THE EUCHARIST IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN CALVIN AND THE OPEN-TABLE DEBATE: TOWARDS A POSTCOLONIAL EUCHARISTIC THEOLOGY.

BY

JOSEPHINE W. MUTUOTA

MTH/NRB/1331/13

This dissertation is submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master in Theology (MTH) from St. Paul's University

Supervisor: Rev Dr. John M. Kiboi

August 2016

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my own work and has not been presented in any other university or for any other award.

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Word count- 21,462.

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as the supervisor appointed by the University for the above student.

Signature of Supervisor..... Date.....

Name of Supervisor: Rev. Dr. J. M Kiboi

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, especially my dear husband, James Mutuota and our three children– Peace W. Mutuota, Patience M. Mutuota and Prince Maxwell Mutuota who have supported me during my studies.

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ABSTRACT

The Church in general has always celebrated and revered the sacraments, one of them being, the Eucharist. From inception of the church, the members of the Christian community did what Jesus commanded, they took and ate and drank knowing in faith that this was indeed a sharing in the Body and Blood of Christ. This was done by all, but due to cultural and historical reasons, Eucharistic practices slowly began to change. Various rules and conditions were placed to qualify one to partake the Eucharist. The Eucharist is practiced in a way that some Christians are viewed as unworthy and excluded. This research seeks to bring out the notion that the Eucharist should be open and not closed. The Presbyterian Church has for years observed a Closed Table Eucharist. The exclusive practice creates apathy and anxiety among the Christians and seems to be driven by misinterpretation of some parts of the bible as well as the church words of institution. The research argues that the problem of exclusion can be resolved if postcolonial hermeneutics in the theology of John Calvin is used to re-interpret the biblical texts used by the church. This study has looked at the practice from a postcolonial hermeneutics approach, viewing the practice of the Presbyterian Church alongside the Calvinistic theology of the Eucharist and brought out the need to re-evaluate it.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background to the study

The Presbyterian church of East Africa observes two sacraments which are Baptism and Eucharist. The sacrament of the Eucharist is administered to a specific category of people who are qualified to be partakers by the Church. Those who qualify must have been baptized and confirmed as full members of the church. Having been brought up in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, I have always noticed that there is a specific criteria followed to allow people to partake in the Lords table during Eucharist. Those who do not fall under these criteria are barred from partaking. This practice raises an issue as one may try to understand why some people are left out and others are invited as partakers. Those who partake the Eucharist are given special privileges which those who do not partake are denied.

Some of the people who are left out are committed Christians who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior while some who do not confess Christ are considered as partakers simply because they have observed the Church rules. In this case it touches on a case in point men who have not wedded in the Church, but living with a woman as husband and wife are not allowed to partake of the Lords table regardless of whether they are baptized or not. This leaves one wondering whether those excluded from the Lord's Table can ever experience God's grace.

The Eucharist is a Christian sacrament which was instituted by Christ himself while on his earthly ministry. It is a true efficacious sacrament through which the partakers are granted strength, the transforming presence, and the life –changing grace of Jesus. It is actually a means of Grace which can be defined as an outward sign ordained by God to be an ordinary channel by which persons in search of life encounter God's grace (Dimock 1910: 49). In this case therefore, the Christian church has embraced the issue of the sacraments to be practiced

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in the church, but in some churches there are people who are not allowed to participate especially in the Eucharist.

Currently there rages the Open Table Debate on whether the Sacrament should be administered to those who do not qualify by Church stands. In this debate there are those who hold on to the Open Table practice and there are those who are opposed to the same. This research is a critical evaluation of the Eucharist in the Theology of John Calvin and the Open Table Debate in an effort to challenge the exclusive practice of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and arrive at an all-inclusive Theology of the Sacraments. The thesis proposes the use of post-colonial hermeneutics in reading those texts the Presbyterian Church of East Africa church has used to exclude others from the Eucharist. The same methodology will be applied on Calvin's exegesis of 1 Cor.11:17-34 in an effort to liberate the Church's oppressive attitude.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Whilst the importance of the Eucharist is entrenched in the Church teachings, as a means of grace, there has been a debate amongst Church members on whether the practice of excluding some members does not therefore deny them these means of grace. This exclusion causes anxiety among the faithful who are excluded and could easily result into relapse in faith.

1.3 Aim of the study

The study sought to critically evaluate the Eucharist in the Theology of John Calvin and the Open Table Debate, in an effort to challenge the exclusive practice of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and arrive at an all- inclusive Theology of the Eucharist.

1.4 Research objectives

i. To establish the basis for exclusivity in the Eucharistic practice in the Presbyterian

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Church of East Africa.

ii. To assess the Theological basis for the argument on the Open Table or Closed Table.

iii. To provide an approach to aid the shift from exclusivity to an Open Table; towards a postcolonial Theology of the Eucharist.

iv. To liberate the biblical texts used by the Church to exclude others from the sacrament of the Eucharist.

1.5 Research questions

- What is the basis for exclusive Eucharistic in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa?
- What is the Theological basis for the argument on the Open Table?
- What is the theological and Biblical basis for Open Table or closed Table?
- What approach can be used to aid the shift from an exclusive tradition to an Open Table tradition in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa?

1.6 Hypothesis

The research argues that if the postcolonial hermeneutics of biblical reading is applied on those texts the Church uses to exclude others in the theology of John Calvin, against which the Presbyterian Church bases her Eucharistic practice, then the problem of exclusion is resolved and those excluded will be included in the Eucharist hence end of anxiety and relapse.

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1.7 Methodology

In order to solve the problem of the exclusive approach to Eucharist as practiced by Calvinistic practice, the researcher used the postcolonial hermeneutic approach. Post colonialism has been defined in various ways by a number of scholars; it is therefore difficult to find a single generally accepted definition of post colonialism. However, all definitions generally agree that it provides resources for resisting by deconstructing surviving forms of subjectivity (Kiambi, 2011: 13). Robert C Young for example, notes that in its emphasis on imperial modes of domination, it names a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention with such oppressive circumstances. Segovia goes on to show that it is an academic task of revisiting, remembering and interrogating the colonial past, thus making it a systematized discourse of events of colonialism as a form of imperialism (Kiambi, 2011: 15-16).

Post colonialism then can be said to seek to aid people in their struggle and if their struggle is against forces that are propelled by prevailing forms of imperialism directly exercised by imperialists or by powers that be and which have mimicked their form of imperialism (Kiambi, 2011: 16). In her attempt to apply the postcolonial approach in creating a shift from the exclusive Eucharistic tradition to the open table tradition, the researcher follows the discourse espoused by Homi Bhabha. Bhabha uses mimicry as a concept that uses the master's tool selectively as a way of enhancing the subaltern identity or evolving a hybrid identity that is to repeat differently in order to disrupt the colonial authority.

This method is key to this research since the exclusive table identified with John Calvin is the tradition that was inherited from the missionary church making it the church tradition in the

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Presbyterian Church in East Africa. It looks at the Calvinistic tradition that was introduced to the African Christians, which will be linked to the imperial culture in the dominion of the open table that is now taken to be the true Christian tradition that is proposed to be followed. This is because, as Presbyterians, their new culture is Presbyterianism which does not reject the whole tradition based on one faulty practice. The solution then is to continue with Presbyterianism, but skip the tradition of exclusivism when it comes to the Eucharist.

1.8 Justification

The continued exclusion of some members in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa from the Eucharist has the potential of creating apathy towards the Church. It is an area that requires to be addressed. According to Rukundwa (2008), Postcolonial hermeneutical approach is a tool for biblical reading in an attempt to find colonial intentions that have been used to justify exclusion. This research uses the Postcolonial hermeneutical approach to develop a postcolonial tradition of the Eucharist; a shift from exclusivity to an Open Table. Post-colonial hermeneutics is justifiable on the grounds that even Jesus Christ in his Beatitudes radically re-interprets the oppressive Jewish traditions. The approach is also justifiable on the grounds that God's revelation is progressive as well as instantaneous. As progressive, the church should always ask itself- what is God saying to us today? Thirdly, this approach is justifiable as it is in line with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa church's new perspective and spirit of Presbyterianism.

1.9 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter covers the following areas; Introduction of the chosen area; statement of the problem; the aim of the study; the research objectives; the research questions; justification of the study and the hypothesis.

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Chapter 2: The Open Table Debate

This chapter focuses on the Open Table Debate; looking at those who argue for and against the Open Table practice. This is with a special focus on the closed Table in the Presbyterian Church.

Chapter 3: Eucharist in the Theology of John Calvin

This chapter focuses on what other writers have said about same area of research with a special focus on John Calvin. The researcher looks at recent researches that are relevant to the study and gives a critical review of literature related to the topic.

Chapter 4: towards a postcolonial Theology of the Eucharist

In this chapter the researcher analyses the Calvinistic view on the Eucharist and the Open Table debate through the postcolonial hermeneutic approach. The researcher analyses the Calvinistic view of the Eucharist against which the Presbyterian Church bases her Eucharistic practice with an aim of developing a postcolonial theology of the Eucharist.

The chapter covers; post colonialism and Theology, Assumptions in the Presbyterian Eucharist Tradition which as the researcher establishes is based on Calvinistic view, and finally, develops a postcolonial Eucharistic Tradition and a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter forms the conclusion of the study and shows the possibility of adopting a postcolonial theology of the Eucharist, challenging the exclusivity practice of the Presbyterian Church, thus allowing all the believers to experience the gift of Grace through the Eucharist.

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1.10 Delineation

The research approach adopted in this thesis will be limited to the Theology of John Calvin on the Eucharist and the Open Table Debate. This is with a special focus on the administration of the Eucharist and pertinent issues that surround it in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

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CHAPTER 2: THE OPEN TABLE DEBATE

2.1 Introduction

The church as the body of Christ has a mission to communicate the grace and the reality of forgiveness realized by the self-giving of Christ to death on the cross. The message of forgiveness is to be communicated to all and it is expected to be done without putting up any unnecessary barriers. One of the ways in which this is communicated is through the sacrament of baptism; understood as the way one is born into the Christian family and the Eucharist which is a communion meal.

This chapter interrogates the Open Table debate and how it can be applied in the administration of the Eucharist. This includes; its theological basis, practicality and benefit if practiced in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

This debate has taken different perspectives, with some people arguing for invitation in general without reference to Christian faith or inter-church communion. Others argue on the Eucharist before baptism. We will consider the arguments of those who argue for and those who are 'not for' Open Table communion.

This research endeavors to develop an argument for an all- inclusive theology in relation to the Eucharist as a means of Grace to all.

The Open Table debate has been ongoing within the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterians and the Methodist church. The Methodists have had long discussions on what Wesley meant by his claim that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance that the table should be open to all (Farwell 2004:215-238).

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2.2 Notion of the Open Table Debate

According to Breindenthal, the open table debate argument revolves around two different views. Firstly, the Eucharist is essentially a covenant meal and secondly it is a family meal where the partaker's care for one another is renewed. Guests are welcomed hospitably regardless of their status, just as Christ frequently had meals with women, sinners and outcasts (Breindenthal 2011:142-157).

The open table debate in relation to the Eucharist argues on allowing everyone to participate in the Eucharist or the Lord's Table. This is by emphasizing on fellowship; hospitality and radical welcome (Breindenthal 2011:142-157).

