



**RECLAIMING THE EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF
SOCIAL JUSTICE: THE CASE OF THE ALLIANCE EVANGELICAL
COMMUNITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Albert Mbungu Nsasi, hereby declare that:

The research presented under the title *Reclaiming the Eucharistic celebration in the context of social justice: the case of the Alliance Evangelical Community (CEAC) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, is my original work, except where otherwise indicated. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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Albert Mbungu Nsasi

As supervisor I approve of this dissertation for submission

Prof. Lilian Cheelo Siwila

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following:

- my deceased parents, Georges Batista Mbungu and Monique Kiminu Mbobo, for all the sacrifices they made for me and for guiding me towards liberation through their prayers, advice and strong leadership. In addition, they taught me the value of a good education.
- all people who have lost their legitimate rights due to social injustice in the world and in the DR Congo in particular; and
- all those who continue to fight for the rights of human beings in the name of social justice.

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ABSTRACT

The current research focuses on the challenges of the Eucharistic celebration in the Alliance Evangelical Community (French: *Communauté Évangélique de l'Alliance au Congo*; 'CEAC') in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) with the Eucharist being one of the sacraments that postulates social justice in the DR Congo. The DR Congo is a wealthy country in terms of natural resources but has been plagued by manifold conflicts which have devastated and destabilised the entire country. Despite its wealth of natural resources, most people continue to live in a state of crisis and are afflicted by malnutrition (due to living below the food security line), unemployment, poverty, permanent social insecurity, housing shortages, electricity shortages, a lack of safe drinking water, inadequate healthcare services and low remuneration for their labour. The Congolese people have been experiencing social injustice brought about by their political leaders. Nevertheless, ordinary Congolese Christians, as well as their political leaders who subscribe to Christianity, partake of the Eucharistic celebration in memory of Jesus Christ and commit to live in conformity with the values of this sacrament. The spiritual significance of this sacrament is to foster love, unity, communion and a sense of social justice. In the context of the DR Congo, the Eucharist should lead our response to the suffering of the Congolese people, whose hardship is often caused by powerful individuals who also partake of the celebration. Unfortunately, there is a great juxtaposition between the Eucharistic celebration and life in the public space, in the context of social justice.

As an evangelical and Protestant Church, the CEAC, based in Kongo Central Province, accords great importance to the sacrament of the Eucharist and considers the Eucharist a fulfillment of the Christian faith. The CEAC believes that the role of the church in general and the role of church members in particular is to help disadvantaged people in their local communities through employing a liberative theological perspective.

Many scholars have discussed the social aspects of the Eucharist. The aim of this research is to analyse how the Eucharistic celebration forms the basis for social justice and how that can postulate the liberative perspective for the people who suffer the injustice. This study argues that the Eucharistic celebration as a foundation and inspiration for Christian social justice has been challenged by the political conflict in the country. Therefore, the study calls for a revisit of what it means to celebrate communion amidst social injustice.

The framework used for the present research is based on the theology of liberation as a movement that aims to liberate people from all injustice. Additionally, the study uses a contextual or contextualising theology and refers to theology that has responded to the dynamics of a particular context. The liberation theology is used in a contextual theology, which includes present realities as well as the struggles for human justice. The study is based on the struggle to construct a just and a fraternal society whereby all people can live in dignity.

Based on a non-empirical method, the study seeks to undertake the social justice implication of the Eucharistic celebration as well as the Eucharist's potential for social transformation. The research demonstrates the enormous potential of the DR Congo as well as the dire situation of its people caused by a few church members who participate in the Eucharistic celebration. This stands in direct contradiction to the values of the sacrament. Therefore, what should be the role of the CEAC when human beings fall victim to social injustice? Silence in the face of injustice can constitute high treason of the prophetic mission of the church.

Key terms:

Eucharistic celebration, remembrance, social justice, church, liberation.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Chapter one focuses on several aspects of the motivation behind the research. It explains the context of the study problem; an examination of prior research on the Eucharist and social justice; the main research question, as well as a few of sub-questions; objectives and the theoretical framework; and the methodology for achieving the aims. Expected issues are also underlined, and an outline of all chapters is provided.

1.1 Background to the research problem

Eucharist and baptism are central sacramental acts or rites in the life of Protestant Christians in general — and the CEAC in particular — as these acts are believed to be vital components of sacramental theology (Katekismo, 2012:11). The Eucharist is considered the most important sacrament for the Christian's experience because, during the primitive church era, it was regarded as the meaningful expression of the church service (Culman, 1948:13).

The elements used in the Eucharist are apparently very minimal, but the meaning and perspectives portrayed postulate real challenges for people. There is great dimension, faith and mystery when participating in the Eucharistic service.

Some of the members in the CEAC attend church services only when there is a Eucharistic celebration (Présidence de la CEAC, 2019:4). During the ceremony, they show respect and dignity through radical pietism, viewing the Eucharist as a type of magic that washes sins and heals sicknesses (Moyo, 2015:101). In fact, the Eucharistic celebration becomes a form of local folklore and a simple liturgy of hypocrisy.

As a social meal and an act of solidarity, the Eucharist brings a novel understanding of the society (Katekismu, 2012:12). This study is motivated by my pastoral experience of the Eucharistic celebration, by the lack of knowledge of the meaning of the Eucharist and by the lack of motivation of some CEAC Christians to be involved in public life. My understanding of the sacramental acts and social injustice rests in the DR Congo — a country with a wealth of potential but characterised by multiform crises such as warfare, poverty, injustice, conflict and corruption. This inconsistency creates the gap in this study, which looks at how Congolese Christians in the CEAC view the Eucharist in the midst of multiform crises. This insight has prompted me to embark on this academic journey to better comprehend the Eucharist's significance in the backdrop of humanitarian crises and severe social injustice in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study calls for a comprehensive investigation of the challenges

produced by the Eucharistic celebration and their implications for the public lives of Congolese Christians. Therefore, the scope of this study hopes to explore the social justice implications in the Eucharistic celebration and to respond to the current needs of the Congolese people — particularly CEAC members — who are suffering the social injustice.

1.2 Review of literature

Many scholars have discussed certain aspects of the Eucharistic celebration. In light of the CEAC's emphasis on this sacrament, the purpose of this research is to examine how the Eucharistic celebration serves as a foundation for social justice. Congolese scholars such as Mushila Nyamankank (2001), Léon Santendi Kinkupu (2001) and Modeste Malu Nyimi (2001) have examined the Eucharist as a sacrament of only communion, human promotion, memorial and prefiguration of the celestial banquet. These limitations create a gap for this research, which is to examine how the Eucharistic celebration functions as a vital sacramental and prophetic fermenter (Smith 1990:13) that can postulate social justice. Therefore, the scope of this study rests on the analysis of the Eucharistic celebration in the CEAC and the Eucharist's capacity to promote social justice in the Kongo Central Province.

According to Iris V. Cully et al. (1990:228), the Eucharist is the ultimate act of Christian worship, celebrated by most Christian church bodies. The 'Lord's Supper', 'Holy Communion', 'Mass', and 'Divine Liturgy', are other names for it. The Eucharist's goal is to remember Jesus Christ as God's incarnation and the source of salvation from sin. It is a commemoration of the complete life of Jesus Christ.

When people partake of this liturgical celebration, they convey an important message: to remember and renew Jesus Christ's sacrifice of salvation for humanity and then to anticipate the celestial banquet that Jesus Christ promised. W. Kasper (1990:448) argued that '*C'est le testament qui resume la vie, la mort et la resurrection du Christ*', meaning that the Eucharist is a testament that makes sense of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Concretely, the Eucharist is a form of Jesus Christ's legacy for fraternal communion and transformation of humanity. The Eucharist, according to Siwila (2015:83), is a rebirth of Christians' devotion to justice for all people.

The Eucharistic celebration has become, for some Christians, a simple ritual, with the CEAC being a case in point. Christians are no longer prepared to partake of the fraternal communion in the unity of the body of Jesus Christ, of social justice and of the transformation of the world. The community of participants should anticipate the instauration of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.

In view of the available literature gathered, the present research will consider six themes:

- 1. The Eucharist as a sacrament of ‘remembrance’:** the ‘remembrance’ or ‘memorial’ concept is crucial in the significance of the Eucharist. Many scholars have explored these terms in the context of the Eucharistic celebration. Uzuku, cited by Siwila (2015:84), sees the ‘remembrance’ term as the recalling. Strizzi (2015:143), citing Menno, saw it as a reenactment of Jesus Christ's suffering and death. For Thurian (1985:91), the Eucharist is the liturgical actualisation of the event of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. It is the familiar term for Jesus Christ's followers to remind them of the work of salvation, to do as he did, to work in the liberative perspective, to save humanity and to promote social justice. In fact, the major challenge is to understand how the church can understand this calling today.
- 2. The Eucharist as a liturgical act:** the Eucharist is celebrated in the context of the liturgy, and it can be profitable and didactic when it is used for enriching the people of God (Siwila and Hewitt, 2018, xxvii). Liturgically, the Eucharistic celebration portrays the meaning of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. In fact, the liturgy of the Eucharist cannot evade that perspective. In view of the liturgical perspectives, Siwila (2015) and Moyo (2015) explore the possibilities of the ‘communion’ of the church members. The possibilities present a point of convergence for the Christians, according to the World Council Church in the Baptism Eucharist and Ministry document (WCC 1982). In fact, there is a liturgical challenge in the relationship between the Eucharistic celebration and the lives of church members. *The Liturgy of Life: The Interrelationship of the Sunday Eucharist and Everyday Worship Practices* postulates the implications for the lives of members (Manalo, 2014). The aforementioned study seeks to promote the communion, social cohesion, solidarity, reconciliation and unity of Christians not only during the worship service but also in the public society from a liberative and transformative perspective. There is therefore a need to renew and update the liturgy of the Eucharist.
- 3. The Eucharist as a sacrifice of alliance for liberation:** the Eucharist has a significant sacrificial dimension. In view of the blood rituals of animals recorded in the book of Exodus (Ex. 24:8) in the Old Testament, Jesus Christ became a ‘new perfect expiatory sacrifice’ (Feingold 2018). Celebrated in the Jewish paschal, Jesus Christ gave a

challenging spiritual meaning to the festive meal of the Jews to commemorate their liberation from slavery in Egypt (Tissa Balusiriya 1977:2). Additionally, the Eucharist offers the liberative perspectives with regards to poverty, deprivation and social injustice and calls upon church members to be agents for liberation. The sacrament teaches deliverance from socio-economic and political challenges (Moyo 2015). The Eucharistic celebration therefore represents a liberation project, permanent transformation and an ecological conscience. In the context of the DR Congo, the Christian church's mission in general — as well as the Church of Christ in particular — plays a major role in responding to socio-political challenges and the country's multiform crises. The Eucharist should be an instrument to unite the Congolese people and to show them the liberative way. For decades, the DR Congo has faced many socio-political challenges due to multiform conflicts. There is a real need for transformation in the country. In this context of changes in the country, the CEAC has an important liberative role to play for peace and the transformation of the DR Congo as a nation by promoting Eucharistic benefits (Muyungi, 2017:1).

4. **The Eucharist as an expression of social justice:** the Eucharist is significant in terms of social justice; sharing a meal with others is an act of togetherness. In fact, the Eucharist can be considered a social institution (Smith 2003). The Eucharist, according to Pope Benedict XVI (2007), is a symbol of fellowship between sisters and brothers who commit themselves to be reunited with Jesus Christ. The status of the church in the contemporary world is a place that offers Eucharistic community in solidarity with the whole of humanity. The church has been entrusted with the task of ushering in a new era of humanity. In the words of Kisitu (2018:124): 'in celebrating the sacraments, we not only encounter God, but also our lived experiences.' Life in the early church bears testimony to these experiences. However, the DR Congo is a country with low justice and equity expectations (Eale, 2009:2). The Eucharistic ritual includes both leaders and ordinary people eating bread and drinking wine (together) in honor of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Bread and wine are of the same quality and quantity for both leaders and ordinary people. Community leaders and ordinary people participate in the same service. The Eucharistic community understands the Eucharistic celebration as a calling for the church's mission to promote social justice. In the same view, Kaunda (2018) considered the Eucharist as foundational to Christian faith in order for the followers of Jesus Christ to repent for committing acts of human injustice and violence.

This is because, in Jesus Christ's incarnation, he challenged the violence and social injustices of his time. In seeing the Eucharist as a ritual of resistance, partaking thereof has the potential to transform the performance in the context of Congolese Christianity. The Eucharistic sacrament is an all-inclusive act and cuts across various social classes and social group distinctions. As the meaning of the act should be the deliverance of people who suffer from discrimination, division and injustice at every level in the community, the Eucharist is considered a symbol of liberation, unity, hospitality, equality and justice. The Congolese challenge in particular is mitigating social injustice. Many leaders in the country profit from the suffering of ordinary people. People are unable to have their basic needs — education, healthcare, employment and so forth — fulfilled.

5. **Jesus Christ's presence in the Eucharist:** Many scholars continue to discuss the sense of Jesus Christ's presence in the Eucharist in an endeavor to fully comprehend the significance of the Eucharist. This is one of the divergent points in terms of the significance of the sacrament. The first theory, promoted by St. Thomas d'Aquina, and quoted by Feingold (2018:340), advances the technical term 'transubstantiation.' The remarkable transformation of bread and wine into Jesus Christ in the flesh is known as transubstantiation. The priest heralds the celebrated mystery and communicates his or her amazement before the substantive translation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ with these remarks given immediately after the consecration. This is a reality that defies human comprehension. The immediate transmutation of the bread and wine is known as transubstantiation. In other words, for Thomas d'Aquina, Jesus is present in the Eucharist as a human individual, as well as God in the shape of bread and wine. The bread and wine are not metaphorical; they signify Jesus' actual presence.

The second set of scholars — John Wycliffe, Huldrych Zwingli and others — see the Eucharist as a 'mere commemorative symbol' (Feingold 2018:345). According to them, the bread and the wine represent natural elements even after their consecration. The Eucharist is a visible mark of the invisible reality, the symbol of the presence of Jesus and the sign of God's invisible grace.

There were also intermediary scholars such Luther and Calvin who rejected the radical theories of transubstantiation in favour of consubstantiation, which is the 'real presence' or 'spiritual power' of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

In this discussion, of most importance is the presence of Jesus in his church in other forms such as in the Lord's Supper, in his symbolism and in his spiritual or real presence. The above scholars recognise that Jesus Christ is present in the act of the Eucharistic celebration. The church celebrates the mystery of the sacrament in the presence of Jesus Christ through the adoration of God. This reality confers a new understanding of the dignity in the Eucharistic celebration. In fact, the Eucharist is a 'mystery of faith' (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007:7).

- 6. The Eucharist as a meaningful act of CEAC efforts to promote social justice:** the DR Congo is one of a number of African countries known for its great mineral wealth but characterised by many sectors as being in a state of crisis. In the DR Congo context, political, social and economic areas adjudicate social justice. The country has endured conflicts that have devastated and destabilised the entire nation and have claimed the lives of more than 6 million civilians. In many regions of the country, people are still living in dire straits. The ongoing Congolese crisis, according to Kandala et al. (2011:2), has taken more lives than any other conflict since World War II and remains one of the world's most pressing crises. In recent years, war has merely accelerated social crises in the country. The current political context is a muddled coalition characterised by a president from the opposition political party against a majority parliamentarian of the former regime. As a post-conflict country, this context does not facilitate the fulfilling of the people's expectations. Sixty years after independence, the country faces many challenges and there is lack of appropriate response by the government to these issues. This is because these crises undermine the government's coalition. People are concerned about the current state of human insecurity, particularly in the eastern parts of the country, where hardship is driven by armed ethnic and foreign groups. Political leaders are preoccupied more with their political positioning than by their duty to enhance the welfare of the people. It is evident that people continue to live in misery (CENCO, 2020). This disastrous social context is characterised by a leadership crisis, recklessness of political leaders, corruption, poverty, a culture of impunity and permanent insecurity. The issue of social justice is still very much a current reality (Tshisekedi, 2019). At present, poverty is the result of increased social injustice perpetrated in the country. Social justice thus remains a fantasy for Congolese people.

This research will be conducted within the CEAC's ranks. The CEAC is a church in the Democratic Republic of Congo that was founded in 1884 by missionaries from the American Christian Missionary Alliance. The CEAC is a member of the Church of Christ in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is located in the southwest of the country. The CEAC is one of the most powerful evangelical communities able to contribute to promoting social justice through encouraging noble actions. The leading mission of the CEAC is to promote the holistic gospel in the DR Congo in different areas. One of the church's goals is the full participation of all Congolese citizens in government policies, and accountability for all those responsible for hardship in the country (Status, 2011:11). Although there have been a few crises in the church's history, The CEAC continues to be one of the most prominent churches in the country, giving it an edge. The CEAC leads a robust and effective lobbying effort among national and international partners for the benefit of the DR Congo in overall and the Kongo Central in specifically (Rapport de la Presidency 2018:3).

The CEAC's doctrine advocates that the 'Whole Gospel for the Whole World' constitutes the good news for everyone. The CEAC recognises that human suffering exists and that there is a need for its relief (Jones, 2019:181). The church views the Eucharist as one of the more important sacraments, as a joyous act of thanksgiving for all God has done, as a sacred memorial of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, and as a symbol of Jesus Christ's sacrifice in which he is truly and rightly present to those who eat and drink thereof. The Eucharist, according to the church, reminds people that a worship service celebrates not only the memory of a meal that has passed but an actual meal with the risen Jesus Christ. The meal serves as a foretaste of the heavenly banquet at which Christ will preside at the end of time. When people participate in this liturgical celebration, they internalise an important message: to remember and renew Jesus Christ's project of salvation for humanity, and then anticipate the celestial banquet that he promised (Katekismo, 2012:11). Kasper (1990:448) argued, '*C'est le testament qui resume la vie, la mort et la resurrection du Christ*', meaning that the Eucharist is a testament that makes sense of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Concretely, the Eucharist is a form of Jesus' legacy of fraternal communion and the permanent transformation of humanity. For Siwila (2015:83), the Eucharist is understood as a renewal of commitment towards justice for all humanity.

Unfortunately, the Eucharistic celebration has become a simple ritual for several Christians in the CEAC. Christians are no longer prepared to conserve and participate in fraternal communion with the goal of uniting the body of Christ, achieving social justice and working towards the transformation of our world. The community of participants ought to anticipate the

instauration of the Kingdom of Heaven on this Earth, as the ‘Whole Gospel for the Whole World’ includes advocating for solutions to social issues. The Gospel also includes good news for the ‘whole man, body, soul, spirit, as well as social concerns for people everywhere’ (Jones, 2019:191).

