EFFICACY OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIGHT OF *IGONGONA*: TOWARDS *AGĨKŨYŨ* SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY OF INCULTURATION

Submitted

By:

DAVID NDEGEREGE

(MTH/LMR/1815/16)

This Dissertation is a Partial Fulfillment of Requirement for Award of Master Degree in Theology from St. Paul's University.

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Lead Supervisors: Rev. Dr. John Kiboi

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Esther Mombo

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution. I agree that this dissertation may be available for reference and photocopying at the discretion of the university.

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We confirm that the work presents in this dissertation has been done by the student under our supervision.

SIGNATURE OF THE LEAD SUPERVISOR: Rev. Dr. John Kiboi

_____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE OF THE CO-SUPERVISOR: Prof. Esther Mombo

_____ DATE _____

DEDICATION

This is a dedication to my dear wife Minneh and my sons Alvin and Andrian for their unwavering support and a special appreciation to my Dad Pastor Joseph Ndegerege for his prayers and encouragement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the writing of this dissertation, various people have immensely impacted my work and I am very for that grateful. First is to my mentor and friend Dr. Loreen Maseno who encouraged me to pursue post graduate studies and her academic achievement standing tall as a beacon to my studies. Secondly to Rev. Dr. J.M. Kiboi for his very engaging lectures and probing questions that made me think beyond what is written and his great mentorship and follow up only God can repay him for this and to Prof. Esther Mombo for her great encouragement and for her enlightening perspectives.

I finally acknowledge my wife Minneh and my two sons Alvin and Andrian for their patience and endurance as I took time away from them to do this study.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen. (1 Tim 1:17).

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

PCEA- Presbyterian Church of East Africa

CCC- Catechism of the Catholic Church

KJV- King James Version

Igongona -a ritual that was done under the sacred tree by elders which involved slaughtering a lamb and drinking of beer and was to invoke God concerning an issue of communal importance.

Igongona ria kuhukura -the ceremony of purification to free that particular home from the blight of death

Kirima gia Kirinyaga- Mount Kenya

Kia-nyandarwa- Nyandarua Hills

Kia-mbiruiru- Longonot Hills

Kithuka- shaker

LG- *Lumen Gentium*

Mugai: divider/distributor

Mugumo- ficus thoningii/natalensis tree.

Mumbi- Creator or Molder

Muraika/murekio- angel

Mwene nyaga, Mwene thi, Mumbi, Murungu, Mugai, and *Mwene hinya*- Names of God

ABSTRACT

The Eucharist is so central to Christianity but due to the lack of understanding of the meaning of the Eucharist and its efficacy among the Agikuyu Christians, they have not taken the Eucharist seriously. Efficacy in this essay will mean the effectiveness of the Eucharist on a believer. The reasons why believers can experience "delight" in the sacrament according to the researcher is that the believers through the Eucharist poses Christ and all that is his, they have eternal life, security in their position within the kingdom of heaven and forgiveness of sins. This study employs the principle of *analogia entis* in inculturation as its methodology. This principle is based on the conviction that between God and his creation (i.e. what is good or positive in creation), there is some similarity or correspondence in such a way that one can gain a deeper understanding of the revealed mysteries by examining them in the light of natural knowledge gained from human experience in the world. This study therefore has used *Agikuyu igongona* to illuminate on the doctrine of the Eucharist specifically its efficacy therefore the efficacy of *igongona* (which is the existing cultural element that is already understood) has been used shed more light understanding of the Eucharist and its efficacy. The study found that explaining the efficacy Eucharist through *Agikuyu Igongona* will shed more light to *Agikuyu* Christians in understanding the meaning of the Eucharist.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces and gives a background to the study so as to contextualise the problem and also identify the gap. The context in this case is the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (P.C.E.A) particularly the Agikuyu Christians within that church. The chapter also justifies the importance of this research as well as the methodology used. It also presents the statement of the problem that the research hopes to solve as well as the research questions that will guide the research and objectives of the study. The significance of the research is also highlighted and the scope in order to delimit the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Serving as an Evangelist in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (P.C.E.A.) the researcher has had a good opportunity to interact with the different theological issues that have practical implications on faith and practice. The P.C.E.A church conducts catechism classes and the researcher was involved in teaching and this served as an avenue to interact with believers and answer some of the fundamental questions that arise from doctrines believed and taught in the Presbyterian Church. The researcher also got an opportunity to start a Masters Course in Theology at St. Paul's University and took a very pertinent unit referred to as Theology and Sacraments. In this course the researcher got an opportunity to explore the origin of sacramental theology historical development of the doctrine of the Eucharist, the different theories held by different church fathers, biblical notions of the Eucharist etc.

The P.C.E.A , a product of the merger of the missionary work of the American Gospel Missionary Society (GMS) and the Scottish Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) in 1946

(Wamagatta, 2007), conducts catechism classes which are teaching the catechumen on Presbyterianism and Christian doctrines. It is worth noting that the church settled in central Kenya, the region that the community in question (the Agikuyu) live in. These exercises are often an avenue to interact with believers and answer some of the fundamental questions that arise from doctrines believed and taught in the Presbyterian Church. From this first-hand experience, the researcher explores the origin of sacramental theology historical development of the doctrine of the Eucharist, the different theories held by different church fathers and biblical notions of the Eucharist. The PCEA teaches the doctrine of the Eucharist within the catechism classes to the catechumen (believers), however this has not resulted in the new believers and the members in general taking the Eucharist seriously and this is evidenced by the mere fraction of people who are not communicants and are not seeking to be admitted to the Holy communion, the life style of the communicants and confessions of a good number of Christians that the researcher has interacted with in the course of executing his duties.

In attempts to bring out the seriousness of the Eucharist the P.C.E.A church has explained the Eucharist in its constitution otherwise known as the Practice and Procedure Manual. The manual describes the Sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper as an outward and visible sign of an inward redemption by and union with Jesus Christ through grace. This is to mean that they are a sign and seal of the work of Christ, which is set forth for all believers in His Gospel of salvation, so that believers might depend on Christ alone. Therefore, a Sacrament can be taken as a corporate act that takes place in communion with other believers, a means of grace, instituted and commanded by Christ; hereby the individual is made a member of a covenant. Further the

Sacraments are an essential part of the public ministry of the Church, in which all Christians, in which all Christians are expected to participate by faith (Practice and Procedure Manual, 1998). The manual continues to state that in the Eucharist, the wholeness of the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and offered. The might acts of God in Christ, done once and for all time, in the life, death and resurrection of Christ for the redemption of humanity, are made presently effectual in the body of believers and in the hope of His coming again. This experience of redemption in Christ and submission to the demand of His sovereign rule is as real and present foretaste of, and earnest desire for, the glorious consummation of God's divine purpose that must be revealed in the last times (Practice and Procedure Manual, 1998).

In summary, the Lord's Supper is a celebration of the reconciliation of man with God and with one another, in which they joyfully eat and drink together at the table of their Saviour. Jesus Christ gave His Church this remembrance of His dying for sinful men, so that by participation in it, they have communion with Him and with all who shall be gathered to Him. Partaking in Him as they eat the bread and drink the wine in accordance with Christ's appointment, they receive from the risen and living Lord, the benefits of His Death and resurrection (Practice and Procedure Manual, 1998).

Calvin (1554) affirms the above position Eucharist is more than a commemorative rite. He taught that special grace was imparted in it to the individual who received it faithfully and worthily. Baker, on the other hand, notes that the efficacy of the Eucharist depends on the recipient as much as on Christ. Calvin therefore was more concerned with the state of the receiver than the substance of the Eucharist. John Calvin believed that a sacrament is more than a commemorative

rite and taught that special grace was imparted in it to the soul of the communicant who receives faithfully and worthily. Baker commenting on Calvin's view notes that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the recipient as much as on Christ. Calvin therefore was more concerned with the state of the receiver than the substance of the sacrament. (Baker, 1903:399)

Whereas the efficacy of the Eucharist is both believed with support from church history and is taught in the P.C.E.A the researcher holds that the gap is not in the beliefs or the written documents of the P.C.E.A church but the gap is in the understanding. The church position has been preached, taught and emphasised during catechism classes. However, no attempts however that have been made to inculturate the Eucharist thus necessitating this research.

While there is difficulty in explaining these liturgical reproductions in Christian setting, the *Agikuyu* community who are majorly the worshippers in the PCEA church have an understanding of the notion of *igongona* and its efficacy. Every rite of passage had an *igongona* and when it was done and due process followed there was no doubt about its efficaciousness. However, this has not translated to their understanding of the Eucharist and its efficaciousness. The *Agikuyu* Christian has not seen the connection between *igongona* and the Eucharist. The researcher holds the view that if the *Agikuyu* Christian could see the connection, then their Eucharistic theology would be improved to a level of understanding the efficaciousness of the Eucharist resulting in them taking the Eucharist seroiusly. Inculturation becomes necessary in such a venture, since the element in culture that can help explain the Christian mystery has been identified then it can be used as known to explain the unknown. In this case the known element in culture is *igongona* and the interest being its efficaciousness whereas the Christian mystery is the Eucharist.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Eucharist is a central doctrine to Christianity but due to the lack of understanding of the meaning of the Eucharist and its efficacy among the *Agikuyu* Christians, they have not taken the Eucharist seriously.

1.3 Aim of the Study

To provide new knowledge in the Christian doctrine of the Eucharist, and to explain better the Eucharist to the *Agikuyu* Christian.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of the research is

1. To explain the efficacy of the Eucharist through the efficacy *igongona* among *Agikuyu*.

1.5 Hypothesis

The research hypothesises that the *Agikuyu* cultural practice of *igongona* can be used to explain to the *Agikuyu* Christian the Christian sacramental theology and the efficacy of the Eucharist.

1.6 Limitations

The study notes that cultures are dynamic and this too applies to the *Agikuyu* culture. The language part of culture evolves quite fast so language barrier could pose a challenge. Documentation is bound to be a challenge since most of the cultural practices were orally transmitted and therefore some of the sources may be written by settlers from the west and therefore encounter bias or a westerner's perspective.

1.7 Justification

Sacramental theology is central to Christianity and to church doctrine. Over the years Christian thinkers and theologians have pondered on meaning of sacraments, number of sacraments, efficacy of sacraments, efficacy of sacraments, frequency, qualifications and the list is endless. Within sacramental theology the Eucharist cuts across denominational boundaries and has remained central and key to Christianity.

The Eucharist has been the topic of discussion in the church councils, in church documents, writings by church fathers, constitution of churches, church service books, liturgies etc however there exists to a great extend an understanding gap especially when it comes to the efficaciousness of the Echarist. This necessitated this study so as to explain to the *Agikuyu* Christian in a well understandable manner the efficacy of the Eucharist.

Inculturation which is the use of cultural elements within culture a certain culture to explain a Christian mystery is best suited methodology in this context to create a dipper understanding of the Eucharist using *igongona* which is a persisting cultural element within the *Agikuyu*. This will not just serve the *Agikuyu* Christian but will also traverse the Africans who to a great extent share common cultural elements or connotations and hence understand significance of certain religious practices to draw parallelism with Christian mysteries.

