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KOINONIA IN 1 CORINTHIANS 10:16 AND ITS APPLICATION TO SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

Biblical scholars over the years have attempted to translate koinonia, applying it to different issues such as Ecclesiology and Ecumenism, however its application to promote social justice seems to be understudied and underutilized. On this note, the present study attempted to interpret Paul's usage of koinonia in 1 Corinthians 10:16 and its application to social justice in the contemporary Nigerian society. The research adopted the historical and exegetical methods.The tools used for obtaining data were oral interviews and consultation of relevant books, journals and unpublished works from the internet and library. It was discovered that the origin and usage of the word koinonia predated its usage in the New Testament, however Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16 coined a special usage of koinonia to express relationship between God and Man in a Eucharistic context. The research concluded that Christians' koinonia in the blood and body of Jesus does not only unite them with Him but also with one another as members of His body the Church, hence advocating among other things for equity and social justice. The study recommended that through proper participation in the Eucharist and harnessing of its robust symbolic functions, Christians can be the salt of the earth and light of the world according to Jesus' mandate in Matthew 5:13-14 by promoting social justice in Nigeria.

Keywords: Eucharist, Church, *Koinonia*, Social Justice, Contemporary Nigerian Society.

Introduction

The exploration of the Greek word *koinonia* has over the years fascinated biblical scholars. It is a multifaceted and flexible noun that stems from *koinon* and is used in secular Greek, Septuagint, works of Philo and Josephus among others, and in the New Testament. It is observed that, in the 1930s, scholars such as E.P. Groenewald, J.Y. Campbell, H. Seesemann, and P.J.T. Endenburg, began to investigate the use and significance of *koinonia* (and its cognates) in non-biblical literary sources in order to shed light on difficult NT passages in which the term(s) appear (Campbell,1965:5). Campbell (1965:5) from the basic lexical meaning, defines it as primarily denoting the abstract noun corresponding to κοινωνός and κοινωνείν, and its meaning therefore is the having something in common with someone, which effectively evokes both ideas of participation and of association. Julien M. Ogereau also conducted a survey on *koinonia* in documentary sources (370 papyri and 100 inscriptions dating from 5B.C. to 7A.D.), with the aim of recovering its practical non-biblical connotations. Similarly, scholars such as George Panikulan(1979) and J.M. McDermott(1975) among others, delved on the usage of *koinonia* in the New Testament with the goal of rediscovering its presumed theological significance.Interest in the usage of *koinonia* has also grown in ecclesiological and ecumenical realms, as seen in the works of J.M.R Tillard(1992) and John D.

Zizioulas(1985).However, Paul's usage of this word in the Eucharistic context of 1 Corinthians 10:16 and its potential for promoting social justice seems to be understudied and underutilized, highlighting significant lacuna in biblical research that warrants attention.

Usage of *Koinonia* in Classical Greek

The origin and usage of *koinonia* predate its usage in the New Testament; as the word appears in Greek documentary and non-biblical sources (such as papyri and inscription).Thayer Greek-English Lexicon describes *koinonia* as denoting fellowship, association, community, joint participation, intercourse both in the New Testament and Classical Greek…the share which one has in anything, intercourse, fellowship, intimacy, a benefaction jointly contributed, a connection, a contribution (Thayer,2003:352). Besides this lexical description, an extensive investigation into the usage of *koinonia* and its cognates among non-biblical writers and in the Septuagint have been carried out by scholars, notable among them is J. Y. Campbell. The result of his review of Classical literature indicates that the primary idea expressed by *koinonia* and its cognates is not that of association with another person or other persons, but that of participation in something in which others also participate (Campbell,1965:5).

It further brings to the fore that, the word and its cognates are frequently used in Classical Greek with the Genitive of things share; this primary usage is called the *koinonia* plus the genitive of the thing shared or have in common.Seltz (1994:7) writes: "In the Greek construction of *koinonia* (and its cognates) the genitive construction becomes the important factor in defining more clearly the *koinonia***.** To miss the primacy of 'the genitive of the thing shared' or worse to dismiss 'the thing shared' is to miss the specific *koinonia***."** Studies on usage of *koinonia* in Classical Greek also reveals that, when making reference to the fellow-sharers, that is, one with whom the common thing is shared, the dative case is used; this is called the secondary usage of *koinonia*. Unlike the primary usage, the secondary is less frequent in occurrence.Campbell (1965:5) contends that "… the marked infrequency of the dative of the person as compared with the idea of participation in something is the primary one."

