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THE EUCHARIST AND SACERDOTALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS IN THE EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN ANGOLA: TOWARDS A POSTCOLONIAL EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

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MTHLMR108522

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation submitted to the School of Theology in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Masters of Theology at St. Paul's University

October, 2023

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Supervised by

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Rev. Dr. John Michael Kiboi

Rev. Prof. Kabiro wa Gatumu

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and it is original, it has never been submitted to another university rather than St. Paul's University-Limuru Campus in Kenya for my Academic credit.

Signature ..... Date 27-09-2023

ALBERTO COTELO GOMES (MTHLMR108522)

This Dissertation has been presented for Examination with our Approval as the Appointed Supervisors:

Lead Supervisor:

Rev. Dr. John Michael Kiboi

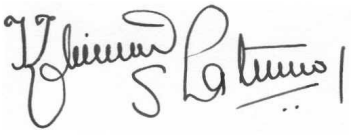
Signature..... Date **06.11.2023**

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Dedication

This Dissertation is dedicated to my church, Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola (IECA). A special dedication is also given to Global Ministry for their support.

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Acknowledgments

I want to thank God for his infinite grace, love, and protection given to me throughout my studies. I recognize that it was not any easy journey, it was only possible through divine intervention. For this reason, I give all honour and glory to God. Secondly, from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank my mentor and lead supervisor The Rev. Dr. John Michael Kiboi for being very kind, patient, for the expertise, guidance and encouragement given along this work. Actually it was a great opportunity and blessing for me to be your student Dr Kiboi, your classes were always inspiring to me. In addition, I want to acknowledge your simplicity and humility as well as your attention in the interpersonal relationship between teacher and student, inside and outside the classes. Thank you so much for your availability and willingness to give me time to be heard and instruct me whenever I requested. Thirdly, I want to thank my co-supervisor, The Prof. Kabiro wa Gatumu, for his encouragement, guidance and expertise throughout the writing process of this proposal. To all my family, friends, colleagues, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, thanks for your moral support, encouragement and your prayers. Thank you very much.

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Abbreviations

Col	Colossians
Cor	Corinthians
IECA	Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola
Exd	Exodus
Deut	Deuteronomy
Gal	Galatians
Hag	Haggai
Gen	Genesis
Isa	Isaiah
Kgs	Kings
Lk	Luke
Mat	Matthew
NT	New Testament
Num	Numbers
OT	Old Testament
Pt	Peter

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Abstract

The sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism are the main sacraments adopted by most protestant churches. The Evangelical Congregational church in Angola has also adopted the two sacraments. The Old Testament gives us various typologies concerning the origin and development of the Eucharist (Gen 14; Ex 12; 13; 25; Deut. 12; 16; Lev. 24), as well as the New Testament (Mt 26:26-28; Mk 14:22-23; Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11). The Passover meal in the Old Testament as well as the Eucharist in the New Testament was celebrated in people's houses and the head of the family was responsible, it was not necessarily done by an ordained clergy. As time went by change was introduced in the church in the sense that the Eucharist started to be celebrated by an ordained clergy, because priests were seen as those who represent God and are a people set apart. For that reason, the lay person was excluded from this priestly activity even in the churches that believe and teach the priesthood of all believers. This research investigated the faith and practice in regard to the administration of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the IECA and the sacerdotalism in order to reflect on the restriction of the laity in IECA and to arrive at a celebration of the Eucharist by the laity based on priesthood of all believers in the context of pandemics. This study established that there is the need of using postcolonial lenses for theological reflections on the faith and practice in the sacramental theology of the IECA. The research established the origin and historical development of sacerdotalism in the history of the Church. Besides, it sought to ascertain whether restricting celebration of the Eucharist to priests was the question of power dynamics in the Church. Finally, it sought to determine whether opening the practice of celebration to the laity would compromise the virtues of the sacrament of the Eucharist. The research found that if theological reflection through postcolonial hermeneutics on the faith and practice on the sacramental theology of IECA is done, the doctrine of priesthood of all believers can be used to solve the problem of restriction on the administration of the Eucharist and opening the celebration to the laity. The research proposes to the IECA in particular and the universal church in general to embark on theological reflections on the administration of the Eucharist so as to allow the laity to celebrate it during pandemics or in specific context.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Eucharist and Baptism are two sacraments, which most protestant churches adopt, including the Evangelical Congregational church in Angola, hereafter referred to as IECA. Augustine defined the sacrament as a visible sign of invisible grace. It is an outward and visible figurative sign or symbol, which points to an invisible spiritual reality. God's grace is present and available in the sacrament without turning the sacrament into a magical rite in which human beings automatically receive spiritual benefit (Hanson 1997:268). Durheim (2015:46-47) affirms that God's action within the sacraments brings salvation to those who participate in it.

This study focused on the sacrament of the Eucharist, of which the Bible gives us various passages concerning its origin and development. Traditionally, the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola has adopted that the sacrament of the Eucharist has to be administered by an ordained clergy in the church and not by a lay person. In one of its statutes, it states, "the pastor of the Pastorate is a minister of the Gospel, to dedicate himself specially to preaching the word of God, administering the sacraments" (Estatuto da IECA, 2017: 22).

The problem of limiting the administration of the Eucharist to the ordained clergy in IECA has led believers to stay without partaking in it for many years due to the context and circumstances they find themselves. While serving in IECA as an ordained priest, the researcher was disturbed with the question of administration of the Eucharist. Some members always complained that they stayed for long time

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without partaking in the Holy Communion. Since I served many congregations, sometimes I could stay for two or three months without visiting some of them. The most amazing thing is that they would invite me to visit them during the week whether in the morning, afternoon or in the evening. The purpose of the invitation and the visit was to worship with them and partake the Holy Communion. My concern on the celebration of the Eucharist only by the ordained priest increased when I joined St. Paul's University to study theology. After some studies on the Theology of Sacraments, I was faced with the question of why the laity are not allowed to celebrate the Eucharist while most protestant churches such as the IECA believe in the priesthood of all believers and teaches that all Christians are priests. Furthermore, the most recent case of non-celebration of the Holy Communion was also seen during the period of COVID 19 pandemic in the year 2020-2021 due to the restriction measures enforced by the government in order to prevent the spread of the pandemic. People were forced to stay at their homes. Besides, during this period, even though church members may have wanted to celebrate the Holy Communion, it was not possible since clergy were not available.

That the laity cannot administer the Eucharist is a paradox since the documents of the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola teaches that everybody is priest and have the right to participate in all ministries within the church. One of its statutes read, "The IECA defends a certain centralism of connection and uniqueness consubstantiated in the full participation of all the people of God, suitable, in all ministries of the Church (Estatuto da IECA, 2017: 3). The church also upholds the teachings of 1 Peter 2: 2-9 that all believers are a royal priesthood and that they have access to God through Jesus. The evangelical church sees its theology of the

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priesthood of all believers linked with biblical authority and salvation by faith. Their justification is that anyone with the Bible can pray and hear God speaking to him or her directly without the need for a priestly mediator (Gerrish, 1965: 2-15). On the other hand, the IECA bases its theology of the Eucharist on John Calvin's view that the Eucharist is the holy supper of Christ and it is for spiritual nourishment to the believers (Calvin *Institute*, IV: XVII.1). It is for restoration, renewal, satisfaction and for spiritual life (Inst. IV: XVII.3). Besides, the Eucharist reminds believers all that Christ did for them and during the Eucharist, they receive Christ by faith (Inst. IV: XVII.5).

This research proposes that a theological reflection on faith and practice of IECA's sacramental theology through the lenses of postcolonial hermeneutics can help the IECA and other protestant churches to determine whether the restriction is the question of power dynamics. It would also help them to decide whether opening the celebration of the Eucharist to the laity would affect the efficacy of its virtues.

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1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Is the restriction of celebrating the Eucharist by the laity the question of power dynamics or would the celebration by the laity invalidate the virtues the sacrament signifies?

1.3 The Objectives of the Research

1. To establish the origin and historical development of sacerdotalism in the history of the Church.

2. To establish whether restriction of celebration of the Eucharist to the priests is the question of power dynamics in the Church.

3. To establish whether the sacrament of the Eucharist possesses inherent virtues which would be compromised if its celebration was open to the laity.

1.4 The Research Questions

1. What is the origin and historical development of sacerdotalism in the history of the Church and in the IECA?

2. Would opening the celebration of the Eucharist to the laity compromise its virtues or is it the question of power dynamics in sacerdotalism?

3. Does the sacrament of Eucharist possess inherent virtues and does it depend on the manner it is celebrated?

1.5 The Research Hypothesis

This thesis argues that by use of Postcolonial Hermeneutics on reflecting on the theology of the sacraments and the contradiction between faith and practice in the administration of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the IECA, the IECA Church will understand better whether the restriction of celebrating the Eucharist by the laity is a question of power dynamics, or whether the celebration by the laity invalidates the virtues the sacrament signifies.

1.6 The Aim of the Study

The aim of this research is to investigate the faith and practice in the administration of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the IECA, in the context of sacerdotalism in

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order to construct the priesthood of all believers as a solution for celebrating the Eucharist by laity in the context of civil unrest or pandemics. It also investigates whether the restriction of celebrating the Eucharist by the laity, the question of power dynamics, or if the celebration by the laity would invalidate the virtues the sacrament signifies.

1.7 Justification of the Research

Many scholars have conducted studies on the Eucharist before. Josefine W. Mutota (2006) argued that the Eucharist ought to be open rather than closed. She used postcolonial hermeneutics to deal with the problem of exclusion in the participation in the Eucharist. David Ndegerege (2019) employed the Agikuyu *Igongona* in order to bring more light onto the reaching and clarification of the Eucharist, notably on its efficacy. He uses the inculturation technique of analogia entis as his methodology in order for Agikuyu Christians to comprehend the significance of the Eucharist. Osiru Elkana Rabwogi (2016) sought for strategies on how the Eucharist can be made more significant for the Pokot and Turkana communities. He used inculturation as a strategy to identify the Eucharist within the Pokot and Turkana in order to better express the central idea of the Eucharistic theology. Noticeably, all the above-mentioned studies concentrated on the participation and understanding of the Eucharist. However, less attention was given on the administration of the Eucharist by a lay person. The idea of limiting the administration of the Eucharist to the ordained clergy in IECA, has led believers to stay without partaking in it for many years. Indeed, it needs to be addressed. This researcher uses postcolonial

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hermeneutics in order to construct the priesthood of all believers as a solution for celebrating the Eucharist by laity in the context of civil unrest or pandemics. Postcolonial hermeneutics would facilitate to deconstruct and reconstruct the IECA sacramental theology of faith and practice in the administration of the Eucharist which should be inclusive and not oppressive. Because Postcolonial hermeneutics is inspired by what Christ did. For instance, in the NT Jesus re-interpretated some of OT the passages by giving to it new meaning. Since the Eucharist has virtues and that it comes from Christ it is not bound to any context and it does not depend on the administrant neither loses its virtues when it is celebrated by a lay person. Therefore, by allowing the laity to celebrate the Eucharist in whichever context the church finds itself, the church will not be seen as the one which keep the power to the clergy or practice the power play to the ordained clergy.