The same argument is raised by Charles Hefling saying that the Lord's Table is not the Church Table and therefore all are welcome to receive the communion. He further notes, that the Open Table can be defined as a more or less explicit policy of being willing to suspend, occasionally or indefinitely the traditional rule of no communion without baptism (2012 accessed 6/2/2014 http://www.christiancentury.org).

2.2.1 Argument for the Open Table

Discussions of the Open Table that focused on radical hospitality, typically revolved around contested understandings of Christ's meal fellowship with sinners; that he dined with tax collectors, prostitutes and Pharisees, all without condition.

The main argument developed by the different scholars for the open table is all about inclusion, following the example of Jesus who radically included everybody in his circle, where the boundary between the saints and the sinner, the outsider and insider, drop away under God's gracious rule. Jesus instead had a problem with those religious leaders who drew boundaries between those inside and outside the circle of holiness (Farwell 2004:215-238).

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Those arguing for the Open Table communion hold that following this example, therefore the church ought to do the same.

The proponents of the Open Table debate have argued that there lacks support in the early practice of restricting the unbaptized from partaking the communion. The same lack of early support for the restriction of communion to the baptized is claimed to the reference to the post apostolic period. Scholars suggest that the restriction of the Eucharistic meal to the baptized is a late development that is inconsistent with the meal ministry of Jesus that is inconsistent with his vision of the Kingdom (Farwell 2004:215-238).

In Tanner's analysis of the relationship between Christ's presence at the last supper and his meal ministry, she points to the primary theological principle underlying his action which shows the unconditionally or provenience of his love for his companions. She argues that this dynamism of God's prevenient outreach eliciting human response has been recognized by theologians from Augustine to Aquinas to Calvin and Luther. This is referred to as the theological model that governs the Open Table practice and therefore Christ's invitation to the table is based solely on his prevenient love such that, the claim is that our relationship with God embodied at the table rests on God's graceful initiative not the human response (2004:473-485).

Stephen Edmondson in his article "Opening the Table", argues that all the baptized who come forward for the Eucharist come not because of their baptism but because of God's offer in and through Christ. Therefore the church also should invite all to the table discerning in them not their baptismal status or lack thereof but their status as the beloved of God to whom God has extended God-self in Christ, inviting them to come and eat (Edmondson, 2007). He continues to say that to withhold this invitation would be to question the welcome at the table

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since the human worthiness to come to the table is grounded solely in the manifold and great mercy of God (Edmondson, 2007)

Paul Althaus argues that, the Open Table is a means of embodying justification by faith whereby it is not that all are invited because all are justified but that the invitation is God's unconditional gift of grace. Though the gift will only come to fruition if received by faith. This is related to Martin Luther's argument in understanding of the sacraments (Althaus, 1966). He continues to say that in this case the meal is not offered as a prize for faith but as gift that might produce faith (Althaus, 1966)

According to Edmondson, what is theologically distinctive in the practice of the Open Table is clearly seen through the five theological intuitions that give this practice its particular shape. They are wholly congruent with strands of the Christian theological tradition which are; 'all are God's children whom God longs and seeks and therefore none should be excluded from the family of God since God claims all persons as their creator' (Edmondson: 2004).

The challenge of the practice of the Open Table is to live fully into this recognition so that we are not simply willing but desirous to seek out not only those who are 'like' us but also those whose status as God's children qualify them to be partakers as well. The inclusion in the circle of grace of those who experience themselves as outsiders break down the barriers of rejection, fear, failure and unworthiness that they may experience as individuals (2004:224). He continues to say that the invitation to the Eucharist instigates reconciliation between persons and God, as well as reconcile persons to the Christian community (Edmondson, 2007).

Edmondson argues that those who are mostly affected by the invitation are not only the unbaptized but also those who have been alienated from the Church. The church is brought

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out to be a destructively exclusionary and judgmental place yet when congregants hear that all are welcome at the table, they recognize and rejoice at this invitation to receive God's embrace in the context of Christian community.

According to Breidenthal (2012 *Anglican Theological Review* V94 (2), the most common argument in support of the open table is that it reflects the inclusivity of the reign of God. This is a strong argument because the reign of God is indeed inclusive. "I will draw all people to myself, says Jesus of his glorification in the paschal mystery.

Ruth A. Meyers in the article "W*ho may be invited to the Table",* argues that any facile inclusiveness or welcoming makes the Eucharistic feast ours and claims as our own the authority to welcome or exclude it is upon the church to consider inclusion and hospitality as privileges especially with an emphasis on that person who may be inclined to fear or judgment. She continues to say that in Christ that stranger outside the comfortable boundary is us. When we claim we are a 'guest' worthy being here, we step outside the circle of people whom Christ himself chose, embraced, dined with and died with, and so only with that stranger will we discover ourselves drawn into Christ's body, the holy people of God that is all humanity (Meyers 2012).

According to Ault 2001, the African view of the Eucharist is that everyone should participate or rather it is a communal meal. The African Church may also enrich world Christianity's notions of who participates in the Eucharist. Looking at the objects offered in the African assembly he argues that they are from the local community. In this case during the Eucharist, members of the assembly often bring the elements to the table with celebration, dancing, and rejoicing. The Eucharist meal is not something that the priest or minister prepares alone. Traditional patterns in Africa call for greater participation and less rarified matter for the Eucharistic elements, including local symbols of nourishing food and festive drink. Also on

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the same issue, Bishop Peter Sarpong draws upon Ashanti culture to involve all the people in the Catholic Mass of Kumasi, Ghana. The symbols of African life, pre-loaded with meaning, are used to communicate the message of the church. Young women dance through the assembly toward the altar carrying chicken, traditional symbols of sacrifice that will later be given to the poor. Hymns and responsive litanies are sung in the vernacular to traditional tunes. Young men beat drums, providing the rhythms that drive the constant movements of the whole assembly. Consider the well-known Zaire Mass, which also highlights the co-offering of the people through a simple offertory rite in preparation for the Mass. Gifts for the needy are brought to the altar; one of the bearers exclaims: "Priest of God here is our offering! May it be a sure sign of our unity" Making a sign of gratitude, the priest accepts the gifts. Two people present bread and wine, saying together, "O priest of God, here is the bread, here is the wine; gifts of God, fruit of the earth, they are also the work of man. May they become food and drink for the Kingdom of God" (Ault, 2001).

Okoye (1992:285) argues that in both the Ghana and Zaire examples, the Eucharist is centered on the active participation of the entire community. The real presence of Christ – "This is the Body of Christ" – becomes true only through full participation. African Eucharistic celebrations have a way of preserving individual distinctions while maximizing the participation of all in common worship of God. On this point, African theologians do not tire of telling us that the African assemblies are nearer to the worship of the New Testament and exemplify the communal life of the early church.

2.2.2 Argument against the Open Table

Farwell argues against open table on the grounds that those who argue for open table seem to be separating the two sacraments this is because they ask for the invitation of the unbaptized to the table. He argues that open communion collapses the character of the church's sacramental life (both radical gift of grace and radical call to discipleship) entirely into divine

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gift and thereby leads to the neglect of baptismal commitment and the need for transformation of life (2004:215-238). It has become commonplace that communion should be offered to all, even the unbaptized in the public worship as an expression of the radical hospitality of Jesus, however, a number of scholars have raised concerns which challenge this argument. Not everyone has been in support of the Eucharist being open to all. Mostly the argument has been that those not baptized should not participate in the Eucharist before baptism. Also, children must wait until they turn twelve years so that they can be considered to be mature for admission. The issue of inter church communion has also been raised (Farwell, 2004).

The sacramental norms have been changing, a half- century ago the question was not about participation in communion before baptism but whether individuals could receive communion before confirmation. This was prior to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer whereby, the Episcopal church prayer books included the so called confirmation "rubric" that stated "that no one shall be admitted to the Holy Communion until he or she was confirmed" (Common Book of Prayer (1928).

The *Didache* which is a church order in the first or early century had sets of clear declaration; "But let no one eat or drink of the Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; this was with a claim that even Jesus said "Give not that which is holy to the dogs" (*Didache* 9).

Andrew McGowan a liturgical scholar, while criticizing the open communion observes that although Jesus frequently dined with those who were marginalized, he did so as a guest and not a host. He further argues that Jesus' meals are handed down in Scripture through the lenses of early Christian communities. The inclusive Jesus of history and the gospels does not provide a clear or compelling mode of communal meal practices without the matrix of the

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defined community that succeeded him. He further notes that perhaps the church should look at the practice of the early church to help her determine whether opening communion to all without regard to baptism is in order (McGowan, 2004).

Richard Fabian argues that formally inviting everyone to the table diverges from an ancient model that Reformers used to support other liturgical changes, hence blurring this boundary would compromise the authenticity of the Christian identity to mere service to modernity (Fabian, 2002).

On the concept of inclusion**,** Breidenthal presents a critique noting that it is not as open because the notion of inclusion shows that those who are advocating for it are already in a privileged position 'to show hospitality is to be a host, and to be a host is to have the right of admission or exclusion' (Breidenthal, 2011).

2.3 Presbyterian Church Eucharistic Tradition

2.3.1 Presbyterian Understanding of the Sacraments

The Presbyterian Church refers to the Eucharist as the Lords table (Church service book, 2011:34) indicates the minister to address the congregation saying:

> Beloved in the Lord, as we draw near the table of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us remember that this sacrament is a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ for sins of men, a means of grace for those who believe in him, and a bond and pledge of their union with him and with each other as members of his body (Church service book, 2011:34).

In the communion liturgy, the Eucharist is a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men, a means of grace for those who believe in him and a bond and pledge of their union with him and with each other as members of his body. The Eucharist is a means of grace that is open to the fellowship of believers as a way of remembering the sacrifice that Jesus made for them to receive salvation

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> The significance of the Lord's Supper must be understood in terms of the sacred history, not philosophy. The Lord's Supper is a celebration of the reconciliation of man with God and with one another, in which they joyfully eat and drink together at the table of their Saviour (Practice and Procedure manual 3.34, 23).

The Presbyterian Church understanding of the Sacrament of baptism is that God receives the person once and for all into the household of faith but in the Eucharist, God offers the continued spiritual nourishment and sustains the person in the communion of the body of Christ. Further, the understanding is that Jesus Christ gave this in remembrance of his death for sinful men, so that by participating in it they have communion with him and with all who shall be gathered to him. Through this, they receive the benefits of his death and resurrection. They rejoice in the foretaste of the kingdom by participating in the Lord's Table with courage and hope for the service he has called them for (Practice and Procedure manual 3.34, 23).

2.3.2 Presbyterian Eucharistic practices

2.3.2.1 Qualification for participation in the Eucharist

According to the Presbyterian Church, the people who partake the Eucharist are all those who are active Church members or communicants of good standing in their own churches where they are considered to be in communion and they trust the Lord Jesus through repentance of their sins as alluded in (Practice and procedure manual 3.54,26),

> The minister shall invite to partake of the sacrament all those who are active Church members or communicants of good standing in their own Churches where they are in communion and who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent their sins, and who covenant anew to live as followers of Christ (Practice and procedure manual 3.54,26).

Another qualification is that they must be baptized with an understanding of the significance of the invitation to the Lords Table and of their response to faith (P&P manual 3.55, 26).