1.8 Methodology

This study employs *analogia entis* in inculturation as its methodology. It is based on the conviction that between God and his creation (i.e. what is good or positive in creation), there is some similarity or correspondence in such a way that one can gain a deeper understanding of the revealed mysteries by examining them in the light of natural knowledge gained from human experience in the world. Nyamiti (2005) notes that, one can reason from a premise derived from

faith and another from natural reason in order to arrive at a theological conclusion which is valid and contains a deeper knowledge of the revealed mystery (Nyamiti, 2005: 23).

Thus, *anaogia entis* is the use of natural elements analogously to infer or understand divine mysteries. According to Charles Nyamiti one begins by choosing the Christian mystery, the topic or the subject of study, then find out the appropriate African cultural item or theme which can be used for theological elaboration of the Christian mystery. This is followed by theological reflection on the meaning of the Christian mystery beginning with the meaning in itself followed by its relevance of our spiritual and material benefits in the light of its African counterpart. This is what Nyamiti refers to as "the intrinsic employment of cultural themes in theology (Nyamiti, 2005:22).

In this research the Eucharist has been identified the Christian mystery that of interest and the *Agikuyu igongona* as the African theme that can be used to explain it to and therefore the researcher will use the three steps in inculturation namely; Identification of the Christian mystery and its African counterpart to be used, explicitation of the implications involved in such identification and drawing pastoral implications.

Interviews and in-depth literary will enrich this study as well. Those to be interviewed are sampled using non- probability sampling meaning, the researcher will deliberately sample items on the basis that the small items selected represents the whole (Kothari and Garg, 2014:97).

1.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has articulated the background of the study, problem of the study, aim, objective, hypothesis, limitation, justification and the research methodology employed. The gap identified is the lack of proper understanding of the efficaciousness of the Eucharist as clearly explained in other writings including the constitution of the P.C.E.A church that is the

Practice and Procedure Manual on this particular doctrine especially among the *Agikuyu* Christians in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA).

CHAPTER TWO

THE NOTION OF *IGONGONA* IN THE *AGIKUYU* COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the researcher dealt with the introductory issues including the background of the study, statement of the problem, aim, objective, as well as the proposed methodology for this research. In this chapter the researcher focuses on the *Agikuyu* ethnography, religious believes, and traces the *igongona* within the *Agikuyu* cultural setting. This will enable us to have a gist of who are the *Agikuyu* and examine their notion of *igongona* and its efficaciousness. *Agikuyu* is the largest ethnic group in Kenya and they speak the Bantu kikuyu language. The term *kikuyu* is from the Swahili form of word which means a large sycamore tree. *Agikuyu* translates to children of the huge sycamore. The *Agikuyu* people are north-eastern Bantu branch and they are geographically concentrated in the vicinity of Mt Kenya (Ngugi, 1964:45).

2.2 The *Agikuyu* Ethnography

According to Kenyatta (1995:23) before 1888 the community amassed geographic and political power from almost all external influences for many generations. *Agikuyu* is one of the communities that were never involved in slave trade and they didn't involve themselves in raids for the capture of the slaves. They were in a state of territorial expansion relying on the land purchases, intermarriages, adoptions and absorptions. Economically they were and they are also today great farmers and business people.

Besides these economic activities they were also involved in small scale industries such as building, wire drawing and chain making. The *Agikuyu* community was divided into nine clans

which were traced its lineage to a single female ancestor and a daughter of *Mumbi*. Their political powers were exercised by the ruling of the council of elders of each clan. Each clan forwarded the leader of the council to the apex council of elders for the whole community. The overall elders representing the clans were led by a headman or the nation spokesman. The clans were not restricted in living in one geographical area and some of the communities didn't have recognized leaders (Njururi, 1969:67).

2.2.1 Folklore

The *Agikuyu* attribute their ultimate origins to sacred intervention by their god *Ngai* who was believed to reside on Mount Kenya which, for the *Agikuyu* is a holy place. According to Kenyatta (1995:5), *Ngai* carried the first man, *Agikuyu*, to the top of Mount Kenya. *Ngai* showed him the rich land spread out below the mountain. *Gikuyu* was told that his sons and daughters would inherit the land and multiply. *Gikuyu* was given a wife named *Mumbi*, meaning "Creator" or "Molder," and together they had nine daughters. *Ngai* said that whenever problems arose, the people should make a sacrifice and gaze at Mount Kenya in order to be assisted (Muriuki, 1974:43)

One day, *Gikuyu* was unhappy at not having a male heir. He pleaded with *Ngai* to provide a son for him. After appropriate rituals, *Gikuyu* went to a sacred tree where he found nine men waiting to greet him. He arranged for these men to marry his daughters provided they agreed to live under his roof and abide by a matrilineal system of inheritance (tracing descent through the female line). In time, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren were born. Still later, each daughter came to head her own clan, thus giving rise to the clans of the *Agikuyu* people (Gathigira, 1952:32).

2.3 *Agikuyu* Religious Beliefs and Practices

The original *Agikuyu* were fascinated by the height and the size of Mount Kenya. They were confronted with the glistening snow on top of *Kirinyaga* (white spotted mountain, white as the ostrich's feather and shiny as the sun). This might have left the *Agikuyu* asking some fundamental questions about the creator and the power beyond creation. They would, in turn, have said that *Ngai* was the one who owned and ruled the sun, the moon and the stars. After all, who else apart from the *Ngai* would live and survive in such a cold and magnificent place. Thus, when the *Agikuyu* conceive of *Ngai* as the bright one or the 'dazzling one', they attribute him to Mount Kenya which they believe to be his abode. They would say that *Ngai* lives in the mountain of *Kirinyaga*. In consequence, traditional *Agikuyu* believed that *Ngai* did not live in the sky but actually in Mount Kenya and therefore close to them (Kenyatta 1995: 234).

Agikuyu elders ensured that all members of their communities maintained their customs and traditions. Elders blessed the people, and presided over ritual and worship ceremonies. Elders also maintained order, harmony and peace in their communities through settling disputes, solving conflicts and counselling the members of the community. The council of elders acted as judges who presided over all cases. They made decisions on behalf of their people and used religious and social sanctions to bring moral stability in the community. So, in order to be efficient in their duties they were supposed to be wise, diligent, generous and not lazy (Kibicho, 1978:53).

Also connected to *Kirima gia Kirinyaga* is the *Agikuyu* understanding of *Ngai* as able to reside in a vast number of different places at once. They speak of different mountains; *Kirinyaga, Kia-nyandarwa*, and *Kia-mbiruiru*. Although *Ngai* is associated with Mount Kenya, he nevertheless makes endless journeys every day to inspect the land, and in doing so, stays in other mountains as well. *Ngai* also dwells in the sacred *Mugumo* (*ficus thoningii/natalensis*) tree. This big tree

symbolizes the mountains because of its height and also the presence of *Ngai*. As a result, *Ngai* can be found in many places simultaneously but has some special, preferential dwellings (Mworia, 1994:97). *Ngai* is also called *Kithuka*. *Kithuka* is from *thuka* (shake) and thus *Ngai* is the one who, because of his power, can shake the earth (Blakely, 1994:76).

2.3.1 The *Gikuyu* Conception of *Ngai*

The *Gikuyu* conception of *Ngai* can be understood by examining the names given to him. Some of these names have to be looked at in reference to the translation of the Bible into the *Gikuyu* language between 1909 and the 1950s under the auspice of the United Kikuyu Language Committee (UKLC). The task of the committee was to reduce the *Gikuyu* language to a standard written form and to arrange for Bible translation. The committee experienced some dilemma in its attempt to set up a religious vocabulary. Some members of the committee were so scrupulous that some of these words could evoke non-Christian ideas and thus ended up borrowing some word from Hebrew for example, angel (*malak*) which was translated to *muraika*. The *Gikuyu* equivalent of an angel is *murekio*, which means the one who has been sent either by the *Gikuyu* deity or by another person (Elkins, 2005:45).

These are some of the names that people use when referring to *Ngai*. Some of the most conspicuous names are: *Ngai*, *Mwene nyaga*, *Mwene thi*, *Mumbi*, *Murungu*, *Mugai*, and *Mwene hinya*. *Agikuyu* people also called their deity *Mũrungu*. This name might be the original *Gikuyu*. *Murungu* has a personal prefix (*mu*) from Bantu denoting humanity. Indeed, the *Swahili* word for the deity is *Mungu* with a similar prefix (*mu*) denoting the Bantu origin. *Murungu* from *mulungu* in some Bantu communities means the spirit of an ancestor (Hastings, 1996: 333).

Ngai is also known as *Mugai* (divider/distributor). He is the provider and in times of crisis, provides what is needed for his children. *Mugai* is the one who gave the present land to the *Gikuyu* people through their progenitor, the founding father, *Gikuyu*. He gave them a share of the land with ravines, the rivers and the forest (Leakey, 1977: 1075). *Mugai* distributes gifts, talents, wealth and land. A common *Gikuyu* proverb says: *utonga ni wa Ngai* (wealth comes from *Ngai*) and thus the *Gikuyu* has to be thankful for what he/she has received (Bernard 1953: 145).

The *Agikuyu* conception of *Ngai* is also enriched by the name *Mumbi*. The *Agikuyu* people would often say *Ngai ni Mumbi* (*Ngai* is the creator). The concept of *Ngai* as *Mumbi* is underlined by the myth of origin and settlement which depicts *Mumbi* as the founding mother of the *Gikuyu* group and also authenticates the origin of the matriarchal system later changed to patriarchal. *Mumbi*, from *kumba* (verb meaning creating) means to mould, knead or to create. In traditional *Agikuyu* cosmology, *mumbi* would be a potter, usually a woman with clay pots. Middleton and Kershaw confirm that pottery was 'made by women specialists, men being debarred from any contact with the processes (Ellis & ter Harr, 2004:74). Thus, *mumbi* is the potter, maker and moulder and therefore female.

Furthermore, it is common to use *kumba* as a verb to describe the work of *Ngai*. Women in *Agikuyu* cosmology were treated with respect when it came to the question of bearing children since the children perpetuated the name of the family, the clan and the larger group. Children sealed the bond, not only of the husband and wife or wives, but also the two families. It is only understandable therefore that for *Ngai* to make sense in the *Agikuyu* cosmology he had to be described in these simple but powerful symbolic terms; *Ngai Mumbi* (*Ngai* the creator). This is because he had the potency to generate life not only for nine months like a woman but to sustain

the *Agikuyu* people throughout their life time. This, critically evaluated, demonstrates that the *Agikuyu* people originally might have conceived of *Ngai* as a female (Dundas, 1955:134).