1.3 Key research question

The following is the key question of this research: how can the Eucharist be used as a liberative tool by the CEAC in the context of social injustice in the DR Congo?

1.4 Research sub-questions

1. In what ways has the CEAC been involved in promoting social justice in the DR Congo?
2. In what ways has the Eucharistic celebration been a meaningful part of CEAC efforts in the DR Congo?
3. How can the Eucharist be used as a liberative tool in the context of socio-political crises in the DR Congo?

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To analyse the effectiveness of the CEAC in promoting social justice in the DR Congo.
- To understand the Eucharistic celebration as a meaningful part of the CEAC’s efforts in the DR Congo.
- To explore ways in which the Eucharist can be used as a liberative tool to help the CEAC in promoting social justice in the context of socio-political crises in the DR Congo.

1.6 Theoretical frameworks upon which the research project will be constructed

The theoretical framework chosen for the present research is based on the theology of liberation as a movement in theology that aims to liberate people from all injustices. The battle to build a just and brotherly society in which individuals can live with dignity and be actors of their own fate is seen as the function of liberation theology (Gutiérrez 1988: xiii). One of the prominent scholars of this theology is Gutierrez. He understands communion to be the foundation for fellowship in the Trinitarian theology. The Eucharist, he believes, effectively recalls and

proclaims the tie that connects God and humanity. The Eucharistic feast is meaningless without a true commitment to fighting poverty and estrangement. A sincere Eucharistic celebration should have the outcome of a just and united society (Gutierrez 1988:150). Similarly, Moyo (2015:102) claims that the Eucharistic ritual obligates the Church of Jesus to free people from poverty, hardship, and social injustice. Christians should serve as agents of freedom in their communities in response to Jesus' instruction, so that the world can be ruled by God's will as expressed in the Eucharistic liturgy. The Eucharistic celebration thus presupposes a liberative attitude. It encourages people to be responsible people who care about others and work for social justice in their neighbourhoods. Indeed, any effort to construct a decent society is freeing (Hauerwas, 1986:68). The present study examines the liberation challenge of social justice in the Eucharistic celebration context. It also employs contextual theology, often known as contextualisation theology. It refers to theology that has been shaped by the dynamics of a certain situation. The liberation theology is employed in a contextual theology that takes into account contemporary circumstances, secularity, technology, and the fight for human rights (Van, 2005:194). It is a human activity that emerges from a specific human setting. Contextualization is a term used to define social settings and specific experiences. As the global phenomena of globalisation pervades the world, it implies that theology must connect and participate in discourse not only with traditional cultural values but also with social change, new ethnic identities, and current crises (Bevans, 2002:120).

This reflection has a theological and social basis. It searches for the significance of the Eucharist in sacramental theology and in re-reading the social context of the Congolese people, particularly in the Kongo Central Province. In other words, this research is a sacramental reading of liberation through a social justice lens. It critically examines the underdeveloped social justice context in the DR Congo and offers alternatives that are rooted in Christianity. Moyo (2015: 101-102) claims that the Eucharistic liturgy cannot be meaningful if it is isolated from a society's socioeconomic and political circumstances. Similarly, the celebration of the Eucharist cannot be realistic if it overlooks the social justice aspect of a society.

The Eucharist is an invitation to the Lord's table — to arise together, to feast and to commit to fighting for a responsible society. In fact, the celebration and the teaching of the Eucharist can become not only a source of the Ecclesiastical ethical code but also the source of transformation and liberation of people generally.

Based on the liberation theology suggested above, this research explores the social justice implications of the Eucharistic celebration in the CEAC in three ways: first, it argues that the Eucharist is one of the Christian sacraments. Second, it investigates the link between the

Eucharistic celebration and the human conditions of the Congolese people. It develops that the theory of the Eucharistic celebration has a social justice implication. Third, it formulates perspectives in view of the social implications of the Eucharistic celebration.

1.7 Research methodology

The processes or procedures used to collect and analyse data are known as research methodology (Grix, 2001:29). It might be defined as a science of studying how academic research is carried out (Kothari, 2004:7-8). The method for this research is a non-empirical method. The research is designed as a case study of the CEAC. It seeks to undertake the social justice implication of the Eucharist celebration in the CEAC as well as the social transformation that the Eucharist can present to society. It was based on existing literature through desk. It engages in a further analysis which is based on secondary materials related to the topic. This research will rely on articles and books, research papers from the internet, and other relevant materials.

The data collection will focus on the literature applicable to the CEAC and focus on the concept of the Eucharist celebration having an influence on the social justice situation in the DR Congo. This study will apply a liberative theological lens and the social basis approach analysis through a review and evaluation of content and themes with a critical eye. It examines and analyses secondary data used to contextual theology as part of a critical examination of current literature pertaining to the research problem.

1.8 Anticipated problems

The scope of this research is limited in analysing the meaning and implications of the Eucharistic celebration as a foundation and inspiration for Christians regarding social justice. It criticises political conflict and social injustice in the DR Congo. The study does not focus on the church in general but on the Church of Christ in Congo and the Alliance Evangelical Community — both Protestants churches in the DR Congo. Two problems can arise: first, sacramental theology is considered by some Protestant Congolese to be a Catholic concept. The second challenge is the critical viewpoint of the social justice situation in the DR Congo. Since the DR Congo is a country with an abundance of natural resources yet chronically impoverished people, some questions may be found to be insensitive and offensive to some.

1.10 Outline of chapters

The present research comprises of five chapters:

The background, rationale, research questions, aims, methods, theoretical framework, anticipated challenges, and study structure are all covered in the first chapter.

Chapter two analyses the CEAC in promoting social justice in the DR Congo.

Chapter three examines the Eucharistic celebration as a meaningful part of the CEAC's efforts in the DR Congo.

Chapter four provides a theological reflection that seeks to formulate liberative perspectives in the social justice context and reflect on how the Eucharist has helped the CEAC redefine its celebration and catechism.

Chapter five contains the conclusion of this study and puts forwards recommendations for the CEAC to promote a culture of social justice. It suggests a 'sacramental catechism practice' in the context of social justice.

CONCLUSION

The first chapter of this study presented a background to the Eucharistic celebration as a fermenter that could challenge social injustice in the Congolese context. The research is motivated by the challenges of the Eucharistic celebration in the CEAC as one of the sacraments that postulates social justice. The study argues that the Eucharistic celebration is one of the inspirations for Christian social justice and can lead the transformation of the contemporary world. In the context of the DR Congo, the community of participants should expect the restoration of social justice. The research objectives provided answers to the sub-questions addressed. The study and its analysis are supported by the framework and research method.

The next chapter focuses on the history of the CEAC as a Protestant church in the DR Congo as well as its promotion of social justice.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CEAC’S ROLE IN PROMOTING SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE DR CONGO

2. 1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, efforts will be deployed to explore the social justice challenge and the CEAC’s role thereof. The context of the DR Congo as a whole, the context of the church under investigation, and the matter itself are all covered in this chapter. It gives a brief historical context of the Protestant church and the CEAC in particular and formulates the position of the CEAC as a Protestant church in promoting social justice in the DR Congo.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the situation of social injustice in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as the CEAC's response and impact on it. Pillay (2017:11) claims that the Christian church has always been concerned in social change, particularly because it has always supported the impoverished and disadvantaged. The church is expected to accept, engage, and continue in its role as a catalyst for change and development. The church plays a vital role in dismantling social injustice and in building a new society. This church's prophetic discourse cannot be practical if it is isolated from the socio-economic and political concerns that a society or community faces. Unless otherwise specified, theology cannot be realistic and adaptable if it overlooks the context of society. According to Vuadi, any substantial theology that fails to provide concrete solutions to society’s challenges is not rooted in reality and should remain in libraries (1999:109). There is, therefore, a need for engagement between the church and the state. Solidarity with the oppressed is not just achieved by siding with government but by standing with the poor and the oppressed. Moreover, if the government sides with the poor and oppressed and addresses their aspirations, it will benefit the church in terms of fostering greater solidarity (Kumalo, 2012:642). In theology, socio-ecclesial analysis means looking at what God is doing to transform society, as well as working in and through the church and its agents. In the same view, Zwane argues that the theory of ‘doing theology in context’ should be understood in these terms: ‘...[the] Bible should be read in the community by the community and for the community as one of the important society sources’ (2020:11). Kumalo (2012: 642) argues that the church needs to work with other faiths by acknowledging their good works but also criticising them when they deny people their rights. The prophetic ministry of the church is relevant for all sectors of society, including the church, so it must be exercised.

2.2 General context of the DR Congo

The DR Congo is one of the world's poorest countries located in Central Africa with an estimated population of more than 80 million. It is renowned for its wealth of natural resources, which are spread across its 26 provinces. It is the third-largest country by area (2 344 858 km²) in Africa. Owing to this geopolitical advantage, the country has the potential to be a beacon of hope for Africa and the world. After independence in 1960, the trajectory of DR Congo was characterised by war and a protracted period of dictatorial regimes for 32 years. According to Ndaywel, the Zairian political landscape under the reign of the Popular Revolution Movement (French: *Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution* — the political movement under the Mobutu presidency) underwent numerous transformations. There were no political troubles, only socio-economic ones (Ndaywel, 1998:688).

The dictatorial nature of the Second Republic was the main driver of socio-economic crises in the country. People lived in a context of constantly having to rescue themselves and others from danger. This was a climate of intense fear. For Tala Ngai (2001:39), the Second Republic was a cruel regime with no sense of morality; it was a regime favourable to corruption, scheming and delinquency. Owing to an absence of effective authority, the regime fell to a military-political movement in 1997. Since then, the DR Congo has been embroiled in numerous conflicts which have devastated and destabilised the entire country and claimed the lives of more than 6 million civilians. According to Kandala (2011:2), this ongoing catastrophe has claimed more lives than any conflict since World War II and continues to be one of the international community's biggest concerns. The protracted warfare has served to increased existing social crises.

After 16 years of democratic transition (1990-2006), the first 'democratic election' took place in 2006 — and disorder followed. Although it was a democratically held election, Congolese people's pressing needs were still not being fulfilled thereafter, so a democratic election did not satisfy them. Social injustice persisted. The Third Republic, with two presidential mandates, was distinguished by a few selected charitable actions but without a comprehensive programme to respond to the needs of the people in a manner that still adhered to the constitution. The aspiration of the people during the last election (December 2018) was — and still is — to depart from the previous regime, which was perceived as corrupt. People's hopes included — and still include — greater employment opportunities (as well as stable jobs), affordable and accessible healthcare and quality education. Fulfilling these needs remains a monumental challenge for

the current Fourth Republic.

The current political context is extremely muddled. The political sphere is characterised by a coalition consisting of a president from the opposition political party against the majority of parliamentarians from the former regime. As a post-conflict country, the situation does not facilitate the fruition of people's expectations. On 2 March 2020, at the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (French: *Conference Episcopale Nationale du Congo*; 'CENCO'), the bishops remarked critically on this situation in a speech titled 'Coalition, for what purpose?'

One year after alternation at the country summit, multiform crises have occurred. This is cause for concern of the greatly anticipated social change. Indeed, there was great concern within the authority coalition, which was evident in the leadership and destructive operations within government. Allies are more preoccupied with their political positioning than the work they should be doing for the people's welfare because these people are still living in misery. The country is facing many problems without appropriate responses due to the crisis which undermined the coalition. Insecurity is increasing in many ways in larger cities. The promised reforms before the elections were not delivered. This is not a good outcome (cf Mt 7,17b; 12, 33). People can therefore rightly ask themselves, "what was the purpose of the coalition?" (CENCO, 2020).

This observation highlights the poor social context characterised by the leadership crisis, the recklessness of political leaders, corruption, the culture of impunity and the state of permanent insecurity. Under these conditions, social justice remains a fantasy for Congolese people. However, Catholic bishops have championed a number of social justice causes such as a free basic education system, poverty alleviation, liberalisation of media and resolving political tensions. Though social justice is an extremely challenging feat, it is nonetheless crucial to examine these issues.

2.2.1 The issue of poverty

Poverty is defined as the inability to participate in regular living activities, notably in the economic arena (UNDP quoted by Bosela, 2009:80). Poverty is defined by the World Bank as "the inability to achieve a minimal standard of living". In other words, poverty is a state that is characterised by the deprivation and/or inadequacy of satisfactory services. Poverty is a

multidimensional, multifaceted problem. It is one of the challenges affecting a sizeable number of Congolese people despite the vast mineral wealth of the country.

This wealth should make the Democratic Republic of Congo one of Africa's most wealthy nations; It has 'wealth potential,' yet it is nevertheless one of the impoverished countries on the planet (Pourtier, 2009:37). According to Bosela (2009:148), the Democratic Republic of Congo has significant economic potential. It has a diverse ecosystem, abundant mineral and timber resources, and fertile soils suited to agriculture. The Democratic Republic of Congo has long been regarded as one of the world's richest countries in terms of mineral resources.

The DR Congo also has an abundant water supply as opposed to many other African countries who experience severe drought. The quantity of water in DR Congo represents 53 per cent of the whole African continent. Its gigantic hydroelectric capacity is more than 100 000 megawatts. This quantity represents just a third of the entire African capacity and it is hardly exploited. Just 2.6 per cent of this capacity is exploited (Tshisekedi, 2019:5). Sixty percent of the DR Congo area is forest, but none of this is optimised. Because of its astonishing natural wealth and mineral resources, and the lack of optimisation thereof, the DR Congo is considered to be a 'geological scandal.'

According to his investiture speech, the President of the DR Congo acknowledged the immense wealth of the country, which could alleviate the poverty, in these terms:

Considering its 80 million inhabitants, multiple and innumerable wealth of natural resources, its hydroelectric basin and its dense equatorial forest, the DR Congo is in a position to contribute to solutions for solving the climate crisis. The DR Congo is able to reach the food self-conceit and can feed 2 million people. In doing that, DR Congo will absorb twice the worldwide food shortage.... The DR Congo is the first worldwide reserve of natural resources which are essential to produce electrical cars (Tshisekedi, 2019:3).

Unfortunately, the DR Congo is the 80th poorest country in the world and is one of the five countries with the highest number of impoverished people in the world. Regarding the norms set up by international organisations, Congolese people are classified or indexed among people living with an annual income per inhabitant of less than 400 US dollars, equating to it having one of the lowest annual income rates in the world (Tshisekedi, December 2019). The DR

Congo has an estimated population of more than 80 million, yet its budget was around four million US dollars in 2020. Its estimated budget in 2020 was about 10 billion US dollars, against 32 billion US dollars for Angola, which has an estimated population of 29 million.

The majority of Congolese people don't have enough food and live below the food security threshold. They are plagued by housing, electricity and safe drinking water shortage; a lack of employment opportunities; inadequate healthcare services; low-quality education; and inadequate remuneration for their labour.

Despite the 80 million hectares of arable land and the Lake Tanganyika, which is the world's largest freshwater lake, millions of children and families continue to suffer from malnutrition (Tshisekedi, 2019). People in the DR Congo generally lack electrical power in their homes and safe drinking water. Most Congolese people who are working in the informal sector do not have social security. Access to free healthcare and a basic income grant are fanciful for them.

According to the message of the Catholic Congolese Bishops, the enrichment of political leaders is a great disadvantage for people. There is an imbalance between wealthy and poor Congolese in general, but the level of inequality is greater between political leaders and people. For Kandala et al. (2011:2), poverty and vulnerability are the main characteristics of the Congolese population. This is a cruel and unjust situation. Inequality is one of the causes of poverty. For Bosela (2009:98), inequality and poverty are like twins. Poverty can be understood in terms of a system of inequality generated by the socio-economic structure. In other words, poverty is a social consequence of inequality. Notwithstanding, efforts by the government for a free basic education system have been deployed since September 2019. However, the major challenge is ensuring that a satisfactory *quality* of education gets delivered and that classroom sizes are conducive to learning.

2.2.2 Insecurity and human rights issues

The DR Congo is known as an unstable and precarious country — politically, economically, socially, and even psychologically. The east of the country is considered as a recrudescence of instability and oppression. The protracted conflict affecting the country, particularly families, women, and children, as well as a culture of impunity, encourages immoral practices such as corruption, injustice, violence and exclusion. The current president has stated under oath that

he will guarantee respect for all citizens' fundamental rights and end all forms of discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2020:16).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, cultivating a human rights-oriented culture is incredibly difficult. Economic, civic, social, cultural, and political rights all fall under the umbrella of human rights. To ignore the impact of one of these factors on the others. Human rights work best when each component is met (Williams, 2011:21). In other words, when a society denies just one aspect of these rights, the individual's overall human rights are challenged. It follows that promoting the rights of each individual is the goal of a responsible society.

Human rights, according to Bentham, are a basic law (Moran, 2012:77). Human rights, on the other hand, are the parent of law, according to Jeremy, as reported by Kuvuna. In a similar vein, Suter argues that some people have a sense of duty without anyone telling them how to behave, referencing human tradition. The Universal Statement of Human Rights, he believes, is a step forward toward a declaration of human obligations and/or duties (Suter, 2012:52).

Various scholarly positions affirm that human rights apply globally, and that their value constitutes the basis of a responsible society. In the case of the DR Congo, the new leadership tends to depart from some old practices in terms of the freedom of political opinion, cancellation of cellular services and solutions to political tensions. According to Human Rights Watch's World Report (2020:165), political repression has decreased significantly since Tshisekedi took power. Many political prisoners and activists who had been incarcerated in previous years were released, while activists and politicians who had fled the country were allowed to return. However, security personnel continue to arbitrarily imprison and beat nonviolent people.

The constitution of the DR Congo expresses that:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The Congolese are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection by the law (Art. 11 and 12 of Constitution, 2006: 2).

This is merely an aspiration, however. Respect for the dignity and security of all people, as well as respect for democratic principles, are far from being accomplished. Many long-standing practices that violate human rights persist.

2.2.3 Socio-cultural issues

The DR Congo is facing a major dilemma regarding the decline of moral values, even if the traditional stories of the country attest that Congolese people are known for their hospitality and peacefulness. Conflict, injustice, violence and human rights abuse often constitute the basis of the society. For Bangala (2019:135), values give a sense to human history. The fact of the matter is that all values build, cement and enable people to live harmoniously within just institutions.