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The church practice and procedure manual intimates that:

> Participation in the Eucharist is to be understood as a privilege to be given to the undeserving rather than a right conferred upon the worthy. Yet those who are unprepared, who are self-sufficient and unrepentant, should be warned not to come to the Holy Table (P&P manual 3.55, 26).

2.3.2.2 Justification for their practice

The different practices outlined in the above section 2.3.2.1, are justified in different ways. The requirement of the communicant being an active member and a communicant of good standing is claimed that he or she has fulfilled the laid church rules and requirements. For the requirement that one should be baptized, indicates that the individual has the understanding of the invitation to the Lord's Table. The Eucharist is considered to be Holy and only those who repent qualify to partake.

An interview with some senior leaders in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa revealed that the church is careful not to open the Eucharistic table as it would dilute its meaning. Jesse Kamau a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, explaining the church's stand on the practice of the Eucharist argues that if the church decides to open the table the importance of the Eucharist will be diluted. This is because some people will just get into the system without much consideration of the meaning of the Eucharist. He further argues that it is important for the church to put some qualification on the same so that people don't just partake without knowing why and how this sacrament of the Eucharist ought to be practiced. He continues to say that through this kind of restriction people tend to revere the Lord's Table as required, unlike when it is just open to anybody without any kind of laid down requirements. Therefore, for Jesse Kamau, the laid rules and regulations are important so that the members can seek to understand the meaning of the Eucharist and ensure that they meet the laid down standards (Interview by author, 4/5/2015).

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2.3.2.3 Critique of the Presbyterian practice of the Eucharistic

The Presbyterian Church refers to the Eucharist as the Lords table. In their communion liturgy, the Eucharist is a memorial of the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men, a means of grace for those who believe in him and a bond and pledge of their union with him and with each other as members of his body (Church service book, 2011:34). Although it is referred to as the Lord's Table but looking at the way it is practiced, one may say that it is no longer the Lord's Table but the Church table. The Church seems to be the host and not Christ; this is in relation to the traditions and rules attached to the same in barring people from partaking. This is the prevenient grace meaning that it starts with God and not man. Contrary the Church interferes with this by restricting people into the membership. For example; people living as man and wife and have not solemnized their marriage in church, the man cannot be allowed to partake in the Eucharist. This is contentious because in the Presbyterian Church marriage is not a sacrament. Therefore, the link between marriage and the Eucharist in this context require to be clearly brought out.

The Eucharist is a means of grace that is open to the fellowship of believers as a way of remembering the sacrifice that Jesus made for them to receive salvation. All who have therefore accepted this sacrifice should partake in celebrating the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Presbyterian Church uses the following words in her liturgy book while celebrating the Lords supper.

> Beloved in the lord, you who truly repent of your sins, who seek to be in fellowship with your neighbors and to lead a new life in Christ, draw near with faith and hear the gracious words of our Lord Jesus Christ., Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you and learn from me: for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall never be hungry; he who believes on me shall never be thirsty; he who comes to me I will not cast out. (Church service book, 2011:28).

The above liturgy contradicts the practice of exclusivity by the Presbyterian Church. The phrase "you who truly repent of your sins", opens the door to all who repent their sins,

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practically, no restrictions are or should be put to discriminate anyone. The same applies to the phrase, "who seek to be in fellowship with your neighbors". Whereas no one selects his or her neighbor, most of the time neighbors do not know each other, neither are they of the same belief, hence this opens the view that nothing should restrict a neighbor from participating in the same. It also indicates "come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". This does not put any barrier of who should approach God in the Lord's Table. The Lord's Table is a place where the overburdened are refreshed by God taking off their burdens without discriminating any one. The phrase "I am the bread of Life", alludes sustenance for all who come to Him which does not close out any one. The final section finalizes, "he who comes to me I will not cast out". This does not lay any condition on who should come to the Lord's Table. All who come will not be cast out; hence no one is deterred from partaking Lord's Table due to any reason whatsoever. Hence, the Lord's Table does not lay the obligation on who should partake based on fulfillment of any requirements. The basis of this argument is more in the church traditions as opposed to the actual requirement to partake.

From the aforementioned discussion, the practice of the Lord's Table in the Presbyterian Church raises questions as to whether it is truly the Lord's Table or the Church table. The Church seems to be the host and not Christ; this is in relation to the traditions and rules attached to the same in barring people from partaking. The church ought to view the Eucharist as a means of grace which starts with God not man. Therefore, the church should not interfere by restricting people into the membership. If participation in the Lords Table is to be considered a privilege to the undeserving, then how does the Presbyterian Church qualify who deserves and who does not?

On whether to open the table or not, the main issues are if one is unbaptized, from other denominations or what most writers are referring to as inter- Church Communion.

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Another concern is on what comes first between the two sacraments; baptism and admission to the Eucharist. Is it baptism or one can be a partaker then be baptized later. Richard Fabian asks this question; should churches today call the world to baptism first and only afterward to share the Eucharist? Or should churches welcome new comers at once to Christ's Eucharistic table and lead them to commitment in baptism later? This serves as long history on the informal practice of open communion to denominations (Fabian, 2002). Both persons should be welcomed just as they are and the two sacraments should be administered appropriately.

2.4 Conclusion

The church has over the years embraced the sacraments although with different emphasis. Most of the protestant churches revere both baptism and the sacrament of the Eucharist. This is in view of the redeeming power of Christ to the church and therefore the sacrament of the Eucharist is observed in remembrance of Christ.

Participation in the Eucharist has been based firstly on an individual being baptized in order to be admitted as a partaker, this has been treated as an order for ages where one had to be confirmed and baptized to be allowed into the Lord's Table. Different interpretations of the scripture depending on different backgrounds have been interpreted to claim that the Lord's Table is set for a selected people. The church leaders have continued to advocate for closed Table in order for the people to comprehend the meaning of Eucharist as well as create order in partaking the Eucharist. The church also has put a condition of marriage for one to be admitted to the practice of the Eucharist, one has to have a good standing and to have met the laid rules and regulations. Despite the church using baptism as a condition for one to be admitted into partaking the Eucharist, there are people who have been baptized, but the church traditions do not allow them to be admitted as partakers.

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By looking at the different standing and positions as brought forth above and consequent critique of the closed table highlighted, the proposition of a closed table is wanting. The Lord's table is clearly open to all who repent without discrimination, it invites one along with his or her neighbors meaning everyone is invited, all those with needs and problems are invited so that the grace of God would deliver them.

The gaps identified above clearly show that while the church is practicing the closed table, the interpretations leading to this are erroneous, and thus bring discrimination on who should partake the Eucharist. Hence this informs the research objectives of establishing the basis of exclusivity, the theological basis of the argument of the open and closed table and guide to shifting from exclusivity to open table.

This research will seek to address the above by using the postcolonial hermeneutics to formulate how the Eucharist should be understood and investigate how the Presbyterian Church interprets 1Corinthians 11:17-34 with a view of liberation.

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CHAPTER 3: THE EUCHARIST IN THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN CALVIN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the notion of the sacraments in both Old and New Testament, Historical notion of the sacraments in general, John Calvin's general view on sacraments and his view on the Eucharist. It addresses the Eucharist in the Theology of John Calvin which is the basis of the Presbyterian Church of East African teaching and practice regarding the exclusive practice of the Eucharist.

The debate on the Eucharist has over the years brought a lot of varying opinions among different theologians. The Church has put a lot of emphasis on the sacraments and through the ages they have been regarded as very important, especially for one to be considered a committed follower in the Christian Faith.

John Calvin, one of the prominent reformers has his views on the Eucharist greatly followed by the reformed tradition, albeit with his unique views as well. The Presbyterian Church borrows a lot of their teachings and traditions from John Calvin even in the area of the Eucharist which they refer to as the Lord's Table.

This chapter will shed light on the Calvinistic exclusive administration of the Eucharist as practiced in the Presbyterian Church in East Africa. It also shows its basis and arguments in support of the practice within the Church.

3.2 Definition of Eucharist

According to St Augustine, a sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace. The word 'sacrament' was developed from the Greek word 'mysterion' and the Latin word 'sacramentum'. 'Mysterion' means 'something hidden or secret' – our word

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'mystery'(http://rcdow.org.uk/att/files/faith/catechesis/baptism/sacraments.pdf). (Accessed 24/11/15)

Calvin defines the term sacrament as all the signs which God ever commanded men to use, that He might make them sure and confident of the truth of His promises (*Inst* 4.14.18).

The Eucharist, also called Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, is a rite considered by most Christian churches to be a sacrament. In the New Testament, it was instituted by Jesus Christ during his Last Supper. Giving his disciples bread and wine during the Passover meal, Jesus commanded his followers to "do this in memory of me," while referring to the bread as "my body" and the wine as "my blood." Through the Eucharistic celebration Christians remember Christ's sacrifice of himself once and for all on the cross (Baker, 2000).

In the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, the Lords Supper is a celebration of the reconciliation of man with God and with one another, in which they joyfully eat and drink together at the table of their savior (Practice and Procedure manual, 1998).

In most churches of the Anglican Communion, the Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday, having replaced Morning Prayer as the principal service. The rites for the Eucharist are found in the various prayer books of Anglican churches. Wine and unleavened wafers or leavened bread is used. Daily celebrations are the norm in many cathedrals and parish churches. They typically observe one or more sacrament during the week. (Date accessed 12/05/2016. http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Eucharist#cite_note-68).

Lutherans believe that the body and blood of Christ are "truly and substantially present in, with, and under the forms" of the consecrated bread and wine (the elements), so that communicants eat and drink the body and blood of Christ himself as well as the bread and wine in this sacrament. (Date accessed 12/05/2016

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http://research.omicsgroup.org/index.php/Augsburg_Confession).

Most Baptists do not consider the Communion or its elements to be sacramental; rather, it is considered to be an act of remembrance of Christ's atonement, and a time of renewal of personal commitment. However, with the rise of confessionalism, many Baptists have denied memorialism as a 19th-century doctrinal novelty, and have taken up a Reformed view of Communion. Confessional Baptists believe in pneumatic presence, which is expressed in the Second London Baptist Confession, specifically in Chapter 30, Articles 3 and 7:

> Art. 3. The Lord Jesus hath, in this ordinance, appointed his ministers to pray, and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread; to take the cup, and, they communicating also themselves, to give both to the communicants.
>
> Art. 7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this ordinance, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually receive, and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

3.3 Historical Notion of Sacraments

Bail in his book *Theology of sacraments*, gives a background of the historical meaning of the word sacrament. He says that it comes from the Latin word *sacramentum* which means the sum which two contending parties deposited in court when they entered upon a Law-suit. In the early days the sum was in form of sheep or oxen. He further explains that the successful party received his deposit back, but the loser forfeited his, and the forfeited pledge which was often used for religious purposes hence the name *sacramentum* (Baillie, 1957).

Baillie states that the sacred thing and the meaning is a pledge. This word pledge has another sense such that it can mean a promise, and that is what *sacramentum* moves on to mean. Again it was a military oath of allegiance which a soldier took when he joined the Roman army, For the Roman soldier; the *sacramentum* was the declaration of a loyalty even willingness to lose one's life in respect to the oath (Baillie, 1957).