1.8 Research Gap

Many Protestant Churches recognize and have adopted the concept of the priesthood of all believers based in 1 Peter 2:2-9. However, they simultaneously keep a clear distinction between the roles of the clergy and laity. Furthermore, the Bible has various passages that talk about the priestly activities (Gen. 14: 18-20; Exd. 18: 19; Ps. 110: 4; Zec. 6: 13; Heb. 3: 1; 5: 6; 7: 27). Furthermore, the theology of the priesthood of all believers emphasizes that the readers of the Bible, whether laity or ordained, can hear God speaking directly without the need for a priestly mediator. It also means that the sacrifice that all believers offer to God is acceptable through Christ. Moreover, the Eucharistic theology emphasises that the Holy Communion provides spiritual food that restore, renew, fortify and satisfy the believer's spiritual

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life. The above-mentioned emphasis in relation to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the doctrine on the spiritual nourishment of the Eucharist to those who partake it led to the gap of this research. The gap therefore is created by the emphasis to only rely on the ordained priest to partake the grace of God, which is imparted through the Eucharist, but also by the need to establish the extent to which the celebration of the Eucharist by a lay person would affect the virtues of the sacrament. It is also caused by the extent to which the restriction of the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist is a question of power dynamics in the church, especially the IECA.

1.9 Methodology

The study was library based. The primary sources were the IECA Church documents on the practice of sacrament. Books and articles on sacramental theology provided very useful data. However, the researcher employed postcolonial hermeneutics as the methodology of the study, through which a theological reflection on the faith and practice was done. The aim was to establish whether the restriction of celebrating the Eucharist by the laity a question of power dynamics or would the celebration by the laity invalidate the virtues the sacrament signifies.

The term postcolonial was established to refer to the recent history of imperialism starting from the period of colonialism through the quest of political, economic and cultural independence to the neo-colonial practices. It is concerned with embracing changes for emancipation rather than concentrating on transgressions of the past and their perpetuation (Dube, 2000: 15-16). It arises where there is oppression and conflict for people to experience their freedom (Rukundwa and Aarde, 2007: 5).

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Furthermore, it critically examines and uncovers colonial control and power and identifies hidden voices and spaces that challenges the hierarchical and the dominant ways of thinking. It exposes the connection between idea and power, it removes imperial authority and it goes over bad things that the empire did, contrasting them with the dignity of native people and their traditions (Kgalemang, 2006: 1-2). Postcolonialism also investigates how the colonizers build and justify their power in various historical contexts, how the colonized struggled, proclaimed their freedom as right in varied historical contexts and how both the colonizers and colonized move across limits. It offers multiple options for coexisting peacefully without oppressing or taking advantage of others (Dube and Jeffrey, 2002: 3). Since Postcolonial hermeneutics pursues freedom through change, and restrains imperialism through decolonization, it has to do with the "act of going beyond" (Bhabha, 1994: 4).

The researcher used this approach in order to decolonize the IECA tradition that the clergy are the only ones who can celebrate communion because of its Calvinistic theology on the Eucharist. Another justification why postcolonial hermeneutics was used is to help the IECA to reflect on the extent to which sacerdotalism has been a question of power dynamics and whether opening the practice of the celebration of the Eucharist to the laity would compromise the virtues of the sacrament of the Eucharist. This is critical because Scriptures do not restrict celebration to clergy. For instance, the OT Passover, which corresponds to the Eucharist, was celebrated in the homes (Exd. 12:1-11) and the eldest member of the worshipping community celebrated the meal. At least such a person was not ordained in the sense of ordination as we see it today.

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The researcher used postcolonial hermeneutics as a tool for critiquing the IECA's belief on the priesthood of all believers and its contradiction with their practice when it comes to the administration of the Eucharist. The researcher also used it to interrogate the IECA Calvinistic theology of the administration of the Eucharist. The method was considered as vital because of the context, which keeps on changing. The changing context inspires Christians to keep on asking questions concerning the life and practice of the church, which need to be answered accordingly. The changing situation demands answers that are not only provided through using the church tradition, but also through the experiential realities of ordinary Christians. While both are now the two sides of one coin, it is now obvious that some church traditions and practices of the past are today being challenged as those which carry imperialistic ideas. For that reason, the use of postcolonial hermeneutics was meant to challenge the IECA to rethink its theology so that it can confront the view of its church members that it has become an authoritarian church.

1.10 Scope and Limitation of the Research

The scope of the study is on the Sacramental theology of the ICEA, primarily the administration of the Eucharist. It exclusively investigates whether the celebration of the Eucharist by a lay person affects the virtues of the sacrament or whether the restriction of the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist is a question of power dynamics in the church, especially the IECA. Due to the scope of this dissertation, the research will not be able to research on all Church traditions in the practice of the sacrament of Eucharist.

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Besides, most of the documents that were used and which talks about the IECA church are written in Portuguese and they are not available online. In mitigation, the researcher requested one of his friends to scan and send them as they are in Portuguese in order to translate them into English. Despite the fact that a lot of time was used to translate them into English, this enabled the researcher to give correct and authentic information on the teachings and practice of IECA with regard to the Eucharist to an English reader.

1.11 Chapter Outline

The study consists of five chapters and each chapter logically leads to the other in an effort to construct a coherent doctrine that would allow the IECA church members to understand why it is important for the ordained minister to celebrate the Eucharist but also demystify the sacrament to allow the laity to celebrate the Eucharist too when need arises. The five chapters are outlined as follows.

Chapter one provides the background to the problem, problem statement, research objectives, research questions and research hypothesis. It also presents the aim of the study, the justification of the study as well as the research gap. It further offers the scope, limitation and delimitation of the research, research methodology and finally the chapters outline.

Chapter two establishes the origin and historical development of sacerdotalism in the history of the church in general and in IECA in particular. It also gives special attention on faith and practice on the priesthood of all believers in IECA.

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Chapter three mainly focuses on the origin, development and virtues of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the Scriptures and in the history of the church. It also establishes whether opening the practice of celebration of the Eucharist to the laity would compromise its virtues.

Chapter four sought to establish whether restricting celebration of the Eucharist to sacerdotalism is the question of power dynamics in the church. It also elucidated the role of the ordained minister in the administration of the Eucharist and the possibility of the laity celebrating the Eucharist in the absence of the minister.

Chapter five gives a rational conclusion on the topic; drawing its conclusion based on the premises made by each chapter. It was recommended that the IECA ought to start a theological reflection on what the church should do in the context of pandemics for its members to have the Eucharist.

CHAPTER TWO: THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SACERDOTALISM IN THE CHURCH

Introduction

This chapter investigates the historical development of Sacerdotalism in the church. Special attention is given on the understanding of the priesthood of all believers in IECA. Moreover, it also demonstrates how the understanding of the theology of the priesthood in IECA restricts the administration of the Eucharist. To accomplish this, the chapter deals with the priesthood in the Bible, that is, in the Old Testament and the New Testament. It further evaluates the priesthood in the history of the church and the theology of the church on priesthood. Finally, the chapter discusses the belief and the practice of priesthood of all believers in IECA.

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2.1 Priesthood in the Old Testament

Reading the Old Testament, right from the book of Genesis, it is clear that the act of offering a sacrifice to God, was primarily done by the leaders of family hold. For instance, individuals such as Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob brought to the Lord an offering (O 'Collins and Jones, 2010: 1-7). We infer that these were the leaders of their families. For instance, during his pilgrimage in Genesis 12: 8; 13: 17-18; 26: 25, Abraham built an altar and offered a sacrifice to God as a way of thanksgiving (Robbins, 1981: 16). It was from such individual acts of offering sacrifices to God that the priestly activity originated and developed with time in the OT. During the patriarchal period, the priestly activity was under the responsibility of the head of the family (Gen. 8; Exd. 19). However, the very first two references of priest are in Genesis 14: 18 and Exodus 18: 1. The first reference is on Melchizedek, who is called "a priest of God Most High" and in the second, Jethro was identified as "the priest of Midian". Besides, the priestly activity began officially when God chose Aaron and his sons as priests to the Israelites while they were wandering in the wilderness (Exd. 29: 1-9). From this time henceforth, the office of priesthood was introduced and priests came from the tribe of Levi, though not all Levites were priests (Ogera, 2021: 243-244). During the time of Aaron, as Exodus 28-29 shows, the priestly office was inherited (Veenstra, 2018: 68). Yet according to Exodus 19: 6, God had chosen the nation of Israel as a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," a theme that Peter adopted to develop the theology of the priesthood of all believers (1 Pt. 2. 1-10). Even so, the prophet Isaiah (56: 5-6; 66: 18-21) introduced the notion of the priesthood of all believers in the OT. In Isaiah 56: 5-6, it is clear that foreigners and eunuchs who kept the Sabbath were allowed to minister to God as servants. In

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Isaiah 66: 18-21 foreigners were allowed to serve as priests and Levites alongside the Israelites' Levitical priests (O' Collins and Jones, 2010:1-7).

Undeniably, the priesthood in the OT began as a simple act of offering sacrifices to God, as a way of thanksgiving and later on it became a priestly activity. It developed to an office wherein some people were chosen specifically among the Levites as priests and anointed for that responsibility (Lev 8; Exd 28: 41). However, even after the office of priesthood was introduced, some people offered sacrifices to God without being anointed as priests. During the era of Kings and Prophets, there are examples of those who were anointed as Kings but who performed the priestly duty even though they were not priests. For instance, King David also gave a sacrifice when the ark was transported to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6: 17-18). Furthermore, 1 King 8: 62-66 and 2 Chronicles 26: 16-23 respectively show that King Solomon and King Uzziah sometimes conducted priestly rituals (Robbin, 1981: 25).

The OT also shows that the priestly office had many activities. They included offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the people, interceding, teaching the law of God, taking care of the Temple and its equipment (Num. 18:1-7). These activities also help in tracing the beginning of the divisions of responsibility among priests themselves. For instance, the high priest had the role of mediator between God and his people (Hag 1:1; 12-14; 2:2-4). He had the task of burning incense every morning and evening on the altar so as to keep the light continuously (Ex. 30:7-8; Lev. 24:1-4). On the other hand, the priests changed the bread of the presence every week upon the table (Lev. 16). They performed religious rites on the altar of the offering and burnt sacrifices (Num. 18; 28: 1-8; Lev 1: 5; 21: 16-24; 27). They protected the

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sanctuary (Num. 3: 8, 38), received tithes (Lev 7; 8; Num. 18) and taught the Torah (Deut. 33: 10) (see Leithart, 1999: 7). Besides, offering sacrifices that would atone for transgressions (Fobes, 2018: 14), they had the task of bringing the good news of God and proclaiming liberation to those who were suffering (Robbins, 1981: 29). It is also vital to note that the head of the Israelites families also performed some priestly activity in their homes. For instance, some feasts and the Passover meal that were celebrated in their own homes (Exd. 12: 2-11; Num. 9: 1-5; Deut. 16: 2-4).