At the National Forum organised by church leaders of the DR Congo (French: *Conference Nationale Souveraine*), socio-cultural issues — such as manners, depravity, youth delinquency, wicked destruction and profanity — were noted, and the conclusion was that human values were regarded to be on the decline (Masiala Ma Solo 2002:18).

Today, the decline of socio-cultural values breeds other decline such as *Kuluna fenomeno* and corruption, even among high-ranked political leaders. At his national speech to the state, the Congolese president condemned the corruption:

The legal institutions are alleging mismanagement of the electoral contentious. The same corruption allegations were made at the election of heads and senators of provinces. There were many questions surrounding the management of electoral contentious or at the voting method. I have been informed of a persistent corrupt system and of fraud, which are the source of the misappropriation of public funds (Tshisekedi, 2019:7).

Owing to corruption and its meagre budget, the DR Congo government has evaded taxes to the amount of between 16 and 20 million US dollars each year. A decline in values is a defect within a society. When immorality is considered a normal lifestyle, a society is dangerously, and gradually, degenerating, and misery becomes pronounced. When cynicism or shamelessness becomes the rule in the management and leadership of the state, inevitably it leads to what Sloterdijk calls a ‘Republic of swindlers.’ Within this kind of Republic, the only interest is personal benefit, which is the specification to any public activity. Yet in such swindle Republics, no one who would sacrifice him/herself for the cause or otherwise (Bangala, 2019:138).

2.2.4 The challenges of achieving social justice in the DR Congo

The sharing of wealth, opportunities and advantages within a society is referred to as social justice. Despite the DR Congo's tremendous mineral wealth, it is afflicted by major injustices in many areas. Poor governance, poverty, corruption, state repression, persistent unemployment, political strife, and leaders who put their personal interests ahead of those of the society they serve have all contributed to these injustices (Muyungi, 2017:4). As the social and the political context adjudicates social justice or injustice, it is important to examine several of these aspects, albeit briefly.

In the DR Congo, the issue of social justice is ongoing and is the most challenging problem that the Congolese people encounter. Social justice does not entail merely an adequate monthly income and job creation; it entails the upholding of the rights, duties, dignities and freedoms of speech for all people. Therefore, there are economic, social and political dimensions to justice, and wealth which must be shared. Every person, rich and poor, must be cognisant of the fact that equitable access belongs to everyone. This constitutes justice for all; justice based on human dignity and mutual respect (Tshisekedi, 2019).

In the DR Congo, social justice issues spark a radical reconversion within all sectors of the country — family, church; and political, social, economic and cultural institutions — in order to establish principles of social justice successfully. Allowing Congolese people to communicate, form real-life networks and relationships among themselves and their leaders, empower themselves, and contribute meaningfully to the construction of a fair society is critical, as stated in the Congolese constitution's preamble (2005:2). The Congolese are a people connected by destiny and history around the lofty values of liberty, fraternity, solidarity, justice, peace, and labour, according to the preamble.

The DR Congo is a country with appreciable potential (due to its abundance of natural resources and its relatively young population) but is weighed down by the persistency of war, conflict, corruption, poverty and public health crises (the Ebola virus epidemic and the current COVID-19 pandemic). These crises persist despite the apparent goodwill of the nation's new leaders, as indicated in their speeches. The promise of social justice and respect for the dignity of all people has been the new leadership's response to the country's calamities. The poverty of the majority of Congolese people is actually a tragedy when one considers that they live amidst an abundance of natural resources. According to Kalemba, quoted by Muyungi (2017:5), the

people's suffering is also a consequence of the delinquent behaviour of Congolese political leaders and unethical laws implemented in government and parliament. The CEAC, as a Protestant church, may play a significant role in the promotion of social justice in the DR Congo in overall and Kongo Central specifically, given its membership numbers and public prominence.

2.3 Brief history of the Protestant church and the CEAC in the DR Congo

The CEAC is one of the members of the Church of Christ in Congo (French: *Eglise du Christ au Congo*; 'ECC'), established by the Protestant's congregations, the latter which are known as 'communities.' The Protestant church in the DR Congo is referred to as the ECC, and it is an umbrella institution that covers all Protestant churches in the country. This section briefly describes the history of the ECC and the CEAC.

2.3.1 The dawn of the Protestant church (ECC) in the DR Congo

The Protestant church has been present in the DR Congo for nearly a century (Garrard, 2013). Its initiation occurred before the Congo Free State was established, in a province that was originally known as Katanga (Goossens, 2000). The majority of Protestant missionaries were Anglophone, with a small number of Scandinavians and a few French-speaking Belgians. To avoid duplicating missionary efforts, newer missions in the Belgian Congo (later Zaire, and now the DR Congo) were established in places where there were no other Protestant missionaries. The exception was large cities, where the population density enabled the existence of multiple missions. This was the trend throughout the colonial era (Hastings, 1979). A large percentage of Protestant missions joined the Congo Protestant Council (CPC). The CPC was a loose association created to represent Protestants in the wake of anti-Protestant and pro-Catholic colonial authority (Garrard, 2013). Some denominations — such as Seventh Day Adventists, the Christian Brethren and the Swedish and Norwegian Free Churches — opted not to become CPC members due to church-state relations in their native countries. The CPC was never a caucus of legislators, but rather a representational body (Garrard, 2013; Kabongo-Mbaya, 1992). The CPC assisted new missions in gathering information about non-evangelised areas and later lobbied the colonial government on issues such as property for mission schools, subsidies for medical or educational work and requests for government recognition — all of

which were required for official status and continued existence in the colony (Kabongo-Mbaya, 1992; Garrard, 2013).

On June 30, 1960, when Belgium granted Belgian Congo independence, it became clear that the CPC's structure would have to change. Rather than having white expatriates lead the CPC, local Congolese church leaders were appointed. Jean Itofo Bombanza Bokeleale was the primary force behind the CPC in the DR Congo after independence. The CPC concluded under Bokeleale's leadership that white missionaries had negatively influenced it. These national leaders believed that if the Church of Christ was united in every aspect across the country, it would become a mighty and invincible force in the Protestant community. All differences between denominations — hereafter referred to as 'communities' — needed to be eradicated, according to the CPC's notion of oneness and African solidarity. The only way to accomplish this was to pass laws requiring all Protestant churches to join the only body recognised by Mobutu's administration, which could only be done through state coercion and persuasion. This body, in turn, longed for ultimate power and authority to impose any doctrine or practice on all of its member communities. A fundamental amendment in the national constitution was made at the CPC's 49th General Assembly in Kinshasa in 1970. By legislation, the CPC was renamed the Church of Christ of Congo (ECC), and the numerous member congregations were merged into one church body (Kabongo-Mbaya, 1992; Garrard, 2013). Without a doubt, Bokeleale's aim to eliminate denominational variety was a ruse devised by Mobutu to limit the political activities of Protestants in the country, enabling Mobutu to implement the reforms he desired (Garrard, 2013). Therefore, the development of the Protestant Church organisation was probably influenced by Mobutu in some way (Kuvuna, 2019). The MPR (French: Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution; English: Popular Movement of the Revolution) was the country's sole political party at the time, and the Mobutu dictatorship wanted the church to adopt its doctrine. Everything came down to the church being used to strengthen political power. In 1972, Mobutu's party decided to form a JMPR committee in every ecclesiastical training organization (French: Jeunesse du Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution; English: Youth of the Popular Movement of the Revolution) (Protestant, Catholic and Kimbanguist). The Catholic Church's resistance to the decision caused a squabble between President Mobutu and Catholic bishop Malula. The Protestant church appeared to disagree with the Catholic Church's position. Protestants' negative attitude to the Catholic perspective has been attributed by some historians to the Catholic church's historical marginalization of Protestants. During colonial times,

Catholicism was declared the state religion. The ECC now consists of 95 settlements (ECC, 2014c:113-122). The CEAC is located in the city of Boma, in the province of Kongo Central.

2.3.2 Mission of the Protestant church in the DR Congo

Congolese people asked that the country's constitution declare it to be a secular republic shortly after the country's post-independence implementation of Protestantism, and they were at the vanguard of this demonstration. A proposal along these lines was discussed in the General Assembly in Stanleyville (modern-day Kisangani) in 1963. The proposal was adapted from the Independent State of Congo, and it was driven by a desire to break away from the Belgian colony's policies.

As Laurent reminds out, Christianity is both spiritual and social. The Protestant missionaries claimed that the church had no choice but to speak out against the state's wrongdoings against the people. The ECC emphasized the church's prophetic role in society (Bibi-Bikan, 2002:247-248).

In chapter 2, article 4, of the Protestant church's current Constitution, the church's tripartite mission is outlined: its evangelistic mission, its instructional mission, and its diaconal mission. The following section delves into these three points in further depth (ECC, 2014a).

Evangelical mission

In the book of Matthew, the Lord Jesus commanded the church to perform the evangelical mission:

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28.19-20).

As a result, the ECC evangelistic ministry is concerned with obeying the Lord's highest command. The most recent church membership statistics available are from the 1990s, and they show a church membership of 25 505 220, with 32 101 congregations and 16 730 pastors. This information was acquired from the ECC's webpage (ecc.faithweb.com, 1990).

Educative mission

The church must offer an education that nurtures Christian growth so that Christians in Congo and everywhere can demonstrate their faith and unity. In this mission, the church emphasizes

God's love, human neighbourly love, and love for one's country. In order to fulfill its educational mission, the church must provide opportunities for people to be schooled in all parts of society (Kuvuna, 2019).

Diaconal mission

This church aims to enhance the well-being of all people by executing humanitarian and religious activities (for instance, providing educational and medical services). As a result, the Protestant organisation consists of an education department and a health department. The education department is managed by the national coordination of conventional Protestant schools, which has primary schools, high schools and universities across the country. The health department, in its latest statistic in 1990, listed 63 hospitals, 606 clinics, 1 000 surgeries and 23 leproseries (Kuvuna, 2019).

2.3.3 The dawn of the CEAC

It is important to highlight that 1876 to 1908 was a crucial period for King Léopold II, who effectively occupied the Basin of Congo. In the same period, the effort of the missionaries was to implant Christian local communities in Central Africa. It was at that period, called the 'third outreach of Africa', that missionaries from the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) reached Congo to establish and implement the CEAC (Holvast, 2020:7).

The history of the CEAC attests that this Evangelical Church was founded in Kongo Central in 1884 by missionaries from the C&MA who had arrived from the USA. Rev. AB Simpson, a Presbyterian preacher from Canada, was the visionary behind the C&MA. Through profound spiritual encounters that transformed the course of his life, Simpson thought that Christ was not only his Saviour but also his Sanctifier, Healer, and coming King (Holvast, 2020:8-9). Early Alliance congregations were called as 'branches,' and were made up of members of various major religions. They were founded as missionary societies, not a church. (Jones, 2019, p. 94.).

According to Brakeman (1961:349), Simpson's objective was 'to reach the world by sending missionaries to areas not yet reached or neglected.' This objective was based on two principles: healing by faith and setting up financially autonomous stations (Jones, 2019:195).

The CEAC was one of the first and was the largest mission in the world founded by Simpson's group of missionaries. It is a local Christian community that attracts myriad people who profess

Christ as their Lord and Saviour (Statutes, 2011:1). It is one of the Protestant churches in the DR Congo that is led by the ECC.

With regards to the origins of the CEAC, according to Yanagihara, the first boarding of missionaries took place in 1884 before the official and final organisation of movement, which took place in 1887. Congo was the first missionary field of missionaries from Alliance. This first boarding of young missionaries to Zaire did not meet expectations due to their lack of spiritual maturity, expertise and experience in church administration. The recruits were only trained for two years before their arrival and this lack of skills and experience delayed the development of the church in Zaire considerably, resulting in conditions being set for future missionaries. It would appear that the failures experienced in Zaire did not take place in other countries. Leaders from Alliance obtained their knowledge from this occurrence (Yanagihara, 2019:3).

The beginning of the CEAC highlighted a problem within the organisation. Holvast (2020:15) argues that the first five missionaries travelled under their own responsibility, as Simpson would later record, with limited organisational and administrative skills because the movement did not hinder the freedom of the Holy Spirit. Their belief was that God would lead his team through his Spirit. This 'holy troop' was formed by the following people: John A. Condit, Francis M. Franck Gerrish, William Quayle, Jeans W. Jensen and William B. Pearson.

Simpson decided to send a second team of missionaries to Congo in 1889. This team initiated the Christian missionary site in Ngangila, Kongo Central Province. The first autochthone to be reached by the gospel was Luidi Kinkela. Luidi Kinkela commenced his ministry as a catechist and was later the first autochthone to be consecrated as a pastor. According to Holvast (2020:51), Kinkela died at the advanced age of 100 years. The experience learnt from Ngangila helped missionaries establish further churches in this area. It is commonly perceived that the CEAC has its roots in Ngangila.

Furthermore, the official bulletin of the International State of Congo confirmed that Ngangila was the headquarters of the International Missionary Alliance. Mr Hunter Reid was its legal representative, and his assistant was Cameroon Scott. In 1904, the C&MA received its legal document, *Personnalité civile* (roughly interpreted in English as 'Legal status'), from the

government, and Boma was designated as the C&MA's headquarters. Cardner Levi Samuel was the C&Ma's legal representative (Bulletin officiel de l'Etat Indépendant du Congo, 1904: 67).

After its founding in Ngangila, some missionary sites were thereafter established in places such as Vungu, Lolo Mazinga, Kiama, Maduda, Yema, and other areas in Bas-Fleuve, Kongo Central. Missionaries were increasingly sent into the entire Mayombe area, where the spreading of the gospel was rapid compared to the areas where they had begun. According to Kuvuna, missionaries were asked to focus their efforts on new territories. This proved to be fruitful compared to Ngangila and Isangila, where the spreading of the gospel was sluggish (Kuvuna, 1984:24).

Most people in the Mayombe area indulging in alcohol, dancing and prostitution, the spreading of the gospel was fruitful. Many autochthones responded to the preaching of the gospel by committing their lives to Christ (Kuvuna, 1984:25). As a result, local churches spread within Mayombe and into Cabinda in Angola. Autochthones or indigenous people accepted the testimony and broke with their ancestral practices by aligning their lives to Jesus' teachings. The outreach task reached its zenith, with a number of catechists among the autochthones. Training was essential in enabling the catechists to learn to read the Bible by themselves. The focus was on developing evangelism for an Ecclesiastical society (Falk, 1985: 345).

Additionally, many evangelism methods were employed through teaching, healthcare services and literature. Thomas Phaku was the first person to be consecrated as a pastor. He was one of the extremely influential persons of that time and left a far-reaching legacy within the church. He was called 'Mundele Ndombe', which can be interpreted in English as 'Black man, but he is a White one.' Nsongo (2014: 49-50) writes about him in these terms:

His leadership was inspirational in spreading and extending the church to Cabinda. Thomas Phaku devoted himself to learning and to be trained, which created the opportunity to attend Bible school at the same time as his son. Thomas Phaku, however, struggled to persuade the government to offer the same support to schools established by Protestant missionaries, as was the case with Catholic schools. This courageous approach of leader Ne Kongo was not accepted by those who were against the education and instruction of autochthones.

Thomas Phaku was well-known in Kongo Central and was known to be trustworthy to government authorities, the military and civilians. His integrity led him to be chosen as the first

autochthone president of the CEAC in 1931, when the church was autonomous. Concurrently, he was accepted by the territorial head. Military and civilian authorities sought advice from him — in his village — about land conflicts and other concerns around territorial administration. Civilian authorities allowed him to collect taxes from people in his community. He assisted community members in resolving their conflicts amicably. His decisions were accepted by both authorities (civilian and military) and ordinary people. He was instrumental in involving the autochthone church in social issues.

After many difficulties, the CEAC stands firm today and has become a powerful force in many parts of the country. In one of his speeches, the former president of the CEAC remarks that it is one of the oldest and largest churches in the DR Congo, characterised by five principles:

- **Christian church:** from the traditional apostles and affirms the commitment to the Bible as God's Word and as God's complete and authoritative revelation to man.
- **Protestant church:** from the Protestant reformation in 1517.
- **Evangelical church:** it bears testimony to the particular truths of the *Fourfold Gospel of Simpson*, which are Christ our Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and coming King.
- **Missionary church:** it supports and encourages people in the task of mission and evangelism, which the church understands to be its special calling.
- **Alliance church:** it provides opportunities and encourages expression of fellowship among members of the Alliance World Fellowship (AWF), and advances unity of theological and moral standards among members of AWF (Kenzo, 2015).

When speaking about the *Fourfold Gospel*, Simpson (1984:12) attests that the blessings of God through the gospel are not limited to these four pillars. On the contrary, the gospel offers multiple blessings and allows us to obtain deeper and richer experiences of God's grace and love each day. The gospel contains four messages which summarise all the blessings that Christ bestows upon us, and every Christian today must focus his/her attention on them. Those messages are four pillars within the temple of truth. The messages' requirement is to encourage followers to experience Christ fully, through his multiple dimensions and facets.

Furthermore, the CEAC advocates for the Christocentric doctrine of Simpson, which is summarised into the self-conceit of Jesus. This self-conceit is shown by a deep spiritual life and a pattern of missionary involvement.

The CEAC has now been in existence for 136 years and has a membership of over 1 million, with 668 active pastors, 782 local churches, 60 ecclesiastical districts, two Bible institutes, two universities, 22 health structures (hospitals and clinics) and 303 primary and high schools, among others. The CEAC is located in 10 provinces of the DR Congo: Kongo Central; Kinshasa; Kwilu; Mai Ndombe; Mongala; Equateur; Haut Katanga; Lualaba; Tanganyika; and Haut Lomami. Additionally, it has two missions in Angola and Zambia. There is a small-scale missionary project in Guinea (Presidency report of CEAC 2019).