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In the imperial times this became the custom for loyal citizens voluntarily to take the *sacramentum* to the emperor, and to renew it on the anniversary each year of the day on which they had taken it. In the end *sacramentum* came to stand for any obligation solemnly taken. From beginning to the end, *sacramentum* means a complete and solemn promise of complete and absolute and if need be, sacrificial loyalty. In this case in the Christian family, to take the bread and wine in our hands and on our lips is a pledge of absolute loyalty to Jesus Christ. Augustine defined the word *sacramentum* as signs that when connected with divine things they are called sacraments (Baillie, 1957).

Berkhof argues that the word sacrament is not found in Scripture, it is derived from a Latin word *sacramentum* which originally denote a sum of money deposited by two parties in litigation. The intention was for it to be a sort of propitiatory offering to the gods (Berkhof, 1941:617). He continues to say that in the early church the word sacrament was first used to denote all kinds of doctrines and ordinances. Some reformers objected to the name and preferred to speak of "signs", "seals" or mysteries, which was the case even during and immediately after the reformation. Again according to Berkhof, sacraments have three components or parts which need to be distinguished; these are the outward or visible sign, the inward spiritual grace signified and sealed and finally the sacramental union between the sign and that which is signified (Berkhof, 1941: 617).

The early Christian practice and usage of the sacrament is indebted to Judaism, the New Testament theology and the interpretations of the church fathers from their own experiences with the sacraments. The Latin word *sacramentum* was first used in a Christian sense by Tertullian, looking for an equivalent of Greek word *mysterion.* 'In a discussion of the meaning of baptism Terturian explained that it was similar to the *sacramentum* which was administered to Roman recruits when they entered the army. The *sacramentum* was a religious initiation so was baptism, it marked the beginning of a new way of life, so did

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baptism, it was an oath of allegiance to the emperor, baptism was a promise of fidelity to Christ' (Martos 1981:42). Clement of Alexandria described sacraments as mysteries representing sacred realities in signs and symbols only understood by the initiated. In this case, just as outsiders were barred from witnessing the pagan mysteries, the non-Christians were barred to be present at the final step in the celebration of the Eucharist (Martos 1981:40-41).

The meaning of the sacraments by the early church fathers was derived from the bible literally. 'If the scripture says that baptism forgives sin, then it must be so, if at his last supper Jesus said 'this is my body 'then the Eucharistic bread must be indeed his body…' (Martos, 1981:42). The church fathers confirmed the theological meaning of sacraments through the scriptures, their own experiences and that of their fellow Christians. Cyprian of Carthage explains his understanding of baptism from his own experience. He speaks of baptism as the sacrament of salvation which removes the blemishes of sin (Martos, 1981:44)

The sacraments were a key area of concern for the early church fathers that recognized a number of rites or practices. McGrath points out that from an early stage, a connection was made between the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion and the mystery of God's saving work in Christ (McGrath 2006:159).

Tertullian translated the Greek term into Latin, by using sacramentum, a word which in a secular sense meant an oath of allegiance in such a way like the way a soldier might make to his commanding officers. Augustine as an example, he defines the Sacraments as a 'sacred sign' (*sacrumsignum*); which he explains as an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace (Book of Common Prayer). Again he says that a sacrament is a visible sign of a sacred thing or a visible form of the invisible grace (Wendel, 1963:312). These understanding by Augustine developed out of his Philosophy that material goods are signs of

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higher spiritual realities; that the visible world is a sign of eternal universe (Vorgrimler 1992:49-50).

The view of the sacraments into the middle Ages was influenced by Augustinian sacramental theology in the Western Church. This period saw the need to develop proper rite for administering the sacraments. Vorgrimler says that in the Middle Ages the idea of the existence of sacred, blessed objects achieved wide acceptance. In the same regard to the original liturgical celebration of the sacraments was emptied thus becoming only the distribution of sacred matter prepared beforehand. The issues of the qualifications of the persons doing the consecration as well as the numbering were areas of great and particular interest (Vorgrimler, 1992).

In the *Summa Theologia* III q60, Saint Thomas Aquina says "For sacrament appears to be derived from "sacring" [sacrando; just as medicament, from "medicando" [healing]. But this seems to be of the nature of a cause rather than of a sign. Therefore, a sacrament is a kind of cause rather than a kind of sign". He further adds that sacrament seems to signify something hidden.

In *Sacramental Theology*, Vorgrimler describes a dogmatic approach to the sacraments where he follows Saint Thomas Aquinas in relating the sacraments directly to Christ but he also expands on the role of the Church. Sacramental activity thus encompasses all of God's activity towards the Church because it always involves the elements of humanity and mystery sacred. Vorgrimler is conscious of the distinction between sacramental activity and sacraments and understands the seven sacraments as existing objectively in the world, though not on their own grounds but always in relation to Christ and the Church. He attempted to explain the sacraments as seven in number on the fact that in that very number reflects the individual and social nature of humanity and indicate through this double imagery that all of

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human life will be incorporated into the life of God (Vorgrimler 1992:54), that which is common to all the seven is that they confer grace.

The theological positions and reflections that developed during the reformation helped show the major differences between Protestants and Catholic approaches to sacraments. In relation to the number of sacraments, the Lord's Supper and baptism fitted in Luther criterion to have had a word of promise from Jesus Christ with a visible sign. The sacraments were understood as signs instituted by God and Jesus Christ and not by human beings, thus real signs of Grace, visible witnesses to God's visible will towards human beings and not mere marks of Christian profession (Vorgrimler 1992:56, Martos 1981:104).

3.4 Biblical Notion of Sacraments

3.4.1 Sacraments in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament meals were a common practice, in the context of a family or in religious settings. As Gavin has observed, it was common to give thanks in recognition of God's provision; the blessing which was pronounced upon God not only recognized and acknowledged man's indebtedness. During the meals such as *Kiddush* (the religious supper ushering in the Sabbath). It released the food for man's use and the words of blessing released divine power and conveyed or exerted a powerful declaration of God as to the matter in hand (Gavin, 1928). The meals however were not initially seen as sacramental as Martos in his book *Doors to the Sacred* 1981, states that "Judaism is not usually thought of a sacramental religion since the focus of its worship is not on sacred rituals which are believed to have a spiritual effect. He continues to say that the Israelites found their God in their own history which was their most important sacrament" (Martos, 1981).

Martos notes that the other most important sacrament to Israel was the Scripture which was seen as the record of the holy revelation that was to be enshrined, venerated read and

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meditated. This was the word of God given to Moses, sung by psalmists, recorded by historians and spoken through the prophets. He continues to say that reading it brought into contact with the important events of Israel's past, and pondering it in one's heart put one into contact with the God who spoke through those events (Martos,1981).

Martos observes other sacramental aspects in the religion of Israel as sacred rituals, objects, places and persons. All these are found in the book of Law which was filled with the prescriptions about rituals of worship, purification and Ordination (Martos, 1981).

Vorgrimler 1992 observes that in the Old Testament, special attention was given to circumcision as a mark of covenant and sign of salvation. Circumcision and the Pascal lamb are acknowledged as the Old Testament sacraments and signs of salvation which also played a role in the life of Jesus the Jew (Vorgrimler, 1992).

3.4.2 Sacraments in the New Testament

Though the word sacrament is not mentioned in the Old Testament, it forms the basis of the Christian sacraments with parallels and precedents traced therein for the Baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism is likened to the Jewish circumcision in that it stripped off the ways of the flesh and initiated a convert into the ways of the Spirit. Those who were baptized received the Spirit of Christ and having being animated by a single Spirit they were now joined by a single body to Christ and to one another (Martos, 1981:166). The New Testament identifies the reality of the Church with the Communion in the one loaf and one covenant cup because all are covenant people and it is from this communion they proclaim the death of Christ in word and in witness (http://www.eucharistia.com.22nd March 2016).

The evening before Jesus died, he shared his last fellowship meal with his disciples, and this was an evening meal before the Passover. Jesus departed from the usual ritual in a few ways

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that Christians would remember and his words of blessings were the simple beginnings of the Eucharistic liturgy (Martos, 1981:239; Mazza, 1995: 9).

The New Testament sacrament of the Eucharist has succeeded the Old Testament chief sacrament of the passion; the Pascal lamb, in which is a remembrance of the passion as a past event just as the Pascal lamb was prefiguration of his passion still to come. The ceremonies of the old law were evidently related to Christ's passion just as the Eucharist is related after it. The sacraments of the Old Testament were regarded as true signs of divine favor, however in the New Testament; they have lost their effectiveness when a new covenant, through Christ came into force (Vorgrimler 1992:15).

By sharing in a final meal with his disciples, Jesus united them in a covenant relationship with himself and with one another. Sharing in the sacred meal establishes unity and communion with the one Lord.

3.5 Calvin's Concept of the Sacraments

3.5.1 Notion of Sacraments according to John Calvin

Calvin defines sacraments as "an external sign by which the Lord seals our consciences his promises of good will towards us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith and we in our turn testify our piety towards him both before himself as well as men" (*Inst*.4.14.1). "for the sacraments are a kind of mutual contracts by which the Lord conveys his mercy to us and by it eternal life while we in our turn promise him obedience (*Inst*. 4.13.6).

Also he calls it "a testimony of divine favor towards us confirmed by an external sign with a corresponding attestation of our faith towards him" (*Inst*.4.14.1).

Calvin states that both the word of God and the sacraments do not differ, but the two hold forth and offer Christ to us, and in him the treasures of the heavenly grace; they confer nothing and avail nothing if not received by faith.

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> Sacraments are to us what messengers of good news are to men or earnest in ratifying actions. They do not of themselves bestow any grace but they announce and manifest it and like earnest and badges give a ratification of the gifts which the divine liberality has bestowed upon us. The Holy Spirit whom the sacraments do not bring promiscuously to all but whom the lord specially confers on his people brings the gifts of God along with him, makes way for the sacraments and causes them to bear fruits (*Inst*.4.14.17).

He continues to say that "sacraments are truly termed evidences of divine grace and as it were, seals of the good-will which he entertains toward us, by sealing it to sustain, nourish, confirm and increase our faith" (*Inst.* 4.14.7)

Calvin also links sacraments to a promise, he says, "there never is a sacrament without antecedent promise, the sacrament being added as a kind of appendix with the view of confirming and sealing the promise and giving a better attestation or rather in a manner confirming it" (*Inst*.4. 14.3).

Sacraments are exercises which make us more certain of the trustworthiness of God's Word. In this case Calvin argues that they cannot make the promise of God objectively more certain, but it can make our faith in God's promise subjectively more certain. This is because the word of God is always absolute, strong and unchangeable but our faith is weak. Therefore, sacraments can be called pillars of our faith or mirrors in which we may contemplate the riches of the grace which God bestows upon us (*Inst*.4.14.6)

Through the sacrament Calvin argues that God establishes us in faith through his mercy emphasizing that "our faith is slender and weak so if it be not propped up on every side and supported by all kinds of means, it is forthwith shaken and tossed to and fro wavers and even falls" (*Inst*.4. 14.3).

Calvin seems to follow Augustine's view who formulated an often repeated definition of sacraments and he called them 'visible signs of an invisible grace" however he explains that definition at a greater length (*Inst.* 4.14.1).

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According to John Calvin in regard to the sacraments, "the more closely Christ has been revealed to men, the more clearly do the sacraments present him from the time when he was truly revealed by the father as he had been promised" (*Inst*. 4.14.22). He continues to say that baptism attests to us that we have been cleansed and washed hence the Eucharistic Supper reminds us that we have been redeemed. Water symbolizes washing and the blood symbolizes satisfaction (*Inst.* 4.14.22).