Therefore, in the OT we notice that the work of conducting worship by offering sacrifices in the families was the work of the leader of the family. With time, this responsibility was delegated to an individual who was known as a priest and eventually to designated families of the Levites and the Aaronites.

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2.2 Priesthood in the New Testament

The epistle to the Hebrews contains a priestly Christology where Christ is depicted not only as a priest, but also the high priest per excellence. The priesthood of Christ's priesthood is excellent and superior compared to the Aaronic priesthood. Christ is recognised as the mediator who intercedes for sinners without any need for animal sacrifice (Ogera, 2021: 243-244). He is portrayed as the high priest who expiated the sins of all humanity. According to Hebrews 9:25-28 and 10:18, he offered himself as a sacrifice once for all because he was both priest and victim (see O' Collins and Jones, 2010:46-47). So, Jesus is presented as high priest whose death was the final offering that replaces the animal sacrifice, which the OT priesthood performed. For

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that reason, Christians replaced the blood sacrifice which was done by Jews through Jesus' death (Korsah, 2020:3-4).

Noticeably, the early New Testament Christians did not deny the Jewish priesthood probably because most of them were Jews. However, during this time, church elders not only played the role of priests (Acts 14: 23; 20: 17, 28), but also defended the church and early believers against false doctrines (Acts 6: 1-6). Besides, according to some NT texts ((Acts 6:6; 13:1-3; 1 Tim 4:14), they laid hands on, and prayed for those chosen for different ministries (Korsah and Appiah-Kui, 2015: 5-6). However, since the NT presents Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and his people, priests no longer perform the task of mediation. Yet through Jesus' priestly activities, Hebrews 10: 19-22 makes it clear that everyone has direct access to God (Fobes, 2018:16-17).

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It is not surprising therefore that 1 Peter 2: 2-9 introduces the concept of priesthood of all believers, which is definitely based on the priesthood of Christ. This is clear in the sense that Christ is the,

> Living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious" and those who believe and come to him, "like living stones," they are "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pt. 2: 4-5).

The text further shows that the proclamation of the gospel is one of the tasks that all believers should perform and so Peter connects the role of a priest to the believers' participation in the mission of God. For that reason, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers conveys to each and every believer the missiological task of transforming humanity and the structures of their existence, which includes the

church. However, it is important to note the difference between priesthood by ordination and the priesthood of all believers. While priesthood by ordination is ecclesiological (Coffey, 1997:17-18), the priesthood of all believers is Christological (Korsah and Appiah-Kubi, 2015:2-15). Priesthood by ordination precipitates sacerdotalism while faith in Christ, which is exemplified through baptism, makes all Christian members of the priesthood of Christ, Christ being their high priest (1 Pt. 2: 5, 9; Rev. 1: 6).

It may appear as if New Testament practice annulled sacerdotalism if all Christians are priests and have similar privileges through Jesus Christ, their perfect high priest, but this is not the case. Through Christ, Christians are called and given the mission to preach the gospel, to praise God and to intercede for one another (Mt 28: 18-19; Jas 5:16; 1 Pt. 2:9). However, despite the fact that all priests, during the time of the apostles (Acts 6), the increase in the number of Christians meant that there would be a separation of some responsibilities within priesthood. While some dedicated themselves to the ministry of the word, others were given the responsibility of serving tables. This may have been the preference of the disciples at that time. Latter, those among the waiters at the table preached the word, for instance Stephen who, in addition to being a deacon, taught the word (Acts 6). However, it is on record that Christ gave different gifts to the church wherein some are apostles, others prophets, others evangelists and others are teachers (Eph. 4:11). Besides, the epistle of 1 Timothy and Titus confirms that bishops, elders and deacons played different roles in the NT church, though it is not said who among them should or should not celebrate the Eucharist.

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Perhaps the priestly tasks and roles were shared activities. As Kevin Giles (2010) maintains, during the ministry of Paul the Apostle, most churches met in private homes and their gatherings were informal and participatory (1 Cor 14: 26). The host, who was usually the head of the household celebrated the Lord's Table. In some cases, the heads of their families were women e.g. Phoebe, Lydia, Nympha, Chloe (Col. 4: 5) and other women hosted churches in their homes and acted as the hosts of the communal meals that were usually part of these gathering. Besides, when they celebrated the Eucharist through breaking the bread in these house churches, designated priests in the tradition of the Old Testament practice were not there. Ideally, the NT does not use the term priest to refer to one person. Rather, it assigns the Levitical tasks of offering sacrifice, to interpret and preach the good news of the gospel as part of the responsibility of the universal priesthood of all believers. It does not create an isolated priesthood for ministers (Muthiah 2009: 16).

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2.3 Priesthood in the History of the Church

Throughout the history of the universal Christian Catholic church, priesthood has been accepted and implemented without difficulties. However, as time went by, there were divisions on the tasks that ordained clergy and the laity should perform. The term priest was first utilized for Christian ministry during the time of Cyprian in the middle of third century. However, the Roman Catholic Church argues that "Christ designated the "apostles" as priests and gave them instructions that they and

those who replaced them in the priestly ministry should sacrifice his body" (Paul, 1940:89). This definitely created the idea that the first task of the priestly office is to offer sacrifice. The fourth Lateran Council of Trent (1215) decided that the priest has authority to grant forgiveness for sins, lay Christ on the "altar-cloth" and offer him as a sacrifice for both those who are alive and the dead (Paul, 1940: 89-96).

The church was viewed as the priesthood and there was no distinct group of priests, even though bishops and deacons carried out specific tasks. However, the difference between clergy and laity occurred during the first century through the instrumentality of Clement of Rome. He was the first one to distinguish the clergy from the laity although the word laity was unpopular up to the second century (Muthiah, 2009:16-17). Yet the expression laity, which is not found in the NT, became widely used during the second century (Veenstra, 2018: 23). This means that it was created and introduced later on in the history of the church. During the Cyprian era, the concept that changed the idea of the priesthood of all believers was introduced. He introduced the idea and conviction that the bishops had a specific priesthood and a unique sacrifice to perform. Furthermore, the impact of the, Jewish and Graeco-Roman idea of priesthood contributed to the diversion from the priesthood of all believers to ministerial priesthood, which was later based on ordination. While Jewish Christians understood the NT covenants in the light of OT priesthood and law, Graeco-Roman Christians regarded the church without priests as unfeasible.

The organizational structure of the Roman Empire, which was hierarchical, served as an example for administration of the Church. This motivated the diminishing of the concept of the priesthood of all believers. A hierarchical structure of bishops and

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priests emerged, which assumed the overall responsibilities of church. They not only presided over the celebration of the Eucharist, but also managed church funds and conducted church worship. They were henceforth viewed as representative of Christ and the priests of God. Bishop were considered to have power within the local church just as Christ has power over the entire church. This affected the order of worship service, especially the Eucharist. The bishops were the ones who served as priests who had the authority to officiate and celebrate the Eucharist (Eastwood, 2009: 80-84). This certainly institutionalized the church which reinforced the division between the clergy and laity officially established through ordination (Veenstra, 2018: 64).

According to Kraemer (1958:19-25), the laity during the NT era performed ministry within the church. For example, the service of being a deacon was first of all done by lay people. Furthermore, during the history of the church, the fourth-century monastic movement began with the lay people. During the reformation era, the laity played a crucial role in laying the foundations that permitted Luther and Calvin to begin the church reformation agenda. So, it is clear that the duty of laity and the priesthood of all believers was significant in the church during the monastic and the reformation period. It is however during the Post-Reformation that the laity fell away and the clergy regained an important position in the church.

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2.3.1 Origen's views on the priesthood

Origen's view concerning the priesthood of all believers is based on the idea that Christ is the source of all priesthood. He is the great High Priest for every being, who offered himself as a sacrifice once for all. Concerning the ministry of the ordained

priests, he maintained that they were called to a life of holiness since they are partakers in the priesthood that Christ conferred to the church. He further states that according to the Bible, the priests have the responsibility to receive and forgive the sins of people. Moreover, he assumed that some Christians and priests share in Christ's priesthood the specific duty of forgiving and reconciling sinners. Even though Origen accepted the priesthood of all believers as priests, he held that through ordination, priests share in the priesthood of Christ by appealing to Leviticus 6:26; 10:17, "The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it…" He therefore identified two types of priesthood, which included the ministerial or clergy priesthood and the faith priesthood. While they are different in function, they are not distinct in nature (O' Collins and Jones, 2010: 72-76).

Origen therefore accepted the concept of the priesthood of all believers and the priesthood through ordination. He recognized that all Christians are priests, although he differentiated the notion of priesthood of all believers and the priesthood through ordination in terms of their functions. He thus distinguished the ministerial priesthood as one that only be done by ordained priests, which is a separate and permanent office. It is similar to the one exercised by those who do it in the temple as it is written in the book of Leviticus and other Old Testament texts. He differentiated the priesthood of all believers in terms of faith through Christ, insisting that all Christians have an obligation to forgive and be reconciled to all.

2.3.2 St. Thomas Aquinas' views on the priesthood

According to Aquinas, the work of Christ, which he executes through the three offices of prophet, priest and king, is the source of all priesthood. Furthermore, he

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affirms that Christ was both priest and victim. Yet even though Aquinas accepts that all believers are priests, he separates them according to their functions. He argues that the ordained priests act as the person of Christ when celebrating the Eucharist. He further states that the ordained priests are marked by the sacramental character. Besides, they are like an instrument that acts by the power of the one who moves it. As a result, ministers of the church can celebrate sacraments even though they are wicked. While he admits that in the case of emergency or urgency, even though a lay leader cannot absolve sins, the penitent can confess to whom they want. Nevertheless, the laity to whom confession is made cannot preside over the sacrament. Concerning the Lord's Table, Aquinas makes it clear that the Eucharist, which is the greatest of the sacraments, cannot be celebrated by just any believer or lay leader. It is the sacrament that joins Christ himself to human beings. Moreover, it is more inspirational than any other sacrament that imprints the character of Christ (O' Collins and Jones, 2010: 110-124).

It is obvious that Aquinas appreciates the concept of the priesthood of all believers in stating that all believers are priests through Christ. However, while he admits that during an emergency any Christian can perform some priestly roles such as listening to confessions, priestly functions of the ordained priest are nevertheless different since the laity do not have similar authority with an ordained priest. Similar to Origen, Aquinas understands the concept of the priesthood of all believers in the context of the temple. As such, the office of priest can only be held by those who are ordained. Even if all Christians belong to the priesthood of all believers, the non-ordained are restricted from performing some duties of the priests.