During the occasion of kindling afresh the domestic fire when a new house was elected in the traditional set-up, the wood of the *Mugumo* tree was essentially used to drill the fire. During this important occasion, the *Mugumo*, strictly associated with *Ngai*, was essentially female, and, could not be used as the male (Beech, 1913:125; Leakey, 1977:1300). Furthermore, the milky sap of the *Mugumo* was strongly associated with fertility and the women's potential to sustain and nurture life. We could therefore conclude that these facts strongly underline the original *Agikuyu* conception of *Ngai* was feminine. *Ngai* is also *Mwene Nyaga* (the possessor of brightness or owner of light). *Nyaga* (noun) means black and white or white parch or stripe. *Runyaga* also means black or white patch especially on a goat's dark skin and thus white spotted. It means clear, pure or shiny. *Nyaga* also means ostrich. Gathigira says that the *Agikuyu* associated the sun with the ostrich. Although some people may say that *Nyaga* also refers to this bird, most *Agikuyu* would accentuate that *Mwene-Nyaga* would have been understood not as the owner of the ostrich but of the sun (Bowie, 2004:89).

Another name for *Ngai* is *Mwene thi* (owner of the earth). *Ngai* was traditionally associated with the land. *Ngai* is the owner of the earth and can do what he pleases with it. People are the custodians of the earth which from the beginning was given to their ancestors. That is why *Ngai* has a continuous communion with the people through the sacrifices offered to him. He also maintains his creation by giving enough rain to water the earth. Accordingly, he has given to the *Gikuyu* a country full of rivers, ravines, beautiful mountains and trees. Natural disaster such as

earthquakes and lightening are attributed to him whenever he is not pleased with his creation (Wanjohi, 1997:57).

2.3.2 The concept of sin (*Thahu*)

The concept of *thahu* (contamination) as it applies to *Agikuyu* religious beliefs is closely related but not synonymous to *mugiro* (taboo) and *kirumi* (curse) in terms of their causes and effects. Kahungura (4th January 2019) explained that thahu is derived from *guthaaha*, Rugiri (4th January, 2019), on the, other hand, equates *thahu* with *mugiro* which he further defines as that which is forbidden. This definition is erroneous since *thahu* is the result of one's actions against that which is forbidden *mugiro*.

According to Anderson (2005:78) human blood was regarded as a sacred liquid serving for pious uses only. For example whenever any two people were engaged in a fight, and one spilt the other's blood, both of them contacted *thahu*. The case whereby one spilt a relative's blood was, however, more serious than spilling a stranger's blood. The former case of *thahu* called for immediate purification. If at any time, the herds' boys fought and spilt blood from one another, they contacted *thahu,* and so did the livestock. The herds' boys blood contaminated the entire herd. This prohibition could have been introduced with an aim of disciplining the herds' boys. Since the herds boys spent long hours in the grazing fields daily, and they were always unsupervised, they could have always injured one another in the absence of such regulations (Cheeseman, 2008:89).

The death of a human being caused *thahu* to most of the people who had an intimate relationship with the deceased. The *thahu* similarly affected all those who had physical contact with the corpse in connection to its disposal. If a woman had a miscarriage or gave birth to a still-born

child, she acquired due to contact with the dead foetus. This form of *thahu* was confined to the woman alone but it was contagious. However, the *thahu* could only be transferred by a sexual act and not by any other human contact. This made it necessary to undergo purification prior to any sexual contact (Bernadi, 1953:113). On the same note, the respondent further noted that a woman, who bore a healthy and normal child, but the child happened to die before the second birth ceremony took place, contacted a serious case of *thahu* (Clark, 1980:78).

Njoroge, one of *Agikuyu* elders (interview on March 2, 2019), also asserted that, the death of a child who had undergone the second birth ceremony and had therefore ceased to be identified with the mother alone, caused *thahu* to both parents and to all the deceased's brothers and sisters. It also affected the deceased's brothers and sisters who were grown up and initiated but were unmarried and, therefore, shared the same hut with the deceased. The *Agikuyu* had numerous unnatural or accidental causes of *thahu*, in which one had little or no control over. In other words, one could easily contact *thahu* even unwillingly through these causes. If a woman gave birth to twins as her firstborns, or her baby was born feet first, or her baby fell on the ground at birth, or any other similar unnatural events occurred during delivery, the woman contacted *thahu*.

On the same note, if a wife accidentally touched her husband's penis, the action caused *thahu*. This *thahu* was a source of potential danger to both the woman and her husband. It could make matters worse if the couple had sexual intercourse prior to cleaning. This measure could have resulted from the belief that the reproductive organs were a sacred weapon, a divine gift which deserved respect. However, most of the elders wouldn't discuss any reasons for such a cause of *thahu*. According to Kenyatta (1995:89) male sexual organs were believed to carry the seeds of life which were sacred and God given.

2.3.2 The Mountain God

The *AGikuyu* beliefs about the dwelling of *Ngai* were closely associated with nature. They believed that *Ngai* lived in the four mountains; Mount Kenya, Kinangop in the Aberdares, *Kianjahi* in the east *Kiambiruiru* in the south and Longonot Crater in *Maasai* territory (Karangi, 2005:34). It is revealing to explore the nature of these mountains where *Ngai* is believed to dwell and to manifest himself in *Agikuyu* cosmology. Mount Kenya believed to be the cardinal of all the mountains in Kenya, is exceptionally high. It is 5199 m above sea level and the second highest mountain in Africa. Thus its height is impressive with its characteristic; three snow-capped peaks appearing dwarfed by their own immense pedestal. Precisely because of its influence on the local ecology and land use, the *Gikuyu* consider it to be an intimate part of *Ngai's* creation. It is a source of many rivers and streams that feed most of the *Gikuyu* country. The people associate Mount Kenya with strength, height, beauty and as a source of water, rain, and forest that the *Gikuyu* need for their survival. In addition to Mount Kenya, *Ngai* manifests himself in the small mountains of Donyo Sabuk, Aberdare Range and Ngong Hills (Kenyatta, 1995:24).

During the planting ceremony for instance, when people were anxiously hoping for an abundant rainfall and a plentiful harvest, the elders responsible for imploring rain beseeched *Ngai*. *Ngai* appears to them and, communicates with them through nature. Indeed, for the *Gikuyu*, heterophonies are not limited to the mountains only (Muriuki, 1974:67). *Ngai* also manifested himself through *mbura* (rain). For an agricultural community, *Ngai* as rain had a more ontological value. During the prayer for rain for instance, the *Gikuyu* demonstrated that *Ngai* and *mbura* came from the same source. They would say - *Ngai*, since rain comes from where you live, be merciful to us and give us rain .Accordingly, the presence of abundant rain means that

Ngai is pleased with his people and through the rain, he blesses them. Finally, *Ngai* manifests himself to his people in the presence of a rainbow (Mworia, 1994:89).

2.4. The Definition of *Igongona*

The word *igongona* can be used generically to mean any ritual in this research. I endeavour to use *igongona* in a specific definition. In generic terms *igongona* can be used to mean ritual and has plural as *magongona* and can also be used as *Kigongona* to mean an altar. *Igongona* also mean plural of *kigongona*. In specific terms *igongona* means a ritual that was done under the sacred tree by a fourth grade elder and involved slaughtering a lamb and drinking of beer and was to invoke God concerning an issue of communal importance. Three major sacrifices were common were always performed under the sacred tree; *ituika* (which is handing over power to a new ruling generation), *Kuhoya Ngai mbura* (imploring God for rain) and *kurinda murimu* (to bury disease) (Karangi, 2008: 124).

Whenever there was an issue of communal importance and the elders present were representations and it was performed by an elder of the fourth Grade (an elder of the highest level of an *Agikuyu* elder) as the high priest suitable for it. *Igongona* applies to a sacrificial act towards *Ngai*. This involved of the choice of a selected animal b) nomination of the offering elders (including in some cases a few women) c) the choice of the power sacrificed site (normally – *Mogumo*) d) a procession to the place. In this case "everybody of the group concerned i.e. entire clan or the whole community was expected to support the *Igongona* by keeping the prescribed taboos" (Kenyatta, 1938:16).

2.5 *Igongona* and its Efficacy

2.5.1 Igongona Associated with Initiation

According to Cagnolo, a new circumcision group will take a particular name after the most occurrences of the year, or not infrequently from the peculiarities of some individuals concerned, as Kanyoto, Kamande, Bendera, Ngige etc. (Cagnolo, 1933:94). These names were essential in computing the age of a person just as we use the year of birth to indicate the time that passed since that occurrence. The *Agikuyu* children were always anxious to be admitted through this ceremony into ranks of youth; they were firmly persuaded that after circumcision they were firmly persuaded that after circumcision the body grows and develops though vitalized by a new life force. For this particular reason a boy from a very young age would urge his father to allow him to be circumcised.

The impact (efficacy) of this exercise could not and cannot be trivialised or over emphasised. On the most basic level, the social consequence of a boy's circumcision was that now he would be allowed now to go to war as a warrior, and serve the community for several years in the service of the community to defend and protect, and to sometimes attack neighboring tribes. The "uncircumcised man would remain a boy even if he lived to be ninety years and also be barred from getting married and raising children" (Kenyatta, 1978:56).

2.5.2 *Igongona* Associated with Normal Birth

The ceremony done after a normal birth would be referred to as *igongona ria muciairi,* this was done by slaughtering a ram and following several prescribed procedures. In summary, a ram was slaughtered and its blood collected in a gourd. The mother would dip a finger in the blood and touch the lips of the baby so as to make sure the 'owner of the ceremony was the first partaker. The rest of the parts of the goat would be prepared in a special way and the father and the elders

would eat the meat. After eating the sacrificial meat; the elders departed for their homes, where they had to sleep that night in the man's huts and might not on any account sleep in any wife's hut or have sexual contact with any woman. This rule of continence which was incumbent on the father for a whole month also had to be observed by the elders who had partaken the sacrificial meat. This continued until the husband had performed the concluding ceremony of purification with his wife. This ceremony that took pace exactly one month from the day of the shaving ceremony, the father had to have intercourse with the mother of the child twice that night and spend the rest of the night with her in her bed. Next morning the wife handed him a half-gourd of water with which he ceremonially washed his face, forehead, chin, hands, and wrists and ankles having done that, the ceremony was complete. This ceremony involved the child, the mother, the father and some elders and after the ceremony which lasted one month, everyone involved would be pleased to have been involved and that would resume their normal lives and the society would have received a new member.

2.5.3 *Igongona* Associated with Marriage

There were several ceremonies and rituals that were associated with marriage depending on several factors including whether the bride was a virgin, this was the first wife, any form of uncleanliness to warrant purification etc. The consummation of the marriage was important and therefore the mother of the bridegroom would take him aside on that particular day and remind him that on that night he was to consummate the marriage with sexual intercourse because it was a part of the ceremonial (*igongona*). He therefore had to have full intercourse with her (bride) twice neither more or less and in the unfortunate even if a young bridegroom being unable to achieve two acts of sexual intercourse, she had to ask some virile friend to come and perform this *igongona* on his behalf. The new morning having had intercourse with his bride twice, he was to

clear his throat loudly so that his mother might hear the signal and know that the sacrifice was completed.

2.5.4 Igongona Associated with Second Birth

The second birth ceremony was to separate the child from its mother since they were once ceremonially linked, this ceremony marked the passage of the child from being a member of the family in the physical sense only, to being a full member of the family with a spirit as well as a body (Leakey 1977:581).