2.3.4 Chart briefly describing the chronology of church leaders of the CEAC

N°	Year	President/ Leader	Observations
1	1884-1931		This period called was known as the 'Mission' and was characterised by missionary leadership.
2	1931-1965	Rev. Thomas Paku	The church achieved autonomy. Rev. Thomas Paku was the first autochthone president of the CEAC. The church was known as the called CMA.
3	1965-1975	Rev. Paul Mandanga Tubi	The church was known as the EEAC.
4	1962-1968	Rev. Joseph Thama Funzi	The Church was known as the ECMA.
5	1997-1991	Rev. Dr Joel Kuvuna Ku Khonde Muela	This was a period characterised by the apogee of the CEAC, with many movements such as the cooperatives,

			laymen and laywomen becoming more involved in the church under a movement named in French as <i>laicat</i> . Many choirs emerged.
6	1991-1998	Bishop Albert Paku Nianga	As per the preceding, this period was crucial but had many challenges. The church developed some social sectors and dynamised the apogee of the CEAC.
7	1998-2010	Msg. JP Mayunda Nzelele	Nzelele was the vice president of the church during Bishop Albert Paku's leadership. At the end of Paku's life, Nzelele succeeded him. Nzelele was initially a reverend monsignor and eventually was appointed as bishop. By the end of his incumbency, the church had already been experiencing serious internal conflict due to his ordination as bishop and as well as other issues relating to the management and administration of the church.
8	2010-2011	Rev. Lt. Colonel Samson BABAKA Nzau	This period was a transition between the ancient regime under Bishop J.P. Mayunda and the post-regime. Many problems affected the life of the church. The CEAC faced more than

			32 ‘judicial cases’ against Mayunda’s team and other persons and services.
9	2011-2019	Rev. Dr J-R. MABIALA Kenzo	With two mandates, the management committee, led by Mabiala Kenzo, was adversely affected by the revolution. The committee promoted a reform of the church, but the work was challenging due to past crises, such as those under Mayunda’s leadership.
10	2019-	Rev. Marcel BUNDA Bunda	With the politics of zero conflict, the management committee, led by the Rev Marcel Bunda, tends to reconcile the church with all its members as well as former President Nzelele. This process is promising. If the previous regime worked for the reformation of the church, the current works for the development of the church.

In view of this chart of the history and trajectory of the CEAC, we can state with assurance that the church is not a hierarchical religious organisation but rather a spiritual entity that seeks to foster community — a community without clergy where each person is active according to the gifts and talents that he/she has received from the Holy Spirit. One becomes a member of a local church after being baptised in immersion. Nevertheless, there are no women clergy in this church.

Since the evangelical mission is involved with responding to the Highest Order of the Lord,

according to the statutes of the CEAC (2011: 2), the mission of the CEAC is to promote the holistic gospel in the various areas and regions of the DR Congo. Adherence to policies and the promotion of a responsible society are essential requirements in the DR Congo. Although the church has been embroiled in some of its own crises in the past, it has leverage in the DR Congo in general and Kongo Central in particular. The CEAC constitutes a lobby group for political authorities.

The CEAC has noteworthy human capital which are able to impact positively on the Kongo Central Province and the country at large. The church comprises of more than 1 million members, approximately 600 pastors in up to 400 local churches and more than 10 000 people who are working for the CEAC in administering its services at schools, hospitals and so on (Presidency of the CEAC, 2019). In the past, most people who received their diplomas from CEAC schools would be hired as salespeople in stores due to their integrity and trustworthiness. Thus, the testimony of a CEAC member is credible and reliable, even in tribunal (Kenzo, 2015:23).

Regarding development, the CEAC has extensive land resources that enables it to create employment. The church owns more than 2 000 hectares of arable land yet to be mined, with the potential of planting many trees for environmental protection.

2.4. The CEAC's efforts as a Protestant church in the promotion of social justice

The worldwide notion of justice initially appeared in the teachings of the world's main faiths, such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, between 1500 and 2500 years ago. It also appeared in Western literature of this period (Reisch, 2002:344). The universality of the social justice principle includes all structures, including the church. The church is an institution, and its role is to set the example for people and leaders to follow. This principle must also be used in the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The church's teachings should not be limited to the spiritual realm, but should have an impact on society's governance as well as the Congolese people's social, political, and financial lives (Muyungi 2017:2). In this section, the researcher will look at how and to what extent the CEAC, as a Protestant church, thought about and led the social justice effort during the DR Congo's most critical and difficult decades.

2.4.1 The CEAC and social justice in the colonial period of the DR Congo

Since 1900, the role of the CEAC in the DR Congo in general and Kongo Central in particular has been highly significant because the church had a considerable influence on the transformation of Congolese society — such as in the Mayombe context. Despite some difficulties in the establishment of the Protestant missions — due to the discrimination against Protestants by certain colonial leaders — the impact of the CEAC on the development of the DR Congo is still visible in education, healthcare, employment, social integration, promotion of human rights, reconciliation and economics.

Bibi Bikan, as quoted by Kuvuna (2019:119), emphasizes that the Council (French: Conseil Protestant du Congo) strives to serve all Congo missions and missionaries in a variety of ways, not the least of which, in recent years, has been to try to protect the Protestant community from Catholic dominance and to stand for fair treatment and religious rights. The Council seeks to help the missionaries collaborate with the government in ways that are best for the Congolese people. In the colonial period (1897-1908), the Protestant missionaries were the first to denounce the human rights abuses perpetrated by the colonial regime who introduced the compulsory tax in the DR Congo. This period was characterised by grave atrocities and disagreement over the relationship between the state and Protestant missionaries.

Protestant missionaries zealously documented in their journals and magazines that they were being marginalised within the new authority. For this reason, the famous campaign, ‘Against Congolese’, or particularly ‘Against Leopold’s System’, with Sjöblom as one of the tenors of this movement (Ndaywel, 1998:350), emerged.

Missionaries quickly understood the consequences of their famous campaign ‘Against Congolese’ in defence of the oppressed population. First, Murphy and Sjöblom began to complain vigorously to their hierarchies based in Boston and Stockholm, respectively. Then they wrote to their friends and relatives by describing all that they had witnessed, including villages being set alight, populations hiding in the forest due to fear, despotic officers and soldiers, murder and baskets full of amputated right hands which were brought to offices as trophies. They presented the gruesome proof of how the despotic officers and soldiers used their munition and boldly approached the officer who was in charge of the killings, telling him that one day he would be accountable to God for those slaughtered. This drew many people’s attention and was the first time that missionaries had spoken openly about abusive practises in

the Congolese independent state (Lagergren, 2003:14-15).

In the particular context of the CEAC, Holvast (2020:159) notes that the confrontation between the Congo Free State (French: *Etat Independent du Congo*; 'EIC') and the missionaries of the C&MA/CEAC focused on five allegations:

- violence during the harvesting of rubber;
- an oppressed population;
- excessive fiscal burdens;
- circulation of propaganda; and
- anti-Protestant sentiment.

In relation to the violence during the harvesting of rubber, Holvast notes that the C&MA office gave readers of magazines information about the EIC's authorities regarding the violent acts that they were committing against the population. The government's violence against the Congolese people during the harvest of rubber intensified from 1900 and became an international scandal. C&MA published a few complaints about the Belgium King, who was extremely insensitive to the atrocities being committed against the Congolese people. Articles of this international campaign increased rapidly through magazines of the C&MA. Missionaries who were in Europe during their vacations did not hesitate to denounce these atrocities (Holvats, 2020: 156).

A second allegation became the source of confrontation between missionaries from the C&MA and leaders of the EIC. This allegation was about the oppressive punishment the EIC was meting out to autochthones. The construction of the railway system and the exploitation of the Mayombe forest provoked social disarray. Missionaries such as Iner Wickware, quoted by Holvast (2020:161), explained the phenomenon in these terms: 'it is not possible to portray the lack of humanity demonstrated by the government and the horrific humiliation inflicted on the population.' Owing to this climate of oppression, the fiscal burden became the source of serious consequences among autochthones. The campaign made by King Leopold II against missionaries, active workers and disadvantaged people were noticed by Protestant organisations as they lived in close proximity to the suffering and abused population. The relationship between missionaries and EIC leaders was largely strained and unhealthy. The Protestant missionaries in the colonial context performed a momentous prophetic mission: they denounced the massive violations of human rights spurred by the leadership of Leopold II and worked

towards the instauration of the new politics, transforming the Congo Free State in 1908.

2.4.2 The CEAC and social justice in the post-colonial period of the DR Congo

Throughout the post-colonial period — 1960 to the present — the position of the CEAC and the Protestant church has not been stable. During the dictatorial regime under the Mobutu presidency (1964-1990), the Protestant church in the Democratic Republic of Congo was a partner of the Mobutu regime and lent its support to the regime. The church was seen to be receiving telegram messages from the National Executive Committee to President Mobutu. The messages sent with great encouragement even when the country's social, economic and political conditions were dire and ordinary people were suffering. This relationship was beneficial to the church as well as to the government executive. Kuvuna observed that the church increasingly became a state tool, and that many national church leaders received the highest civil award — *Ordre des leopards* (the Leopard Brotherhood) — granted by President Mobutu (Kuvuna, 2015:90). For this reason, Protestants leaders were hesitant to take up the defence of the oppressed people.

However, this was a pinnacle moment in terms of projects and activities promoting charitable actions within schools and hospitals, and cooperative movements with other bankable projects were established. These charitable projects propelled Protestant churches, and the CEAC became a powerful and inescapable partner for the promotion of charity. Nonetheless, attaining effective social justice for all people remained a challenge.

Under pressure from international forces, President Mobutu announced the democratisation process of the state, which would usher in dramatic reforms, on 24 April 1990. This was a decisive period for Protestant churches. It was an awakening moment and an opportune time to see changes within the church. From 1990 to 2006, motivated by certain circumstances, Protestant churches with a profoundly renewed perspective for social justice used different ways to justify or testify of their commitment to the marginalised people. In fact, except for some pertinent speeches, memorandums, non-violence marches, meetings and other actions, the National Synod of the Protestant General Assembly set up a committee known as the *Commission Justice Paix et Sauvegarde* (Justice Committee of Peace and Safeguarding) in 1994. The goal of the committee was to create an awareness of the problems of social justice, unrest and climate change, and to promote the importance of engaging in these issues to remedy them (ECC, 1994:56).

Since 2017, the church's new leadership has been attempting to modify and update the social justice position of the Protestant church to the public. The CEAC is sensitive to the social justice challenge as it is battling to promote social justice values both within the church and the country at large. The CEAC's impact can be seen in development, education, health, and human rights.

2.4.3 The position of the CEAC in promoting social justice in the DR Congo (2010 to 2020)

The involvement in promoting social justice is one of the missions of the CEAC, as defined by legislation (Statutes, 2011:3). As an Evangelical and Protestant church, the CEAC plays an important role in social justice activism in the country by invoking its historical, moral and political authority. The CEAC claims the role of participating in social justice challenges faced by most Congolese people today. The CEAC understands that the country's potential is not in privatisation or as a source of war, but rather in solidarity with people's rights to equality (Kenzo, 2015). Thus, the liberation of spreading the gospel should lead people to this revelation and lead them to apply it in their daily lives.

2.4.4 Chart briefly describing the position of church leaders of the CEAC in promoting social justice

N°	Years	Position	References	Observations
1	2010	Period of the transition characterised by troubles in the church. The credibility of the church was impugned. However, church members, the secular movement and a few clergies worked towards the restoration of the church's profile. This period was called the Revolution.	Report from the management committee of the church on the synodal council in 2011.	This period of disorder created friction between the ancient regime (church leadership) and the ordinary church members. It was a sorrowful period.

2	2011	Installation of new church leaders after the election. This is a period of reformation. Church leaders remained in the public space. The President of the CEAC and the Catholic bishop in Boma published a message for the credible, democratic and transparent election in the DR Congo. In the meantime, the CEAC played a significant role in the monitoring of the election — in collaboration with other churches and civil society organisations.	Report from the Presidency of the CEAC in 2011.	Despite the Reform promoted by the church's leaders, the CEAC faced many judicial actions. After the publication of the results of the national election, the silence of the church compromised the initial position of the CEAC.
3	2012 to 2013	The management of the CEAC underwent numerous changes and transformations. Church leaders organised a large-scale meeting by inviting political leaders and leaders in various fields of society involved in Kongo Central's development in particular, and the DR Congo's in general. The function of this meeting was to elaborate on the <i>feuille de route</i> , or the guidelines for the promotion of social justice in the nation.	Report from the management committee of the church on the synodal council in 2013.	

5	2014	<p>The President of the CEAC attended social justice meetings at every stage in relation to the issue of Boma as well as meetings concerning issues on a more national level, such as the existence of the <i>Bundu dia Kongo</i> (BDK). The BDK is a secular movement from Kongo Central.</p>	Report from the management committee of the church on the synodal council in July 2014.	During this period, the President of the CEAC played a key role in the social justice concern. The CEAC was an interlocutor alongside the state.
6	2015 to 2016	<p>In 2015 and 2016, the CEAC responded substantively to the needs of flooding victims. This social assistance programme operated on three levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. it provided vulnerable families with school supplies for their children; 2. it supplied food parcels and other essential goods to families for their welfare and development; and 3. it provided vulnerable families with a few domestic goods. <p>This social assistance was offered to all families regardless of religion. In this unprecedented move, it became the first (and only) church to perform such charitable acts with no religious discrimination.</p>	Report from the management committee of the church on the synodal council in 2014 and 2015.	

7	2017	In this period, the CEAC engaged in the process of some reform, known as <i>Les Etats Généraux</i> (The States General), but did not achieve its objectives.	Report from the management committee of the church on the synodal council in 2017	
8	2018	As of 2011, the CEAC has collaborated with the Catholic Church in preparing for national elections by educating people about the credibility of political leaders, democracy and transparency in the DR Congo.	Report from the management committee of the church on the synodal council in 2018	Unfortunately, in 2011 and 2018, when the Catholic Church and the CEAC partnered in preparation for the national election, the initiative came from the Catholic Church.
9	2019 to 2020	<p>After the election of July 2019 in the summit of the CEAC, the new leadership has focused on seven strategies or pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. restoring credibility. 2. evangelism and mission support; 3. supporting ministers working in disadvantaged economic areas; 4. development of the CEAC, known in French as <i>Debout CEAC</i> (Stand up, CEAC); 5. an end to conflict in the church; 	Reports from the management committee of the church on the synodal council from 2019 to 2020.	These pillars highlight the vision of the CEAC, which is to participate in the building of a state that is responsive to its people's needs and promotes social justice. However, the need to extend this vision across all levels remains a considerable challenge.

		6. visibility of the church; and 7. social and economic issues within the CEAC.		
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CONCLUSION

The second chapter included the following topics: the DR Congo's general setting, a brief summary of the Protestant churches and the CEAC in the DR Congo, and the CEAC's impact in promoting social justice as one of the country's Protestant churches.

In view of the historical mission and the social perspectives of the CEAC, the church has enormous potential to promote social justice. With its sizeable membership, its capital authority and influence within the DR Congo and the influence of its leaders, the CEAC can play an important role in the social justice challenge. Furthermore, the CEAC can promote extensive actions to inculcate a culture of social justice in the areas of job creation; the fight against poverty, education and healthcare; and the promotion and protection of human rights.

The next chapter will analyse the Eucharistic celebration as a meaningful part of the CEAC's efforts in the DR Congo. The chapter will also retrace the meaning of the Eucharistic celebration in the Protestant Congolese church as a memorial of victory over evil forces, the union of a spiritual rite with Christ and prefiguration of the celestial banquet promised by Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

EUCCHARISTIC CELEBRATION AS PART OF THE CEAC'S SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT IN THE DR CONGO

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two analysed and explored social justice challenges in Congolese society that the CEAC has attempted to remedy. It provided a brief account of the DR Congo's context. It also explained the relationship between the CEAC as a Protestant church and its social justice work in the backdrop of the DR Congo conflict.

The third chapter looks at Eucharistic celebration as an important part of promoting social justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This understanding highlights the meaning of the Eucharist and dimensions thereof. The Eucharist reminds participants to recognise through it the determination to transform all structures of social injustice and to restore human dignity. The Eucharistic celebration promotes social justice and becomes relevant to building a peaceful society. From a social point of view, the Eucharist is an action and not just a confined ritual within the Church. It reminds us that its key purpose is to break down universal social boundaries.

3. 2. The meaning of the Eucharist

The understanding of the word 'Eucharist' as a sacrament in the social injustice context offers a new understanding in sacramentary theology. This new understanding should produce a great awareness and appreciation of its historical foundations, theological grounding and social code (Smith 2003: 287). Torvend (2019) argues that the Eucharist should lead Christians to global outreach. He claims that the Eucharist has an earthly trajectory, in which communion in the life of the risen Christ is meant to lead every worshipper into the world (Torvend, 2019:15). Kowalczyk (2021) emphasises the context of God's mercy in the Eucharistic sacrifice. In this section, the intent is to define three key concepts: sacrament, Eucharist and social justice.

3.2.1 Sacrament

The term 'sacrament' is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum*, and translated into Greek as *mysterion*. In the most general sense of the term, a sacrament is a sign that possesses a hidden

sanctification or bears some relationship to it (Nutt 2017: 61). Sacraments are a language of faith of the church which Christian believers experience. During worship, members express and testify their commitment to the church by gesture of the sacraments. According to Kisitu (2018:125), a sacrament is understood as a communal event, communicated through words, symbols and actions that emphasise the unity of the community and the responsibility of each member to each other.

Sacraments are often described as a visible sign of inward and spiritual divine grace, and they take the form of rites and rituals. Sacraments are thought to be special or specific means of grace (Thorsen, 2020:158). Sacraments are the elements that Jesus Christ incorporated into the Christian faith as they served to strengthen Christian faith (Feenstra 1984:141-142). The sacraments were considered more to be a sign of divine grace. People's faith should be emphasised, rather than the rites and rituals performed. Protestant churches recognise two sacraments, namely Holy Baptism and the Eucharist, while Catholics identify seven sacraments (Thorsen, 2020:158).

Sacraments were understood and celebrated by early Christians as communal events or rituals that theologically defined who they were: Christians united in the life of Christ. The early Church's sacramental activity was founded on the core sacramental principle: "a belief that we can experience God through liturgical events and symbols, and that the Church is a sacramental community that commemorates Jesus Christ's presence in tangible and symbolic ways" (Kisitu, 2018:124). Furthermore, the particular view that Christians have of the sacraments serve as important ways of remembering how God has provided salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and how God continues to work in assuring, encouraging and strengthening Christians. The sacraments represent a vital way through which the Holy Spirit work. The goal of sacraments is invariably to point towards God's grace (Thorsen, 2020:158).

When Jesus said: 'Do this in remembrance' (Luke 22, 19), he conveyed that the Eucharist was a public expression of faith in Jesus Christ for the community of believers. By this ritual, the church members realise their commitment and the unity with other members in the world.