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2.3.3 Martin Luther's views on the priesthood

Luther based his ideas of the priesthood of all believers on Galatians 6: 2 "Carry each other`s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." He constructs his view of the priesthood of all believers since he considered baptism as the gateway to the universal priesthood of all believers. He therefore ignored ministerial ordination, though he himself was ordained, so as to build a narrative about Christ`s priesthood, which is shared to all believers through baptism. He argues that since Christ is priest, then all Christians are priests. Besides, he held that the priesthood of all believers has three functions, i.e., to preach, to come before God with intercessions for one another and to offer personal self-sacrifice to God. He emphasized that all Christians have the right and duty to teach and spread the Word of God since to do so is the highest priestly office. He also maintained that those who are baptized can forgive the sins of one another because through his sacrifice, Jesus Christ gained for all forgiveness of their sins. Concerning the Eucharist, Luther insisted that it is a sign of solidarity between all the faithful. Besides, it is a common self-sacrificing love, which when united with Christ`s passion, bears one another`s sufferings. He further asserted that the priests are servants who are duty - bound to administer both kinds of sacrifice to those who desire them as often as they desire them. He concludes that priests were ordained simply to offer communion for such intentions and not to serve the pastoral needs of the faithful (O' Collins and Jones, 2010: 129-137).

Although Luther was one of the reformers who advocated for the priesthood of all believers, he differentiated the role of priests, especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. At no time did he indicate that all believers should celebrate the Eucharist, but he relegated this task to the ordained priests. He only relegated the priesthood of

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all believers specifically to preaching, prayers and in the execution of pastoral needs, but not in administering the Eucharist.

2.3.4 John Calvin's views on the priesthood

Calvin regards Isaiah 61:1 "But you shall be called the priests of the Lord…" as the basis for the priesthood of all believers. To establish the nature of Christ's priesthood, he followed the author of Hebrews' use of the figure of Melchizedek as the typology of Christ's priesthood. He reiterated the idea that the priesthood of Christ is eternal and without lineage unlike the priesthood of Aaron whose lineage came only from the tribe of Levi. Besides, he maintained that the office of Christ`s priesthood involves the ministry of teaching and asserted that the Eucharist confirms and symbolizes Christ's once and for all sacrifice. Nevertheless, he differentiates the priesthood of all believers along the lines of the functions that the ordained priest and a non-ordained believer are supposed to perform. The ordained priests are supposed to perform three roles, which include: preaching the gospel, feeding the flock, and governing the community (O'Collins and Jones, 2010: 150-161). While aligning his concept of the priesthood of all believers with Isaiah 66:1, he demonstrates that Old Testament prophecy had already indicated that priests who were not the offspring of Levi, would serve God together with the Levites in the future. They were also to perform specific tasks such as the Levites did, which included teaching God's law, offering sacrifices, standing in the gap between God and the people as well as praying for people's sins so that they can be forgiven. However, though he agreed that all Christians are priests, he differentiated their functions and that of the ordained priest. He insisted that the responsibility to administer the sacraments belonged to the ordained priest and at no time did he hint that during an emergency,

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any lay Christian can celebrate the Eucharist. According to Homan (1914:183), "He experienced the outbreak of Black Plague in Geneva in his lifetime in 1543, and in his response to that in the year 1545, he has not mentioned anything concerning the administration of the Eucharist by the lay leader."

2.4 The Theology of the Priesthood

As noted above, the New Testament regards the ordained priesthood as ecclesiological (Coffey, 1997: 17-18), while the basis of the theology ministerial priesthood is Christological (Korsah and Appiah-Kubi, 2015: 2-15). Besides, anyone who presides over the Eucharist is a priest who participates in the ministerial priesthood (Korsah and Appiah-Kubi, 2015:4). However, according to Cyprian, the clergy transmits God's grace, which he associated with Aaronic priesthood. Cyprian's sacerdotalism eventually became the basis of the Roman Catholic Church's justification with regard to the preservation of Aaronic priesthood (Fisher, 2019: 9-10).

Lamentably, sacerdotalism predominantly triggered the division of tasks for ordained priests and the priesthood of all believers, which accepts the participation of the laity in church ministry, including administering the Eucharist. Rather than assenting to the effectiveness of the laity in church service and worship, it has continually given the power of celebrating the Eucharist to the ordained priest. The emphasis of the theology of priesthood has always been that through ordination, the priest has three offices. These include the ministry of the word, the administration of the sacraments and pastoral care. As for the Roman Catholic Church, ordination to priesthood distinguishes ordained priests from the rest of all believers. It is argued that the

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ordained priests are set apart for their priestly activities through ordination (Korsah and Appiah-Kubi, 2015: 2-15). They act in the person of Christ who is the head of the church hence they are equipped with spiritual skills and authority in all matters related to the church (Pogorelc, 2021: 10).

The theology of priesthood in the Evangelical Church is aligned to biblical authority and salvation by faith. The emphasis is that anyone who reads the Bible can hear God speaking to him or her directly without the need of a priestly mediator. The Evangelical justifies their theology based on Martin Luther`s ideas that the teaching of the Word of God is the primary role of the priest. The church insists that it does everything by the Word of God. The priesthood of all believers is accepted as the right of every believer to go directly to God in search for forgiveness. However, when it comes to the administration of the Eucharist, the Evangelical church tradition relies on what Luther said, i.e., in the context of emergency or in a situation whereby the official ministry or ordained priest is not available or in location where he cannot reach, any believer has only the responsibility of ministering or teaching the Word of God. Luther further stated that any believer must be ready in an emergent situation to perform baptism or grant the death bed absolution. However, on matters pertaining to the administration of the Eucharist, the non-ordained person cannot preside over it. In his criticism of Luther's views that the Eucharist should be only presided over by an ordained priest, Gerrish (1965: 2-15) insists that this was because he saw the Eucharist as a public act of the Church, which is not necessary for salvation. So, despite the fact Luther accepted and supported the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, his theology on the task of the priest and the laity is erratic. This is due to his assertion, "the entire power is in Christ" and "ordination does not separate the

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priest from the congregation" yet "priests have sacramental authority" (Fisher, 2019:55-56). This begs the question, if ordination does not separate priests from the congregation and if the power comes from Christ, why then are the laity denied some tasks during the absence of the ordained priests? Is it because the virtues of the Eucharist can be affected if it is celebrated by the laity?

As noted above, Calvin accepted the priesthood of all believers, but asserted that while "priesthood can be shared by all Christians, however administration is not (Fisher, 2019: 60). He differentiated the priesthood of all believers in terms of functions that are supposed to be done by the ordained priest and a laity. He presents three roles that are supposed to be done by the ordained priest such as preaching the gospel, feeding the flock, and governing the community (O 'Collins and Jones, 2010:150-161).

Comparatively, theology of the ordained priesthood for the Catholic Church and that of the Evangelical Church are similar. The key emphasis for both is that the celebration of the Eucharist is the exclusive responsibility of the ordained priest. Through their ordination, they were conveyed the authority to administer it. Besides, their theology is similar because they emphasize that the ordained priest is a person set apart and with specific functions, which are different from those of the laity. Luther and Calvin kept the difference between the role of an ordained clergy and laity, though they accepted the priesthood of all believers. Both inspired the tradition from which IECA gets its theology concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist.

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2.5 Faith and Practice on the Priesthood of all believers in IECA

In this section, the researcher specifically evaluates the priesthood of all believers in IECA in terms of faith and practice. The section exposes what the IECA believe in and what they do when it comes to sacerdotalism. It is incontestable that the IECA has accepted the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers without any problem. She believes and teaches that all believers are priests through Christ who is the head of the church. She recognizes that the priesthood of all believers is linked with biblical authority and the doctrine of salvation by faith. As noted above, IECA holds that anyone with the Bible can hear God speaking to them directly without the need for a priestly mediator since she recognizes the sovereignty of God as well as his providence and grace (Chokombonge, 2022:16-19). For that reason, whether one is an ordained priest or laity, they must all submit themselves to the authority of Scriptures.

The IECA makes some effort to reinforce the doctrine of priesthood of all believers in teaching that every believer has the right to participate in all ministries within the church. One of its relevant statutes states that,

> The IECA defends a certain centralism of connection and uniqueness consubstantiated in the full participation of all the people of God, suitable, in all ministries of the church, including the use of the pulpit and in the direction, which distances it, a little, from the congregationalism of classic type (Estatuto da IECA, 2017:3).

This statute clearly confirms that the IECA teaches the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. However, while it claims to be inclusive in all ministries, it seems to contradict itself on the administration of the Eucharist since it denies the laity to do that. On the ordination of priests, a lengthy IECA statute says,

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> We believe that Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Head of the church, established within her a Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, calls men and women to this ministry; and that the church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom He calls, and must, therefore, properly ordain them to the work of the Ministry. For the exercise of the ministry of worship, the IECA ordains men and women (Estatuto da IECA, 2017: 5-6).

Such IECA statutes seem to have given life to sacerdotalism, which has tended to overshadow the doctrine of priesthood of all believers. The way through which the statutes have been interpreted and put into practice, especially with regard to the functions that must be exercised by an ordained priest, relegates the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers to a downward spiral. The ordained clergy in IECA are set apart and they are given specific duties, which laity are not supposed to do. For that reason, the priestly ministry in the IECA becomes sacerdotalism wherein the priests regulate the functions of the laity. While the laity and the ordained priest can share in the ministry of the word and church leadership, the administration of baptism and Eucharist are specifically reserved for the ordained clergy.

Based on the foregoing analysis of the origin and development of sacerdotalism in the Church and celebration of the Eucharist, we notice that it originally was bestowed on the head of the household or eldest among the congregation and later to ordained ministers.

This leads us to the conclusion that right from its vestiges in the OT through the NT and Church history, this ritual was not open to any member of the gathering but designated to some people with responsibility. This therefore answers our question whether the restriction is the issue of power dynamics in the Church.

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2.6 Conclusion

From the aforesaid, it can be concluded that priesthood began as a small activity in the Old Testament. Individual people, as an attitude of gratitude to God for the deeds accomplished in their lives, performed the duties of priest in offering sacrifice and thanksgiving to God. With the passage of time, priesthood became an office to which specific people were chosen to present sacrifices before God on behalf of others. Yet the OT predicted a time when the priesthood would no longer be an activity, which specific people performed. Foreigners would be incorporated into the priesthood of Israel to serve God alongside the priests of the tribe of Levi, thereby making priesthood universal. Furthermore, through Christ, all believers are privileged to approach God, hence they are part of the universal priesthood.

Despite the inclusion of all believers in the universal priesthood, the church, through sacerdotalism, has introduced restrictions on the functions of the ordained priest and the laity through the ministry of ordination. For instance, in the IECA, which is the main focus of this research, it is only the ordained clergy who have the authority to celebrate the Eucharist, notwithstanding its belief and teaching on the priesthood of all believers. Does this division create dichotomy between faith and practice with regard to the priesthood of all believers, which the IECA emphasizes?

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CHAPTER THREE: THE EUCHARIST: ITS ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND MEANING

Introduction

This chapter discusses the origin and historical development of the sacrament of the Eucharist and it evaluates the different church traditions on its virtues. Besides, it sought to establish whether opening the practice of the Eucharist to the laity would compromise its virtues in IECA.

3.1 Origin and Development of the Eucharist

3.1.1 The Old Testament background

The Old Testament, wherein the sacrament is used to refer as the secrets of God (Baker, 1983:139-140), provides the background of the sacrament of the Eucharist. The OT offering ceremonies and rituals, such as those Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob performed, exemplified the sacrifice of Christ, which the Eucharist commemorates. Besides, Christians consider the lamb that was sacrificed during the Passover as a pointer to the sacrifice of Jesus for which the Eucharist reminds its partaker. The presence of God through a visible glory covering the sacred space is

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another typology of the Eucharist. Just as God "dwells among his people" (Deut. 4:7), so as Christ is present in the Eucharist (Feingold, 2018:72-95).