The ceremony involved elaborate rituals to indicate the independence of the child, after the ceremony the parents have now given a new life to their child, who becomes a complete person (*Mundu mugima*).

2.5.5 *Igongona* Associated with Death

Hastings (1996:134) argues that for the *Kikuyu*, every single death in the *Agikuyu* community involved the performance of *igongona ria kuhukura* (the ceremony of purification to free that particular home from the blight of death) the ceremony was obviously more complicated when it involved the death of an elder. The objective of the *kuhukura* ceremony was to remove the contagion of death and therefore enable all members of the family to go back normal life once more. The ritual was divided into a number of stages, and continued over a period of eight days and nights, so that it might be brought to a close on the ninth day. Under *Kikuyu* customary law, it was seen as a great transgression for any member of the tribe to touch a corpse. He argues the *Kikuyu* custom did not allow *Kikuyus* to touch corpses. After death, usually those who had children even if the children had all died were accorded respect during funeral rites that culminated in a full *Gukura* ceremony which meant among other things that the spirit achieved a status which it would not have had otherwise.

2.5.6 *Igongona* Associated with Misfortune

When there were misfortunes or illness in the community, purification was done. This process was referred to as *gutahikio* in the *Agikuyu* community. After being called by elders, a diviner (*mundu mugo*) conducted it. The process demanded a male sheep from the homestead head to be slaughtered. This ritual was meant to cleanse the homestead from evil (*thahu*). The wives and children underwent this ceremony that used particular herbs (ibid). Again, during drought; elders sacrificed a male sheep under a *mugumo* tree to ask for rains from God. Some of the meat would be eaten by men there and leave the rest for the spiritual world. This day the community was warned about immoral acts that were considered reasons for the shortage of rain and everyone was forbidden for doing anything that could anger the spiritual world and hence rendering the ritual useless. An offender was also corrected in a ceremony referred to as *guikio na kiano* in which the diviner was involved (Kershaw, 1972:89).

Death was feared and hence to hound off evil spirits a terminally ill person was carried to the forest and a fire would be lit to clear off the evil caused by death. Elders would also slaughter a sheep (*ngondu*) to purify members of the homestead affected from these evils. Through the ritual known as *kũhũrũo na tatha*, elders shaved the hair of the deceased persons. These rites were useful in restoring order that was disturbed by death and they calmed down the members of the community. They made them understand that death is part and parcel of their life and it is a stage which everyone must go through (Clark, 1980:98).

2.6 Synthesis

The several elements to be observed for *igongona* to be efficacious include the priest (the elder performing it), the place, the lamb, and the process. The elder who would perform such a task (priest), was appointed during that very occasion by fellow elders who are jointly performing the

igongona. The said elder needed to be in the highest possible level of eldership i.e. *muthuri wa mburi inya* (an elder of level four). These levels were determined by how many sheep has he offered. Level one was basic and included offering the first sheep, level two was also basic and involved offering a second goat. Level three was a higher level where an elder needed to be appointed by qualified elders or him to offer the third goat. The highest level which is level four had several qualifications which included an elder had to be at menopause, could see the horizon and had capability to curse. This is the elder who would perform the *igongona*.

Every *igongona* had a place where it was designated for its performance for example purification was to be done near a river, birth ritual was to be done in the house of a mother, and for initiation special homes were appointed to host the *igongona*. In regard to when the i*gongona* was to be done, there were special circumstances that would necessitate the *igongona* to be done for example, if there was persistent draught, an epidemic, or in case of war. *Igongona* was not performed regularly as Jomo Kenyatta rightly states that '*ngai ndagiagwo'* that is God should not be disturbed (Kenyatta, 1995:67). Every time an *igongona* would be done the effects were very visible for example, in case it was done to seek end of a persistent draught then rains would be experienced, in case of epidemic then the epidemic would stop, in case of war victory was a visible sign (Githuku, 28th February, 2019).

The process of an *igongona* was not very obvious so it would suffice to say that several preparations were necessary for *igongona* to be performed. There was an announcement of the day of *igongona* and those involved would undergo several cleansing rituals and observe certain rules in order to qualify for the *igongona*, this was called '*Gwitheria'*. There was a specific time

of the day for every *igongona* and searching for the lamb that would qualify for the *igongona*; the lamb was to be one colour and healthy. The slaughtering of the lamb, roasting and eating it was also part of the *igongona*. Prayer to God was also part of the *igongona* however it was the last thing done before the elders left the sacred tree (Githuku, interviewed on 28th February, 2019). The *igongona's* success was pegged on keeping in the preparatory traditions explained above. Leakey (1977:1098) notes that no person whose father or mother being alive was supposed to perform a full sacrifice and if so, this was risking the death of the parents or parent. This shows the seriousness given to every component of an *igongona*.

The researcher has observed that in the recent times the *Agikuyu* elders have engaged in an *igongona* at the Mt. Kenya Forest to pray for the country, and to retain leadership or kingship '*uthamaki*' within their region. They also conducted a ritual when a *mugumo* tree fell in Nyeri. There are several variances between *igongona* in the past and *ingona* in the recent times due to the missionaries influence on African rituals further affecting language, culture dynamic, and the *Agikuyu* customs (Kirienye, interviewed on 28th February, 2019).

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has given us an overview of the *Agikuyu* ethnography, who *Agikuyu* are, what they believe in and has explained different types of *Igongona* and their efficaciousness among the *Agikuyu* community. *Agikuyu* people believed that it is only *Igongona* that would appease God and enable God bless them in different ways. In the following chapter, the researcher explores the doctrine of the Eucharist so as to have a better understanding we hope to inculturate

CHAPTER THREE

THE EUCHARIST

3.1 Introduction

Many Christians today influenced by Modernism and technology, do not see the seriousness of sacraments and especially its symbolism. This has undermined the *Agikuyu* value of the Eucharist in worship. Our concern in this chapter is to explicate the efficacy of the Eucharist. The need to do this is founded on the question of whether the Eucharist imparts any salvific value to the participant. It is from this understanding that we shall be able to show how *Agikuyu* understanding of the efficacy of *igongona* could be used to demonstrate the seriousness and efficacy of the Eucharist to a Christian who partakes in it.

3.2 Definition of Sacraments

Cyprian of Carthage first translated this into latin as *sacramentum*, which means 'something sacred,' hence the English transliteration, sacrament. Similarly, St. Augustine (354-430) defined sacrament as a 'sacred sign' (*sacrum signum*); explaining this as 'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace' (cf BCP). Augustine listed about 30 rituals acts, which he thought are to be included among the list of sacraments (This included, for example, such as 'making the sign of the cross.' He generally considered that sacraments are 'token of divine reality' i.e. divine gift that although apprehended sensually represents a transcendent or metaphysical reality.

St. Isadore Seville (c. 560-636) in his etymologies 6: 19 lists sacraments as baptism, chrism, the body and the blood of Christ (Eucharist) and explains that these are called sacraments because "beneath the cover of bodily things the divine power works salvation more secretly" (Sheerin, 1986:90).

Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) In his 'de sacraments Christians *fidei* defines sacraments as: A material element set before our senses, representing by similarity, signifying by institution, containing by sanctification some invisible and spiritual grace' (Rubin, 1992:89). Peter Abelard (1079-1142) "A sign of invisible grace, (*signum invisibilis gratiae*), a visible form of invisible grace (*invisibilis gatiae visibilis forma*), a sign of a sacred thing, of something hidden"

Peter Lombard (1100-1160) had a definition close to that of Augustine: in his book, 'The sentences, book IV he lists seven sacraments defining this as: A sign of God's grace and invisible grace such as bears its likeness and exists as its cause. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) in his summa theological (3a: 60) defines sacraments as: 'a sign or a seal of a sacred thing in so far as it sanctifies a person. He explains 3 aspects of sacraments in light of the three dimensions of time past, present, future: it commemorates Christ's passion (past); imparts grace and virtues (present) and a seal/guarantee of eternal life (future) (Sheerin, 1986:103).

John Calvin (1509-1564) close to Augustine's definition Calvin says: "An external sign, by which the Lord seals on our consciences his promises of good will towards us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith, and we in turn testify our piety towards him. Both before himself and before angels as well as men "In a simpler statement Calvin says: "it is a testimony of the divine favor towards us, confirmed by an external sign, with corresponding attestation of our faith towards him" (Rubin, 1992:78).

3.2.1 Definition of the Eucharist

To understand Eucharist, Baker (1962:102) claims that the decree made by the Council of Trent ran in equivalent terms, thus declaring the definition, at least in the mouth of many theologians, depends upon a particular philosophical theory of existence, according to which everything

consists of two parts that is substance- the invisible and imperceptible, and constitutes the essential reality of the thing; and accidents- the viable and tangible, and give the thing its outward form, shape, taste. So, in regard to the Eucharist, the theory was that the substance of the bread and wine (the invisible) became by consecration the actual substance of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, while the accidents (the visible) remained unaltered, what they were. The substance of the bread and wine thus wholly ceased to be, and a new substance took their place. The accidents however continue to exist without their substance exception, as did Beranger before them.

3.3 Origin and development of the Eucharist

The question of how the practice of the Eucharist began is a contentious one. Scholars do not agree whether the practice directly begun from the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples or whether it evolved from other sources and applied the last supper event as a justification (aetiological references) for its practice. Therefore in this section we endeavour to discuss the biblical notion of the Eucharist (Allen & Unwin, 1950:456).

3.3.1 Adumbrations of the Eucharist in Old Testament

These Jewish practices lie behind the origin of the Eucharistic practice. The Jewish had various such meals which had religious dimension to it for example Kiddush Jesus held regular meals with his disciples, and the disciples seem to have continued the practice after his departure. This may have evolved into becoming a sacramental meal with strong elements of thanksgiving as in the Jewish meals but now with references to Jesus and his saving death, which gives spiritual life as physical food gives physical life (Uzukwu, 1996:90).

In ancient Palestine sharing of meals was a common practice especially at social and religious meeting. In Acts believers broke bread together, which from ancient Palestinian context we know could simply mean they shared meals or ate together. Also, note that in this context any meal will have a religious dimension to it (e.g. the Jewish Kiddush, breaking bread with thanksgiving etc.). This occasion where Christians met and among other activities 'shared meals' must have provided the context in Jesus was remembered and his teachings shared or rehearsed (ibid).

In light of the 'memorial' aspect of these meals where Jesus' death would be remembered and his the last supper he had with the disciples, it is likely that the meals may have evolved into sacramental 'feeding on the Saviour' the context (especially Hellenistic) providing such conceptual reference. E.g. it is likely that the Hellenistic concept of 'mystic union' with God through sacramental meals must have influenced the Eucharistic views of the many Gentile converts. Indeed, it is likely that it may have evolved to provide a ritual 'functional equivalent' to the traditional worship involving sacrifices for early Christians. They must have then used the last supper as an etiological reference holding that Jesus instituted it at the last supper (cf his last Passover meal) (Vakalisa, 1999:69).

