians, by this ordinance, and the faith therein professed, were united as the grains of wheat in one loaf of bread, or as the members in the human body, seeing they were all united to Christ, and had fellowship with him and one another. This is confirmed from the Jewish worship and customs in sacrifice. The apostle applies this to feasting with idolaters. Eating food as part of a heathen sacrifice, was worshipping the idol to whom it was made, and having fellowship or communion with it; just as he who eats the Lord's supper, is accounted to partake in the Christian sacrifice, or as they who ate the Jewish sacrifices partook of what was offered on their altar. It was denying Christianity; for communion with Christ, and communion with devils, could never be had at once. If Christians venture into places, and join in sacrifices to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, they will provoke God.

The cup of blessing which we bless - The design of this verse and the following verses seems to be, to prove that Christians, by partaking of the Lord's Supper, are solemnly set apart to the service of the Lord Jesus; that they acknowledge Him as their Lord, and dedicate themselves to him, and that as they could not and ought not to be devoted to idols and to the Lord Jesus at the same time, so they ought not to participate in the feasts in honor of idols, or in the celebrations in which idolaters would be engaged; see 1 Corinthians 10:21 He states, therefore:

1. That Christians are "united" and dedicated to Christ in the communion; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

2. that this was true of the Israelites, that they were one people, devoted by the service of the altar to the same God, 1 Corinthians 10:18
3. that though an idol was nothing, yet the pagan actually sacrificed to devils, and Christians ought not to partake with them; 1 Corinthians 10:19-21 The phrase "cup of blessing" evidently refers to the wine used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. it is called "the cup of blessing" because over it Christians praise or bless God for his mercy in providing redemption. It is not because it is the means of conveying a blessing to the souls of those who partake of it - though that is true - but because thanksgiving, blessing, and praise were rendered to God in the celebration, for the benefits of redemption; see Note, Matthew 26:26 Or it may mean, in accordance with a well known Hebraism, "the blessed cup;" the cup that is blessed. This is the more literal interpretation; and it is adopted by Calvin, Beza, Doddridge, and others.

The cup is put for the wine in the cup (which is very ordinary). The cup, or wine, of blessing, signifies that cup of wine to which the blessing is added, or with which in that holy institution we thankfully remember the death of Christ, and bless his name for that great mercy; and the wine or cup of blessing, also, here signifies our religious action in drinking of that cup of wine so blessed. This, saith he, is the communion of the blood of Christ; that is, it is an action whereby and wherein Christ communicates himself and his grace to us, and we communicate our souls to him; so that Christ and believers in that action have a mutual communion one with another. And as it is with the one element in that holy sacrament, so it is also with the other.

The bread which the minister breaks (according to the institution and example of Christ) for the church to make use of in the celebration of the Lord's supper, that is, their action in eating of that bread so broken and divided amongst them, is the communion of the body of Christ; an action wherein Christians have a fellowship and communion with Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:17 confirms the statement that the bread is a communion of the body of Christ. For it is one bread; one body are we, the many, i.e. for through one bread being eaten in the Supper, we Christians, although as individuals we are many, form together one (ethical) body. This union into one body through participation in the one bread could not take place unless this bread were κοινωνία of the body of Christ, which is just that which produces the one body—that which constitutes the many into this unity.

1 Corinthians 10:17 contained no explanation at all of what preceded it (Rückert). Rodatz agrees with the rest in rendering: "because there is one bread, therefore are we, the many, one body," but makes this not a subordinate thought brought in by the way, but an essentially new point in the argument; he does this, however, by supplying after ἐν σῶμα, "with Christ the Head" (comp also van Hengel, Annot. p. 167 f.), and finding the progress of the thought in the words supplied.

1 Corinthians 10:17 unfolds the assertion virtually contained in the question just asked: "Seeing that (ὅτι) there is one bread, we, the many, are one body";

The saying is aphoristic: One bread makes one body C. F. G. Heinrici's [1520]—a maxim of hospitality (equally true of "the cup") that applies to all associations cemented by a common feast. "The bread" suggests the further, kindred idea of a common nourishment sustaining an identical life, the loaf on the

table symbolising the ἀληθινὸς ἄρτος of John 6, which feeds the Church in every limb (1 Corinthians 12:13).—“For (γὰρ of explanation) we all partake from (partitive ἐκ, cf. 1 Corinthians 9:7) the one bread”; eating from the common loaf attests and seals the union of the participants in Christ. The passage proves, that the cup and the bread are the communion; for the bread by itself does not make them that eat it, become one body; but the bread does so, in so far as it is communion, etc.—εἷς ἄρτος (one bread), viz. there is [and indeed it is such bread as is broken, and carries with it (implies in the participation of it) the communion of the body of Christ.