In the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry document (1982:13), the World Council Church receives the Eucharist as a sacrament from the Lord, in which Jesus Christ provides communion with himself. The Eucharist is fundamentally a whole act that will be examined under the

following headings: thankfulness to the Father, memory of Jesus Christ, invocation of the Holy Spirit, faithful communion, and Kingdom meal. The sacrament is viewed as a symbol of God's mercy.

3.2.2 Eucharist

The term 'Eucharist' — also known as the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, and Mass and Divine Liturgy — is derived from the Greek verb *eucharistein*, and the noun *eucharistia*, which means 'to give thanks' and 'thanksgiving', respectively. It was adopted in the Christian vocabulary as a translation of the Hebrew verb *barak*, and the noun *berakah*, which are also translated into Greek as *eulogein* (to bless) and *eulogia* (blessing). For Jews and Judaic Christians, *berakah* (blessing-thanksgiving), is an act of praise directed towards God and a basic expression in all prayers (Downey 1993:137). The Eucharist is a religious service in which bread and wine are used as a focal point for religious instruction, public petitions, personal devotion, and congregational praise. Its prevailing characteristic and the meaning of the Greek word from which it is derived is thankful praise (Cully *et al* 1990: 228).

In the Bible, especially the Old Testament, all sacrifices and offerings of the patriarch and Israel — and even those offered by pagan cults — were figures of the Eucharist. Feingold (2018:72) positions the Eucharist in the prefiguration in the Old Covenant as being in the presence of God, manifested at certain times by a visible glory overshadowing the Holy Place. However, the immolation of the paschal lamb during the feast of the Passover most perfectly prefigures the Eucharist in three ways: first, the Eucharist was performed by eating unleavened bread. According to Exodus 12:8: "They are to eat flesh...as well as unleavened bread. Second, on the 14th day of the moon, it was immolated by the whole multitude of the children of Israel, and this was the symbol of the Christ's Passion. Third, the blood of the paschal lamb saved the children of Israel from the Angel of Death and liberated them from Egyptian captivity" (Thomas, 2016). The background of this rite includes the Jewish practice of using meals to celebrate events with significant religious meaning.

In the New Testament, Zizioulas (2011:2) attests that the Eucharistic meal is positioned in the context of the history of the people of Israel. There is no doubt that the Passover took place in the context of the Easter celebration. The New Testament gives four accounts of the institution of the last supper: Matthew, Mark, Luke and St. Paul in 1 Corinthians. These books record that

Jesus Christ shared a meal with the disciples on the night before his crucifixion and also shared a meal with those who believed in him after his resurrection. The institution of the Eucharist was celebrated in the context of a Passover supper, with Jesus Christ's sacrifice giving meaning to the Jewish Passover.

For Smith and Taussig (1990:21), the fact that early Christians regularly ate meals whenever they gathered was a common characteristic with other social groups. Furthermore, when these various groups held their meals, they followed similar patterns and rules. This indicates that the ancient meal, or more particularly the banquet, was a social institution that was shared across cultures, regardless of social or ethnic distinctions among people.

In that case, the Eucharist was already instituted in a social frame as a common meal, common meeting and common tradition. It should be noted that the same basic patterns were followed whether the meal was to be designated 'secular' or 'sacred' (Smith & Taussig, 1990:22). This is the social setting in which the form and purpose of early Christian eating practices evolved. Social boundaries, social connection, moral duty, classism, and social equality are the forms of social relations that comprise up ancient banquet ideology (Smith 2003). Jesus Christ's sacrifice gave significance to the festive meal of Jews commemorating their liberation from slavery in Egypt.

In writing about the new meaning of the festive meal of the Jews' commemoration in the Eucharistic institutional context, Tissa Balusiriya (1977:7) argues that Jesus instituted the Eucharist on the night of the Jewish Easter. It was the national feast and a celebration of their independence as well as their liberation from slavery. Jesus Christ's sacrifice gave a new, deeper, and more universal meaning to this event.

Regarding the Eucharist being instituted, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Liturgy, cited by Feingold (2018:37), notes:

He [Jesus Christ] did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.

This text highlights the principal reasons for which Jesus instituted the Eucharist. As the greatest gift of all, the Eucharist contributes to the church's vitality, nourishes the people of God in this state of exile and helps the church to perpetuate the redemptive gift of Christ in the world. According to Feingold (2018:54-55), the Eucharist is by far the supreme sacrament in dignity; it is the queen of the sacraments. The church becomes a way for the life of humanity through the Eucharist.

Feingold (2018:170) attests that the church Fathers have given united testimonies about the Eucharist, though expressed in different ways. They emphasise, above all, the reality of Christ's body and blood, Christ's sacrifice for humankind, and a sacrament which brings about unity in the Mystical Body of Christ, and which thus must be celebrated in the presence of the bishop. Many church Fathers used the Eucharistic faith of the church to combat Gnosticism or other Christological heresies and asserted the real presence of Jesus Christ in terms of the transubstantiation.

Many scholars continue to discuss the sense of Jesus Christ's presence in the Eucharist in an endeavor to fully comprehend the significance of the Eucharist. This is one of the points of contention regarding the significance of the sacrament in terms of form. For the first theory, promoted by St. Thomas Aquinas and others, and cited by Feingold (2018:32), the technical term 'transubstantiation' describes the extraordinary conversion of the bread and the wine into Jesus Christ. The priest proclaims the mystery being celebrated and expresses his or her surprise before the substantial conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, a reality that beyond all human understanding, with these words, delivered immediately after the words of consecration. The Eucharist is a "faith puzzle" (Pope Benedict XVI 2007:46). The transubstantiation involves the instantaneous conversion of the bread and the wine. In other words, during the Eucharist, Jesus is present with his humanity and divinity in form of the bread and wine. The bread and the wine are not the symbols but the real presence of Jesus.

John Wycliffe, Huldrych Zwingli and others saw the Eucharist as 'a mere commemorative symbol' (Feingold 2018:345). For these scholars, the bread and the wine remain natural elements even after their consecration. The bread and wine represent a visible mark of the invisible reality, the presence (or spiritual presence) of Jesus Christ and God's invisible grace.

Additionally, there are some scholars, such as Luther and Calvin, who take more intermediate positions. They reject the radical theories of transubstantiation or consubstantiation in favour of the 'real presence' or 'spiritual power' of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The presence of Jesus Christ in the church in many forms, such as the Lord's Supper, is most important in this subject. The church celebrates the mystical sacrament of Jesus Christ's presence through the adoration of God. This reality confers a new impulsion of dignity in the Eucharistic celebration. , as Fay (2001:1) beautifully explains, Our Savior instituted the Eucharist during his last dinner with his followers to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the years and to entrust to the church, his spouse, a remembrance of his death and resurrection. Msg. Fay concurs with *Dominicae Cena*e (Pope John Paul II 1980) that the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is an endless mystery that the church will never be able to fully comprehend; the threefold God is the creator of everything and has the ability to accomplish far more than we can conceive (2001:3). The Lord is adored as the blessed sacrament in the rite of Eucharistic exposition and benediction, and in Eucharistic procession, or is kept in the tabernacle. The Christian faith is strengthened with devotions that are rooted in Jesus Christ's presence in the appearance of bread, and the Eucharist nourishes the dying (*viaticum*) and the sick (*Dominicae Cena*e 1980).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that Jesus Christ keeps his promise to be with his followers always, until the end of time (Mt 28:20). This is realised in the Eucharist. 'Christ has not left us without his corporeal presence in this voyage, but he links us to himself in this sacrament in the reality of his body and blood,' said St Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae* III 75 a. 1). The author adds that Christ gives us eternal life through the celebration of the Eucharist under the appearance of bread and wine and we are thankful to God for this blessing (Knight 2017).

3.3 Some aspects of the Eucharist

The Eucharist is the 'sum and the summary of faith' (Pope Benedict XVI 2007: 23). It is one of the sacraments which is multifaceted and has social implications — some of which are discussed below.

3.3.1 Liturgy and the Eucharist

The connection between the Eucharist and liturgy is the most vital theological point of the current study. Jesus Christ's words, 'This is my body which is broken for you...Do this in

remembrance of me' (1 Cor 11:23-25), are the liturgy of the Church's understanding of the Eucharistic celebration. According to Moyo (2015:104), liturgy manifests in the socio-economic and political context of the church by exhibiting the power dynamics of society in the church.

Various meanings have been applied to the understanding of the term 'liturgy.' In the present study, the aim is to rely on the meaning of liturgy in the Eucharistic context. According to Gathogo (2018:2), the liturgy concept is derived from the Greek, '*leitourgia*', meaning a 'public work done on behalf of the people.' It is seen as the order of the service of the church.

Adrian Fortescue, cited by Moyo (2015:96), defined liturgy from the original Greek word '*leitourgia*', meaning a public duty — a service to the state undertaken by a citizen. The meaning of the word liturgy is then extended to cover any general service of a public nature. For Carvalhaes (2015:3), the term liturgy was first related to how people used it to organise their lives within the city, including festivals related to civic duties.

Today, liturgy refers to the manner in which public religious worship is done. Various faiths utilize liturgies to organize their worship and ceremonies to honor God, gods, and/or divinity, according to Carvalhaes (2015:3). Liturgical worship, according to Gennrich and Rakoczy (2018:31), reflects faith in the community's theology — that is, the community's knowledge of God, God's people, and their call to his word — as expressed in the language, metaphors, and rituals used. The liturgy defines the fundamental nature of a Christian church (Pope Benedict XVI 2008:26). For J. Gordon Melton, cited by Mpofu (2018:109), Prayers, readings, and liturgical acts such as the administration of the Eucharist are all part of the liturgy of a church.

The liturgical power in the worship service is distinguished by the dominant role that liturgy plays in the community. Liturgy becomes one of the sociological elements of understanding people. The Eucharist is given as worship, according to Moyo (2015:101), and it is a lesson to be brought into the community following the service. 'This is my body, which is broken for you.... Do this in commemoration of me,' (1 Cor 11:23-25) Jesus Christ says, addressing socioeconomic and political difficulties. In Moyo's view, the words 'in remembrance of me' are highlighted in post-colonial liturgy. Exploring these words in a feminist context, Siwila (2015:91) sees the role that Jesus Christ played from a liberating perspective:

If Jesus, who calls all humanity to the table, is the same Jesus who heals the woman with the flow of blood, how can we differentiate today the blood that flows from these women who are excluded from the Lord's Table and that of the woman in Mt 5:24-34? How can we help these marginalized groups to reach out and touch the cloak of Jesus? We need to radically transform and heal the damaging, misogynist aspects of the Christian tradition that deal with the body.

The relationship between liturgy and the Eucharistic celebration calls for transformative and liberating perspectives. Carvalhaes (2015:5) explains this when he highlights the effort of the World Council of Churches in the Baptism Eucharist and Ministry (BEM) document, as well as Lima Liturgy, that helped foster the renewal of the church. In these documents, Carvalhaes claims that languages and practices produced new ways of thinking as well as trends within Christian churches. The liturgical Reform was a sort of *aggiornamento*, or updating the church to reflect current events in the world. So far, the Eucharistic liturgy has urged participants to be responsible citizens who care for others and has reminded each person of the sacred nature of their participation. It's a ritual, an act, an affirmation, and a formal public declaration all rolled into one.

The Eucharistic sacrament is an all-inclusive act and cuts across social differences and class boundaries. Liturgically, Siwila (2015:83) says that Christians are considered as God's church, a congregation of all believers, and all body of Jesus Christ that is accessible to all. As a result, the Lord's Table is seen as a sacred location intended to bring humanity together. Concretely, the liturgy of the Eucharist or the Eucharistic celebration in the liberative and the transformative perspective was one of the aims during the liturgical reform. According to Moyo (2015:102), The Eucharistic ritual reminds the church that Jesus Christ is the one who overcomes, deliberates, releases, people from poverty difficulties and social injustice. The liturgy of the Eucharist is an expression of the communion, hospitality and solidarity of the church members and of the grace of God in the restoration of humanity.

According to the liturgy of the Eucharist, the Eucharistic celebration affects and addresses all dimensions of people's lives. As a response to the Eucharist liturgy, the participants demonstrate the presence of God in their social lives. God's justice, according to Wolterstorff, as cited by Moyo (2015:103-104) is an expression of His holiness: "...our justice is a reflection of God's holiness...holiness unites liturgy and justice".

3.3.2 The Eucharist as a sacrament of remembrance

The Eucharist is not only a sacrament in and of itself, but a sacrament of ‘remembrance’ or ‘memory.’ In terms of the Eucharist as a commemoration, Uzuku, quoted by Siwila (2015:84), sees it as a reenactment of the Christian story's event. It is one of the first forms of worship, commemorating Jesus Christ's death. Menno understands the Eucharist foremost as an act of remembrance of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, and second as an exhortation to love one another (cited by Strizzi 2015:143).

The remembrance concept leads to the understanding of the Eucharist in three ways: first, the remembrance of Jesus Christ refers to all of salvation. It testifies to the love, humility, solidarity and compassion of Jesus Christ for all humans. The remembrance also re-enacts the role of liberation and challenges most of life's boundaries in our particular context. Indeed, the Eucharist is meaningless when worshippers celebrate the remembrance sacrament of Jesus Christ and disregard those who suffer injustice in their own communities. The remembrance must influence community members' daily relationships and habits. The Holy Eucharist, according to Pope Benedict (2009:5), is a gift made by Jesus Christ of himself, revealing to us God's immeasurable love for all people. The 'higher' love that motivated him to 'laid down his life for his friends' is manifested in this wondrous sacrament (Jn 15:13).

Second, remembrance signifies revitalising the memory of Jesus Christ. The word ‘memorial’ is central to the profound meaning of the Eucharist. The memory, according to Thurian (1985:91), is a ritual action that actualizes the event of Jesus Christ's sacrifice rather than a simple subjective recollection. As an act of thankfulness and supplication, the church offers this one-of-a-kind sacrifice to the Father. “Do this as a tribute to me' actually means 'do this so that my sacrifice may be remembered among you and by my Father on your behalf’”. The memorial concept actualised God's deliverance of the people and the renewal of the Jewish paschal. When applying this concept, the Eucharist as Christ's sacrifice becomes a ‘Christianisation’ of the Jewish paschal. The Eucharist, according to Downey (1993:137), is a liturgical and holy supper in which the church commemorates, honors, and proclaims Jesus' sacrificial life, death, and resurrection. It is a liturgical rite in which a group of people gather in the name of the Holy Spirit and act through, with, and in the name of God's son, Jesus Christ. The members give God, the Almighty Father, all glory and honor.

To rephrase, the Eucharist is a memorial of Jesus Christ's entire life, but particularly for the culmination of his life in his passion-resurrection. It is a celebration and a solemn act of praise and thanksgiving for the signs and wonders that God has exhibited for people throughout the ages. Above all, the Eucharist symbolises the mission of his son, Jesus Christ. It is a proclamation of the Lord's self-offering and death on humankind's behalf, until he comes in the fullness of time (Feingold 2018:340).

Third, the Eucharist is a memorial because it recalls the past and functions as a renewal of the last ceremonial of Jesus Christ. This memorial is not a discontinuous past but is one of realignment; that is, it concerns the past, present and future. The Eucharist is an act of actualisation. So far, the commemorative 'in memory of me' recalls the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and influences the future of the participants. It is not an exhumation of the past but is a re-actualisation of reality (Jean-Marc Ela, 1980: 9). Jounel (1983 :323) emphasises the following:

Dans ce repas, chaque famille juive évoque non seulement un passé lointain, mais aussi l'avenir glorieux promis par les prophètes ; et elle prend conscience du Seigneur au milieu des siens. Le memorial envelope le passé, le présent et l'avenir.

The above means that during the Jewish meal, each family brings up not only the remote past but a glorious future from the prophets. In this regard, the Eucharist refers to the past, renews commitment to justice in the present and builds the future. Finally, by these words: 'Do this in memory of me', Jesus Christ reminds his followers of the work of salvation and liberation, to do as he did, to save humanity and to promote this calling in memory of him each time that they participate therein. In the context of the liberating perspective, as a memorial, the Eucharist is a sacrament of human liberation and the transformation of the world and a sacrament of solidarity.

3.3.3 The Eucharist as a sacrifice of alliance

Smith (2003:67) emphasizes that sacrifice is the major religious rite of all people in the Greco-Roman civilization in his analysis of the banquet in the early Christian world. This places the sacrificial supper at the center of the ancients' religious lives. In view of Smith and other authors, the sacrificial ritual is one of the fundamental religious acts in ancient times. The implication is that festive joy is a social experience deriving from, as well as contributing to,

the 'friendship' that is also fundamental to the banquet. As a result, 'festive delight' is to be regarded as a communal experience based on the form and purpose of the banquet of which it is an integral part, rather than as an individual experience (Smith 2003:81).

The Eucharist portrays a great sacrificial dimension. In the words, 'This is my blood of the New Testament', the Greek text stresses the expression 'sacrifice of alliance.' This highlights the sacrificial character of the death of Christ on the cross. In view of the ritual's blood of animals in the Book of Exodus with Moses (Ex. 24:8) in the Old Testament, the 'new sacrifice' for the New Testament overrides the old because of the death of the son of God. The death of Jesus as a supreme sacrifice renews the 'alliance' between humanity and God. Feingold (2018:43-44) sees in the Eucharist the mystical dimension of the expiatory sacrifice of our redemption in these terms:

Christ became man in order to be able to offer an expiatory sacrifice to satisfy all human sins in perfect justice. This was necessary because of the gravity of sin and the impossibility for man to offer fitting reparation... It is mystically because Christ Himself is the immolated Victim who becomes present on the Altar through the ministry of His priest who acts in His Person and His Blood is sacramentally poured out for the living and the dead (Feingold,2018:43-44).

In this Christology perspective, Jesus Christ is the primordial sacrament because he "is the reality to which the sacrament refers, namely the presence of the divinity itself, the divine grace of reconciliation and eternal life" (Osborne cited by Kisitu 2018:128). The Eucharist sacrifice implores the application of salvation to all humankind, the sanctification of the faithful until Jesus Christ returns and the gift of liberation to those who do not yet know him (Thurian 1982:101). Although Jesus Christ has done everything for the salvation of all humankind, and although objective redemption and reconciliation have been accomplished on the cross, it remains for the Church — that is, the Body of Christ — to be an instrument for the application of each and all the graces of salvation (Thurian 1982: 101).