3.3.2 Passover/ Pesah/ Seder

The essence of the Passover is properly explained in the book of Exodus 12:1-14 this is when God ordered Moses who was at that time in the land of Egypt to speak to all the congregation of Israel, he was to instruct them to take a lamb, specifically one year old male on without blemish, and to kill it in the twilight on a specific day: "They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.... And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over

you. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments I am the Lord. Now this day is a memorial to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance" (Uzukwu, 1988:97).

In time Moses (according to the Old Testament) appointed men, priests, whose main task was to see that the people never forgot what happened that night they ate the Paschal lamb. The lamb kept alive Israel's faith in God. And the Lord told them that the first-born of their sons should be given to him and that they should do the same with their sheep. The first-born of the beasts were to be sacrificed and the first-born sons were to be redeemed with a lamb (Ex 22:29, 30; 13:11-15; 34:19-20; Dt. 16:1-8). It is unnecessary to speak of the deep symbolic significance that Christians find right through the Bible in this regard, and just a few examples will suffice (Uzukwu, 1996:78).

Zimmerman (1981:52-55) shows how Jesus' earthly ministry was introduced with a quotation from the prophets, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). Utterly defenseless, like a lamb led to the slaughter, He offered himself, his body and soul, as a ransom, an offering, a sacrifice for sin and sinners. The Paschal Victim became the sacrifice of the New Covenant which was offered for all people (Lk. 22:20). There were many types of sacrifices in the Old Testament most were due to God and belonged to him. Zimmerman (1981:56) concludes that God sacrificed the Lamb on the altar of the cross and that God promises to pass over his judgment of death for those who are willing to stand under its protection. This is what Christians remember and celebrate at Passover (Ex 12:13).

3.3.3 Notion of the Eucharist in New Testament

The first Christians were Jewish, and it seems the prayers of blessing and thanksgiving that were traditionally said at Jewish meals were adopted by the Early Church for their communal meals. The Greek word for blessing, *eulogia*, is found in Mark 14:22 and Matthew 26:26 where Jesus broke the bread during the Last Supper while instituting a lasting ordinance in his memory. After he had said a blessing for the bread and had given it to his disciples to eat, Jesus gave thanks for the cup of wine. In Mark 14:23, Matthew 26:27, Luke 22:17, 19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24 the word *eucharisteo*, which means "give thanks", is used. *Eucharistia* (thanksgiving) eventually became the preferred term for the communal Christian meal (Kodell 1991:30).

In the Didache, a church manual that seems to have been used widely in the second century, there are instructions for observing the Eucharist. Chapters nine and ten of the Didache provide prayers of thanksgiving for the Eucharist; however, instead of referring to Jesus' death, the prayers allude to the story of the feeding of the five thousand (Didache 9:4; cf. John 6:10-13). Interestingly, John introduces the narrative of the feeding of five thousand in his gospel with a pointed reference to the Passover (John 6:4). After telling the story of the feeding the five thousand, John continues with Jesus teaching the crowd on the theme of bread: "For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world…I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:33-35).Jesus, as the True Bread, is both the bread of the Passover meal (John 6:51-57) and the manna of the wilderness wanderings (John 6:31-33, 49-50, 58) (Howard 1967:335).

John's Gospel records lengthy teaching from Jesus during the Last Supper and it records a prayer in John chapter 17 as if "the Lord, acting as the president of the feast, offers a new Haggadah and

a new prayer of blessing and consecration . . .” (Howard 1967:336). In John 17:20-23, Jesus prays for unity, a profound oneness for his disciples and for future believers. The Eucharist prayers of the Didache also emphasize the theme of unity, as does the apostle Paul in his instructions for observing the Lord’s Supper.

The close fellowship (*koinonia*) and unity of believers, which is a theme of the Eucharist, has caused this supper to also be known as “Communion”. This term is taken from 1 Corinthians 11:16-17. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (*koinonia*) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (*koinonia*) of the body of Christ? For we being many share one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread (1 Corinthians 10:16-17 (KJV). The participants of the Eucharist “experienced the meal as a gathering of the new family of the children of God. In their view, it expressed their community and unity ‘in Christ (Alikin 2009:8).

The absence of references to Jesus’ death in the Eucharist instructions in the Didache has caused some scholars to suggest that there were two traditions of Eucharist meals in the early Church: one tradition that was recorded in John’s Gospel and the Didache, and another tradition that was recorded in the synoptic gospels and Paul’s teaching. Alikin (2009:110) writes that “the agreements between Mark’s and Paul’s accounts of the last Supper warrant the conclusion that in this story the two authors are using a common tradition”. Nevertheless, in both traditions; the breaking and distribution of bread is a key feature.

3.3.4 Historical Development of the Notion of Efficacy of the Eucharist

At the early period of the Church, East and West Christendom had not yet separated, though they had their unique differences in the Eucharistic celebrations. As in the first period, where the principal figures were called ‘apostles’ and disciples, the chief personages of the second period

of the early Church were referred to as the 'Fathers of the Church.' Under separate sub-sections I intend to give special attention to the works of some of the Fathers of the Church on the Eucharist. Pier (1987) gives a good collective portrayal of the Fathers in this illustration:

> The Fathers of the Church are those personages, almost always bishops and thus endowed with particular pastoral responsibilities, who decisively influenced by their preaching and writings both the development of Christian doctrine and the formation of Christian customs. The Fathers unite in themselves the enduring characteristics of a holy life, wisdom and antiquity (Pier 1987:11)

These Fathers of the Church, as shown in this quotation, laid a strong foundation for the Church through their life style, their teachings and writings. Not much was said, however, or profoundly taught about the Eucharist before the fourth century. Lampe (1968:34) confirms this fact in these words: "It is not until the fourth century that we find detailed information about the teaching given to catechumens about the Eucharist…" The reasons for this scanty information on the Eucharist vary from historical to cultural reasons. Much of the period under discussion witnessed significant borrowings from the surrounding pagan culture. Referring to this borrowing in relation to sacraments in general, among which the Eucharist is one, Martos (1991:23) asserts:

> Greek-speaking Christians some time later began to speak of their sacramental rituals as 'mysteries', apparently borrowing the term from the pagan mysteries, but in Paul's letters mysterion always had the more everyday meaning of something which is hidden or secret.

This idea of keeping the sacraments in general and the Eucharist in particular secret from the new converts influenced the Fathers of this period. Lampe (1968:34) explains this fact clearly in this statement: "the strong third century tendency to present the Christian sacraments as true counterparts of the false pagan mysteries, and consequently to conceal the details of them from the uninitiated, is a contributory factor". In effect, only a skeletal aspect of the Eucharist was taught to those who were not yet fully initiated into the Catholic community. Since they were not yet baptized, they were not allowed to know much about the Eucharist or to receive it. In this circumstance, therefore, the teaching of the Eucharist was not systematic. Sheerin (1986:16) confirms this idea when he asserts: "the Fathers themselves rarely approached the Eucharist in a wholly comprehensive, synthetic way", not only agrees with Sheerin, but he also goes further to point out another reason why the teaching of the Eucharist in the early Church was scanty when he records that besides the fact that the nascent Church was yet to build up an adequate vocabulary with which to express itself in areas like the Eucharist, it was also disturbed by the incessant persecutions of the time. Furthermore, the early Fathers thought that since the Eucharist was both a mystery and sacred food, the un-initiate would learn more about it after their baptism through their participation in the celebration. Sheerin (1986:18) further confirms this in these lines: "the Eucharist was for the Fathers a mystery, rather like a splendid, many-faceted gem which they held up, before themselves and their people, to the light of the Spirit." In other words, the new converts would be enlightened by the Spirit when they started to participate and share at the breaking of bread—the Eucharist. This limitation in terms of the teaching on the Eucharist notwithstanding, the Fathers of the early Church were convinced that in the background of their understanding of the Eucharist, there stood the Jewish meal of fellowship and prayers before the meal, and, in particular, the Passover commemoration of the redemption.

Though the teaching of the Eucharist for the new converts was unsystematic, however, in practice the Eucharistic meal was the main focus of their fellowship. It was, for them, both the ground and expression of the Church's unity in Christ and of the love that binds the newly founded Church together even in the midst of persecutions. The encouragement these early Christians derived from the Eucharist motivated them even to the point of dying in the name of Christ because it was based on the understanding that they were not only carrying out Jesus' command, but were also following His footsteps. Lampe (1968:36) presents this conviction succinctly as follows:

In the Eucharist Christ's death and resurrection were made present to the faithful as contemporary realities in which they participated sacramentally and in which they shared, in a more tangible way, in the daily dying and rising with Christ which, according to much early Christian thought found its proper fulfilment in martyrdom.

3.4 Notion of the Eucharist

Christ is the sacrament of God. The Church is the sacrament of Christ. Through Baptism Christ gives us life and through the Eucharist Christ nourishes life abundantly. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 10). Through the Eucharist Christ's life, death and resurrection are made real, are made present, and are offered sacramentally. In the Eucharist, Christ unites his Church and all her members with his work of salvation. All ministries and sacraments of the Church are bound up with the Eucharist in which Christ, acting through the ministry of the priesthood, gives himself as an offering to the Father. Through Eucharist the faithful individually and communally renew their promise to conform their lives to Christ. Through the Liturgies of the Word and of the Eucharist the events of

Christ's life are made present. It is through the community whose unity is created by the Eucharist that the faithful are commissioned and empowered to evangelize. In the Eucharist Christ completes the initiation of the faithful, nourishes them throughout their lives, and consoles them at the time of death with *Viaticum* (*Sacrosantum concilium*, 47).

The Eucharist is the sacrament that makes present in the liturgical celebration of the Church the Person of Jesus Christ, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, and his redeeming sacrifice, in the fullness of the Paschal mystery of his passion, death and resurrection. This presence is not static or passive (as an object in a place), but rather an active presence where Christ makes himself present with the dynamism of his saving love. In the Eucharist he invites us to accept the salvation he offers us and to receive the gift of his Body and Blood as the food of eternal life. This enables us to enter into communion with him, with his Person and his sacrifice, and also with all the members of his Mystical Body, the Church (*Sacramentum Caritatis*, 2007)

As Vatican II teaches, "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet, 'in which Christ is consumed, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us".

3.4.1 The efficacy of the Eucharist

The Eucharist is a manifestation of the unity of the members of the Church and Christ as he offers his body and blood. Christ offers himself to the community every time they receive the communion. Augustine underscores that the unity with Christ and the Church is based on love

which is the nature of Christ as sacrifice. He points out that every act of love is the Christian sacrifice (Grane, 1994:89). Therefore, the content of this sacrament is Christ and the Church and the Eucharistic food signify the presence of Christ's body and blood. He leans on the Scripture as well due to that we as many members partake of the one bread (1 Cor. 10:17). The bread, for Augustine the image of the whole Christ and through this sacrament, Christians get a closer relationship to Christ. They participate more deeply as followers of him towards salvation (Grane, 1994:91).