Are one bread - One loaf; one cake. That is, we are united, or are one. There is evident allusion here to the fact that the loaf or cake was composed of many separate grains of wheat, or portions of flour united in one; or, that as one loaf was broken and partaken by all, it was implied that they were all one. We are all one society; united as one, and for the same object. Our partaking of the same bread is an emblem of the fact that we are one. In almost all nations the act of eating together has been regarded as a symbol of unity or friendship.

To facilitate easy comprehension of I Corinthians 10:16-17, the text can be structured thus:

## **The Cup and the Bread**

The cup of blessing which we bless, isn't it a sharing (GK of the blood of Christ (v. I Corinthians 10:16). The cup of blessing was the third cup, drunk at the end of the meal and accompanied by a prayer of thanksgiving for blessings received from God. It was probably this third cup that Jesus used to institute the Lord's Supper. “He took the cup, gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, “all of you drink it, for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for the remission of sins” (Matth 26:27-28). He commanded, “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19, I Corinthians 11:24-25). Paul says, “for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes’ (I Corinthians 11:26). Paul strongly affirmed that when Christians participate in Eucharistic fellowship, they are communing with the blood sacrifice and universal body of Jesus (I Corinthians 11:23-32) making reference to the universal body of believers that (I Corinthians 10:16). The bread which we break, isn't it a sharing (GK koivovia) Christ thus “God is faithful, through whom you were called into (fellowship) of his son, Jesus Christ our Lord (I Corinthians 1:9). He implies that our participation in the Eucharistic puts us into a deep fellowship with Christ and his person. It reminds us that Christ suffered death on the cross for our benefit that he shed his blood for us.

## **One Bread and One Body**

I Corinthians 10:17 in eating at the Eucharistic fellowship, Christians manifest their unity of one faith in worship of one Lord. The bread is symbolic of the unity of the body of Christ. Therefore, every time Christians, meet together for Eucharist, they proclaim the unity of the church throughout the world Paul wants us in the Eucharistic fellowship to remember the oneness of the body of Christ. Each individual member is part of that body regardless of the denomination where they participate in the Eucharistic fellowship; therefore, Christians throughout the world must remember that they are part of the universal

body of Christ. Although, they do not participate in the Eucharistic fellowship the same place or at the same time, but because they eat the bread of the Eucharistic fellowship of the Lord in remembrance that they are part of a universal body of Christ. This is the evidence that they expressed oneness in Christ.

## **Context of the Text**

The text I Corinthians 10:16-17 is located in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians within the discourse, the first letter to the Corinthians has sixteen chapters Willington (1984:414) divided the first Corinthians into two sections chapter 1-6 he tagged seven corruption and chapter 7-16 he tagged six question. The concern of this paper is on the second section because it is where the text I Corinthians 10:16-17 falls on. In this second section, each of the questions is introduced with the phrase "Now concerning..." "the text under study falls on the second question "Now concerning food offered to idols.

Yamsat (2010:121) says that, I Corinthians 10:16-17 is not written to present a doctrinal position regarding the Lord's Supper. Rather, this argument is brought in to strengthen Paul's point regarding the consequences of their present practice, which tended to give no regard to the "weak" brother who stood in danger of slipping away from the partnership as a result of the lack of caution on the part of other brethren. In this way, Paul is able to preserve a kind of check and balance over the freedom to eat sacrificial food. Instead of going straight on to demonstrate that eating sacrificial food is partnership with idols or demons, he raises two rhetorical questions that state the unifying nature of the Lord's Supper. "The Cup we bless is it not the Blood of Christ? The bread we break is it not the body of Christ? Though we are many we are one body because we all share in one bread" (I Corinthians 10:16-17).

Dickson (2011:149). What we have here is participation between believers in the one cup and the one bread. Paul does not elaborate on the drinking of the cup of blessing and the eating of the bread, because he does not intend to discuss the Lord's Supper. He brings it here simply as an illustration in support of the subject under discussion. As we have said, he brings it in here to illustrate his point of argument that there is a unifying factor in eating sacrificial food.