Genesis 14:18-20 gives another OT typology of the Eucharist where Melchizedek brought bread and wine to Abram, which he used to proclaim the benediction. Other OT typologies include the Passover festival, through which the Israelites remembered God's act of deliverance (Exd. 12:1-14; 24-27; 13:1-10; Deut. 16:1-7) and the manna, which God gave to the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex 16:4-35). Moreover, the bread of presence, which was supposed to be put in God's place each Sabbath and partaken in holy places (Exd. 25: 23-30; Lev. 24:5-9), is among them (Bavugayabo, 2016: 1-3). Exodus 24:1-11 shows that the sprinkling of the blood of the animals over the Israelites as part of their covenant with God was another typology for the Eucharist (Devasia, 2018: 23). In addition, the OT sacrifices and ritual meals, which focused on Jewish union and obedience to their covenant with God and as a way of demonstrating their thanksgiving and happiness (Deut 12:20-25), typifies the Eucharist (Mazza, 1999 :9-11). Yet according to Omi (1977:7-8), the most prominent and well-known OT background of the Eucharist is the Jewish people's quest for their freedom from the captivity in Egypt to Canaan, the promised Land (Exd. 1:13; 8:11). It is exceedingly probable that the OT Passover, which was celebrated and eaten in the homes of the Israelites (Exd 12), correspond to the Eucharist.

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3.1.2 Eucharist in the New Testament

The New Testament clearly shows that Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist, which he compared to the OT Passover but gave it a different meaning. He

intended it to be a reminder to his disciples of his life of service, his work and to be a symbol of Jesus' presence in their midst (Mk 14: 22-23, Lk 22: 19-20). It was an act of breaking the bread and a community meal in the house churches, which met in private homes for fellowship, teaching the Word of God and prayer. Christians partook the Eucharist, which according to Paul was the mystery of redemption demonstrated through the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Omi, 1977: 7-16; Baker, 1983: 139-140). Certainly, Jesus used bread and wine to symbolize his body and blood that was shed for the new covenant (Mt 6: 14-15; 26:28, Mk 14: 24, Lk 22: 20). For that reason, the Eucharist was celebrated for the purpose of the forgiveness of sins, redemption, thanksgiving, remembrance, fellowship and to strengthen the community of believers (Devasia, 2018:23-28). While it reminds the believers of the presence of Jesus, it also reminds them of his suffering, his once for all sacrifice for humanity and it reaffirms the new covenant (Mk 14: 22-23). Furthermore, in the light of 1 Corinthians 11: 26, it demonstrates believers' response to Christ calling (Omi, 1977: 12). While the Eucharist has an eschatological meaning (Mk. 14:25), it creates a moment of linking God and the church. While it is as an offering for sin (1 Cor 11:23; Mk 14:24; Mt 26: 28; Lk 22: 20), the Eucharist demonstrates the process of adoption of Jesus' promise of the new covenant. It is a true fellowship (1 Cor 10:16), which represents a new exodus through Jesus Christ (Lk 24:13-35) (Daly, 2005: 3-12; Bavugayabo, 2016: 5-7).

As noted above, the Eucharist was celebrated in private homes and not in the temple or synagogue. For instance, Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover feast, which is a pointer to the Eucharist (Lk. 22: 7-14). On his way to Emmaus, when the night came, Jesus broke the bread in a house (Lk. 24:35). Besides, as Kevin Giles

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(2010) notes, during Paul's ministry, most churches met in private homes and that those gatherings were informal and participatory (1 Cor. 14: 26). As noted above, the host was the head of the household, and he or she acted as the host of the communal meals, which were usually part of these gatherings.

3.2 Eucharist in the History of the Church

Changes on who should participate to the administrant of the Eucharist have been made throughout the history of the church. During the era of the early church, church fathers through several church councils, made the decision on who should be excluded from participating in the Eucharist. For instance, Cyprian, as noted earlier was the first to suggest that the priest should be the one to celebrate the Eucharist. He held that the priest, who is the "typus Christ," fulfils the duties of Christ. This is because he follows Christ through the Holy Spirit given to him. He further insisted that the high priest Melchizedek typifies the offering sacrifice given by Christ. While Christ's offering is similar to that of Melchizedek, the only difference is that the bread and wine represents the body and blood of Christ. The Eucharist therefore is the "remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Mazza, 1999:126-132).

Most of the church councils consistently agreed that while the Eucharist should be celebrated by the ordained clergy, the unbaptized should not receive it (Lee, 2014:64-65). In his letter to the Smyrneans 8:1-2, Ignatius of Antioch insisted,

> All of you should follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father; and follow the Presbyter as you would the apostles. Respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything involving the church without the bishop. Let that Eucharist be considered valid that occurs under the bishop or the one whom he entrusts it. Let the congregation be wherever the bishop is; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there also is the bishop. But whatever he approves is acceptable to God, so that everything you do should be secure and valid (Ehrman, 2003:303-305).

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Moreover, they developed new understanding of it in noting that the Eucharist was not an ordinary meal. It was "something supernatural, as a powerful drug that prevents death and ensures immortality" (Paul, 1940:29-30).

Noticeably, the person of the bishop, his office and priestly activity was exceedingly elevated. Bishops were put at the centre of the administration of the church, without whose permission nothing should be done in the church. They were regarded as the representatives of Christ under whom the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of the unity of the church, should be celebrated. As such, the idea was that there is only one Eucharist, which is celebrated by the bishop or his representative and all members are required to participate (Mazza, 1999: 93-100). The bishops were hereafter recognized as the only ones who bear the priesthood in the church and the unity of the church was linked to the bishop in relation to the Eucharist (Zizioulas, 2001:18-19).

The rise of monasticism during the medieval period expedited additional issues and mistreatment over the Eucharist. During the monastic movement, some monks either totally avoided to participate in Eucharist or wanted more than the usual part because they relied or lived on it. Monasteries which did not have priests who were monks either invited a priest to celebrate the Eucharist or allowed the monks to go to the local church on Sunday to receive it. In other monasteries, one of the monks was responsible for performing the task of celebrating the Eucharist (Traft, 1982:18).

During the modern era, the dominant idea was that the celebration of the Eucharist should be based on the believer's spiritual needs and not on the clergy's personal or spiritual needs. The understanding was that the Eucharist goes beyond crucifixion, it

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reveals the church throughout the limits of the entire worship custom (Traft, 1982:17-21). Moreover, many church traditions supported the idea that the clergy have a unique ministry, which includes the word and the sacrament and that some priestly tasks can only be performed by an ordained priest. It was also held that priests were appointed as stewards of the word and sacraments. This certainly made the office of bishops and priests to practice sacerdotalism since the holders of those authorities had express authority to guide the laity on all matters pertaining to the church life, especially the sacraments. The church held that bishops and the priests represent the redemptive work of God, they represent God and are entrusted with the duty of preaching the word and celebrating the sacrament of the Eucharist (Macquarrie, 1977: 427-435).

The place of an ordained minister in the administration of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church is crucial. Quoting John Mary Vianney (the patron saint of parish priests), Pope Benedict XVI says, Vianney had said, "The priest is the love of the heart of Jesus. When you see a priest, think of your Lord Jesus Christ…God obeys him (the priest): he utters a few words and the Lord descends from heaven at his voice, to be contained within a small host…" (Kiboi, 2017:145). This explains the centrality of the role of ordained minister in the celebration of the Eucharist. It means that without the invocation by the minister, the elements would remain ordinary accidents.

While the Roman Catholic Church follows the views of Cyprian of Carthage noted above on the Eucharist and administration, the Orthodox Church sees the Eucharist as the most significant offering of thankfulness given to God. Afanasiev, one of the

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Orthodox theologians states that the Eucharist should be presided over by the bishop who is the leader of the liturgical congregation in line with Eucharistic ecclesiology. The congregants who belong to the local congregation or church must gather under the leadership of the bishop. He further argued that the bishops play a crucial role in the unity of the church, because they are the leaders of the Eucharistic fellowship. The bishop who celebrates the Eucharist and takes part in the royal priesthood, acts as the leader of the community (Devasia, 2018:111-115).

The tradition of reformed churches, of which the IECA belongs, follow the Calvinistic theology of the Eucharist. The office of Christ`s priesthood involves the ministry of teaching. Although Calvin admits that all Christians are priests, he makes a difference in terms of their functions, clearly stating that the ordained priest has the obligation to celebrate the sacrament of Eucharist. As noted earlier, he differentiated the priesthood of all believers, which allows the involvement of the laity and the ordained priest in terms of functions (O`Collins and Jones, 2010:150-161).

3.3 Virtues of the Eucharist in Church Traditions

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the sacraments contain virtue in themselves which when properly administered by the priest, they transmit supernatural grace. The council of Trent stated that the sacraments are always effective for all justification before God unless an obstacle is placed in their way. A favourable disposition of the recipient is not necessary, but a negative or neutral condition is sufficient. The sacrament is sufficient and effective because of its own inherit power (Paul, 1940:22). Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church holds that the valid administration of the sacraments depends upon the intention of the ministering priest

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and his use of the prescribed formula. If the priest has not the necessary intention to consecrate the sacrament or if he has the intention and omits part of the prescribed formula, the sacrament is invalid (Paul, 1940:22-23). In contrast, the Evangelicals hold that the virtue of the sacraments depends on the faith of the recipient as he or she apprehends Christ. The efficacy of the sacraments does not depend on the exact words used by the celebrant but upon the active faith of the recipient (Paul, 1940: 23). John Calvin argued that what makes the sacrament special is the use of the right words. He further argued that the efficacy of the sacrament requires both the right words and external sign (Tinker, 1998:3). Besides, for Calvin the effects of the sacraments include salvation, righteousness, sanctification and everlasting life (*Inst*. 1960: IV: 11).

Along the lines of Thomas Aquinas (1914: 350-360), the sacrament of the Eucharist derives its virtues from Christ who confers grace into the world (John 1:17). It repeats on a believer's life what Christ's suffering on the cross accomplished which is eternal life. Besides, it gives sustenance, growth, restoration, forgiveness of sin and happiness to the spiritual life (John 6:56) and so, it provides the ability to reach to heaven (Heb. 9:15). While it functions as a sacrament because it is received, it also functions as a sacrifice because it is offered. As a result, it has the impact of sacrifice to the person to whom it is given and the impact of sacrament to those who receive it. The objective of the Eucharist is to sustain the spiritual life of believers through the unity with Christ.