Christ takes the initiative for us to encounter him by drawing us closer to him. Christ is by his nature a true sacrament, which represents the unity of Christ and the Church as Eucharistic food (Jeremias, 1974:492). According to Pope Gelasius 1, (492-496), the unity of the church is not the fruit of the communion, but rather a presupposition to achieve it. He underlines the importance of integration with the rest of the faithful and the reception of the holy body and blood. First, according to Pope Gelasius, it is not only a personal relationship to Christ, but you receive his sacrifice in communion with Christ and the faithful. Second, the Eucharist has an approach of salvation where baptism and the Eucharist are necessary for salvation (John 3:5, 6:53). Kilmartin (1994) argues that Gelasius understands this text as a unity and a relationship between Christ and the people. He states that without the Eucharist, they cannot have life in themselves. The teaching on Christ as 'newly' offered was supported by Pope Gregory and it became important proof that the sacrifice of Christ is repeated each Mass. He reflects on this Roman theology of the Eucharist.

Kilmartin, (1994) also argues that Cajetan emphasized the priest's instrumental action and power account for the unity of the sacrifice of the cross and of the mass. He refers to the mass as a

sacrifice and efficacious because it is united to Calvary, which cannot be separated. The victim is the same and the same priest who offers the sacrifice on the cross, offers it in the mass too. The principle priest and the instrument have one action and one effect. Cajetan's view on this unity is the radical subordination of the priest's act to the act of Christ. Christ is truly the main celebrant, and the mass becomes the same offering laid down on the cross. The whole sacramental economy in the life of Jesus culminates in the Eucharist. In this way the consecration is, for Aquinas, crucial for the unity of the sacrifice. He uses the word image to speak about the deep unity or correspondence between the cross and the mass. It is called a sacrifice because it is an image of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and because it conveys the effects fruits or the passion of the Lord (Kilmartin, 1994).

3.4.2 The Eucharist in the Sacramental order of the Church

Because of the Blessed Trinity's love for man, the presence of Christ in the Eucharist brings all graces to the Church and to mankind. The Eucharist is the most exalted sacrament. "For in the most Blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch and the Living Bread which gives life to men through his Flesh; that Flesh which is given life and gives life through the Holy Spirit." The other sacraments possess a sanctifying power that flows from Christ, but the Eucharist makes the very Person of Christ truly, really and substantially present. The incarnate Son of the Eternal Father, who now reigns in glory at his side, is made present, with the saving power of his redeeming love, so that all men and women might enter into communion with him and live through him and in him (cf. Jn. 6:56-57).

Moreover, the Eucharist is the summit towards which all the other sacraments lead in the spiritual growth of each of the faithful and the whole body of the Church. Thus Vatican II

affirmed that the Eucharist is the source and the summit of Christian life, the center of all the Church's life. All the other sacraments and all the works of the Church are directed towards the Eucharist because their aim is to lead the faithful to union with Christ, present in this sacrament (cf. CCC, 1324).

From the beginning of the Church's life, the Christian assembly celebrating the Eucharist is hierarchically structured. According to (CCC 1348), at its head is Christ himself, the principal agent of the Eucharist. He is high priest of the New Covenant; it is he himself who presides invisibly over every Eucharistic celebration.

3.4.3 The Eucharist in God's Plan of Salvation

CCC 1333 says that, at the heart of the Eucharistic celebration are the bread and wine that, by the words of Christ and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, become Christ's Body and Blood. Faithful to the Lord's command the Church continues to do, in his memory and until his glorious return, what he did on the eve of his Passion: "He took bread ..." "He took the cup filled with wine..." The signs of bread and wine become, in a way surpassing understanding, the Body and Blood of Christ; they continue also to signify the goodness of creation. Thus in the Offertory we give thanks to the Creator for bread and wine, (Cf. Ps 104:13-15.) fruit of the "work of human hands," but above all as "fruit of the earth" and "of the vine" – gifts of the Creator. The Church sees in the gesture of the king-priest Melchizedek, who "brought out bread and wine," a prefiguring of her own offering.

The CCC 1337 teaches us that the Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. Knowing that the hour had come to leave this world and return to the Father, in the course of a meal he washed their feet and gave them the commandment of love. (Cf. Jn. 13:1-17; 34-

35.) 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, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return; "thereby he constituted them priests of the New Testament." (Council of Trent (1562): DS 1740.)

According to (CCC 1360), the Eucharist is a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Father, a blessing by which the Church expresses her gratitude to God for all his benefits, for all that he has accomplished through creation, redemption, and sanctification. Eucharist means first of all "thanksgiving." In the New Testament, the memorial takes on new meaning. When the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she commemorates Christ's Passover, and it is made present: the sacrifice Christ offered once for all on the cross remains ever present (Cf. Heb. 7:25-27.) "As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which 'Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed' is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out" (LG 3; cf. 1Cor 5:7.).

Eucharist being the memorial of Christ's Passover, it is also a sacrifice (CCC 1365). The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: "This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." (Lk 22:19-20.) In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28).

The mode of Christ's presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as "the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend." In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist "the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly,

really, and substantially contained." (Council of Trent (1551: DS 1651.) "This presence is called 'real' by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be 'real' too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a substantial presence by Eucharist which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present" (Paul VI, MF 39).

Eucharist, (in Greek, "thanksgiving"), is a celebration of both the thanksgiving sacrifice and memorial banquet of our Lord's Paschal Mystery. As a meal, Eucharist developed from Jewish meals, particularly the Passover meal. The Jews experience liberation made present every time they celebrate the Passover meal, a living memorial of the Exodus. As a sacrifice, Eucharist makes present Jesus' body "given for you" and his blood, the New Covenant "poured out for you." Catechesis will include the following truths regarding Eucharist: That the whole risen Christ is truly, really, and substantially present in the Eucharistic species; that He is present in the proclamation of the word, in the presider, and in the worshipping assembly (*Lumen Gentium II*).

Holy Communion augments our union with Christ (CCC 1391). The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. Indeed, the Lord said: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (Jn. 6:56). Life in Christ has its foundation in the Eucharistic banquet: "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." (Jn. 6:57.) On the feasts of the Lord, when the faithful receive the Body of the Son, they proclaim to one another the Good News that the first fruits of life have been given, as when the angel said to Mary Magdalene, "Christ is

risen!" Now too are life and resurrection conferred on whoever receives Christ. (Fanqith, Syriac Office of Antioch, Vol. I, *Commun*, 237 a-b.)

Holy Communion separates us from sin. The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is "given up for us," and the blood we drink "shed for the many for the forgiveness of sins." For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins: For as often as we eat this bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the death of the Lord. If we proclaim the Lord's death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins (CCC 1393)

According to CCC 1404 the Church teaches that the Lord comes even now in his Eucharist that he is there in our midst when celebrating the Eucharist. However, his presence is veiled. Therefore we celebrate the Eucharist awaiting the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ asking to share in his glory when every tear will be wiped away. There is no surer pledge or clearer sign of this great hope in the new heavens and new earth "in which righteousness dwells" (2 Pet 3:13) than the Eucharist. Every time this mystery is celebrated, "the work of our redemption is carried on" and we "break the one bread that provides the medicine of immortality, the antidote for death, and the food that makes us live forever in Jesus Christ, (LG 3; St. Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Eph. 20, 2: SCh 10, 76).

3.4.5 Teachings of John Calvin on the Eucharist

Calvin begins his exposition on the Eucharist by dwelling on the Christian's identity in Christ which is linked to the believer's union with Christ. The believer's relationship to the Father is that of children rather than servants. They are adopted children of the Father through union with Christ. Eucharist points to the food that Jesus Christ has furnished because of his death, "…he,

(the Father), has given another sacrament to his Church by the hand of his only-begotten Son viz. a spiritual feast, at which Christ testifies that he himself is living bread (Cf. John 6:51), on which our souls feed, for a true and blessed immortality" (Allen & Unwin, 1950:456).

Calvin is adamant; the reason for the gift of Eucharist is that Christians may be assured of the efficacy of the shed blood of Christ. Writing that our union with Christ is "incomprehensible," he understands that the material means of Eucharist reminds the believer that just as wine and bread feed the body "our souls are fed by Christ" (Allen & Unwin, 1950:458). Eucharist is a Sign of Our Union with Christ because communion is a sign of the Christian's union with Christ, making them one body with him. Calvin lists the reasons why believers can experience "delight" in the sacrament. He argues that possessing through Christ all that is his, they have eternal life, security in their position within the kingdom of heaven and forgiveness of sins. Affirming these gifts, Calvin reminds the believer of the great exchange between them and Jesus Christ. He writes:

> Having become with us the Son of Man, he has made us with himself sons of God. By his own descent to the earth, he has prepared our ascent to heaven. Having received our mortality, he has bestowed on us his immortality. Having undertaken our weakness, he has made us strong in his strength. Having submitted to our poverty, he has transferred to us his riches. Having taken upon himself the burden of unrighteousness with which we were oppressed, he has clothed us with his righteousness. Since all of this is pictured in communion, the Christian has cause to rejoice in the gift of communion (Inst. VI, 45).

Calvin (1554) points to two significant ways that the sacrament brings assurance to the believer. First it brings assurance that Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed for the believer's

redemption. Second, his broken body and his shed blood are those gifts which continue to nourish their souls and keep them alive. He puts it this way: the body of Christ, "invigorates and keeps alive the soul"; the blood of Christ is meant to, "foster, refresh, strengthen, and exhilarate," the soul of the believer. Returning to the great exchange that Jesus made for the sake of his adopted brothers and sisters, Calvin is resolute in his insistence that the grace affirmed by communion sends the Christian to the cross of Christ, where that promise was performed and fulfilled in all its parts. The sign is not effective if it is divorced from the crucifixion.

William (1990:220) notes that Jesus' identity as the bread of life does not stem from the supper itself, but is seen in his life on earth, death on the cross, and consequent resurrection and found in our union with him. Calvin makes a distinction between simply believing in Christ (knowledge) and being nourished and fed continually by union with Christ (faith). He explains that it is by faith that the body of Christ is eaten. He uses the analogy of looking on bread and eating bread. The looking brings knowledge about the bread but will not bring nourishment to the body, whereas eating the bread will. By faith one obtains Christ and is nourished eternally by his body and blood.

At this point, Calvin intends to make sure his readers understand that communion with Jesus Christ is not just with the Spirit but that they are also nourished by his actual resurrected humanity, which Christ calls "meat indeed" and "drink indeed". Very carefully, Calvin explains that this is a mystery that is far above even his own understanding yet he will attempt to explain some of the mystery. The first part of the explanation centers on the Biblical view of Christ as the eternal Word of the Father; he was the Word from the beginning. It is Christ who gives life to

all things. But because of sin the one who gives life was very distant and humanity was only capable of experiencing and seeing death (Donald, 1993:56)

Next Calvin looks at the Word revealed in the Incarnation. He writes:

> But ever since that fountain of life began to dwell in our nature, he no longer lies hid at a distance from us but exhibits himself openly for our participation. Nay, the very flesh in which he resides he makes vivifying to us, that by partaking of it we may feed for immortality. "I," says he, "am that bread of life"; "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;" "And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (Inst. vi. 48, 51).