3.3.4 The Eucharist and social life (social justice)

Social life is central in human society in view of its importance and the global meaning in the context of social life. The Eucharist's unity with Jesus Christ gives our social relationships a fresh start (Pope Benedict XVI 2008:49). The goal of this study is to better understand social life and the concept of social justice in the context of Eucharistic celebrations. Social justice is often used in a plural-disciplinary context; the term refers to equality, equity, solidarity, justice and distributive justice. The antithesis of social justice is injustice, inequality and inequity. In other words, social justice promotes freedom, human rights and hope.

When exploring the Eucharist in relation to the African concept of Ubuntu, Kisitu (2018:124) considers that in celebrating the sacraments we encounter not only God but also our lived experiences. These experiences include loving and being loved, caring and being cared for, and forgiving and being forgiven. These values manifest themselves in human societies as a sacramental celebration. Kisitu argues that the life of the early church bears testimony to these experiences, for instance, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles:

Now all believers were one in heart and soul, and nobody called any of his possessions his own. Instead, they shared everything they owned...none of them needed anything, because everyone who had land or houses would sell them and bring the money received for the things sold and lay it at the apostles' feet. Then it was distributed to anyone who needed it (Acts 4:32-35 NIV).

In view of Kisitu's thinking, the Eucharistic celebration challenges the social lives of people, the quality of being human and the quality of a society. Through this experience, we find the foundational meaning of the Eucharist as a gift of God's encounter with human persons through Jesus Christ. During the Eucharistic celebration, the followers of Jesus Christ share a meal. This is not only a joyful moment but also an opportunity to listen to and learn from one another. For Kisitu, (2018:133), as a sacrament of the believers, the Eucharist is an opportunity to encounter God and one another in the true spirit of humanity.

In relation to the social meaning of the Eucharist, According to Moyo (2015:102), the Eucharistic celebration necessitates reconciliation and fellowship among all individuals seen as

brothers and sisters – in God's family — who are seeking suitable social, economic, and political ties. Injustice, oppression, exploitation, and manipulation are all challenged by the Eucharist's very character.

In the *Sacramentum Caritas* document, The Eucharist, according to Pope Benedict (2008:50), is a ritual of communion between brothers and sisters who have allowed themselves to be redeemed through Christ and who have united Jews and pagans as one people, bringing down the wall of hatred that separated them (Eph 2:14). Only by constantly striving for reconciliation are we able to partake of Christ's Body and Blood in a worthy manner (Mt 5:23-24). True peace requires, without a doubt, the restoration of justice, reconciliation, and forgiveness.

In light of Pope Benedict XVI's call to reform unjust systems and restore dignity and respect to all men and women — all created in God's image and likeness - sharing the Eucharist recognises the need to change unjust structures and reinstate dignity and respect to all men and women. The Eucharist becomes an opportunity for church members to participate in social life activities.

From this consideration, the Eucharist is also a community act. The obvious social conditions for first-century Christian meals place a strong focus on the contemporary Christian Eucharist as a communal rite. Some individualist cultures have contributed in major ways to the exploitation of the poor, significant damage to the environment and to our inability to coexist in families and communities (Smith and Taussig, 1990:81). The significance of the Lord's Supper challenges individualistic piety and suggests a more collective model. As an expression sacramental to the group life, the Eucharist helps us to live harmoniously.

The social justice approach to the Eucharist identifies four crucial themes: challenging injustice, applying the concept of Ubuntu, reconciliation, and acts of community. Throughout human history, the story of salvation has spanned all of humanity. Wood (2014: 360) believes that the Messianic people do not represent the entire human race because all humanity is predestined for eschatological renewal and all humans will share in the final liberation of the glory of God's sons and daughters (Rm 8:21). These themes constitute the focus for the next chapter in this research.

3.4 Social justice

This dissertation has found it worthy to reflect on social issues in the DR Congo such as corruption among political leaders, mass killings, poor infrastructural development and gender inequality. The application of social justice as a response to the troubles in the DR Congo offers an interdisciplinary framework where those in the religious, political, law enforcement, traditional leadership and academic sectors (among others) can support a common struggle. The study of social justice offers the opportunity to gain insight into a variety of issues and teaches people how they can use this knowledge to be an agent of change for social issues. The term 'social justice' is a wide notion that has different implications for different people, both positive and bad. While caring about each individual is important, social justice is the quest of equity in the community and society as a whole, seeking to change laws or other constraints that cause people to become engrained in the challenges they face (Bailey, 2018).

Multiple causes — both foreign and internal — define Africa's social, economic, and political setting in terms of African viewpoints on social justice. Poverty and inequality on the continent have a large depth and incidence, as evidenced by social and economic indices. In other words, the social and economic circumstances underline the causal relationship between economic growth and poverty and inequality reduction (Stiftung, 2013: 15). Despite excellent economic growth trends and expectations, poverty and inequality remain a worry for millions of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The reality is that many people live in horrible conditions. The interaction of social, economic, and political settings has an impact on the possibility of achieving social justice.

Social justice, according to Rawls, has moral, theological, philosophical, and political roots. Some theorists and philosophers say that it is abstractionist as a notion since it concentrates on an idealized state of what a society should be (Rawls 1999:39). Others argue that social justice is relativist in nature, taking into account human diversity and differences, and that it underpins justice ideals. Equality, distribution, and redistribution, solidarity, subsidiarity, inclusion, fairness, equity, equality, and nation-building are all principles of social justice (Taylor 2013:17). Social justice is a broad concept that encompasses universal human rights values as well.

The term 'social' can have various meanings in in various contexts. Notwithstanding, the term

generally refers to a society or a community of people. When the distribution of goods and advantages in society is allocated fairly, justice is achieved. Everyone has equal access to goods such as money, basic liberties, freedom of movement, office power, and profession choice (Taylor, 2013: 20).

Social justice is understood as a justice exercised within a society (Stronks and al, 2016:5). It includes many topics of the current debate in order to promote equality and well-being in a society. People and organisations approach this topic in diverse ways. World Day of Social Justice is celebrated on 20 February each year. It promotes gender equality, indigenous peoples' and migrants' rights. In 2020, the theme for World Day of Social Justice was *Closing the Inequalities Gap to Achieve Social Justice*. This day focused on fulfilling the goal of full employment and social integration. An additional focus was the United Nations' global mission to promote development and human dignity.

Social injustice is a notable obstacle for the peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. Social justice essentially breaks all barriers that people face in relation to their gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, disability and so forth. It is therefore necessary to uphold the principles of social justice. Social justice is based on the equality of the rights of all people and the possibility for all human beings to advance themselves socially and economically, without discrimination. It is crucial to understand that social justice is a fundamental condition of peaceful coexistence and of human prosperity within a country.

Nelson and Creagh, cited by Rambaritch (2018:47), make reference to the ancient Greek and Roman eras when the notions of justice and equality were used to organise political and social life. As one of the classical authors of the theory of justice, Rawls (1999:3) considers justice as the first virtue of social institutions. For Rawls, the idea of justice is fairness through the principles of liberty and equality. Challenging the idea of liberty and equality proposed by Rawls, Young, cited by Rambaritch (2018:48), suggests that the broader scope of justice cannot be restricted by liberty and equality, because justice includes all aspects of public life — that is, political and economic institutions and civil society.

The concept of social justice is vast and the term cuts across several disciplines. When we think about social justice, we usually think of income, wealth, employment, and educational chances. Social justice is viewed as a component of distributive justice in the writings of today's political

philosophers, and the two words are frequently used interchangeably (Miller 1999:2). As a result, those who grasp the effectiveness of social life, political practice, socio-economic implications, distributive and retributive principles, and all aspects of welfare are frequently referred to as "social justice" (Miller, 1999; Field, 2015). Miller (1999:17) defines social justice as "the ability of a society's basic structure to provide both advantages and disadvantages to its citizens". Discovering the basic concepts that people examine when judging whether components of their society are equitable or unjust is the first step in developing a social justice worldview. There is the concept of 'distribution among the members of a society' and the 'fundamental structure of a society' in Miller's definition. The basic structure of society, or more precisely, how the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the allocation of benefits from social cooperation, is the primary subject of justice (Rawls, 1999:6). The political constitution, as well as the major economic and social systems, are referred to as key institutions by Rawls. This is the ideal principle that a number of nation-states attempted to implement.

Because its impacts are significant and present from the start, the basic structure of society is the core subject of justice. As a result, the concept of social justice can be viewed as a benchmark against which the distributive components of society's fundamental structure can be measured. This norm, on the other hand, should not be confused with the principles that define other virtues, because the underlying social structure might be efficient or inefficient, liberal or illiberal, and just or unjust (Rawls 1999:7-9). Rawls views justice as a social ideal, with social cooperation as the social notion. In other words, the concept of justice makes sense if it is predicated on societal value agreement.

According to Van den Bos (2011:2795), social justice is defined as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and obligations in society to all people, regardless of race or ethnicity, age, gender, ability status, sexual orientation, or religious or spiritual background. Inclusion, collaboration, cooperation, equal access, and equal opportunity are all values emphasized in this concept.

The Stiftung believes that universal human rights values underpin social justice (2013: 17). The ideals of equality, equity, distribution, and redistribution, as well as solidarity, subsidiarity, inclusion, recognition, fairness, and nation-building, are all automatically included in the concept. Concretely, social justice refers to the justice exercised within a society and the equal

opportunities to achieve social action. It is not just about what is good for the individual, but also what is good for society as a whole (Stiftung 2013: 17). Social justice, according to Capeheart and Milovanovic (2007:2), requires an awareness of human connections. This is a difficult and broad endeavor, but it is also fascinating and worthwhile.

Social justice concerns large or small groups, such as families, churches and workplaces. Nation-states have a special standard in this dissertation because the state is considered the executor of the principles of social justice. The state's involvement in fostering a just society is widely recognized as critical in influencing the social justice agenda, not just through domestic policies that mobilize people, but also through mediating with external influences (Stiftung 2013:6).

Millions of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo are facing horrific circumstances, highlighting the urgent need to revisit and engage with themes of what constitutes the public good. This is done through discourses of social justice to create a more equitable, respectful and just society. This section served as an attempt to explore the definitions of the key themes of this topic and the contextual meaning for the current research. The next section considers important aspects of the Eucharist in the celebration thereof.

3.4 The Eucharistic celebration in the CEAC

As a Religious community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the CEAC regards the Eucharist as a victory over evil, a spiritual union with Jesus Christ, and a foreshadowing or typology of the celestial banquet promised by Jesus Christ. The Eucharistic celebration is an opportune moment to remind participants of political, economic and ethical perspectives that can challenge the society (Mushila, 2001:77-87). As a member of the union of traditional church missions with the diversity of doctrine, and working towards unity in this diversity, the CEAC recognises two sacraments: baptism and Eucharist. Eucharist is administered once a month or four times a year depending on the local church. In all local churches, the celebration is presided over by an ordained minister, assisted by deacons (men or women) for the sharing. The minister of the Eucharist is an ambassador who represents the divine initiative and expresses the connection between local communities in the universal church (WCC, 1982:15). In local churches, wine or juice represents the blood, and the bread or biscuit represents the body of Jesus Christ. The CEAC recognises the Eucharistic hospitality, also known as intercommunion,

with all Christians baptised by immersion as the unity of Jesus Christ's body. The WCC (1982:11) details this in these terms:

- The Eucharist ushers in a novel reality that changes Christians into the image of Christ and thus makes them efficient witnesses for him.
- The Eucharist is valuable food for missionaries, just as bread and wine are valuable to pilgrims on their apostolic journey.
- As Jesus is the one who gives his life for the salvation of the world, the Eucharistic community is fed and developed by acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ in speech and action.
- Eucharist gathers and unites people and allows them to share the unique Lord's meal,
- Eucharistic assembly must also gather those who are present beyond its visible limits because Christ invited to his feast all for whom he died.

Missionary witness is hindered at both the individual and corporate levels when Christians cannot come together in fellowship around the same table to eat the same loaf and drink from the same cup.

In analysing Simpson's book, *The Apostolic Church*, Daryn (2020), finds the early thinking of C&MA-CEAC to be about the Supper in the context of 'unity' and 'bodiless', including the social divisions in the Corinthian community as an exegesis of 1 Cor. 11. He also outlines his theology of the institution, form and meaning of the Supper.

For Daryn (2020), the early C&MA continued to practice the Supper regularly, often in a notably (conservative) ecumenical way as a result of its original makeup. Henry Wilson (an ordained Anglican) often was the celebrant of the early Alliance's Supper, and this was held in the context of the C&MA's social and divine healing ministries and concerns, as well as in Nyack, New York. But the Supper continues to be decentred in favour of practical evangelistic and missionary concerns. It remains part of the Alliance's teaching and practice. This is a common trend in holiness movements of the time; the Eucharist is still practiced and idealised ecumenically, but often decentred in favour of practical concerns.

In general, and theologically, the celebration of the Supper or Eucharist has sat alongside social and liberating actions throughout the CEAC's history. This explicit connection is found in 1 Cor. 11, with the 'divisions' which many biblical scholars discern as between the poor and the

rich. The understanding of the Supper is further elaborated to include the receiving of nourishment, equipping oneself for the service of others and the actualisation of the church's fellowship in terms of social commitment. Today, the CEAC considers Eucharistic hospitality as evidence of Christianity and of testimony of the Christian faith. Regarding the CEAC context, Eucharistic hospitality has its foundations in the Christian creed and leans on traditions according to the Bantu table (Mushila, 2001:88).

CONCLUSION

Chapter three covered the understanding of the Eucharistic celebration as a meaningful part of the promotion of social justice in the DR Congo. The chapter also retraced the Eucharist celebration in the CEAC. Thus, the Eucharist celebration can challenge social injustice crises. The chapter chose some aspects and analysed them in view of the social experience derived from the Eucharist celebration. The chapter explained that the Eucharist was foundational to Christian faith and was a ritual in which the followers of Jesus Christ re-enacted human injustice and violence. This was manifest in the cruel death of Jesus Christ on the cross. In his incarnation, life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ challenged the violence and the social injustice of his time (Kaunda 2018:90). The Eucharistic celebration can challenge social injustice crises. The literature review in chapter two focused on understanding the social aspect of the Eucharist.

When exploring the link between liturgy and Eucharist, the Eucharist manifests from the liberation and transformative perspective. As a worship service, the Eucharist liturgy involves any general service to public life. The 'remembrance' expresses the recalling of the event of the Christian story, re-enacts the role of liberation and challenges most of life's boundaries and social injustice. There is a great interpellation for the continuous exploring of the meaning of the Eucharist because, according to Radcliffe (2005:169), the church makes the Eucharist, and the Eucharist makes the church. The above notions have been of crucial importance in evaluating the role of the CEAC in the DR Congo in the context of glaring social injustice.

CHAPTER FOUR

EUCHARIST CELEBRATION IN A SOCIAL JUSTICE CONTEXT: A LIBERATION PERSPECTIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter four focuses on the social justice aspect of the Eucharistic celebration in relation to the liberation perspective. The attempt is to analyse the liberation theology perspective in the Eucharist, in line with the objectives of the study. The analysis leads to the recommendations for teachings and Eucharistic celebrations in the CEAC's context as a Congolese Protestant church. These teachings of celebrating the Eucharist should be revised to consider liberation perspectives in the social justice context of the entire DR Congo. Theology of liberation is located in the 'contextual theology. The main themes addressed are liberation theology according to the contextual theology; Eucharist in the liberation theology; social justice compared to the liberation theology; and implications of the Eucharist and social justice.

4.2 The role of the CEAC as a Protestant church in promoting social justice

The church, as a human community with an ideology and culture that influence all people, plays an important role in society. Many religious values and practices contribute to the building of a society. The Christian religion is centred on the promotion of justice, peace, solidarity, non-violence, tolerance, reconciliation, cohesion and love. In this understanding, the church is positioned to play a crucial role in transforming a society through innovative solutions to current problems.

Religion is critical in the development of values like honesty, integrity, openness, forthrightness, and tolerance. Such ideals are necessary for the establishment of successful economic and political systems. Religious teachings based on strong moral principles play an important role in cultivating hope in the face of bleak sociopolitical and economic. Circumstance Religion is a major source of social capital in Africa. Social, cultural, and religious or spiritual capital are all intertwined and interdependent (Agbiji & Swart, 2015:11).

Religion disposes a considerable moral and ethical influence on a society. This moral capital is a power to analyse the current problems, and to suggest and anticipate responses in line with

the gospel. Church leaders play an integral role in shaping attitudes, opinions and behaviours. The gospel, God's Word, the message of love, is a liberating force that goes at the core causes of all injustice (Gutierrez, 1988: 61-62). The church, using temples, pulpits, sacraments and other instruments, has to propose its anthropological pattern by using words and gestures. It encourages its members to be endowed with a good will, and political leaders to participate actively in building liberated and humane societies (Nyamakank 1996:66). This is one of the roles of the church as well as its mission.

Additionally, the church can promote social actions which could include the care of people, as well as facilitating government in many aspects of the public sector such as education, health, development and so forth. For Smidt (2003:2), religious behaviours may contribute to social formation through volunteer actions, charitable contributions and other acts of mercy. Those religious behaviours can, at least in the short-term, help to provide a 'safety net' for 'at-risk' members of society. The Christian church's mission in the DR Congo should play a major role in response to socio-political challenges. It should intervene in socio-political issues in an attempt to maximise the healing impact of reconciliation and promote peace, development and positive transformation. The church should be a means of uniting the Congolese people and encouraging them to love each other. The church's mission in the DR Congo should be to create a peaceful atmosphere and joyful relationships with one another; evangelising people; fostering a deep sense of faith within them; promoting truth, justice, reconciliation, reconstruction, social cohesion and development; and defending the poor and oppressed (Muyungi 2017:1). The following section examines the impact of and or the contribution of the CEAC to promoting social justice.

4.3 The liberation theology and the contextual theology

4.3.1 Liberation theology

The promise of Latin American liberation theology was that it would be a theology that would go beyond simply talking about freedom and actually aid people to be liberated (Petrella quoted by Lewis 2017:1). Liberation theology is a thought and expression based on the gospel and the experiences of men and women dedicated to the liberation of Latin America's oppressed and exploited. It's a theological thought formed of a common desire to end injustice and build a more free and humane society (Gutierrez, 1988: xiii).

The emergence of liberation theology, according to Phan, was the most influential movement (inside the church) of the twentieth century. Liberation theologies — a broad and wide-ranging collection of theologies with various emphases, viewpoints and analyses, and goals that are reliant on social context — are more commonly referred to as liberation theologies (Quoted by Lewis 2017:4).