Calvin notes that, the sacraments were diverse according to the varied dispensation of the times by which the lord was pleased to reveal himself in one way or the other to humankind. He observes that in this case circumcision was enjoined upon Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17: 10) so he states that to it were afterwards added purifications and sacrifices from the law of Moses which according to Calvin these were the sacraments of the Jews until the coming of Christ (*Inst*. 4.14.20).

3.5.2 Calvin's Concept of the Eucharist

John Calvin states the two sacraments as instituted for the Christian church as Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the (*Inst.*4.17.1), Calvin speaking on the Lord's Supper, says that "it is the bread sanctified in Christ's body and the wine sanctified in his blood". This is called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist because in it, the believer is both spiritually fed by the Lord's goodness, and give thanks to him for his kindness. The promise added thereto very clearly asserts for what purpose it has been instituted, and the goal to which it looks, namely to confirm to the believer that the Lord's body was once for all so handed over to us as now to be ours and also forever to be so; he further says that "the blood was once for all so poured out for us as always to be ours" (*Inst*.4.17.1).

Through the Eucharist Christ testifies that he himself is living bread on which our souls feed for true and blessed immortality. The signs of these sacraments are bread and wine which

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represent the invisible food which we receive from the body and blood of Christ. The heavenly father invites us to a communion with Christ to refresh us and help us gain new vigor until we reach the heavenly immortality (*Inst*.4.17.1)

He argues, "that pious souls can derive great confidence and delight from these sacrament, as being a testimony that they form one body with Christ." (*Inst.* 4.17.2) Calvin maintains that the Eucharist benefits believer who receives the elements with faith and heartfelt gratitude such that they can receive the actual body and blood of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit who works through the sacraments, a view known as receptionism (*Inst*. 4.17.10).

Through this sacrament, Calvin says that the believers' souls gather the sweetness and the comfort because of recognizing that Christ has been so engrafted in us, as we in turn have been engrafted in him so that whatever is his we are permitted to call ours and whatever is ours we reckon as his (*Inst*. 4.17.2).

He calls this the boundless goodness whereby there are great things that are promised to us through this particular sacrament through which we must consider him truly shown to us. He states that; by receiving our poverty unto himself, he has transferred his wealth to us; that taking our weakness upon himself he has strengthened us by his power, that having received our mortality he has given us his immortality, that descending to earth, he has prepared an ascent to heaven for us that becoming son of man with us he has made us sons of God with him (*Inst* 4.17.2). 'to all these we have a complete attestation in this sacrament that enable us certainly to conclude that they are as truly exhibited to us as if Christ were placed in bodily presence before our view or handled by our hands' (*Inst.* 4.17.2).

The sacrament is for the benefit of the partaker "in bidding us take, he intimates that it is ours; in bidding us eat, he intimates that it becomes one substance with us, in affirming his body that it was broken and of his blood that it was shed for us he shows that both were not

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so much his own as ours because he took and laid down both not for his own advantage but for our salvation." (*Inst*.4.17.3).

According to Calvin when he says,

> This is my body given for you, this is my bloodshed for you'', indeed he observes that the entire force of the Sacraments lies in these words, "which is given for you, which is shed for you''. Hence that the present distribution of the body and blood of the Lord would not greatly benefit us unless they had been given once for all for our redemption and salvation (*Inst*. 4.17.3)

He teaches that these are not so much his as ours, which he took up and laid down, not for his own advantage but for our sake and benefit they are represented under bread and wine so that one can learn that they are ours and that they are as life and food for us (*Inst* 4.17.3).

Calvin emphasizes that the cup as being the blood of the new covenant between God and man. This gives the impression to his conviction that by taking part of the wine, we receive the indisputable confirmation that God will be true to his promise of reconciliation after satisfaction through the blood of Jesus Christ. He states that drinking from this cup, one knows that the covenant of grace is continued and extended to us (*Inst*.4.17.1).

The physical things set forth in the sacraments ought to point to the believer an analogy to spiritual things. Thus when one sees the bread set forth to us as a sign of Christ's body one must grasp this comparison that as bread nourishes, sustains and keeps the life of our body, so Christ's body is the food and protection of our spiritual life. The same case with the wine that as a symbol of blood one must realize just as the benefits imparted to the body, the spiritually imparted to us by the blood of Christ are also great to strengthen, refresh and gladden the partaker (*Inst* 4.17.3).

John Calvin states that the chief function of the Eucharist is not simply to exhibit to us the body of Christ rather it is to seal and confirm that promise by which he testifies that his flesh is food indeed and blood is drink feeding us unto eternal life (John 6: 55-56). Through this he

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declares himself that he is the bread of life, whereof he who eats will live forever. This sacrament sends us to the cross of Jesus where that promise was indeed performed and in all respects fulfilled (*Inst*.4.17.4).

Calvin says that by Christ calling himself the bread of life he did not borrow that name from the sacrament rather he had been given as such to us by the Father and showed himself as such when being made a sharer in our human mortality, he made us partakers in his divine immortality; when offering himself as a sacrifice, he bore our curse in himself to instill us with blessing; when by his death he swallowed up and annihilated death and when in his resurrection he raised up this corruptible flesh of ours, which he had put on to glory and corruption (*Inst*.4.17.4).

Therefore, the sacrament does not make Christ to be the bread of life but in short it assures us that all things that Christ died or suffered for, were done and suffered to quicken us; and again that this quickening is eternal such that we are being ceaselessly nourished, sustained and preserved throughout life by it for Christ would not have been the bread of life for us if he had not been born and died for us (*Inst*. 4.17.5).

Christ 'gave himself once that he might become bread when he gave himself to be crucified for the redemption of the world; and he gives himself daily when in the word of the gospel he offers himself to be partaken by us in as much as he was crucified when he seals that offer by the mystery of the supper and when he accomplishes inwardly what he externally designates' (*Inst.* 4.17.5)

John Calvin says that the Lord in the Eucharist admonishes the believers not to be ungrateful but continue to proclaim the lavish kindness with fitting praises and to celebrate it with thanksgiving. Therefore, when he gave the institution of the sacrament itself to the apostles he taught them to do it in remembrance of him (Luke 22:19) Paul interpreted as to declare the

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Lord's death (1Corinthians 11:26) that is publicly and all with single voice to confess openly before men that for us the whole assurance of life and salvation rests upon the Lord's death, that we may glorify him by our confession and by our example, exhort others to give glory to Him (*Inst*. 4.17.37).

Another purpose of the sacrament according to Calvin is to exercise us in the remembrance of Christ 's death. This is seen in the command given to believers in 1Corinthians 11:26 to "declare the Lord's death till he comes''. In this case, in judgment it means that we should by the confession of our mouth declare what our faith recognizes in the sacrament that the death of Christ is our life. This is an outward confession (*Inst*. 4.17.37).

Calvin indicates that the Lord also intended that the supper be a kind of exhortation for us, this is seen as one that can forcefully quicken and inspire us to love, peace and concord. For the Lord communicates his body to us there that he is made completely one with us and we with him. In the same understanding, since the Lord has only one body which he makes us all to be partakers; it is necessary for us also to be made one body by such participation (*Inst*. 4.17.37).

The bread shown as the sacrament represents this unity. As it is made up of many grains so mixed and comingled that one cannot be distinguished from another, so it is fitting that in this way we should be joined and bound together by such great agreement of hearts that no sort of disagreement or division may intrude. Calvin continues to say that the cup of blessing which we bless is a communication of the blood of Christ; and the bread of blessing which we break is a participation in the body of Christ this concludes by stating that we are all one body, for we partake of one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17) with this thought being impressed and engraved upon the partakers heart, there is a lot of benefit from the Sacrament (*Inst* 4.17.38).

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Calvin refers to the Lord's Supper as spiritual food, sweet and delicate to those to whom Christ has shown it to be their life, again it moves to thanksgiving for which it is an exhortation to mutual love among themselves (*Inst* 4.17.40). On the other hand, he says that it is turned into a deadly poison for those whose faith it does not teach and to whom it does not arouse to thanksgiving and to love, here he quotes Paul's words that anyone who eat unworthily of the body and drink of the blood of Christ is guilty of the same, and eat and drink of judgment upon themselves in not discerning the body of the Lord (1Cor.11:27-29).

In this case Calvin says that, in this text not to discern the body and blood of the Lord and to receive it unworthily are taken to mean the same thing. He continues to say that men of this sort who without any, spark of faith and without any zeal for love and yet they do not believe that it is their life, they dishonor it even robbing it of all its dignity and finally they profane and pollute by so receiving it (*Inst*. 4.17.40).

3.5.3 Sacraments and Assurance of Faith

John Calvin again profoundly expounded its character as a seal of assurance for the believers' conscience. Calvin stresses the duty of the partaker to pay attribute to God in per-taking his meal and thus professing the faith before men (*Inst*.4.14. 1). The assurance the sacraments brings is that Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed for the believer's redemption, secondly that the broken body and the shed blood are the gifts which continue to nourish the soul and keep them alive (*Inst*.4.14.1).

He further says that the sacrament leads one from material things to spiritual truth. "Even as bread nourishes our bodies, so the body of Christ is the only food to invigorate and keep alive the soul" (*Inst*.4. 17. 3). Therefore, in the sacraments there are two things; the bodily or corporeal signs depicting and representing invisible things in a manner adopted to our weak

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capacity, and the spiritual truth which is at once figured and exhibited by the signs (*Inst*. 4. 17.11).

Calvin sees a remarkable connection between the Sacrament and God's promises to his people. He says that it is the very work of the Sacrament to seal and confirm this promise such that whoever receives Christ, the bread of life also receives eternal life itself. Therefore, over and over again the Sacrament brings us right up to the cross where God's promise was fulfilled and accomplished (*Inst*.4. 17. 4).

The promise according to Calvin is the word of God; therefore, the sacrament is a mere addition to the promise. They are instruments under which God dispenses his blessings to us thus he spiritually nourishes our faith by means of sacraments, whose only office is to make his promises visible to our eyes or rather to be pledges of his promises (*Inst*.4.14. 12).

Sacraments in themselves do not have a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them, by which of themselves they can promote or strengthen faith but because our Lord has instituted them for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith (*Inst*. 4. 14.9).

3.5.4 The Efficacy of Sacraments

On how the sacraments work, Calvin says they duly perform their office only when accompanied by the Spirit. The internal master, whose energy alone penetrates the heart stirs up the affections and procures access for the sacraments into our souls (*Inst*.4.14.9). The ministry of the sacraments is empty and frivolous but when the Holy Spirit acts within and exerts his power, it is replete with energy. The work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of a pious partaker is to commence, maintain, cherish and establish faith (*Inst*.4.14.9).

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He continues to say that 'they avail no further than accompanied by the Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts and make us capable of receiving this testimony in which various distinguished graces are clearly manifested'(*Inst*.4.14.17).

In his definition and explanation of the sacraments, Calvin has alluded to the sacraments being meaningful only to the believers; he says that when the ungodly partake of them they only incur greater condemnation, giving an example of the Gospel the fact that it is preached to many not all receive and acknowledge it (*Inst*.4.14.7).

In relation to the word and the sacraments, Calvin holds that, there was no question whatsoever as to the priority of the word of God over the sacraments. He says that logically and ontologically the word precedes the sacrament, this is because the sacrament's power and effect is fully dependent on the word (*Inst*.4.14.12).