By these words he declares, not only that he is life, inasmuch as he is the eternal Word of God who came down to us from heaven, but, by coming down, gave vigour to the flesh which he assumed, that a communication of life to us might thence emanate. Calvin calls this a "comfort" for the devout believer because "now they find life in their own flesh." The life that comes to the believer from Jesus Christ comes from the Godhead through the humanity of Jesus Christ to whom the Christian is joined. To reiterate, the life that God gave to Jesus Christ in the incarnation is now the life of the believer.

Next Calvin turns to the Holy Spirit to help clarify that the Lord's Supper is not an empty sign but is filled with reality. That is, the Holy Spirit takes that which is distant, the risen Christ, and unites the believer to him. And going again over the whole matter of the Christian's faith and what that means as it relates to communion Calvin writes:

> And, indeed, I see not how anyone can expect to have redemption and righteousness in the cross of Christ, and life in his death, without trusting first of all to true communion with Christ himself. Those blessings could not reach us, did not Christ previously make himself ours. I say then, that in the mystery of the Supper, by the symbols of bread and wine, Christ, his body and blood, are truly exhibited to us, that in them he fulfilled all obedience, in order to procure righteousness for us; first that we might become one body with him; and, secondly, that being made partakers of his substance, we might feel the result of this fact in the participation of all his blessings (Inst. vi, 53).

Next Calvin uses his chapter on the Lord's Supper to point out the error of the Roman Catholics regarding the Lord's Supper. Hughes (1992:173) argues that according to Calvin, what is important for those in the Reformed faith in these pages is his insistence on preserving the whole resurrected humanity of Christ Jesus in heaven in his glory. Calvin is unwavering in his presentation of the believer as being in union with the resurrected Christ. He distinguishes between those believers who through faith are united with Jesus Christ verses those who, without faith, are ignorant of any union. The former partake of the blessings of Christ. The latter attempt to feed on substances that in a sense replace Christ's true body and blood found in the incarnated and resurrected Lord.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the development of the Eucharist in both the New Testament and Old Testament, analysed the view of church fathers on the efficaciousness of the Eucharist and highlighted what the Church history has taught on the Efficaciousness of the Eucharist. We

have noted that through partaking Eucharist, believers are assured of Christ possessing them for they are his, having eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Having looked at *igongona* in its cultural setting among *Agikuyu*, and having explained the efficaciousness of the Eucharist the next chapter will focus on constructing *Agikuyu* sacramental theology of inculturation based the above explained facts.

CHAPTER FOUR

TOWARDS *AGIKUYU* SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY OF IN CULTURATION

4.1 Introduction

The concern is to construct *Agikuyu* sacramental theology of inculturation. The urgency of this task is that the *Agikuyu* partake the Church's ritual of the Eucharist but do not believe in its efficacy as they did in their traditional *igongona*. Since *igongona* rituals are common among the *Agikuyu* people as illustrated in chapter two, it is imperative to note that they are not going away any soon and therefore, there must be some positive elements in these rituals which if used, they can be entry point for evangelization. It is from this perspective that this chapter endevours to examine the intrinsic values in the *igongona* and in the Christian Eucharist to find entry for Christian Eucharistic ritual for it to have impact on the Christian faith. The chapter analyzes similarities and differences between *igongona* and Eucharist and then illustrates the superiority of the Eucharist over the *igongona* so as to lead the *Agikuyu* faithful to the Christian doctrine of the Eucharist as efficacious to their faith and salvation.

4.2 Analogia Entis

4.2.1 Meaning and Functionality

This applies the principle of *analogia entis* to show how God has used the earthly elements to communicate to humankind His will and nature. In the principle of *analogia* we argue that through creation God has revealed Himself and that one revelation (mystery) one can understand another mystery (*nexus mysteriorum*).

Thus, *anaogia entis* is the use of natural elements analogously to infer or understand divine mysteries. It is based on the conviction that between God and his creation (i.e. what is good or

positive in creation), there is some similarity or correspondence in such a way that one can gain deeper understanding of the revealed mysteries by examining them in the light of natural knowledge gained from human experience in the world. Nyamiti (2005) notes that one can reason from a premise derived from faith and another from natural reason in order to arrive at a theological conclusion which is valid and contains a deeper knowledge of the revealed mystery.

According to Nyamiti (2005) one begins by choosing the Christian mystery, the topic or the subject of study, then find out the appropriate African cultural item or theme which can be used for theological elaboration of the Christian mystery. This is followed by theological reflection on the meaning of the Christian mystery beginning with the meaning in itself followed by its relevance of our spiritual and material benefits in the light of its African counterpart. This is what Nyamiti refers to as "the intrinsic employment of cultural themes in theology.

In this research the efficacy of the Eucharist is our major concern of study and the cultural authentic element is the *Agikuyu igongona* through which we hope to learn the efficacy of the Christian mystery– *Eucharist*. The researcher will use the three steps recommended by Nyamiti (2005) in inculturation: identification of the Christian mystery and its African counterpart to be used, *explicitation* of the doctrine and critical analysis of the pastoral implications that result from this exercise.

The researcher will apply creative interpretation. According to Nyamiti (2005) this involves firstly, theological interpretation of the similarities and differences between the African theme and its Christian counterpart. One can also show that parallels or similarities are signs of good African cultural values which are from God as *Logoi Spermatikoi* and are preparatory for evangelization. Secondly, theological interpretation of the Christian mystery in terms of its African counterpart with which it is analogically or even dialectically identified. This implies

the analogical or dialectical formulation of the various items in the Christian mystery in terms of the categories or elements found in the African theme. All this effort goes hand in hand with a serious endeavour to draw out as much as possible all the theological implications of the consequences and insights which are revealed by the examination and interpretation of the Christian mystery in the light of the African categories.The researcher therefore intends to use *Agikuyu igongona* to illuminate on the doctrine of the Eucharist essentially this entails the lifting up of elements of *igongona* that can be help shed more light understanding of the Eucharist and its efficacy.

4.2.2. Justification

Inculturation of Christian doctrines into our cultures is grounded on the facts that there are African cultural practices that have always offered solution to African needs and these practices have endured time even in the wave of Christianity and modernity. Such persistence is an indication that they are authentic to the African people and as such God given. Msaki (2012) advocating for inter-religious dialogue reflects on the spirit of *Nostra Aetate*'s call for dialogue between Christianity and non-Christian religions. He argues that:

> Many (African) Christians, at critical moments in their lives, have recourse to practices of the traditional religion, or to prayer houses, healing homes, "prophets", witch doctors or fortune teller. Some tend to join sects or the so called 'independent churches', where they feel that certain elements of their culture are more respected.

This is a clear justification for inculturation of Christian faith into culture using that which is authentic to the people. In the same spirit, the *Christus Dominus* also appeals for

contextualization of Christian message when it encourages the church to present Christian doctrines in a manner adapted to the needs of the times. i.e., Christian message should be relevant to the needs of the people. This decree concerns the pastoral office of bishops in the church as proclaimed by his holiness Pope Paul VI on October 28, 1965. (Chapter II, paragraph 13).

Most of the Catholic theologians advocating for inculturation take cue from Pope Paul VI's exhortation of the church in Africa to apply inculturation in their mission work. He states,

> Only through African Christian Theology and inculturation will Christianity become fully rooted in Africa. Only then will it dwell among Africans in the world of their culture, values and meanings, and no longer in alien signs and symbols… This would not explain away the mystery of incarnation of faith… (Pope Paul VI's address in Kampala, Uganda, July 1969).

In "*Evangelii Nuntiandi*", the apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI, 8 December, 1975 of the synod declared that "The Church respects and esteems non-Christian religions in other cultures because they are living expressions of the soul of the vast groups of people. Cultural values have sparks of revelation and can constitute a true preparation for the Christian Gospel as expresses by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* quoted in Kiboi (2017). Following the exhortation from the Pope, Nyamiti argues that "One can also show that the parallels or similarities (i.e. between African cultural authentic practices and Christian teachings) are signs of the good African cultural values which are from God as *Logoi spermatikoi* and are preparatory for evangelization, in this idea Kiboi (2017) adopts Nyamiti (2005).

Justification of the principle of *analogia entis* is based on the grounds that Jesus himself used it in his teaching– parables. He said the kingdom of God is like….and used earthly known elements to explain the nature of God's kingdom. He also taught his disciples to call God "our Father"; this is the language of analogy. Therefore, if God through creation has revealed both His will and nature, it is not right to ignore the cultures of various people as God's way of revelation. However, it should be noted that since all cultures are fallen, the revelation therein is not sufficient and for that reason we need Christ himself as the perfect image of God to reveal the Father and His will to use. It is for this reason we are employing the principle of analogy and the principle that one revealed mystery (African cultural elements) to understand another revealed mystery– the principle *nexus mysteriorum*.

4.3 Comparative Theology

4.3.1 Similarities with *Igongona*

In the same way *igongona* is performed for every event, Eucharist is performed regularly as commanded by the Lord in remembrance of him. The *Agikuyu* believed that the *igongona* effected the intended purpose for them the same is held by Christian faithful who partakes the Eucharist, it has effect on their faith. The effects of the *igongona* on those who partook of it in unfitting manner were dire. The same is believed among Christian communicants, that those who pertake of the Eucharist in unfitting manner are affected, not only spiritually but some have even died (1Cor11:29-30: For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died**)**. Both in the Eucharist and in the *igongona,* sacrifices are offered to the ultimate (God) as a means of appeasing (propitiation), seeking forgiveness of sins and restoration of the moral order. In both

cases, expiation is achieved and the participant in the ritual receives assurance of their forgiveness.

In both cultural *igongona* in the Christian Eucharist, there is realized fellowship between the participants and their God. In the *igongona*, the creatures raise their being to meet God and similarly in the Eucharist, the participant is raised by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to fellowship with God. In the *igongana* the state of the celebrant and the participant mattered. For the *igongona* if the celebrant had contravened the customs of the community, his act of sacrifice would not achieve for the participant the intended purpose (Githuku; 2012: 75). In both the *igongona* and in the Eucharist, the knowledge of the act was necessary for its effects on the participant. For example an *igongona* would not have effect on a person with defective mind. However, it would happen to the infants based on the faith of the parent(s). This is not so with the Eucharist especially in the mainline Churches and those that advocate for believer baptism and "Closed Table" but it is similar to the practice of infant baptism.

4.3.2 Dissimilarities with *Igongona*

In the *igongona* performed in the ritual of *gutahikio,* whose purpose was to remove *thahu* from the body of the offender, the *thahu* was vomited out and the person thereupon became ritually clean and physically healed. Unlike in the *igongona*, for the Eucharist, there is no vomiting of sin but the person who partakes of this ritual through faith believes that their sins have been forgiven them. In the *Agikuyu igongona,* the effects of the sacrifices were visibly manifested unlike in the Christian Eucharist. For example in the *gwithamba* ritual the sins of the offender were physically washed away in the flowing stream. The equivalent of this particular ritual would be the Christian baptism in which one's sins are washed away by the waters of baptism. However, in this comparison with the Eucharist is that in the Christian ritual, faith was imperative. In the

igongona, the priest plays a significant role just as in the Eucharist. However, unlike in the *igongona* where the state of the priest would affect the efficacy of the ritual, in the Christian Eucharist (and in all sacraments) the state of the priest doesn't affect the efficacy of the ritual.