Since its virtues are of the great value, according to Aquinas (1914: 413-417) as noted above, the authority to consecrate it belongs only to the priest, who received it

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through ordination. Hence the ordained priest is the person with the responsibility to perform the Eucharist. The ordained priest has the authority to distribute the Eucharist because he acts in the person of Christ and because he was chosen to acts a mediator between God and human beings. Since no one can touch the elements once sanctified due to respect, the priest must also dedicate his hands before he approaches the elements. The understanding is that the sacrament of the Eucharist has virtues, which truly derive from Christ. An important thing to note is that for the Evangelical tradition, the virtues depend on the faith of those who receive it as they fellowship with Christ. This being the case, if a lay person can read the word and sign in order for them to administer the sacrament, can the virtues be affected?

3.4 The IECA'S Theology of the Eucharist

The IECA subscribes its theology of the Eucharist specifically on John Calvin's views. The understanding of its theology is clear from Calvin's definition of the sacraments as,

> A visible sign that the Lord puts upon our consciences the assurances regarding his goodness for us as a way to affirm the vulnerability of our faith, and in return, we respond to our devotion before the Lord, his angels, and humanity. Sacrament is also an evidence of divine grace given to us, confirmed with external sign, with a united demonstration of our sincerity to the Lord (Institute, IV: XIV.1).

He also understood the sacraments as ritual that increases the faith of Christians and so he referred to them as "pillars of faith." He uses the analogy of pillar to explain how the Christian faith relies on the Word of God as its basis and that when the sacraments are included the pillars become stronger (*Inst*. IV: XIV.6).

Calvin referred to the Eucharist as the "holy supper of Christ." He acknowledges the Eucharistic theological views that the bread and wine symbolizes the body and blood

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of Jesus Christ and that is given and received for spiritual nourishment of believers. Through eating the body and blood of Christ, believers constantly regain power till they shall acquire the eternal life (*Inst*. IV: XVII.1). Further, Calvin upheld that the words of Christ "This is my body" and "this is my blood of the new covenant poured out for many" (Mk. 14:22-25) demonstrate that the Eucharist is beneficial to the one partaking it rather than to Christ himself. This is because his body and blood were given for the restoration and salvation of those who are his followers. The sacrament of Eucharist, through the words of the institution "which is given for you" and "which is shed for you" or "which is poured for you" (Lk. 14:22-24, Mk. 14:22-24. 1 Cor. 11:24), thus depicts the strongest effect of Christ's words. So, as noted above, Calvin acknowledges that the Eucharist is spiritual food that restores, renews, fortifies and satisfies our spiritual life. Besides, his theology of the Eucharist also acknowledges Christ's spiritual presence, because for him the bread and wine are symbols (*Inst*. IV: XVII: 3). During the Eucharist, the partakers receive Christ by faith hence the Eucharist continuously reminds believers everything that Christ achieved for them. Christ, as John 6:51-58 puts it, gave his flesh and blood in order for those who believe in him to have life (*Inst*. IV: XVII.5).

Concerning the practice during the administration of the Eucharist, Calvin insisted that sharing the Word of God was necessary. He maintained that teaching or preaching the Word of God should be done during the celebration of the Eucharist, which should be done at least once per week. The order he suggested was that it should start with prayer, which would be followed by the sermon. Thereafter, the bread and wine should be put upon the table and the priest would pronounce the words of institutions. Then the priest would read the blessing and exclude everybody

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who is forbidden to participate in it. Next, the priest should pray for God to direct and shape those receiving to eat the holy food with confidence and a thankful heart, simultaneously making them ready for such a meal (*Inst*. IV: XVII.43). However, he insisted that the act of dedicating the elements does not depend on the intention of the priest (*Inst*. IV: XVII.39). Besides, it should be celebrated frequently so that Christians can reflect regularly on Christ's Passion. This would empower them to maintain and fortify their faith, sing songs of praise to God and announce his goodness to others. It would also promote affection between Christians and enhance their union with Christ (*Inst*. IV: XVII.44).

From his theology and practice of the Eucharist, it is important to acknowledge that the Eucharist is a testimony of divine grace towards Christians. It is their spiritual food, which should be celebrated frequently. However, why should people miss God's grace and meal just because priests are not around? How should they have it often if the laity are not allowed to celebrate it in the absence of priests, especially during civil unrest or pandemics? The Eucharist being the meal for spiritual nourishment, why should Christians starve for long just because the clergy are not there?

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3.5 Faith and Practice: Priesthood of all Believers and the Celebration of the Eucharist in IECA

Basically, the sacramental theology of IECA recognizes two sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, which quickens and strengthens the faith of its members. This is clear in a statute, which states,

> we believe and recognize two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which were instituted by Christ to be of perpetual obligation as signs and seals of the covenant ratified in his precious blood, as a means of grace, by which, working in us, he not only quickens, but also strengthens our faith in him, and as an ordinance through the observance of which his church confesses its Lord and visibly distinguishes itself from the rest of the world (Estatuto da IECA, 2017:6).

Furthermore, the IECA internal regulation points several duties, which its members have and which they should perform. As we can see,

> Every member of the Church has the following duties: to live a life of complete dedication to God, shown in works of purity, truth, honesty, humility, zeal for good, and love of neighbor; participate diligently in the divine services of the Congregation to which he or she belongs; to work according to the gifts he or she has and to the positions to which he or she is appointed; regularly participate in the Holy Communion; to contribute generously to the Pastorate fund, with a view of the maintenance of the cult and the expansion of the Christian faith; contribute to Church relief and Missionary work (Regulamento interno da IECA, 2010:4-5).

The IECA therefore acknowledges the Eucharist as a means of God's grace and as for the frequency it states that church members should have it regularly. However, the believers wonder why the laity are not allowed to celebrate it even in the context of civil unrest or pandemic if the priests are not around? Is it because the lay celebrant would adulterate its virtues or is it about power dynamics in the church? Does celebrating the Eucharist bestow the celebrant certain privileges of status in the society?

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Noticeably, the IECA only allows the ordained priests to administer the Eucharist according to one of its statutes that define its belief and practice on the same. The statute states,

> We believe that Jesus Christ, as supreme head of the church, has established within it a ministry of word and sacraments, calls men and women to this ministry, and that the church, under the guidance of the

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> Holy Spirit, recognizes and chooses those whom he calls, and must therefore ordain him or her properly for the work of the ministry. For the exercise of the ministry of worship, Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola ordains men and women" (Estatuto da IECA, 2017: 6-7).

IECA's belief and practice as embodied in the above statutes has led to sacerdotalism due to its emphasis that the celebration and administration of the Eucharist is reserved only to the ordained clergy. This contradicts its teaching of priesthood of all believers. If priests' work is to administer the sacraments, why are they not allowed to administer this particular one?

The IECA tradition of ordaining men and women therefore creates differentiation as to role of clergy and laity and on what a lay person cannot do in relation to the Eucharist. The ordination of men and women into priesthood in IECA is seen as a rite. This is clear in one of its statutes, which says that the rites of ordination is the "means of grace," through which "the faithful have access to the fellowship of the church (Estatuto da IECA, 2017:16). It further says that the ordained "are instruments that God uses to grant men spiritual life and bring them to safety" (Estatuto da IECA, 2017:16).

Evidently, the document of IECA makes it clear that the celebration of the Eucharist is the sole responsibility of the ordained priest. It is common knowledge to all its members that when the priest celebrates the Eucharist, deacons and deaconesses only assist him to distribute the elements. So, those who have not gone through the ordination ritual cannot celebrate it regardless of whether it is in the context of civil unrest/pandemic or not. However, belief and practice that it is only the ordained priest who can celebrate the Eucharist seems to contradict its faith, which affirms

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that the Eucharist is a means of grace and that it should be celebrated frequently. Besides, the faithful do not receive the Eucharist as frequently as they ought. Again, when Jesus gave the instructions to his disciples concerning the celebration of the Eucharist, he did not say in what context they should be celebrated it. The instructions were that they should partake in the Eucharist often in remembrance of him. The time at which Jesus gave the instructions on the Eucharist was at the night of his arrest and the persecution of the disciples was imminent. For that reason, the situation could have been similar to the context of civil unrest or pandemics. Since the New Testament Christians did not stop to fellowship through prayers, ministry of the word and the breaking of the bread despite the hard situation they lived, Christians are supposed to celebrate the Eucharist all the time, whether there is civil unrest or a pandemic or not.

Furthermore, the issue should not be on whether during the New Testament, the laity celebrated the Eucharist or not and if it only allows the ordained people to only celebrate it. Clearly, it is not clear in New Testament whether the Eucharist is supposed to be celebrated only by ordained priests or whether laity should celebrate it or not. The guidance given by Christ is that the Eucharist should always be done in remembrance of him. Besides, even among the apostles, Jesus did not appoint anyone of them to celebrate the Eucharist in his absence. Nevertheless, it is clearly identifiable that the Eucharist is an ordinance, which Jesus gave to his disciples and which they should do often in remembrance of him (Luke 22:14-20, 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Moreover, as noted in chapter two above, the IECA believe that all believers are priests. Yet in the administration of the Eucharist, the practice of IECA is to restrict the laity, which is a contradiction of what it believes in and what it does.

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3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the sacrament of the Eucharist in the Church by providing its background or origin, development, history and virtues. It revealed that during the OT and the NT era, the Eucharist was not only celebrated in the temple or synagogue, but in people's house. Specifically, during the NT times, priests were not always there to celebrate, but the host of the house did it. The chapter also revealed through ordination, the church decided that the Eucharist should be celebrated by an ordained clergy and not a lay person. The church decided that the ordained clergy must celebrate the Eucharist since they are set apart a person and acts on behalf of Christ. The IECA, which follows the theology of John Calvin with regard to the celebration of the Eucharist, supports the idea that it should be celebrated by an ordained priest and not a laity. The chapter therefore recommended that the IECA should rethink its theology of the administration of the Eucharist. The recommendation was based on what was observed during the Angolan civil unrest and COVID 19 pandemic. Christians could not receive the Holy Communion since the ordained clergy were not available. Besides, it was based on the fact that the IECA acknowledges the priesthood of all believers.

The chapter revealed that it is not demonstrable that allowing the laity to celebrate the Eucharist would compromise its virtues. Besides, its virtues derive from Christ and partaking in it depends on the faith of those who receive it. However, the Word of God makes the Eucharist special as it is the means of God's grace and also the spiritual food of its partakers. However, sacerdotalism or priestly activity in the church brought separation on the responsibility that should be carried out by an ordained clergy and the laity, especially on the celebration of the Eucharist.

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CHAPTER FOUR: TOWARDS A POSTCOLONIAL EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to use Postcolonial hermeneutics in liberating the notion that the virtues of the sacrament of the Eucharist could be affected or diminished if it was not consecrated by a validly ordained minister. It first explains what postcolonial hermeneutics is all about and what it seeks to achieve in the life of the church. Besides, it seeks to justify why postcolonial hermeneutics, despite its limitations, is necessary in the IECA and other churches that deny the laity the right to officiate the Eucharist. The chapter also evaluates sacerdotalism in the light of power dynamics in the life of the church. Since the basis of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers is 1 Peter 2: 2-9, the chapter provides a theological reflection on it. Finally, the chapter analyses the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the light of the celebration of the Eucharist.