Since that is his aim, he moves straight into an interpretation of this drinking of the cup of blessing and the eating of the bread in v. 16, using the Greek word (partnership, sharing). He says that the partaking together in the cup, or in the blood of Christ and in the bread, is partnership in the body of Christ. The cup of blessing they partake expresses their partnership in the death (blood) of Christ and the bread, an expression of partnership in the body of Christ (the church). In this way, the participation in the cup and the bread goes beyond mere eating together, but expresses their partnership or sharing in the suffering and death of Christ, an argument Paul would want to apply to those who eat sacrificial food. What he is aiming at by this illustration with the Lord's Supper is made clearer in v 17 in a poetic style. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, since we all partake of the one bread. Here, the language of unity is derived from the act of sharing together in the one bread by "the many", since there cannot be sharing where there is only one person involved. That is, those gathered are many and different individuals who have become "one body" by their partaking or sharing in the one bread.

## **Africa and the Concept of Eucharistic Fellowship**

As we have seen, Christianity is traced to Judaism and Jesus Christ and these two are alien to Africans and their history, therefore, Eucharistic fellowship can only be relevant to Africans who are Christians. Notwithstanding, irrespective of how true this may sound, it will not actually be true since Africa is a strong religious continent.

Africans and African religion has its own way of Eucharistic fellowship, though not practiced with the same name and in completely same manner, but has similar religious connotations and spiritual implications. According to Okefor, African culture is embedded in her religion and the two cannot be separated. African understanding and practice of Eucharistic fellowship will be exemplified here, by the Igbo people of South Eastern part of Nigeria in West Africa.

## **The Igbo Nation**

The Igbo occupy the South Eastern Nigeria. This includes the area east of the River Niger and west of the Cross River. Although the bulk of the Igbo live in the former East-Central State of Nigeria, (now sub-divided into Abia, Ebony, Enugu, Anambra and Imo States) yet, they stretch into the Ahoada Division of the Rivers State, and into Asaba, Ika and Aboh Divisions of the Bendel State.

The people speak a common language called “Ibo”, although there are dialectal variations. But the dialects are usually mutually intelligible. Igbo people believe that they were created by the Supreme Being to settle in what is now called Igboland. Igbo traditions, as well as excavations carried out in Nsukka, Okigwe, Awka, Bende and Afikpo divisions have shown that the Igbo have settled in these parts for thousands of years. They have Nri in Awka and Amaigbo in Orlu as their spiritual and ideological headquarters, the centres from which their different branches spread out to occupy their present locations.

The Igbo traditionally had no central organization. The systems of political organization were structured on the village. The King (Obi) was the head and the religious leader of the community. He was the symbol of unity. But he ruled in association with a council of state made up of chiefs and titled men.

The Igbo have always been an active and progressive people. In economic, cultural, social and political affairs, they had already attained an enviable standard before the advent of the British. The Igbo culture and identity is embellished in her religion.

## **Eucharistic Fellowship and Its Relevance in Igbo Land**

The Igbo’s according to Nwosu (2003 x 1 in Anukam 2015:80) refers to kola nut as Igbo sacramental communion which is restated by Rev. Fr. Ogbonna in Nwosu (2003). Thus they Igbo celebrate brotherhood, unity love, harmony using the kola nut as a symbol of communion”. This celebration of brotherhood, unity love and harmony is what Okorochoa in Anukam 2015; 81 explains as “Oriko bu isi mmeko” Eating together, especially from one dish is the surest sign of trust, unity, love, harmony and group solidarity. That is how to show that we are of the same, blood and have absolute trust for each other”.

Adding his words, Charles F.P in Anukam: 81 says that eating and drinking together has the significance of a covenant meal which the two parties had fellowship and pledged their loyalty to each other.

Like the Christian sacrificial and sacramental Eucharistic fellowship, the Oriko (especially with the Kola nut) binds Igbo people together in a covenant, helping to build love, trust, unity, brotherhood and solidarity etc. In this Oriko, the most elderly or the most spiritual, handles the Kola and its elements, blesses it, before it is shared amongst the people. Among the people that partake in the eating, none is expected to harm the other. Oriko binds Igbo people together, it removes fear, it ensures good human relationship and conviviality among other things it does in Igbo community. It affects relationship and behavioural activities, principles and guardians of human relationship in Igbo land. It is widely consumed as a stimulant and hunger suppressant; hence Kola nut is widely used and celebrated in Igbo land.