4.4 Towards an *Igongona* Eucharist of Inculturation

4.4.1 Efficacy of Eucharist in the Light of *Igongona*

In this thesis the argument is that although there have significant alteration of the traditional way of sacrifices, thanks to the introduction of Christianity, education and modernity, there are some traditional cultural practices that have persisted. There are observations of some of the persisting practices which mark the life journey of an *Agikuyu* person viz. at birth, second birth, initiation, marriage and death. During these stages forms of sacrifices (*igongona*) are performed. In some places they have taken a new "Christian" dimensions e.g. circumcision taking place in Church compounds. Therefore there must be something intrinsic in these practices which if proper analysis is done, it can be used in explaining the efficacy of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharis.

In the *Agikuyu* sacrifices, celebrant's state could interfere with the efficacy of the sacrifice rendering it useless. In the Christian Eucharist it is Christ himself who is the celebrant and the victim of the sacrifice. He is holy and therefore, his sacrifice is efficacious because there are no defects in him that would obstruct the efficacy of the sacrifice. In the Christian Eucharist, Christ the officiant is the same God to whom the sacrifice is being offered and at the same time he is the High Priest who presents the sacrifice before the Father and intercedes for the sinner. This understanding makes the Christian Eucharist incomparable to *Agikuyu igongona* and therefore more efficacious that all sacrifices performed outside Christ.

Just like in the *igongona*, the victim (animal of sacrifice) was supposed to be pure, in the Jewish sacrifices, the victim was supposed to be pure to, but how could animals' blood atone for the sins of humankind? God declares that all animals on the hills are his and so to the gold. If human beings owe God, what would they offer that is not His own to atone for their debt? This is what makes the Eucharist superior to traditional sacrifices that were offered to atone for people's offences. In the Eucharist Christ Himself is the Initiator; he has approved it, replacing the Old Testament and African Traditional modes of sacrifices. However, in the Eucharist, Christ is symbolically the sacrifice i.e. he is not sacrificed over and over again whenever we celebrate it but as some Church traditions understand, he is present in the Eucharistic elements while in the Roman Catholic tradition the bread and the wine transubstantiate into the real body and blood of Christ. Whichever tradition, what is key is the fact that Christ at the celebration is present either in the elements or in the occasion. This makes the Eucharist more efficacious than the *igongona*, even though the communicants in the *igongona* invoked the presence of God and the ancestors; it was neither God nor the ancestors that celebrated it.

Christians believe that when Jesus resurrected from the death and ascended to heaven, he took the blood of the sacrifice to the heavenly temple in the Holy of Holies, in the manner of the Old Testament High Priests and therefore, unlike the blood of the *igongona*, the Eucharistic celebrations are a reflection of the heavenly celebrations taking place now in heaven where the Son as the High Priest is offering sacrifices to the Father. Now "thanks to his death (and ascension), Christ eternally plays the role of priest in heavenly places; offering sacrifices to God on behalf of humanity" (Kiboi, 2017:163).

According to Kiboi (2017), Priesthood of Jesus Christ is pre-figured in eternity in the God where from eaternity, Jesus Christ has always been the High Priest and "…descends into the world to offer a perfect sacrifice to God the Father in place of human beings' imperfect sacrifices that they used to offer" (Kiboi; 2017:163). The sacrifice here referred to is what Jesus institutes on the night he was betrayed and commands his disciples to commemorate over and over again in remembrance of him. From this understanding, it is logical to infer that the sacrifice offered by Christ on the cross was prefigured in eternity, performed in time (at the cross) and continues in the heavenly realms till the end of the earth. If the Eucharist is the sacrifice pre-figured in eternity and continues in the heavenly realm, then it is superior to all earthly sacrifices that are limited to time and space. The Eucharist being divine is universal in nature. God the universal Creator and saviour of the whole world has instituted the Eucharist as a means by which we can know his redeeming love and respond to it for our salvation. This makes the Eucharist universal in nature, unlike the *Agikuyu igongona* that lacks universality i.e. it was only efficacious to the *Agikuyu* community, but the Eucharist having been initiated by God the Son is universal; it embraces all humankind.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that since God wills to be known by His creation so that through that knowledge they may come to believe in Him and receive salvation, He has revealed Himself to humankind through created order. Through this created order human beings can understand His revealed mysteries by way of analogy. The human cultures have these obscure revealed mysteries serving as *logoi spermatikoi*. From analysis of this *logoi spermatikoi* one can b able to understand and receive the gospel for our salvation; in our case here, the *igongona* acts as a *logoi spermatikoi* and *evangelii preparatio* unto the *Agikuyu* people.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the entire thesis we have tried to show how the efficacy of sacrament of the Eucharist can be understood via the *Agikuyu* cultural practice of the *igongona*. In this chapter we try to wrap-up what we have been presenting in a more explicit and brief form of the long stories. The important point also in this chapter is the pastoral implications this method has on the faithful and observation of difficulties encountered in the course of developing a theology of inculturation.

5.2 Summary of the Argument

In Romans 1:19- states, argues that all human beings have no excuse to say they did not have means of knowing who God is for He has revealed Himself through His creation. He says, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made..." From this text one concludes that through what God created, one can trace His footprints and able to know His nature (what God is) and His will.

If through creation God has revealed His intrinsic nature, will and purpose, we therefore can argue that all human beings of all races have no excuse not to know Him. If this is true then we ask ourselves, in what way did He reveal himself to the Jews, to the Greeks, to the Romans and to the Africans? According to the Bible, God revealed Himself to the Jews through nature, then through prophets and at long last through His own and only Son, Jesus Christ; special revelation denied by the Jews. Some scholars have argued that God revealed Himself to the Greeks through

philosophy. In Africa God revealed Himself through nature, prophets and specialists e.g. medicine-people, diviners, and ancestors. Therefore, through the principle of *analogia entis,* we have argued that God revealed His nature and will to the *Agikuyu* people through metaphors and idioms familiar to them. In our particular study we are saying, through the idea of *igongona*, God revealed to the Agikuyu how their pacts could be sealed with seriousness. The seriousness with which the participants in an *igongona* took the ritual because of its effects, ought to be the same seriousness or even more, they should take the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The seriousness to accompany the Eucharist is based on the fact that the Eucharist was intiated by God (the Son) Himself. We can argue that the igongona was a type of Eucharist that was to be later introduced by Jesus. I.e., God reached the Agikuyu through the igongona before the clear mystery which was later inaugurated by His Son. Therefore, one is a type of the other.

In the igongona, as already noted, its effects on those who participated was real; the same is said of the Eucharist. Paul says, some who had taken the Eucharist in unbecoming manner had died. In the history of the Church, the debate on the efficacy of the sacraments was argued and the Church taught that the state of the celebrant or the communicant did not invalidate the efficacy of the sacraments – *ex opera operantis* and *ex operara operato*. In the same manner, an *igongona* performed on people without their knowledge of it, experienced its effects. However, knowledge and a belief in its efficacy had therapeutic and psychological effect on the participant in the same way atonement had effect on the participant especially the effect of expiation.

Thus, if God from eternity wishes to be known and according to Christian faith, God has been revealing Himself through divine mysteries, He also revealed Himself to the Agikuyu people through their cultural practices which according to the principle of *nexus mysteriorum*, we can

understand the Christian divine mystery through using the cultural element as *lumen sub quo*. *Igongona* acts as our light into the divine mystery.

5.3 Implications of Comparing the Efficacy of the Eucharist to that of the *Igongona*

There is always danger of committing syncretism in the process of constructing theology of inculturation. Whenever wrong methodology is applied there is risk of drifting into syncretism. However, failure to construct a relevant theology for a people, Christianity remains a "stranger within" and the problem of dualism abounds. Therefore, construction of a theology of inculturation makes Christianity be at home. From this point of view, Christians who have always taken the Eucharist for granted would now take it with the seriousness it deserves and benefit from its effects.

In comparing the two mysteries, the *Agikuyu* faithful understands the efficacy of the Eucharist more than before and thereby takes it seriously and it in turn impacts not only his faith but also becomes therapeutic and cures them from physical diseases.

5.4 Some Pastoral Implications of Comparing Efficacy of Eucharist to that of the *Igongona*

In our background and statement problem we noted that *Agikuyu* Christians did not take the Eucharist with the seriousness it deserves because they do not know how effective it is in what it is said to achieve for the participants. We hypothesized that through the principle of analogy we would be able to compare it with what was familiar to the people and that way they would take it seriously. Therefore, this approach achieves for us deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the sacrament of the Eucharist and that way they may benefit from its effects. Christians upon understanding its effectiveness will not look to the igongona for effective remedy of problems they have but to the Eucharist. Dualism will be resolved and Christians will be more focused

than before. Dualism that would lead to syncretism is done away with and Christians become genuine.

5.5 Observations and Recommendations

The fact that I am a Presbyterian doing theology of inculturation in a Protestant context could not go without challenges. One challenge is the over-reliance of Catholic Church documents for evidence of what I am arguing. Secondly, the Protestant opposition to metaphysics as a way of doing theology; What has Jerusalem got to do with Athens? However, realizing the need for a theology of inculturation in contemporary Africa was a force that pushed me to carry on with the research and attempt to construct a Eucharistic theology of inculturation. Many of our young people are ignorant of the traditional cultural beliefs and practices. This as a challenge and I call upon all people contextualizing theology to use persisting cultural elements only and avoid the temptation of resurrecting dead and repugnant practices to use in inculturating of Christian mysteries.

Pastors and all those involved in propagating the Gospel need to learn the proper methods of inculturation to avoind possible syncretism. This is a challenge because many have ended up recommending insertion of cultural elements into Christianity instead of inserting Christian gospel or mysteries into African cultural elements that do not contradict the gospel.

5.6 General Conclusion

In Chapter two we surveyed the ethnography of the *Agikuyu* people, explaining their socio-cultural, political and religious activities. In this chapter we realized that God was working among them though in a rather veiled manner, revealing His will and nature in their cultural idioms or categories. In chapter three we endeavoured to explain the Christian mystery –

Eucharist. Through the Eucharist, God revealed to the Christians the efficacy of covenants. In this particular covenant, God demands total submission just like in the cultural element of the *Agikuyu– igongona*. Therefore, leading us to arguing that through the Eucharist God revealed Himself among the Jews and Christians and that same time, He was revealing Himself among the *Agikuyu* through the mystery of *igongona*. The efficacy of the Eucharist on its participant can thus be likened to that of the *igongona* of the *Agikuyu*. This approach is justified on the grounds that God from the foundations of the earth has always revealed Himself to His creation and *Agikuyu* people received this revelation through cultural elements that were familiar to them. Therefore, this thesis has argued for inculturation because it is very contemporary and relevant for evangelism today.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. What is *igongona* in the *Agikuyu* culture?
2. Who performed *igongona* ?
3. How was it performed?
4. What were the effects of the *Igongona*?
5. Do we have a most recent event?
6. Is it a persistent practice?
7. Are there variants between how it (*igongona*) was done then and how it is being done today?