The goal of liberation theology is for it to have a transforming effect. It is more than an aspirational philosophy; it is also a practice that can contribute to greater social justice. According to Lewis, the methodology of liberation theologies are based on personal experiences and socio-political analysis, and lead to action (Lewis, 2017:2).

Liberation theology is defined as a "critical reflection on Christian practice in light of God's Word" (Gutierrez, 1988: xxix).

The objectives of theology of liberation are:

- to allow the Lord's Word to judge us, to think through our faith, to increase our love, and to give reason to our hope based on our resolve to becoming more radical, total, and efficient; and
- To rethink the major themes of Christian life from this new perspective, and to account for the new questions raised by this commitment (Gutierrez, 1988: xiii).

Liberation theology, according to Barua (2014:3-4) arose in the 1970s as a distinct style of critical reflection on the Bible in the context of inhumanity to and poverty among millions of Latin Americans. One of Latin America's leading thinkers, Gustavo Gutierrez, emphasized that the Christian 'preference' for the poor referred to their human predicament rather than any exclusivity centered on them.

The central question in examining liberation theology is: how does God of all humanity, as revealed in the Bible, love the poor and troubled people created in his image? In other words, how does the just God, who loves and approves of all his people, allow people to live among such social injustice? Furthermore, how does the church, as a body of Christ, recall the life of Jesus Christ in the context of social injustice?

Liberation theology is seen as the church's prophetic voice in the face of societal injustice. The theory is viewed as a contribution of the universal Christian community with the function of theology as the struggle to construct a good, just, democratic and fraternal society where

persons can live with dignity, security and be the agents of their destiny. The notion of liberation appears to be superior to development, because liberation is all-embracing. It emphasises that human beings transform themselves by conquering their liberty throughout their existence, destiny and history.

There is a strong link between social justice and sociopolitical crises. One of the main goals is to establish a new sense of self. The downtrodden are encouraged to assert their self-identity and promote their culture and consciousness in public settings (Barua, 2014:8).

Despite their many contextual differences, liberation theologies all sound the same: the Biblical God is on the side of the downtrodden and is guiding them to freedom, despite their current slavery. Christian theology that sounds like a demand for continuous engagement with, and destruction of, oppressive social institutions and economic orders is framed by redemptive praxis (Barua, 2014:13).

The challenge with liberation theology is that it is both traditional and new at the same time. The traditional approach's previous solutions to the problem lead one to believe that modern areas of theological reflection are being sought. This investigation should aid in the removal or elimination of some barriers to social justice.

Christians are the dominant religious group in Latin America, but they are also the most exploited and mistreated, according to Gustavo. Gustavo describes and interprets the various ways in which the Latin American church participates in the liberation movement, particularly among the most devout Christian populations, in order to establish the question for genuine theological thought. According to him, theologically speaking, the meaning of emancipation is an issue concerning the very essence of Christianity and the church's mission. There was a time when the church would calmly call to its doctrinal and vital resources in response to any issue (Gutierrez, 1988: xiv).

4.3.2 Contextual theology

“Any true liberation theology, wherever it exists, must resist all forms of injustice” (Phan quoted by Lewis 2017:1). As one of the liberation theologies, contextual theology is a form of liberation theology which places greater attention on understanding Christian faith in terms of a particular context. It is a ‘theological interpretative’ and theology in action.

West claims in his article on contextual theology (or contextual Bible study) that, due to a lack of persistent collaboration between Latin American-derived theologies and South African black theology, 'contextual theology' has become a distinct kind of liberation theology (West, 2014:2).

Theology engages theological researchers in the path from social analysis to theological reflection to social action, according to contextual theology as a form of emancipation. Theological communities' principal goals are social study and social action (West, 2014:2). In other words, contextual theology is a socio-theological approach. The formulation of theological ideas or dimensions must be born in the life of people within the Christian perspective — that is, all areas such as politics, social life, economics and so on.

'Doing theology contextually is not an option,' according to Stephen (2002:12), because it is a human activity that is developed within a specific human context. Theology that has adapted to the dynamics of a particular setting is known as contextual theology or contextualising theology.

Contextual theology is critical, as theology must be relevant and rescue people in a particular context. First, each person has particular problems in his/her social context. If theology is far away from socioeconomic and political experiences within a country or community, so theology could not be realistic. Unless otherwise specified, theology cannot be realistic and adaptable if it overlooks the context of the society. Reflecting on the South African crisis context, Draper (2015:8) argues that the context of the text and the context of the reader were and are both decisive in the production of meaning. For West (2016:45), text and context are always, at least implicitly, in conversation. The dialogical dimension of Biblical interpretation has always been an explicit feature of African Biblical hermeneutics. There is a dialectic need between the text and the context.

Second, as a study of people and as a scientific study of God, theology represents a critical reflection of faith in a particular context. In other words, theology is a reflection of God by the people and for the people. The reading of the Bible according to the community's lens must not disregard the theological study of the text. According to Draper (2015:6), the hermeneutical area is an attempt to find out exactly what the 'real readers' within the church were doing with the Bible.

Third, *Doing Theology in Context* helps to understand the sources of theology in the ancient particular context and use the current contextual words, expressions and language to meet the contemporary people's needs.

However, two observations can be mentioned. First, we find that the theological reflection is based more on present realities when we examine contextual theology. It is unfortunate that resources of community, experiences and realities in theology do not explore 'tradition' as one of the important resources of the community. In *Doing Theology in Context: South African Perspectives*, the important inheritance we derive is tradition. It is essential to couple tradition with experience. Tradition refers to the past but also influences the future. Second, we must ask ourselves: what is the purpose or the aim of theology, in the *Doing Theology in Context*? The aims are the liberating action and the prophetic voice of theology. Thus, the intent is to practise theology just for the secular or temporal need. It is also risky to make a selective choice and use the intentional or the premeditated interpretation of the Bible. Preconceived Bible interpretation is a challenge in *Doing Theology in Context*.

We cannot use theology to legitimise oppressive situations. The primary task of contextual theology is to provide reflection and action in the faith context. This is the practical approach of theology. We need to:

- bring together systematic and practical theology to offer a rich doctrine and practise active Christian discipleship;
- use contemporary science to breathe life into traditional theological positions; and
- provide a new calling and vocation theology as a prophetic voice of the church.

4.3.3 The Eucharist and liberation theology

Within the Eucharistic sacrament, the redemptive or redemption plan is fulfilled and revealed. As a result, according to Gutierrez, the sacrament is an effective revelation of the call to communion with God and the unity of all humanity. This is a historical encounter, not because God comes from history, but because God arrives from history (Gutierrez, 1988: 146). This mystery, according to Gutierrez, is the "love of the Father, who loved the world so much that he sent his only Son" (Jn 3:16), as well as a summons to all human beings in the Spirit of connection with God. Human beings are called together as a community to participate in the Trinitarian community's life and to enter the circuit of love that connects the Trinity's people. This is the kind of love that "builds up human society throughout history" (Gutierrez, 1988 :67)

The mystery of the Eucharist celebration holds the great mission of the church in the redemptive perspective. When Jesus says, 'in memory of me', the calling is to renew the event of salvation

and to actualise this event within our lives. Contrastingly, ‘communion with God and others presupposes the abolition of all injustice and exploitation.’ Ela argues that ‘the Eucharist is an appeal or call to great solidarity with the world and its history by the sharing of bread with the poor and the hungry....’ For Ela, the Eucharist is a commitment involving the powers of life (Ela, quoted by Kouadio, 2016:16). In the Eucharistic celebration, the church cannot ignore or forget the oppressed. Ela recommends celebrating the Eucharistic sacrament to reconstitute its theological and social dimension or apprehension with its critical power and liberation (Ela, quoted by Kouadio, 2016:).

The Eucharistic celebration is not a simple ritual. It announces a new anthropological model. It engages the participants in a liberation process in the context of oppression, social injustice, conflict and poverty, and the celebration becomes a calling to liberation. Ela (quoted by Kouadio, 2016:22) confirms that ‘in celebrating “in memory of” is not to present a new structure of salvation but to present the original structure with renewed acts of liberation which have historically occurred in our lives.’

Considering Ela’s viewpoint, we can highlight that in the Eucharistic celebration, Jesus Christ’s calling is not only to *tell* but to *do*. In the ‘do this in memory of me’, Jesus Christ invites all celebrants to participate in their process of liberation. So, the Eucharist stands to invite all participants to say ‘yes’ to solidarity. The Eucharist is a commitment and a struggle to love others, most of whom are hungry and weak. This is why, when celebrating the Eucharist in the African context, the church should be mindful of a large number of people who are seeking liberty, justice and peace and also to forgive itself.

Another author who explores the relationship between the Eucharist and society from the redemptive perspective is Wood. From the theology of Henri de Lubac, Wood explores the social dimension of the Eucharist and the church’s role in the world as being the sacrament of unity in these terms:

The Eucharist is not only the visible sign of communion in and with Christ, but is also constitutive of ecclesial communion, for in partaking of one bread we become one body (Wood, 2014: 365) (1 Cor. 10, 16-17).

In analysing Wood’s thinking, we can conclude that the Eucharistic celebration as a sacrament of unity transcends all boundaries of cultures, races, languages, nations, ethnicities and political

parties. In the celebration, the Kingdom of God becomes a visible reality. The church members become brothers and sisters to one another in the same body of Jesus Christ. ‘This is the true relationship between Eucharist and society’ (Wood, 2014: 365).

4.3.4 Social justice and the Eucharist in the liberation perspective

Social justice in a context of faith recalls the role of the church (or another faith community) in helping disadvantaged people in their local communities — for example, running a food bank, setting up the church hall to be a community space (often the only remaining community space in deprived areas), running welcome programmes, providing services for vulnerable people (those with mental health issues or addiction) and offering advice and support in areas like debt management or education (Lewis 2017:6). These social projects aim to promote the transformation of the liberation of people in the inclusive and social justice perspective.

Social justice in the context of liberation theology also promotes equality, independence, freedom in the fraternity and the fight against all forms of violence. The social injustice context of people becomes a calling for the church to be a ‘liberation- shaped’ church and suggests some practical steps that can be taken to achieve a greater semblance of social justice (Lewis 2017:7).

Considering the Eucharist as a basis of social justice, Igboanusi (1994:2) notes that the Eucharist is the symbolic eating of the bread and drinking wine (fruits of human labour) and is a tacit declaration of our honest intention to share other fruits of fair human labour and collaboration instead of monopolising them. In other words, the elements of the Eucharist constitute the solid fruits of the human labour in the production process. Moreover, these elements explain the socio-economic dimension of the Eucharist. Thus, in the Eucharistic celebration, Christian social justice can be a motivation and an inspiration for the participants.

Igboanusi demonstrates the thinking of Paul and Eucharistic social justice where participation in the Eucharist influences the sharing of material goods and possessions. Paul, unlike Luke, expresses great anxiety over the Eucharistic life of the church (Acts 2,42-47; 1 Cor. 10,31). The division in the Corinthian church was not a dogmatic, spiritual or mystical division, but rather a social division. This is because the Eucharistic celebration challenges the divisions and confirms the unity of the body of Jesus Christ when the bread is broken and distributed to all. Here, the basis of Christian identity is proclaimed, and mutual care and social justice become a

Christian inspiration (Igboanusi, 1994:5). In the same way, the dream of a just society must motivate all participants. The transformation of the society becomes a motif of the church. The issues of hunger, conflict, war, misery and underdevelopment in the world inspire the church's mission to work towards social justice. Christians have a duty to work for this.

Reflecting on the Eucharistic celebration in a social context as a redemptive tool, the Eucharist has to lead the Christian communities to analyse the issues which confront persons in the present. The people are called to unmask injustice and to build groups for liberation (Balasuriya, 1977:80).

When teaching Eucharistic celebration, we can find the richest themes of love, justice, solidarity and/or unity and communion. These terms have different definitions, but their meanings tend to converge in the same Eucharistic discourse. The theological concept of justice indicates the broader spectrum of solidarity because Christian love, solidarity and justice cannot be separated, since love implies an absolute demand of justice (Igboanusi, 1994:15). Further, we cannot love our fellow humans without justice. As the Eucharistic celebration proclaims the love of God for humanity and love for one other, there is a great dimension of social justice in this celebration. The Eucharistic community has become a true agent for justice in the world. The church task exceeds all frontiers because the entire mission of the church boots the justice of society. The Eucharistic celebration is a proclamation of social justice as a source of the liberation of people.

The connection between Eucharistic celebration and social justice is the power of inclusion, and not division or exclusion. One of the key elements that characterises social justice is living in a community where one can be loved and receive and share material, as well as spiritual goods. There is respect and dignity for all human beings and nature (WCC, 2011:332). In one bread and one cup, 'the Eucharist moves Christians to a commitment to work for greater unity and justice in today's world.' The Eucharist must not point to areas of separation or division, but the sacrament has the transformative power to shape society and bring about justice despite physical separation (Driscoll, 2014:2). The Eucharistic celebration responds to the social injustice challenges of current times. Where the world is faced with grave problems of hunger, war and violence, the Eucharist expresses love, solidarity, fraternity, participation, equality and equity. Driscoll (2014: 3) notes the following when he quotes the bishops of the world:

In a culture of death, the Eucharist is the culture of life. In an atmosphere of individual and societal selfishness, the Eucharist reaffirms total self-giving. Where there is hate and terrorism, the Eucharist places love. In response to scientific positivism, the Eucharist proclaims mystery. In desperate times, the Eucharist teaches a sure hope of a blessed eternity.

In the context of the DR Congo, where people suffer grave social injustices and abuse, there is a great need for churches, especially the CEAC, to revitalise the Eucharistic celebration to attract the participants not only in the festive celebration but in the educative celebration. The significative gift presented by the Eucharistic celebration leads to the fellowship of the table, the communion of the church and the commitment to the underprivileged.

4.4 Four dimensions of the Eucharist in the redemptive perspective

When the people participate in the Eucharistic celebration, Jesus Christ communicates a form or a way of life that can include or embrace every aspect of human existence. The Eucharist is not only the innermost sanctuary of faith of the church but also the key to discovering the original truth or logos of creation in all of its distinct dimensions. It embraces life holistically (Healy, 2012, 587-588). The Eucharistic celebration can help the church and Christians spread the message on the streets while avoiding entanglement with coercive powers. There are, in the Eucharistic celebration, some ways or optional approaches which the members of the body of Christ can use when inviting others to participate. The attempt is not a human effort to build a society on the model that Christ has left, but to conform publicly to the body of Jesus Christ and to participate in the action by which Christ is reconciling the world. The Eucharist is the ongoing action of Christ in the Spirit to go out and reconcile the world to the Father (Cavanaugh, 2014:391-392). In terms of the redemptive perspective, four dimensions can allow the Eucharistic celebration to reach this objective. These are: social, political, economic and ecological.

4.4.1 Social dimension

One of the speakers of the social dimension in the Eucharist is Henri de Lubac. He worked within the context of a larger recovery of the social dimensions of the Eucharist advanced by the liturgical movement. For Lubac, the social unity of the Church as a mystical body of Jesus Christ is founded in the Eucharist. In liturgical celebrations, there is an important social

implication (quoted by Cavanaugh, 2014:392-393). In this sense, we find a great deal of ferment about the social dimension of the Eucharistic celebration in the church as a mystical body of Jesus Christ. However, the spiritual dimension of a mystical body of Christ is viewed by the visible body. The dynamic of the social church is translated by the Eucharistic community. When church members participate in the Eucharistic celebration, the 'true ecclesial communion' and the testimony of the church in the public space are proclaimed. For Mitralaxis (2017:12), this provides a basis for a social justice that is genuine and not merely idealistic; it liberates work from slavery to need, transforming it into a personal relationship, and it highlights each human being's creative distinctiveness.

One of the functions of the Eucharistic celebration is to fortify relationships; social communion is not only between people and their Lord but also between members. For Balasuriya (1977:81), when the community becomes more committed to each other and society, the Eucharistic celebration will become more meaningful. The Eucharistic celebration creates a form of social community with a social implication of living in harmony and promoting human dignity and identity. The fraternal communion which Eucharistic celebration postulates calls all participants to consider each other and bring good will to each other. Balasuriya (1977:81) argues that the Eucharist is actually challenging the lifestyles of the more affluent.

In the African context, eating and drinking together is an important and significant symbol of community. This action highlights the social role and reinforces vital community cohesion. The meal generates cohesion and harmony among members of the community.

Just as the African experience of sharing a meal gathers people, it fosters the sharing, and partaking of communion. The Eucharistic celebration, in the context of social justice, becomes an intimate fraternal experience. The Eucharistic celebration is not an occasion of boundaries, division oppression or repression. In the same sense, Jesus said with consternation, 'He that eateth bread with me hath lifted this heel against me' (Jn 13,18).

One of the values of the Eucharist is solidarity or fraternal communion. The celebration confirms the unity of the body of Christ and the unity of humanity. Kubi notes that:

It is very important to celebrate the Eucharist within family gatherings, but it makes no sense when families, brothers, and sisters within the community are divided, and are not

kind-hearted towards the poor and oppressed. Due to the Eucharist, we shall once again find the fraternal and communion power (Kubi quoted by Kouadio, 2016:19).

4.4.2 Political dimension

In the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus highlights the redemptive project: the salvation of humankind. The Eucharistic celebration takes the form of a potentially revolutionary meeting. Liturgically, the political action which engages participants creates a motivation to transform society. Participants realise the values of justice, truth, freedom, love, equality, equity and peace within human societies. There is, therefore, a need to build a just world order and a transformed society. There is also a Christian inspiration to work in the service of our neighbour throughout the world (Tissa Balasuriya, 1977:83). This inspiration must motivate our *res publica* management. There is a need to work diligently to encourage and stimulate people to strive for their self-liberation from poverty, bondage, injustice and oppression.

The political dimension requires all political leaders to engage in serving people, to lead with a conscious awareness and to manage society and organisations with full regard for human rights. Archbishop Romero, quoted by Carvalhaes, considers the Eucharistic celebration to be a way of fighting against governmental repression and corruption and engaging communities in the struggle against oppression. At the table, a new world is called upon, rehearsed and organised. At the altar, God's holy ground and just and communal food was to be spread around the country to transform structures of injustice, unchain the ties of misery and turn lives and land into a holy, just and communal ground (Carvalhaes, 2013:5). The Eucharistic celebration becomes a motivational centre of liberation, a place for meditation and a call to go out as a potential revolutionary to build freedom, hospitality, solidarity, justice, dignity and a fair life for all. The Christian Passover takes on and reveals the full meaning of the Jewish Passover; liberation from sin is at the very root of political liberation (Gutierrez, 1988:148).