Among the Igbo the aspects of communalism are celebrated with kola nut which is both a spiritual and symbol of unity. Not everyone is permitted to participate in the Oriko, as unqualified, and excommunicated or the socially stigmatized called “OFEKE” are not allowed to partake in the Oriko like the Hebrew whose condition of admittance into the Eucharist is “CIRCUMCISION”, in Igbo land the condition of admittance is Igba Oriko. Nwosu (2003:73 in Anukam 82) says that the person who blesses the Kola nut as presented clears his throat with the intention of alerting the ancestors that he is about to communicate to both the living and the dead. He makes supplication to God Almighty “CHUKWU” or “CHINEKE”, the ancestors and the guiding spirits of the land requesting for their protection in the day’s activities.

Due to the strong covenantal attachment to oriko “Eating together” the defaulter may die or suffer protracted deadly disease. This is in line with St. Paul’s assertion in I Cor. 11:29-30 “Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. This is why many among you are sick and a number of you have fallen asleep”.

Though kola nut is used in every occasion both public and private, which will be like Jewish bread which is served at every gathering both public and private. It is wonderful to know that Eucharistic fellowship is fully practiced in Igbo land, and with parallel similarities with the Jewish/Christian pattern, one begins to wonder, why this is practiced extensively and with detailed instructions, warnings and benefits.

The reasons for the importance and benefits of the Eucharist in Igbo land both for the Christians and traditionalist are not far-fetched.

Both the Igbo Eucharist fellowship with “kola nut” and the Christian Eucharist “Holy communion or last supper”, have both “I” vertical and “representations.

Vertically, Eucharistic fellowship is spiritual, sacramental and ritualistic. It relates man to his creator “God” or “CHUKWU”/“CHINEKE” as God is traditionally referred to in Igbo land. This is why at the Zenith of the vertical height is God and at the ground level is man who looks up to God, for protection, guidance, provision, life sustenance and after life as well as how to relate with fellow human beings on this

terrestrial world. On the horizontal level is where Eucharistic fellowship tends to relate man with his fellow man. At this level is where man mingles with his fellow man.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Notwithstanding the various views and ambiguities surrounding the origin of man and human relationship, the bible has been able to put all that to rest by giving us an elaborate insight into the issue. Furthermore, Eucharistic fellowship both in the Christian and traditional (igbo oriko) setting have provided us some varitable ways of curbing the problems human relationship

Eucharistic fellowship epitomizes some of the highest levels of love, as the meal or kola shared together emits a deep sense of love of God for humanity which he also expects man to share with his fellow man. It also depicts oneness or togetherness, as everyone sits down in one place with one aim or purpose in mind, which is among other things to share together that which revitalizes the spirit consciousness of man. It also serves as a re-union for human communal relationship.

Eucharistic fellowship brings about peace both in the church and in Igbo society. This is why in a disputed home or marriage when an elder is called to settle the dispute, the elder brings a kola nut, blesses it and breaks it for the disputed individuals to partake as a sign of settlement peace and reunion. It brings the rich and the poor, the haves and the have not together under one table thereby eliminating class and inequalities, breeds harmony; it gives a sense of belonging etc. It offers a forum or avenue for people to communicate and share their plights, prospects and progress together. These are some of the direct and immediate effects of the Eucharistic fellowship. On a wider scope, one will understand that Eucharistic fellowship, will serve as a tool to checking corruption, misappropriation of public funds, unemployment, laziness, marginalization, insecurity and other societal ills. And thus make for a good, harmonious and sustainable human development.

Finally, the Eucharistic fellowship, should not just be seen or fulfilled only as a religious ritual, and thus be made a ceremonial formality, but should rather be observed with its full horizontal implication as an integral element that fosters the deepest values and virtues that keeps and maintains the sanctity and sanity of the society, especially in Igbo land both with Christians and non-Christians alike.

Since the essence of both the Christian Eucharist and the Igbo oriko are the same, therefore the public who partake in this are advised to be careful to live out its lessons, essence and importance, which among other things include love, unity, harmony, hospitality, forgiveness, sacrifice, faith/trust in God and in fellow man etc. One should control the thoughts of his heart as good and bad emanates from it (james 4;1-8)

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