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4.1 Postcolonial hermeneutics and its justification

The theory of postcolonial hermeneutics is informed, among several other things by the hermeneutics of suspicion and the hermeneutics of restoration, which emphasise on exposure, reconstruction and transformation. As such, postcolonial hermeneutics confronts the past and present subjugation and rejection. It emphasizes on adjustment as it brings to the foreground that which was absent so as to redefine and correct what is lacking in a specific context (Punt, 2014:1). As Musa Dube (2000: 198-199) avers, postcolonial hermeneutics is an "ongoing existence of expanding authority or power. It pursues freedom and dignity, it denies patriarchy and colonial systems that rely on domination. It also addresses all types of injustices with severity." According

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to Sugirtharajah (2003:15), it provides a chance for seeing "various interpretations based on place".

The objective of postcolonial hermeneutics is to study how the colonizers explain other people's dominance in varied historical contexts. It also investigates how the colonized and colonizers relate, how the colonized refuse imperialism and how they act within limits to claim for sovereignty in different historical contexts. Besides, it investigates the use of stories in the process of colonization, decolonization and the building of nations. It gives solutions for coexistence through highlighting the importance of not oppressing other people (Dube, 2002: 3). Furthermore, its process of decolonization creates procedures of opposing colonial power. It seeks for new liberative ways, which are used to remove dependence that exists among different ethnicity, race, gender, economic and cultural contexts (Dube, 2002: 52).

In a context where it is only ordained priests who can celebrate the Eucharist and not the laity despite the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers being upheld and taught, then the question of power arises. Perhaps the question on who has power to celebrate the Eucharist is based on imperialistic and Eurocentric worldviews, which postcolonial hermeneutics criticizes. As Sugirtharajah (2003: XIII) notes, it criticizes imperialistic and Eurocentric attitudes and forms of thinking and doing. So, due to its emphasis on evaluating power relations that inspire oppression, it would help analyse whether power does or does not compromise the virtues of the Eucharist. This makes this methodology relevant and imperative.

This is because it brings those who were seen as the outsiders at the centre of things. While emphasizing on creating and disseminating the sense of self, it stresses on the

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significance of hybridity (Wan, 2000: 110). It emphasizes on re-reading texts, taking into consideration the point of view of underprivileged people (Joy, 2014: 57).

Although Postcolonial hermeneutics is a tool used by biblical scholarship in liberating biblical texts that carry with them colonial mentality, our use of it in theological reflection is premised on the idea that theological doctrines are a result of biblical interpretation, i.e., a particular hermeneutics applied gives birth to a particular doctrine. Based on this understanding, postcolonial hermeneutics will provide a framework in which Church doctrines and practices are re-evaluated to purge them of any imperialistic tendencies that are normalized.

The use of postcolonial hermeneutics in the contemporary context of the church is necessary. This is because postcolonial hermeneutics deals with hybridity, identity, ambivalence, mimicry, centre/margin, among other terms. Hybridity, refers to new transcultural structures as a result of colonization inside the area of interaction. It also refers to uncomplicated multicultural exchange (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin: 2007:108-109). Identity is about how the imperial regime affected people living under colonization making them to think that they are disadvantaged (Fanon quoted by Dizayi, 2019:9). Ambivalence indicates that collaboration and opposition inside a colonized person are part of a changing relationship. It appears to be equally oppressive and caring at the same time (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin,: 2007.10). Mimicry exposes an imbalance in the trust of colonial power and an instability in its capacity to regulate the conduct of the colonized. It demonstrates the boundaries of the power of colonial speech (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin,: 2007.125). Centre/Margin has to do with representation and relation between the colonial and

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colonized, where the colonial were considered as those at the centre or the "insiders", and the colonized were seen as the outsiders or people from the "margin" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, 2007:32).

Furthermore, it challenges colonial understanding, examines colonial claims and also reconstructs colonial identity based on the context (Joy, 2008:4-5). According to Dube, (2000: 48), it investigates and exposes practices and the results of imperialism. It emphasizes on the value attributed to the voices of the deprived and perceives the voices of the struggle. Furthermore, it evaluates how power play is used to dominate and colonize the subaltern or people from the margin and how it became part of their culture and the relationship built between colonizer-colonized (Sugirtharajah, 2000: 58-59). Besides, its demands a unique attitude so as to clarify the relations underlying ideas and power, language and power, knowledge and power as well as how the connections support western theories (Sugirtharajah, 1998: 16-17).

Perhaps postcolonial hermeneutics would facilitate the present church to re-read and re-interpret the Bible, which supremely guides its theological articulation. Besides, it would help to deconstruct, reconstruct and re-think the way the current church articulates its theology and practices the faith. It would specifically inform the IECA on how to reconstruct its sacramental theology, especially on the celebration of Eucharist, which is inclusive and not oppressive. Its justification is clear in the NT, especially through Jesus' re-interpretation of some of OT the passages. For instance, the antitheses found in the Sermon of Mount introduced a new understanding of the Mosaic Law with the formula, "you have heard that it was said... but I tell you..." (Mt. 5: 21-48). Besides, Paul reinterpreted the Jewish concept of salvation through

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the works of the law such as circumcision. While he deconstructed this understanding, he also reconstructed the new concept of salvation by grace through faith (Rom 3: 27-28; Eph 2: 8-9).

It may not be an exaggeration to regard Jesus and Paul's reinterpretation of the Mosaic Law as the bedrock of postcolonial hermeneutics due to the way it reconstructed a new ideology, which seeks to liberate humanity from the limited and prejudiced power and domination of the Mosaic law. Furthermore, Jesus reconstructed the meaning of the OT Passover meal, which as noted above offers the background of the Eucharist. In pointing to the elements of the meal, that is, the bread and wine to himself (Lk 22:7-20; Matt 26:17-30), he initiated the Eucharist as a sign of the new covenant. Postcolonial hermeneutics is inspired by what Christ did.

Christians in the IECA ask many questions regarding the celebration of the Eucharist and they expect the church to give an efficient and effective answer. Rather than relying solely on church tradition, Christians are looking for answers having biblical foundations, yet without ignoring what they rationally and experientially live through or endure to live with. For that reason, the IECA needs to review, re-evaluate and rethink some practices inherited from the past because some of them demonstrates power and authority. For instance, the authority and power to celebrate the Eucharist place the laity at the margins.

During the recent COVID 19 pandemic, due to the government measures of keeping distance and not meeting in crowded places, Christians did not receive the Eucharist because the priests were restricted to access their faithful to administer this vital

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element of worship, the Eucharist. If the laity were free to celebrate the Eucharist, each family would have had their own Eucharist at family level.

4.2 Evaluating sacerdotalism in the light of power dynamics in the church

The laity have a feeling that Sacerdotalism creates a sense of privilege. This is expressed in the effort to restrict celebration of the Eucharist to the priests because they believe that they (priests) represent Christ and they are equipped with spiritual skills and authority within the church (Pogorelc, 2021: 10). The clergy believe that ordination distinguishes them from the laity (Hinson, 1981: 485). Postcolonial hermeneutics would wish to establish why, through sacerdotalism, the IECA unfairly accords power to celebrate the Eucharist to the ordained priests (Dube, 2000:17).

Despite the foregoing criticism on sacerdotalism, we noted in chapter three that sacerdotalism was introduced in the Old Testament via God's choice of Aaron and his sons to be priests of the Israelites (Exd. 28). So, the priestly activity became an office, which offered sacrifice, represented people before God and taught the Word of God (Exd 28:9-12; Ezk 44:23). Therefore, it only becomes burdensome when abused. We also noted that although the New Testament teaches priesthood of all believers, the Lord's Table was celebrated by designated privileged members of the worshiping family.

This observation challenges the question whether restricting the celebration of the Eucharist to the priests give to them power over those who do not have that privilege.

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4.3 Priesthood of all believers and Celebration of the Eucharist

Priestly activity as noted above is an activity that started in the OT. It began as a simple act of offering sacrifice to God, which was done by all people (O 'Collins and Jones, 2010: 1-7). As time passed, what started as a form of thanksgiving was organized and developed such that it became an office. As Exodus 28-30 shows, priests came from the house of Levi even though not all Levites were priests. However, they were to be consecrated so that they may serve God as priests (Exd, 28: 41; 29: 1, 44; 30:30), which perhaps led to sacerdotalism. Yet in the family setting, the priestly activity was under the responsibility of the head of the family (Gen 8; Ex. 19). Furthermore, kings offered sacrifices though they were not anointed as priests (1 Kgs 8: 62-66). All this seems to have been ended through the consecration of priests since all sacrifices had to be done by the priest only in the temple.

According to O'Collins and Jones (2010: 1-7), the concept of the priesthood of all believers was introduced in the OT, especially through the prophetic voice of Isaiah (Isa. 56: 5-6; 66: 18-21). While it was not only the Levites who had the privilege to serve God and offer sacrifices in the temple, the priesthood of all believers implied that even foreigners and eunuchs serve God as priests alongside the Levites. The NT reinforces this understanding of the priesthood of all believers in 1 Peter 2: 9. However, it moves the doctrine further in pointing out that the priestly activity through which believers offer sacrifices as Christians, is only possible through Christ's priestly activity, which makes their sacrifices acceptable to God (Clowney, 1988: 87-91; Arndt & Gingrich, 1957: 242). Because Christ's priesthood is excellent

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since he offered himself as sacrifice once for all, he mediates and intercedes for believers (Ogera, 2021: 243-244).

Through Christ, believers have direct access to God and serve him individually Mt. 28: 18-19; Rom. 12: 1; 15: 16; Heb. 13: 15-16; Phil. 2: 17; 4: 18; Jas 5: 16, 1 Pt. 2:9). Therefore, the NT teaches that while all believers are priests, their priesthood is based in Christ and not in themselves. So, all believers are part of the universal priesthood, they have the same right and access to God the Father, but which is only possible through Christ. The believers wonder: Why is there division in the church when it comes to the celebration of some priestly activity such as the Eucharist? Why should people stay without having the Eucharist just because the priest is not around? Why are the laity not allowed to celebrate the Eucharist in IECA in such context? Would the celebration by the laity invalidate the virtues the sacrament signifies? Or to what extent would opening the practice of celebration of the Eucharist to the laity compromise the virtues of the sacrament of the Eucharist? The celebration of the Eucharist by an ordained clergy in IECA derives its practice from the Bible and Church tradition.

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4.4 Practical implications arising from the laity's celebration of the Eucharist

The Eucharist is a spiritual food and drink and it is for our spiritual nourishment. Through our participation in the Eucharist, believers regain power, renew, restore and satisfy their spiritual life. During the Eucharist, according to John Calvin (Institute, IV:XVII.1-5), Christians receive Christ by faith. This implies that the Eucharist can be celebrated by ordained clergy or by a laity. This is because all Christian sinners, whom God has forgiven by grace through faith in Christ including

the ordained clergy and laity, are not really the ones who consecrate the elements. Christ, who is present during the celebration of the Eucharist, consecrates them. What matters, as Calvin suggests, is the use of the right words and the right sign and not who is celebrating or not celebrating.