He further says that the sacrament can be no more than an aid for our faith next to the preaching of the word therefore they do not differ from the word of God they both help to bring Christ to us and in him, the treasures of the heavenly grace, He clearly says that sacraments confer nothing and avail nothing if not received in faith (*Inst*.4.14, 17). He continues to say that 'they avail no further than accompanied by the Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts and make us capable of receiving this testimony in which various distinguished graces are clearly manifested'(*Inst*.4.14.17).

Again according to Calvin, the priority of the word was clearly understood in the liturgy which he developed for the service of the Lords supper. In this case, preaching of the word had to precede the meal. In the institutes, he suggests that the Lord's Supper be taken every week (*Inst*.4. 14.17).

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The Reformed view who are greatly influenced by Calvin also holds that Christ's body and blood are not corporeally (physically) present in the Eucharist, but really present in a spiritual way. They believe that the elements are spiritual nourishment in Christ by faith (Westminster 1946)

According to Calvin, "The sum is that the flesh and blood of Christ feed our souls just as bread and wine maintain and support our corporeal life. For there would be no aptitude in the sign, did not our souls find their nourishment in Christ". Further he states that the sacred mystery of the Supper consists of two things which are the corporeal sign, which presented to the eye which represent invisible things in a manner adapted to our weak capacity, and the spiritual truth which is at once figured and exhibited by the signs (*Inst*.4.7.10-11).

Calvin states that the flesh and blood of Christ are no less truly given to the unworthy than God's elect believers, he further says that faith, not a mere mental apprehension and work of the Holy Spirit are necessary for the partaker to behold God incarnate, and in the same sense touch Christ with their hands so that by eating and drinking of bread and wine Christ's actual presence penetrates to the heart of the believer more than food swallowed by mouth can enter in (*Inst.* 4. 7).

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that "sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to the believer." Further, it teaches that the visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the grace proper to each sacrament (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1992).

The Calvinist or the Reformed view has placed great emphasis on the action of the community as the Body of Christ. As the faith community participates in the action of celebrating the Lord's Supper they are transformed into the body of Christ or 'reformed' into

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the body of Christ each time they participate in this sacrament. They said that this term "transubstantiation" can be applied to the faith community or the church itself being transformed into the real body and blood of Christ truly present in the world.

3.5.5 Qualification to be a partaker

In John Calvin's Commentaries in expounding 1Corinthians 11:27, in which Paul speaks of those who partake the Lord's Table unworthily, he says that one must seek to fulfill what the Lord expects of him or her in relation to the Eucharist.

> If the Lord expects gratitude from an individual when he or she receives this mystery; if God wants us to acknowledge His grace with our heart and make it known with our lips, then the man who offers him insult rather than honor will not escape without punishment, for the lord will not tolerate the despising of His commandment," (Oliver and Boyd, 1960).

He continues to argue that, in this case partaking the lord's Table in an unworthy manner means to ruin the pure and proper use without a shred of penitence but forcing one's way into the Lord's Table which bears a mark of a cruel insult to Christ, thus this kind of a partaker receives the Supper to his or her own destruction (Oliver and Boyd, 1960).

According to Calvin, in regard to who should participate in the Lord's Supper he challenges the view that one should be free from all sin in order to be regarded as being in the state of Grace. This view that one needs to be pure and free from all sin, would mean that none is worthy to partake on earth since all have sinned and none can achieve righteousness by own effort. Calvin goes on to state that it is exactly our unworthiness which makes the Lord's Table accessible to us (*Inst*. 4.17.41). On the other hand, Calvin clearly indicates that the church must also have the right to bar from the communion of the Lord's Supper those who cannot receive without profaning this great mystery (*Inst*.4. 11.5).

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3.5.6 Calvin's view of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

According to John Calvin, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, he notes in verse 20 that "Paul condemns the abuse which had crept into the Corinthians observance of the Lords Supper, that they were mixing up ordinary banquets with the feast that is holy and Spiritual; along with that went contempt for the poor" (Calvin's Comm. 1 Corinthians).

His view is that, "Paul says that when this is done, it is not the lord's supper that they are eating not because one particular abuse would completely destroy and reduce to nothing the most sacred institution of Christ, but because they were desecrating the sacrament by observing it in the wrong way" (Calvin's Comm. 1 Corinthians).

It is possible that the Corinthian were so divided and thus were not ready for the lords' supper and therefore Paul condemns the inclusion of ordinary things that do not relate to the lords' supper. They were bringing in things that were supposed to be done and observed in their homes to the place of worship. V22. Thus he reminds them of the words of the institution showing them how they ought to do it (23-29). On how this sacrament is given to us, Calvin alludes that some people say that it is given to us when we are made sharers in all the benefits which Christ poured for us in his own body; this is to say that by faith we embrace Christ (Calvin's Comm. 1 Corinthians).

Calvin's view is that it is only after we obtain Christ Himself that we come to share in the benefits of Christ. Not only when we believe that he was sacrificed for us but when he dwells in us and we become united in one life and substance with him (Calvin's Comm. 1 Corinthians).

According to Calvin he observes that the efficacy of the sacrament does not depend upon the worthiness of men, and that the promises of God are not in the least impaired or destroyed by the badness of men. He states this "I agree that the body of Christ is offered to bad men just

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as much as to good, and that is all that is required so far as the effect of the Sacrament and the faithfulness of God are concerned". The bread is not an empty sign but a pledge of Gods faithfulness. V 28 let no one approach the table without being well and truly prepared. Take care not to fall into this sacrilege through neglect or indifference (Calvin's Comm. 1 Corinthians).

3.6 Presbyterian documents on the Eucharist/words of institution

The words of invitation to the Table in the Presbyterian Liturgy are as follows:

> "Beloved in the lord, you who truly repent of your sins, who seek to be in fellowship with your neighbors and to lead a new life in Christ, draw near with faith and hear the gracious words of our Lord Jesus Christ., Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you and learn from me: for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall never be hungry; he who believes on me shall never be thirsty; he who comes to me I will not cast out*"* (church service book, 2011:28).

The Presbyterian Church liturgy refers to the Eucharist as a memorial of Christ.

> "According to the holy institution, example and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for a memorial to him, we do this; who on the night he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way after supper he took the cup saying; this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do these as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. Also as the minister gives the cup he says: this cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ, which is shed for many for the remission of sins; drink of it" (Church Service Book, 2011:31

3.7 Conclusions

The church over the years has had different ways of practicing and administering the sacraments. Each practice is influenced by a particular theologian or a resolution by a certain council, thus at times it is important to keep re-looking onto the practices with time in order to ensure that the main purpose is achieved.

The notion of the sacrament as seen by the early church, and in the subsequent years has its background in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the experiences of the early Church fathers.

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During the reformation there developed a distinct understanding of the views of the sacraments between the Protestants and the Catholic Church. John Calvin's Theology was influenced majorly by the reformation.

John Calvin's notion of the Sacraments and the Eucharist is comprehensive, by the fact that he explains in details the definition and the understanding. He has looked at the sacraments as the external signs of internal grace, emphasizing that the ministry of the sacrament, finds meaning only in the presence of the Holy Spirit 'without the Spirit 'he says 'the sacrament is empty and frivolous'. The Holy Spirit works in the heart of the pious partaker to Commence, maintain, cherish and establish faith.

He has showed that Sacrament presents Christ more clearly to us for baptism testifies that we are washed and purified, the supper of the Eucharist that we are redeemed.

On who should partake the Eucharist, Calvin has pointed out that it is our unworthiness that makes the Lords table accessible to us, since no one is pure, and no one can achieve righteousness by his or her own effort. On the other hand, Calvin indicates that the church must also have the right to bar from the communion of the Lord's Supper those who cannot receive without profaning this great mystery, therefore showing that he does not have an all-inclusive theology.

The church has therefore upheld this view and has come up with ways to bar those whom they consider unworthy. The challenge is that the church emphasizes on the traditions and the regulations set by the church other than one's relationship with Christ.

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CHAPTER 4: TOWARDS A POSTCOLONIAL THEOLOGY OF THE EUCHARIST

4.1 Introduction

The way Christianity is practiced today in Africa is more or less the same way it was transmitted to the Africans by the missionaries. Several practices have never been re-looked at and re-considered with an aim of establishing the significance or validity in today's context.

One of the issues that have prompted a lot of debate is on the Eucharist as a means of grace, which seems to carry an ideological heritage of colonialism. A man who has wedded in Church seems to automatically attain an imperial position that qualifies him to per-take the Eucharist. Relating this to the missionary view on the African traditions, one can see a similar pattern where those wedded in church are considered to be married but the others who have gone through the African traditional marriage rites are seen as cohabiting. This further cements the imperial position of the church wedding that is used to deny some of the Christians a right to the means of grace. Such practices bring to the fore the need to look at the church traditions and practices and specifically the Eucharist with a postcolonial lens.

Having looked at the Open Table Debate and John Calvin's views on the Eucharist, some issues come out strongly in regard to the need of re-looking at the practice of the Eucharist and the way it is administered within the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

The Presbyterian Church has borrowed a lot from the Calvinistic views in their practice of the Eucharist. This has continued to elicit a lot of debate especially among those who are locked and left out. It is with this in mind that this chapter looks at the Eucharist in the Presbyterian Church from a postcolonial hermeneutic approach.

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This chapter will critique the Calvinistic view of the Eucharist and the Open Table debate through a postcolonial hermeneutic approach with an aim of introducing and developing a postcolonial theology of the Eucharist in the Open Table debate. The chapter looks at what postcolonial Theology is all about; it also looks at different critiques on post colonialism, justification and seeks to bring out different approaches to a postcolonial Eucharist and a conclusion.

4.2 Postcolonial Hermeneutics

According to (Kgalemang, 2006:218) Post colonialism does not only alert us to the way the powerful use their power but also the way the marginalized protest. By scrutinizing this reality, the voices that dare not speak against the imperial domination are given an avenue to be heard. When their views are heard, a platform for overturning colonial assumptions can be developed.

Post colonialism has been defined in various ways by a number of scholars; it is therefore difficult to find a single generally accepted definition of post colonialism. However, all definitions generally agree that it provides resources for resisting by deconstructing surviving forms of subjectivity (Kiambi, 2011; 13).

Kiambi notes that "the term postcolonial has been the subject of protracted and sometimes ingenious discussions" In his attempt to define postcolonialism, he notes that in its emphasis on imperial modes of domination, it "names a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention with such oppressive circumstances". Therefore, casting light upon colonizer-colonized relationships (Kiambi, 2011).

According to Young, "postcolonial theory in the strict sense of the word for it does not involve deductions on the basis of a number of axioms applicable to indefinite number of empirical descriptions. Postcolonial theory is designed to undo the ideological heritage of

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colonialism by operating through the dimension of history and reordering of the world through forms of knowledge reworked from their entanglement in long standing coercive power relations. It facilitates the naming of activities by which the new subaltern identities are fashioned and performed by redressing power imbalances. In this way, postcolonial mainly includes the colonial, imperial and anti- colonial past, the postcolonial present, people's and cultural rights, emigration and immigration, diaspora" (Young, 2003).

Segovia shows that it is an academic task of revisiting, remembering and interrogating the colonial past thus making it a systematized discourse of events of colonialism as a form of imperialism (Segovia, 2006).