4.4.3 Economic dimension

How can we justify the contrast between the Eucharistic celebration and the hunger (famine) that the Congolese face, despite the wealth of their country? In the context of the hunger, poverty and oppression that the Congolese face, with the gap between the rich and the poor increasing, what is the economic dimension of the Eucharistic celebration? The Eucharistic

celebration calls humankind to have a charismatic and prophetic attitude when confronted with dramatic circumstances that provoke or induce hunger and misery. We must know what God tells us when we celebrate faithfully (and with fervour) the Eucharist in the context of hunger, poverty, oppression and misery. The Eucharistic celebration highlights the values of sharing, solidarity, communion and fraternity. According to Kouadio, the Eucharistic celebration ‘can lead African Christians to a total liberation in Jesus Christ’ (Kouadio, 2016:4).

According to Wressinski:

The Eucharist is not the synonym of suffering. It is a way to reject the suffering imposed upon people by people. It is important to reject all alienation and misery within the world consciously. If there is any time where the rejection of absolute misery is proclaimed, it should be when the body and the blood of Jesus Christ is offered to us during the Eucharistic celebration (quoted by Kouadio, 2016: 17).

To rephrase, the Eucharistic celebration is a sacred moment for the church to challenge all injustice and to fight against all forms of oppression that deny humankind and affect the liberation of Jesus Christ’s teachings. It opens the way of human life. ‘Any division or separation between the poor and the rich during the Eucharistic celebration is not acceptable and it means that the church of God is scorned’ (Bialo, 1999:85).

4.4.4 Ecological dimension

Climate change remains an alarming concern for the world, despite significant international efforts. According to the former President of the USA, Barack Obama, (quoted by Kumalo 2019), ‘We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it.’ The WCC Assembly in Busan in November 2013 identified eco-theology and climate justices as two key priorities for the period 2014 to 2021 (Wener & Jeglitzka, 2016:19). The environmental crisis plaguing the world makes our response imperative and urgent. Our lifestyles impact adversely on the environment and affect people, societal institutions and cities around the world. According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the world’s wealthiest countries have emitted more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. Resultant floods, droughts and consequences due to the climate change continue to fall disproportionately on the world’s poorest people and countries, many of whom are in Africa.

There is a need to recognise the strength and creativity of African people in times of distress (quoted by Conradie, 2010: 135). Since climate change and ecological destruction are becoming more and more menacing to humanity, climate issues present a global challenge that should be reflected on in theological education and formation worldwide (Wener & Jeglitzka, 2016:20).

Conservation of nature is an urgent issue for our time. Through the Eucharistic celebration, there also is the challenge of responding adequately to the problems related to the current global economic and ecologic crises. These crises include job losses, state austerity and exhaustion of aid from the Global North (WCC, 2011: 332). Currently, the silence of the church and the inactivity of its members in public spaces after the Eucharistic celebration — despite the cruel infliction of injustice by those in power — may be seen as complicity in the unjust system. The commitment to environmental justice through the Eucharistic celebration is one of the most important dimensions we can find in this sacrament. For Mushila, the Eucharistic celebration is a significant moment of ecological and missionary awareness (Mushila, 2001:87). The Eucharist calls for the church and participants to adopt a new worldview towards social injustice in ecology. The Eucharist reminds us that the world is a creation of God and that we have a responsibility towards it as we are a part of this creation. In the light of the dramatic ecological destruction in Boma, the CEAC can consolidate churches' power and capacities in lobby and advocacy work.

The CEAC needs to re-read the signs of current times — that is, the *kairos* and the *kronos* moments — to re-discover the gospel's message for today's world of ecological degradation. According to Wolf (2010:1):

The Christian religion is not just about preaching the gospel; it also about what Luther called the law. It teaches the law. The law is part of the Christian religion, but it is not specific to Christianity. It is in terms of the law that the Christian religion has to do with the problem of climate change.

According to statistics of church members, the CEAC is one of the two principle churches in Boma, just behind the Catholic Church, so it has the capacity to fight against the negative impact of climate change in Boma. The theological justification of the church's involvement in this new form of struggle is that religion can play a key role in this task. Christianity recognises this link and understands the environment from God's perspective. Bread and wine are natural products; they are the fruits of human labour. As participants in the Eucharistic celebration,

Christians have to respond positively to the calling of the cultural mandate to take care of the environment. They need to respond adequately to the current challenges of ecological destruction.

The bread and the wine are symbols of fellowship which, at the same time, suggests the gift of creation. The materials used in the Eucharist also retrace that fellowship is rooted in God's will to bestow the Earth with the provision for all people to build a more humane world. Thus, the Eucharist appears to be inseparably linked to the creation and the fostering of a real human fellowship (Gutierrez, 1988: 148).

CONCLUSION

Chapter four postulates the redemptive perspectives of the Eucharistic celebration in a social justice context. Four dimensions were discussed, based on the writings of various theologians. According to these perspectives, the CEAC as a Protestant church can adopt and adapt these teachings to promote social justice in the DR Congo in general and the Kongo Central Province in particular. In the context of this study, the Eucharistic celebration is viewed as an important moment for the church to challenge social injustice in the minds of participants and to promote fraternal communion in society.

Considering the war, conflict, poverty and injustice that plagues the DR Congo — and the significant number of church members (Christian) in general and the CEAC membership in Kongo Central in particular — there is no sense in proclaiming the unity of the body of Jesus Christ in the Eucharistic celebration when there are divisions transpiring within the church and society. Ordinary people and political leaders participate in the service of communion on most occasions. However, in the public space, the reality of life does not reflect the reality of the Eucharistic teachings.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter five is divided into three parts. The first is an overview of the study. The second gives some recommendations for the church with the view of how to celebrate the Eucharist in the social justice context. The third presents suggestions for further research on the topic.

5.2 Overview of the study

The present study has focused on *The Eucharistic celebration in the context of social justice: the case of the Alliance Evangelical Community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. It is one of the most pressing challenges faced by the DR Congo is social injustice, characterised by conflict, wars and poverty, despite being a wealthy country in terms of natural resources and having a sizeable working population. The study demonstrated that social injustice was one of the obstructions to development and liberation. With a large Protestant church membership, as well as a large membership for the CEAC in Kongo Central Province, the Eucharistic celebration is viewed as a fermenter that can encourage political leaders and ordinary members to build a new society and fight against the unethical practices of those in power.

This study highlighted that the main obstacles to achieving social justice in the DR Congo are poverty, insecurity, human rights issues, socio-cultural issues and a lack of dignity for fellow human beings. These obstacles have been driven by poor governance, poverty, corruption, state repression, unemployment, political conflicts and the personal interests of leaders. As the Eucharistic celebration promotes solidarity, equality and equity, there is a need for the church in general and the CEAC in particular to enforce teachings about the meaning of the Eucharist and to participate consciously in the celebration.

The Eucharistic celebration is not simply eating bread and drinking wine with a solemn devotion to the remembrance of Jesus Christ, and it is not only participating in the Divine Liturgy or a simple ritualisation; rather, it represents a way of life that can include every aspect of human existence. This is how the Eucharist forms the basis of social justice. Thus, the

members of Christ's body are called to be servants within society. The church is a leader for people to promote social justice.

5.2.1 Obstacles to social justice in the CEAC

Eucharist as a communion of Christ's body is a challenge for all church divisions and makes visible the Kingdom of God. The New Testament context evokes the division as a social crisis in the early church characterised by social class. St. Paul stigmatised this attitude in 1 Cor 11. He realised the contradiction between the Eucharistic gathering and its divisions. In this study, conflicts and background tribalism are obstacles faced by the CEAC church to promoting social justice.

First, conflicts weaken the church and its members' testimonies at all stages. Since 2010, the CEAC has been facing an exceptional situation with the former president, bishop Mayunda Tsumbu Nzelele, and some of its pastors. The crisis went to the courts.

Second, the CEAC is understood by some people to be a tribal church due to the geographic borders and the historical context set up by traditional missions, for example:

- the Evangelical Alliance church in Congo (French: *Communauté Evangélique de l'Alliance au Congo*; 'CEAC') is from the Yombe ethnic group based in Kongo Central.
- The Evangelical Church in Congo (French: *Communauté Evangélique au Congo*; 'CEC') for the Manianga ethnic group in Kongo Central.
- The Christ Disciples Church in Congo (French: *Communauté des Disciples du Christ au Congo*; 'CDCC') for Bangala ethnic tribal group in Equateur Province.
- The Presbyterian Church in Kinshasa (French: *Communauté Presbyterienne de Kinshasa*; 'CPK') for the Luba group in Kasai Province.

Most of those churches had seen their implementation in rural areas but, up to today, they remain situated beyond those geographic borders. It is indisputable that some are experiencing difficulties integrating into the new areas in the country due to traditional liturgical behaviours and factors seen in their cultures and identities. This is the church's weakness. The Eucharist cannot be the communion of the world if the church does not embody the communion with Christ. J-M Ela highlights that the Eucharist is a calling to solidarity within the world and that its purpose is to share bread with the underprivileged and hungry. That is, it makes no sense to

celebrate the Eucharist in the context of division and indifference towards poor and oppressed people. During the Eucharist, participants relive the fraternal power and the communion (J-M Ela quoted by Konan, 2016:18-19). The ecclesiological sense of the Eucharist is assembly. The Eucharistic gathering appears as a church meeting in itself and a manifestation of the whole church. Representing the unity, the Eucharist transcends itself not only across social divisions but across natural orders such as age, gender and race. The Eucharist is the manifestation of the 'Catholic Church' (Zizioulas, 2011: 17).

Third, the CEAC encounters serious challenges regarding communication of its viewpoints. Each local church tries to engage in its small projects, but this bears no significant impact. The social justice views of the CEAC are not commonly shared, so the church encounters difficulties in lobbying to political leaders and in persuading citizens in Kongo Central. For instance, reports from the Synodal Council, with strong statements from the CEAC, are published but unfortunately sometimes only three years later. The church website does not get updated, and all statements are published once to thrice a year through a few radio stations or broadcasting televisions.

Fourth, the CEAC has experienced low involvement of church members in public management, despite having a sizeable membership. Nonetheless, in 2018, during the electoral process, the CEAC leaders motivated church members with a political vocation to seize the opportunity. Today, the CEAC has one senator, two national ministers, two national members of parliament and three provincial members of parliament.

Fifth, the CEAC experiences an inadequate Eucharistic celebration. The Eucharist takes place once a month in some churches and in most churches, once a quarter. There is a historical reason for the latter kind of Eucharistic celebration. At the inception of the CEAC in DR Congo, the number of ordained ministers was extremely low. For example, within the CEAC, one pastor would have to take care of more than 10 local churches. Therefore, Eucharistic celebration has to be planned six months before the day of celebration. This tradition remains in force today, even with the growing number of ordained ministers.

5.2.2 Opportunities for social justice for the CEAC

In June 2020, the DR Congo marked 60 years of political independence from the Belgian state. Unfortunately, independence has not become synonymous with social justice. The CEAC, as one of the most valuable partners of state, remains a critical factor in the national social justice context but has discarded many opportunities.

The CEAC is a Protestant church member in the DR Congo and it imparts a wealth of teachings. It represents various traditions, experiences, realities and doctrines around the key topics in the Christian faith and has a sizeable church membership, encompassing people from different denominations. Considering the number of members of the Protestant church in the DR Congo, the presence of several members in public office, the credibility of Protestants in the DR Congo and the Protestant teachings of the Eucharistic celebration in their liturgy, social justice can be pursued at all levels of the country — that is, the nation-state, church and family.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study presents recommendations, albeit not an exhaustive list, that can assist the CEAC to celebrate the Eucharist in the context of social justice.

5.3.1 Renewing the Eucharistic celebration in the context of ‘true communion’

The Eucharistic celebration is not only a spiritual sacrament of a memorial or a solemn festival celebration that calls for, respect, joy and silence; it is also a profound communion from the heart. The community must be conscious, reflective and action-oriented to maintain this communion. It is a memorial to Jesus Christ that presupposes an ever-renewed acceptance of the meaning of his life as a total sacrifice to others. The Eucharistic celebration must create a profound human fellowship. Communion with God presupposes the abolition of all injustice and exploitation (Gutierrez, 1988:149). The Eucharist implicitly expresses the profound importance of service to neighbours throughout the world, and the celebration must always consider this aspect during the service and must re-enact the *communion* (fellowship) responsibility, as the early congregation in Acts 2, 42 did.

In relation to the ‘true communion’, I agree with Gutierrez that true communion is the concrete gesture of human charity that Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 9, 13 to designate the collecting

organised on behalf of the Christians in Jerusalem. The ‘true communion’ as *Koinonia* — that is, the Eucharistic celebration proclaimed and recalled — is the full communion with the persons of trinity. The Eucharistic celebration without a real commitment against exploitation, alienation against the solidarity and justice within the society is an empty action by those who participate in it (Guitterez, 1988:150). To renew the Eucharistic celebration in the context of the ‘true communion’ is to approve of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross and to live as a witness of Jesus Christ and all God’s creation. This motif must lead our celebrations where we prophetically denounce abuse and dehumanising behaviour that are contrary to fellowship, justice, liberty and solidarity. Concurrently, the Eucharist must motivate critics to denounce every oppressive structure to which the church itself might have contributed. This denunciation must be public, prophetic and sincere, without compromising the Good News of the love of God to humanity. Because of its social influence, the church can have a positive impact on the world if the ‘true communion’, which the Eucharistic celebration want to be practised in the life of the participants.

Ekanga (2021) notes: ‘Church is “fellowship and communion.”’ Therefore, the church must be united as one body. One of the most unquestionable values linked to this unity is solidarity among church members and across different denominations.

5.3.2 Promoting social justice through developing a Eucharistic catechism

How are we to embody the Eucharistic evangelical message in the context of social justice? How can we reconcile the evangelical values of the Eucharist with the social injustice and the protracted conflict in the DR Congo? These are issues that the Eucharistic celebration are faced with in the context of the DR Congo. These are urgent challenges that affect Eucharistic celebrations every day. The church is one of the most influential opinion groups able to transform the structures of unethical systems of society. In the context of the DR Congo, the church leaders play a critical role in teachings and lobbying. In fact, the church should contribute to the promotion of a culture of social justice in developing a Eucharistic catechism as a cast of the teachings about the Eucharist with all implications for the lives of people. The Eucharist is understood as an indispensable requirement on the path to salvation and as an act of worship; it is also a commitment to Christian living, according to the personal code of morality taught by Jesus Christ (Verry, 2010: 476-477). Nonetheless, the Eucharistic celebration becomes an invitation to worship and to create a new life for all followers of Jesus Christ. The CEAC is a Protestant church characterised by a right administration on churches’ sacraments

and by a robust proclamation of the Scripture through preaching, particularly in vernacular language for laypeople (Thorsen, 2020:158). It therefore is vital for the church to elaborate on a 'Eucharistic catechism' in the form of a document to facilitate Christians in discovering the rich teachings about the Eucharistic sacrament. The role of the church in this task is to teach all followers the meaning of the Eucharist and its implications.

5.3.3 Promoting social justice in the public space by revitalising the available services within the CEAC

If Christian celebrations could not impact on society, Christians' role of salt and light would merely be a utopia. Church leaders must therefore be consistent with this task. The CEAC is a distinguished church with a sizeable number of members, but its influence in Kongo Central is not demonstrating this. We must, however, acknowledge that the CEAC wields no power in the public space, especially concerning social justice. There is a need to revitalise the available resources for promoting social justice and impacting on public space. Four services can assist the CEAC in fulfilling this task: 1) the Justice, Peace and Nature Conservation Commission; 2) the Christian Education Department; 3) the Development Department; 4) and the Medical Department. As the ecclesial departments are responsible for leading all actions of the church according to the Eucharistic mission of the church, the CEAC must reconsider these services to give a new impulsion of the church in the public space. For example, according to my observation, I suspect that the Justice, Peace and Nature Conservation Commission is defunct in the CEAC; the CEAC does not discuss it. Concretely, there is no representative of this commission in the summit of the church. The Christian Education Department is more involved in taking care of choir groups. The Development Department is confined just to selective financial projects. The monumental social justice challenges which the Eucharistic celebration should demonstrate are not clearly explained in the programmes of the CEAC. The communication service is merely a spontaneous service; it is only active when there is an event within the church or a special programme. The theological commission is also just a theoretical commission. There is a need to revitalise these services to become relevant to society.

5.4 Further research

I do not think that this research approached all dimensions of the Eucharistic celebration in the context of social justice. Other aspects of the research problem could be examined by other researchers. I focused my attention on the Eucharistic celebration as a fermenter able to challenge the social injustice that the DR Congo faces. I developed four themes: social, political, economic and ecological dimensions that the CEAC could explore and develop in the Eucharistic celebration. I also motivated churches to be engaged and involved in concrete action, according to the prophetic voice, in solidarity with all oppressed people in the context of the DR Congo. As a sacrament of liberation, the Eucharistic celebration can be used as a calling to all participants — that is, political leaders and ordinary members — to renew their commitment to the transformation of the society, to promote social justice through actions and to stand in solidarity with the vulnerable.

Other crucial questions that can be further researched are: how can the church facilitate Eucharistic hospitality in the context of Protestant communities or both Protestant and Catholic churches in the DR Congo? I think that, as Christians are the light of the world, they need to be the model for the world. The lack of Eucharistic hospitality from Christians despite their congregations is one of the problems that the Eucharistic celebration faces in the DR Congo. In the same view, how can Protestant churches, especially the CEAC, facilitate the emergence of their church members in public spaces such as politics, economics and so on? Moreover, how can the CEAC be heard on national and international stages as a lobby group struggling against social injustice in the DR Congo? Various approaches to these questions can constitute the aim of the future research for the purposes of eliminating and/or alleviating social injustice in the DR Congo.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first is an overview which is a summary of all chapters of the study. The second provides some recommendations as a way for the church to celebrate the Eucharist in the social justice context. The main purpose of these suggested strategies, got from social justice experiences, is for the society transformation in order to achieve social justice. The third section presents suggestions for further research on the topic as the present study is not the final one.

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