The Eucharist is also a spiritual meal through which believers have fellowship in offering their thanksgiving as a result of the forgiveness of their sins. Through Christians praying, singing and studying the Bible together, the Eucharist strengthens their faith as they remember what that the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ did for them to gain salvation (Devasia, 2018:23-28). This implies that the Eucharist helps the people of God to be connected with him (Daly, 2005:3-12). Moreover, it is important to notice that the Eucharist gives Christians an opportunity for evangelization. As they receive the bread and wine that symbolize the body and blood of Jesus Christ, they are also people brought into a relationship with Christ. This means that there is a promise of salvation in the sacrament of the Eucharist and it provides a moment in which believers learn to support each other. Besides, as means of grace, Jesus assures everlasting life to those who participate in the Eucharist (Gomes and Kiboi, 2022: 4-14). Every time believers partake in the Eucharist, they are reinvigorated because in celebrating the Eucharist, they encounter Christ in the deepest way. This implies that believers need to continue celebrating the Eucharist no matter the context they are in, just like what the disciples of Jesus did during the time of persecution of the church (Hansen, 2009: 44-46). It is important for Christians to have the Eucharist because according to the words of Jesus (Mt. 6: 14-15; 26: 28; Mark 14: 24; Luke 22: 20), it is celebrated for the forgiveness of sins, for redemption, for thanksgiving, for the

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remembrance of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and for fellowship (Devasia, 2018: 23-28).

The administration of the Eucharist is not bound to any context and it does not depend on the administrant because it contains virtue and that its virtues are derived from Christ. When Christians are taught how to pronounce the right words and do the right signs, they can do them very well. The priesthood of all believers needs to be taken into account in practical or pastoral reality. Because the Eucharist confers grace, it is a spiritual food, it restores our spiritual lives, and helps to remind us what Christ did for our salvation. So, when it is celebrated, Christians receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith as they fellowship together. By allowing the laity to celebrate the Eucharist in whichever context the church finds itself, the church will not be seen as the one which keeps the power to the clergy or practices the power play to the ordained clergy and restricts it to the laity on the administration of the Eucharist. On the contrary, it would be seen as a church that practices the priesthood of all believers without restriction in any priestly activity. Since Christians are sacramental people, the church should have one people and one ministry model (Greg Ogden, 1990:31-69).

Since the Eucharist has virtues and that it comes from Christ, it should be celebrated as often as possible. Besides, it does not lose its virtue neither are they affected if and when it is celebrated by a lay person. Again the virtues of the sacrament depend on the faith of the recipient as they receive Christ, it does not depend on the administrant. It is the word of God that makes the sacrament special in line with Calvin. It is not because of the holiness of the clergy since all human beings are

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sinners, whether laity or clergy. The Eucharist is for the spiritual growth of Christians, for affection between Christians, and for unity with Christ. For this reason, the context or circumstances that may prevent the ordained clergy to be present should not stop people to have the Eucharist.

Christians may stay without having the Eucharist for a long period of time when its administration is restricted to the ordained clergy only and they may miss all the benefits or virtues of the Eucharist that we have just mentioned in this dissertation. Also the issue of power dynamics between the clergy and laity may become a big problem in the church. Moreover, it may also increase lamentation and anxiety amongst church members as they see their need of celebrating the Eucharist being denied just because clergy are not available due to the circumstances. This study proposes that laity should be trained on how to administer the Eucharist, so that church members may not stay without having it in the absence of ordained clergy in the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola.

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4.5 Challenges observed when the laity celebrate the Eucharist

The postcolonial theology of priesthood of all believers may bring some challenges when the lay person is allowed to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist. It may cause some people to end up doing it just for the sake without any preparation. One of the biggest challenges is related with the issue of disorder as we can also find in the book of 1 Corinthians 11. Disorder may bring divisions and may also cause people not to wait for anybody because they have the right to do it. Disorder may also lead to starvation and drunkenness. An abuse or misuse of the Eucharist may create another challenge if everyone is allowed to celebrate the Eucharist. Some

people may feel like they have to take it at any time and make the elements as their daily food requesting for bigger quantities as the monks did in the past. People may start to get drunk and justify themselves that it is because they had celebrated the Eucharist. Furthermore, this abuse can compromise the spiritual meaning of the Eucharist, because it is being celebrated without reverence of what Christ intended it to be.

Avoidance of participating on the celebration of the Eucharist should also be another challenge. Some Christians may feel depressed and decide to avoid to participate or even move out from that the environment where it is being celebrated by a laity, may it be in a church or in the house where the Eucharist is celebrated without reverence.

There is also the issue of fighting for personal opportunity to come and have the chance of celebrating the Eucharist, because when everybody feels that can do it, they should also wait until their time comes and in some cases, it may happen that someone does not know how to read the Bible and do the sign. The question now is how it shall be when someone does not know how to read and pray? Are they going to celebrate the Eucharist without using the word? Even though the Bible does not say that the ordained clergy are the only ones to celebrate the Eucharist, the issue of training is very useful, because if people are not trained on how to do it in a correct way, this may also become another challenge.

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4.6 Conclusion

We have noted from our research and discussions that the virtues of a sacrament are not dependent on the mode of celebration nor on the disposition of the celebrant. Yet

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that does not endorse the idea that the sacrament in point can be celebrated by all because of their participation in the priesthood of all believers.

The sacrament of the Eucharist, unlike that of Baptism that ushers in new members into the Church, is for strengthening those already in the communion of worshippers. The Bible provides the basis for sacerdotalism especially in the celebration of the Eucharist. The postcolonial hermeneutics have absolved the Church tradition from the blame that restriction of the sacrament to the ordained ministers was a question of power. It is indeed the tradition of the Bible and the Church.

This thesis concludes that celebration of the Eucharist by an appointed church minister does not give them a special place in society but bestows upon them the responsibility of service, neither does it mean that if the sacrament of the Holy Communion is celebrated by a non-ordained minister, it would lose its vitality. The reasons for restricting it to the ordained ministry should be understood in the light of the Church tradition and the biblical tradition.

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CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The faithful in the IECA have always wondered why the celebration of the Eucharist is a preserve of the ordained ministers only. This question has been raised especially in the context of war and social restriction during pandemics like the COVID-19. Their argument has been based on the reasoning that if the Church teaches priesthood of all believers, i.e. all those who have come to the faith through baptism have

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become priests in the loose sense, why are they not allowed to celebrate the Sacrament of the Holy Communion?

This dissertation has systematically sought to establish the origin and development of sacerdotalism in the Church universally to be able to provide an answer to the IECA faithful. In its research, it has been established that sacerdotalism has its roots in the Old Testament period. It found out that this concept develops right from Genesis where the eldest or the leader of a family offered a sacrifice on behalf of the entire worshipping family or community. In the survey, we noticed that for example in Genesis account of Noah's floods, after the floods had subsided, Noah sacrificed to the Lord. In the account of the covenant between God and Abraham, Abraham sacrificed on behalf of the entire family he was leading. The trend continues throughout the entire Old Testament where we see kings sacrificing too on behalf of the nations they led, for example, Saul, David, Solomon and many others that followed.

In the New Testament, the tradition of the eldest member of the worshipping community sacrificing on behalf of the worshippers seems to have been adopted from the old tradition. In the account of the occasion of the Last Supper, Jesus the leader of the team presided over the meal. He commanded his disciples to do it every time they met in remembrance of him. In carrying out the command, the disciples always met in members' houses and celebrated the Lord's Supper, during which the eldest or the leader of the family or household presided over it. As the Christian family grew larger, there was need to appoint specific people on whom hands were laid and were tasked to preside over these meals. So we see the notion of

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sacerdotalism developing into an organized formal system. This tradition of identifying special people and ordaining them by laying hands on them before they could be tasked with presiding over the celebration of this special meal develops in the history of the Church.

Based on this biblical account, this dissertation has sought to use Postcolonial Hermeneutics to liberate the Church from taking sacerdotalism and the celebration of the Eucharist from thinking that there is something special imparted into the sacrament when consecrated by an ordained minister. The dissertation has shown that the disposition of the priest does not affect the virtues of the sacrament. Indeed, any member of the congregation could as well have consecrated the elements and they would be valid as long as the intention was good. However, this is not allowed for the sake of the order and sacredness the celebration ought to bring with it.

Therefore, the consecration of the sacrament of the Eucharist is a preserve of the ordained priest not because of the church trying to enjoy certain powers and privileges that come with the sacrament or prestige, but for the sake of order and sacredness of the meal.

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5.2 Pastoral Implications of this Sacerdotalism in the IECA

In chapter one of this dissertation, we have mentioned that the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola has adopted that the sacrament of the Eucharist has to be celebrated by an ordained clergy in the church and not by a lay person. We hypothesised that by the use of Postcolonial Hermeneutics on reflecting on the theology of the sacraments and the contradiction between faith and practice in the administration of the sacrament of the Eucharist in the IECA, the IECA Church will

understand better the role of the ordained priest in the celebration of the Eucharist. Therefore, this approach achieves for us the understanding that it is not demonstrable that allowing the laity to celebrate the Eucharist would compromise its virtues, because the virtues of the sacrament of the Eucharist are derived from Christ and partaking in it depends on the faith of those who receive it. The IECA theological reflections on sacerdotalism and the priesthood of all believers will not allow its believers to stay without partaking the sacrament of the Eucharist no matter the context or circumstances they find themselves. The Eucharist is the means of God's grace and spiritual food, and that it is the word of God that makes the Eucharist special. Since the IECA also believes and teaches that everybody is a priest and has the right to participate in all ministries within the church, the paradox that the laity cannot administer the Eucharist should be solved.

5.3 Recommendations

There is need for the Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola to revisit its biblical and theological arguments on the priesthood of all believers, so that the concept of priesthood of all believers is understood, not as giving automatic authority to presiding over the Eucharist, but as one for participating in the living a life of sacrificing to the ministry of the Church as a believer.

The study recommends that an effort should be made to demystify the ritual to allow the laity to celebrate the sacrament of the Holy Communion in the absence of the ordained minister since this act would not remove any virtues signified in the sacrament. This will remove the contradiction observed by the faithful in the doctrine of all believers and the restriction of the consecration of the Eucharist.

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REF: SPU/48/2023 **Date: 28th June 2023**

TO: Alberto Gomes
St. Paul's University

Dear Alberto,

RE: Sacerdotalism and Priesthood of all Believers: Faith and Practice in the Administration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist in the IECA

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 56, for the period between 28th June 2023 – 28th July, 2024.**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

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v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
(ISERC)
APPROVAL WITH
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RESEARCH
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BOARD OF POSTGRUADUATE STUDIES

29th June, 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

REF: ALBERTO COTELO GOMES – MTHLMR108522

I wish to confirm that the above named is a student of St. Paul's University registered for a Master in Theology (MTH) Program.

Alberto is currently conducting research as a part of partial fulfillment for the award of the degree. The topic of his research is ***" Sacerdotalism and Priesthood of all Believers: Faith and Practice in the Administration of the Sacrament of Eucharist in the IECA."***

Kindly grant him the required assistance.

If you need more information, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
29 JUN 2023

Dr. John Muhoho
Director Postgraduate Studies
jmuhoho@spu.ac.ke

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