4.2.1 Methodology

Post colonialism brings in new and broader perspectives in theology in the Two thirds of the world, a shift in emphasis pointing out what was missing in previous or Western analysis, and offering an opportunity to correct previous views as advanced through Western readings (Punt 2004:140-159). According to Kiambi (2011:20) and Gerald West (1997) post colonialism well bridges the gap that existed between the 'academic theology' and the 'ordinary people's theology'. KwokPui-Ian (1996) notes the introduction of postcolonial discourse into biblical criticism, which offers new avenues to interrogate the Bible as a critical product, the formation of the Canon and the politics of biblical interpretation. Sugirtharajah (2002) notes that when postcolonial criticism entered the field of biblical criticism it put colonialism at the center of biblical studies

Sugirtharajah (2001) also notes that postcolonial reading of the bible involves reconstructive reading that pays attention to such issues as liberation struggles and other subaltern elements embedded in the texts.

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Post colonialism then can be said to seek to aid people in their struggle and if their struggle is against forces that are propelled by prevailing forms of imperialism directly exercised by imperialists or by powers that be and which have mimicked their form of imperialism (Kiambi, 2011; 16).

As this study applies the postcolonial approach in creating a shift from the exclusive Eucharistic tradition to the open table tradition, it will follow in the discourse espoused by Homi K. Bhabha who argues that the effects of mimicry are camouflage (Bhabha 1994). Bhabha is the leading contemporary critic who has tried to disclose the contradictions inherent in colonial discourse in order to highlight the colonizer's ambivalence in respect to his position toward the colonized other. The simple presence of the colonized other within the textual structure is enough evidence of the ambivalence of the colonial text, an ambivalence that destabilizes its claim for absolute authority or unquestionable authenticity.

According to (Moor-Gilbert 2000) Bhabha uses mimicry as a concept that uses the master's tool selectively as a way of enhancing the subaltern identity or evolving a hybrid identity that is to repeat differently in order to disrupt colonial authority. Bhabha focuses on colonial ambivalence as he focuses on the colonizer as a snake in the grass who speaks in a tongue that is forked and produces one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge. He continues to say that mimicry refers to the imposition of the colonizers culture and the colonized, which resulted not only in the coercing of the colonized but also includes the enticement of the colonizers culture all of which aims at its internalization and replication of it by the colonized.

With the use of mimicry that produces a hybrid culture; colonial and dominant powers are subverted. The series of inclusion and exclusions on which a dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of the formerly excluded subjects into the mainstream

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discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self. The new hybrid culture can therefore be seen as a counter narrative, a critique of the canon and exclusion of other narratives (Bhabha, 1995; 88).

Sugirtharaja argues that postcolonial approach helps to evaluate the colonial ideology, stigmatization and negative portrayals embedded in content, the plot and characterization. He continues to say that it entails looking for the colonial intentions be they political, cultural or economic that informed and influenced the writer's context. It also helps in reconstructive reading which enables the reader to see the concerns of liberation struggles of the past and the present. This draws the attention to the inescapable effects of colonization and colonial ideals which may help to establish a reconstructed identity from the colonial context (Sugirtharaja, 2009).

Mimicry foregrounds not only the said re-inscription, but also the association between resistance and re-inscription. First the trap an almost dualistic battle of the colonized against the colonial or the neo colonials, a simple elaboration of colonial binarism which has been an issue in the church. Second the contradiction and ambiguity of the adoption and appropriation of theoretical positions originated from the West. This is querying about the possibility of the Western contribution given the deceptiveness of binarism. Third, a forever split between intellectual thinking and writings and the ethical obligation to the marginalized and the poor. The guilt conscience in identifying with the oppressed who do not care about theorizing the practices at hand (Wong, 2011).

4.2.2 Justification

This approach is necessary since the Church is dynamic and there are changing contexts that lead questions to some long held practices in the Church. Certain practices which have been there for a long time when looked at in today's context carry a colonial or imperialistic

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connotation where some are superior to others. The Presbyterian Church needs to critically look at such in order to play its role as an umbrella for all who seek the shelter of Christ.

This method comes across as the best because the solution espoused is that the general Presbyterian culture should be maintained as it is the acquired culture by those who adhere to the tradition. In mimicry as has been shown above, those who have been excluded from the Eucharist do not necessarily discard the whole culture that they have acquired but rather they exclude oppressive elements within them and include liberating and authentic elements so as to create a hybrid culture. Therefore, this research will look at the Calvinistic view that was introduced into the Presbyterian Church, which is linked to the imperial culture in dominion of the Open Table that would be taken to be the true Christian practice which the research proposes that it should be followed. This is because, as Presbyterians the new culture is Presbyterianism (a form of Church government in which the church is administered locally by the minister with a group of elected elders of equal rank, and regionally and nationally by representative courts of ministers and elders), thus should not reject the whole tradition based on one faulty practice. The solution then is to continue with Presbyterianism but skip the practice of exclusivity when it comes to the Eucharist. This is through the application of Postcolonial hermeneutics and specifically mimicry where we take the whole practice and follow it as it is, but bypass areas where the Eucharistic liturgy is seen to be exclusive. According to Bhabha, mimicry provides a platform for resistance to the colonized subject by challenging subjective elements of authority in a way that liberates them and creates a hybrid identity (Kiambi: 18-19). By so doing, the Presbyterian practice is maintained but with a new forms of an Open Table where all are invited.

Another justification is that Jesus re-interpreted oppressive Jewish laws e.g. in the Beatitudes when he gave the traditionally held ideologies new perspectives e.g.” Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

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4.2.3 A Critic of Post colonialism

Different people have fronted various arguments for and against the use of postcolonial approach. Banana (1995:69-82) arguing for postcolonial approach, calls for a rewriting of a new Bible in order to liberate it from culture specific world view and from constantly being used as an oppressive instrument. Applied to the Presbyterian practices, there is need to rewrite some of the practices that are oppressive due to their demands for exclusivity.

Sugirtharajah (2001:257-258) advocates for questioning of all sacred texts and traditions with an aim of discarding elements that are no longer useful or relevant to specific contexts. In this case therefore, there are some practices and teachings within the Presbyterian Church that can be termed as no longer useful especially due to the cultural change and thus needs to be questioned and discarded.

According to Ivison, Postcolonial hermeneutics has been criticized for being a paradoxical exercise especially when dealing with location and specifics in a world of generalization and globalization (Ivison 1997:154). A solution may be provided that will only be relevant to a specific context and location where the study was conducted but may cause another problem when viewed from a different context. This is because of the continuity within and discontinuity of colonialism and imperialism in the postcolonial era which has caused different perceptions of similar issues to different groups of people in different contexts.

4.3 A Post-Colonial Eucharist

Having looked at the Calvinistic exclusive practice of the Eucharist and the Open Table debate, the researcher presents arguments on the need for the Presbyterian Church to shift from the exclusive practice to an Open Table.

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It is in this view that the researcher has relooked at the Eucharistic practice in the Presbyterian Church with a view of liberating the silenced voices in the church. If the call of Jesus is wholly inclusive, then the church cannot create exclusivity based on a tradition and erroneous biblical interpretations.

As Farwell alludes, Jesus had a problem with those religious leaders who drew boundaries between those inside and outside the circle of holiness (Farwell 2004:215-238). This indicates that sacrament should not have boundaries of those inside and outside the circles of holiness. Anyone who receives Christ is allowed to per-take the sacrament. The Church should therefore go beyond some of these practices and focus more on a person's relationship with Christ. John Calvin again profoundly expounded its character as a seal of assurance for the believers' conscience. Calvin stresses the duty of the partaker to pay attribute to God in per-taking his meal and thus professing the faith before men (*Inst*.4.14. 1).

Paul Althaus argues that the meal of the Eucharist is not offered as a prize for faith but as a gift that might produce faith (Althaus, 1966). Since the Eucharist should not be taken as a price in return to gaining faith, it should have no restrictions as it should be free to enable man get the faith required.

The assurance that the sacraments brings, firstly is that Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed for the believer's redemption and secondly that the broken body and the shed blood are the gifts which continue to nourish the soul and keep them alive (*Inst*.4.14.1). The essence of being a believer is one accepting that the gift of the shed blood and broken body of Jesus Christ was done for him or her. For one to believe this it is prudent to also get to the position of receiving this truth and this will easily be received by practicing the Lord's Table. This directly means, for the conversion of humankind to become believers, the Lord's Table should be open to all, to enable all to access salvation.

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Calvin indicates that the sacrament is a seal of assurance for the believer's conscience, this therefore shows that if someone's conscience allows that person to partake the Eucharist then no one has the right to condemn or bar the other. Paying attribute to God is an individual choice which nobody can be able to dictate on the other person in any way but people should be encouraged to desire to get to such a level where one knows who the host is for example on the Eucharist. Thus instead of paying tribute to the church leadership believers will always seek for God's approval. The question arises therefore; should the church restrict people into the membership using the sacrament yet it is a means of Grace? Who needs this grace more? Is it the upright or the one who is lost? Those who are excluded feel as though they are outcasts and thus develop anxiety on whether they can also attain salvation. This is especially following the Church's teaching that outside the Church there is no salvation as well stated by Tertullian (Walker, 1985: 325). Since salvation is laid up for everyone without restrictions, it follows suit that the Lord's Table is open for all who come into the church where salvation is found.

In this case therefore, Eucharist should not have restrictions because, when one is denied, they may tend to think that those who are partakers of the Eucharist are better than others even in the eyes of God. This creates apathy in the church and may lead to division or people deserting the church since they feel that they are not part of those who belong. To some extent, those who are barred from partaking get to a point of concluding that this is just a practice and that they really do not need it so long as they have faith in God. The Eucharist being open to everyone will ensure all people feel wanted and appreciated in the church hence they will stop deserting the church.

The host of the Lord's Table is Jesus Christ himself and is open to all who accept the invitation. In the words that Jesus used he said 'this is my body which is broken for you; take eat in remembrance of me' (Mathew 26:26 NIV). That means that He is the host and just as

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he dined with all kinds of people he welcomes everyone to his table. Since Jesus came to liberate the whole humanity without any discrimination, the Lord's Table is therefore open to all freely.

Calvin alludes that the Holy Spirit whom the sacraments do not bring promiscuously to all but whom the Lord specially confers on his people, brings the gifts of God along with him, makes way for the sacraments and causes them to bear fruits (*Inst*.4.14.17). He indicates that the Holy Spirit is not given as a gift to all promiscuously but the Lord specially confers the gifts. This can be taken that the Lord will in His own way select the person to be endowed with the gift the Holy Spirit gives. It would mean that only the Lord can be able to pick the person or persons to be given the gift and no one should be able to select the person to be given the gift. As Edmondson indicates, the human worthiness to come to the table is grounded solely in the manifold and great mercy of God (Stephen Edmondson, 2007), the mercy of God is to all humanity and hence perhaps Calvin meant that God is the only judge who knows who to involve in the sacrament and thus all humanity remains as candidates of the same.

4.3.1 Alternative exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

The apostle rebukes the disorders in their partaking of the Lord's supper. The ordinances of Christ, if they do not make us better, will be apt to make us worse. Christians may separate from each other's communion, yet be charitable one towards another; they may continue in the same communion, yet be uncharitable. There is a careless and irregular eating of the Lord's Supper, which adds to guilt. Many rich Corinthians seem to have acted very wrongly at the Lord's table, the rich despised the poor, ate and drank up the provisions they brought, before the poor were allowed to partake; thus some wanted, while others had more than enough. What should have been a bond of mutual love and affection was made an instrument

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of discord and disunion. The Lord's Supper is not now made an occasion for gluttony or reveling? But is it not often made the support of self-righteous pride, or a cloak for hypocrisy? The apostle describes the sacred ordinance, of which he had the knowledge by revelation from Christ. As for the visible signs, these are the bread and wine. What is eaten is called bread, though at the same time it is said to be the body of the Lord, plainly showing that the apostle did not mean that the bread was changed into flesh. The things signified by these outward signs, are Christ's body and blood, his body broken, his blood shed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and sacrifice. The actions of the communicants were: to take the bread and eat, to take the cup and drink, and to do both in remembrance of Christ. But the outward acts are not the whole, or the principal part, of what is to be done at this holy ordinance. The apostle points out the duty of those who come to the Lord's Table is to do self-examination which is necessary for right attendance at this holy ordinance. The apostle closes all with a caution against the irregularities of which the Corinthians were guilty at the Lord's table. Let all look to it, that they do not come together to God's worship, so as to provoke him, and bring down vengeance on themselves.

In the first section, Paul rebukes the church at Corinth for being divided. Paul praised the Corinthians because they remembered him in everything and maintained the teachings he passed on to them. But in verse 17," In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good", he does not praise them on account of their class divisions. Instead, he declares that they "come together not for the better but for the worse"(Krell, 2010). In Verse 18, "In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it", Paul repeatedly describes the Corinthians as coming together in one location, knowing fully well that their eating was anything but "together" as a unified body. Thus, the very ritual that was intended to celebrate the gospel and symbolically act out their oneness in Christ had become an

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occasion for splitting the church on the basis of status. This explains why Paul stated that the Corinthians "come together not for the better but for the worse." The problem is further explained in verse 19 "No doubt there has to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval", when Paul cannot praise the Corinthians. Instead of treating one another with love, there are divisions among them. What Paul has in mind is a division between those who have more than enough to eat and drink at the Lord's Supper and those who have less.(Krell, 2010).The behavior of the Corinthians reflected significant Eco social differences; thus, members who brought nothing with them to the meal were humiliated and went hungry, while those who could bring plenty to eat and drink, enjoyed their own food without sharing it. What should have been an inclusive community meal had become an occasion for simultaneously private meals. This was against Christ and His gospel. As a loving and impartial Father, God calls us to include all of His children in worship. No one should be discriminated while coming to the Lord's Table on the basis of his or her social economic status.

The second half of the section clearly talks of Judging yourself to avoid God's judgment (11:27-32). In this section, Paul warns us against abusing the Lord's Supper in verse 27 "so then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord". The word rendered "unworthily" or "unworthy manner" is an adverb, describing the manner in which one partakes of the Lord's Supper and not the person (Krell, 2010). The sin of the Corinthians, for which divine discipline was imposed, was related to the manner in which the Lord's Supper was observed and not the person. The Corinthians are not commanded to examine themselves to see whether or not they are Christians, or even to see if they have sin in their lives, but to see if they are properly discerning the body of Christ. This clearly advocates that the Lord's Supper is not closed to anyone; it is open to anyone provided he or she takes it in the right manner.

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In summary, one who treats fellow believers poorly fails to discern that they are members of Christ's church, His body. One may also fail to discern the significance of Christ's death since by His death he created a people; and therefore one who mistreats fellow believers at the Lord's Supper reveals that he or she has little understanding of why Christ died.

4.3.2 Alternative exegesis of the Words of the Institution

The words of the institution out line that "Drink from it, all of you." This does not outline any division of people who should or should not per-take the Lord's Supper. The context under which the words of institution lays, does not divide or discriminate expressly who should qualify. It remains open and most scholars may take the opportunity to interpret the openness as to mean all who have qualified by church standards. From direct view, it clearly depicts that all should partake of the Eucharist.

Jesus gives through it: "his body for you, his blood for you for the forgiveness of sins". As long as we are still in this sinful world with our sinful flesh with the devil at work among us, can we ever say, "I don't need the Lord's Supper at the moment"? Baptism is a one-time sacrament; communion is a sacrament that we are to keep on celebrating. Since sin is a problem for everyone, it directly means that the Lord's supper is extended to everyone who is sinful for the forgiveness of his or her sins hence being open to all.

Paul reminds the Corinthians as individuals that their partaking of the supper isn't only for the purpose of strengthening their own faith; through it they also proclaim the Lord's death to each other. It's not just about you; it's also about your brothers and sisters.

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4.4 Arguments for an All-Inclusive Eucharist

The Eucharist is a communal meal in line with the Jewish culture and all members of the family were partakers. Therefore, in the family of Christ, everyone should be allowed to partake.

Inclusion denotes the unconditional love of Christ, which we should propagate as Christians.

The Eucharist is administered in remembrance of Christ's death. Anyone who willingly desires to remember that should not be hindered or forbidden.

There is no Biblical support on any pre-condition of marriage that Jesus gave for anyone to partake the Eucharist.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, a postcolonial study of the Eucharist in the Presbyterian Church is paramount as it will greatly help in enhancing the missionary call to all who have accepted to follow Christ. It is also a great opportunity to eliminate contradictions that have existed for a long time in regard to it being a closed table as opposed to an open table for everyone. By doing this, Christ becomes the savior and Lord of all.

The postcolonial look at the Eucharist also helps in bringing out the subdued voices that have not been able to question the practice over the years. This places Biblical practice ahead of the church traditions, in line with Christ's teachings.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The Presbyterian Church upholds the area of the Sacraments with great regard as has been shown throughout the discussion; they practice and observe a closed table when it comes to the Eucharist. In the previous chapters, this research has shown the qualifications that one must have to partake of the Eucharist in the Presbyterian Church. These include the requirement that one must have been baptized, and men with wives must have undergone catechism classes for confirmation and further solemnized their marriage in church.

This study has also presented arguments in support for and against both the open and closed table, where most of the arguments in the Presbyterian Church seemed to incline towards the closed table. From this research it comes out clearly that the Open Table would add content, value and appreciation of the Lord's Table or the Eucharist. Therefore, the study presented an argument with the use of Homi Bhabha's postcolonial approach of mimicry with an aim of liberating the Presbyterian Church from the exclusivist approach in the Eucharist.

To liberate the biblical text used by the church to exclude others from the sacrament of the Eucharist, an exegesis of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 and an exegesis of the words of the institution was carried out; both justified inclusivity in the Eucharist.

In this chapter the researcher will now embark on analyzing the pastoral impact of implementing the open table in the Presbyterian Church with special attention to the critiques brought forth, for and against the method. This will also focus on the challenges posed by the open table and the gains the church will make as a result of being inclusive.

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5.2 All-Inclusive Eucharist

If a sacrament is defined as an outward sign of inward grace for our sanctification and a means of grace to God's people, it is therefore very important that all people should access it. Denying God's people this means is denying them salvation.

From our re-interpretation of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, we learn that the sacrament of the Eucharist should not necessarily follow or come after baptism. Since solemnization of marriage is not doctrinal, it is not right to deny one participant in the sacrament of the Eucharist on the basis of what the Bible does not prescribe.

Therefore, since the sacrament is a means of grace for salvation and is important and solemnization of marriage is not a doctrinal issue, the Eucharist should be open.

5.3 Pastoral Implication of an All-Inclusive Eucharist

(Breindenthal 2011:142-157) argues that the Eucharist is a fellowship meal where our care for one another is met, and also a means of affirming our commitment to the *MissioDei*, this is the fellowship and duty to the believers. In fellowship, the believer develops a sense of belonging and the warmth that comes with togetherness. This creates an overall commitment to the Christian faith. Through the Eucharist, the Christian is reminded of the evangelical mission of the church, thus creating a desire to witness as one feels that has fulfilled the command of Christ in not forsaking the meeting together of brethren. It is in the Eucharist that the proclamation of the Lord's death and imminent return are re- emphasized thus bringing the Christian to a point of renewed faith and hope. Nlenanya (1987:156) observes that "Participation in the Eucharist makes believers not only more committed to their Lord but also more responsible for one another in mutual service, love and unity. "Sacrament has also been taken by our fathers as an assurance of faith in God. Calvin indicated that it is the

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very work of the Sacrament to seal and confirm this promise such that whoever receives Christ, the bread of life also receives eternal life itself. He goes on to indicate that Sacrament brings us right up to the cross where God's promise was fulfilled and accomplished (*Inst*.4. 17.4). Indicating that "the sacrament was to seal and confirm the promise that whoever receives Christ", perhaps Calvin meant that the sacraments offers the seal and assurance to all that receive Christ. Receiving Christ is not limited to a few people, but it is open to all humanity. If open to all humanity, then it means as long as one has received Christ, then he or she can partake sacraments which offers the assurance of faith.

Towards an all-inclusive Eucharist, radical changes will need to be considered in the pastoral field. Since the Eucharist is a means of grace, it should be open to all regardless of their status or condition. Once an individual receives this grace; it will eventually transform him or her.

By practicing an all-inclusive Eucharist, the church will be seen as modeling the way of Christ by embracing everyone.

For a long time, men who are customarily married and have not solemnized their marriages have been treated as unforgiving sinners by being locked out from the Eucharist yet their wives are welcome to partake the Eucharist.

Since the man is not allowed to partake the Eucharist, they have also been locked out of participating in the Church responsibilities regardless of the possibility that they could perform better than those considered as full communicants.

Due to this kind of selective practice of the Eucharist, families cannot share the meal together in church since the men are barred from it. As a result of this, some women have considered themselves superior over their spouses in the area of spirituality which may not be the case.

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This research proposes a shift from a focus on the status of the individual in the manner in which the Eucharist is practiced in the Presbyterian Church.

5.4 Challenges posed by an All-Inclusive Eucharist

The all-inclusive Eucharist may lead to some challenges which include the fact that some people may just follow the practice without much consideration of the meaning of the Eucharist. Some instead of changing or taking time to reflect may end up being more hardened.

Another challenge is that those who are already in may have a feeling of being superior Christians compared to those who have not qualified. This may create disharmony in the church fellowship.

Due to the long time practice of the closed table, if the church decides to open it up, there are still people who may never partake especially if they feel like they have not fulfilled what has been posted as a hindrance to be a partaker.

Another challenge posed by an all-inclusive Eucharist is that, openly practicing sinners like gays would want to participate. The atheists would also infiltrate to be part of the practice. This will call for the church to be extra cautious on who "all" means by fighting the open sins in the community and also ensuring the meaning of the Eucharist is understood by all which negates their beliefs and actions.

5.5 Recommendations for further research

An inclusivity comparison for the two sacraments (Baptism and Eucharist) research could be undertaken.

It is important to undertake an in depth study into the cumulative effect that exclusivity has had over the years in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

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There is need to open doors for an interrogation of other traditions in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa from a postcolonial perspective.

Having looked at the aspects of both the Open and Closed Table Debates in the administration of the Eucharist, this study finds need for the Presbyterian Church of East Africa to review her stand on the selective admission of the members to the Lord's Table. By doing so, the Church will be affirming the Eucharist as a means of grace and allow a universal embrace of those who accept to be members of the Church.

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