Also in Classical Greek, Philosophers employed *koinonia* to convey various thoughts. According to McDermott (1975:67) it assumes a place of importance *"…*in the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and other basic Greek, philosophical systems." In the works of Plato, *koinonia* is designated as denoting all kinds of union based on a common interest there is the *koinonia* of ideas and a *koinonia* that is, the universal embraces gods and men, in an order of justice, friendship and temperance (Ranelli,2017:433). It is interesting to note here how Plato applies the word not only philosophically but also in a religious milieu, speaking of *koinonia* among the gods, men e.t.c. Aristotle applies *koinonia* to marriage and the fellowship of life in his reference to the bond that united the Pythagoreans. Like the duo, Stoic Philosophers apply *koinonia* to friendship and marital bonds, however unlike the duo, Ramelli (2017:433) asserts that the Stoics postulated humans' *koinonia* with God.

In addition, Julien Ogereau's work entitled *A Survey of Κοινωνία and Its Cognates in Documentary Sources* has contributed significantly to the understanding of the usage of *koinonia* in Greek literature. In this work, he carries out an extensive study of 370 Papyri and 100 inscriptions dating from 5 B.C. to A.D. 7. Ogereau ((2015:213) argues that *koinonia* is frequently used in these inscriptions to denote express participation in civic

activities…marital union…partnership in some kind business enterprise or even in commercial organization…in funerary inscription denoting common ownership…sense of a share of the tomb.In his study of the usage of *koinonia* in 370 papyri he further asserts that it denotes marital union…joint-ownership or joint-exploitation of a piece of property essentially a business partnership religious connotation on only one occasion (Ogereau,2015:213).

From the foregoing, it may be asserted that in Classical Greek, *koinonia* assumes the connotation of union in common areas of interest, participation and partnership in civic activities, social activities such as marriage and commercial enterprise among others. It is also on record that *koinonia* is used in a religious context, however this usage is rare. This rare occurrence of the usage of *koinonia* in religious context may have informed Ogereau's(2015:213) remark that how seldom, if ever the senses ,religious community/association and spiritual communion/fellowship, which are held by many to be the primary significance of *koinonia* in the N.T, are encountered in the documentary sources, which is a sign of its rareness in the lingua franca of the time. This leads to the study of *koinonia* in the Septuagint and in Other Jewish Writings.

Usage of *koinonia* in the Septuagint And Other Jewish Writings

Studies reveal that, *koinonia* and its cognates, that is words derived from the Greek root koinon are used with the genitive in a manner consistent with its utilization in Classical Greek. The usage of *koinonia* and its cognates in the Septuagint is less frequent; altogether appearing about twenty-two times having no reference to God (Yahweh) but to men, that is, it is anthropocentric in emphasis; nor are these group of words used to express relationship between God and men. Seltz(1994:7) writes "In the LXX *koinonos* occurs eight times, *koinoneo* occurs thirteen times and *koinonia* occurs only three times."A look at Seltz's analysis indicates that, of these group of words derived from the root koinon, *koinonia* has the rare occurrence; occurring once each LXX version of Lev 5:21(but Lev.6:2 in the canonized books), Wisdom of Solomon 8:18; 3 Mac 4:6. In Lev.5:21 it is used in the context of Moses recording the laws guiding restitution, denoting a partnership (NETS 'joint ownership); as conversing in Wisdom of Solomon, and as sharing of life as in marital union in 3 Mac.4:6 (Seltz,1994:7).

Furthermore, Jewish writers such as Philo of Alexandria and Josephus among others, made use of *koinonia* in some of their works. Philo of Alexandria uses *koinonia* and its cognates in two distinctive ways. On one hand, in some of his works (such as *De Posteritate Caini,* 83; *De Fuga et Inventione,* 52, *De Sacrificiis et Caini,* 100; *De Specialibus Legibus I,* 278,Flaccus,10)Philo utilizes it in a conventional manner denoting partners and partakers. On the other hand, Philo does use *koinonia* in his reference to the ideal life shared by the Essenes in a religious context. Carver(1964:31) posits: "Theirs was an ideal of a common life, not only in deed but also in spirit ,and central in that life was a common meal…This meal was not only an expression of their brotherhood but also definitely cultic and eschatological in settings." After cataloging the virtues of the Essenes, Philo according to Selzt(1994:7) describes them as a "…fellowship ... He also references how the Priests shared (κοινωνοί) with God in the thank-offering."

Philo's depiction here in the opinion of the researcher, is akin to religious fellowship described in the New Testament in text such as Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:16-17. Josephus, the Jewish historian's usage of *koinonia* followed conventional Hellenistic usage of commonality and partnership (e.g., *Antiquities* 1:32; 1:35; 1:304; *Wars* 2:253; 3:485; 4:348).For instance, though

sharing Philo's admiration of the virtues possessed by the Essenes, Josephus however does not describe them with the term κοινωνία he did see the Essenes as sharing a common life comparable to the Pythagoreans *Antiquities* 15:371 (Seltz,1994:8). So far, this study has revealed that *koinonia* is infrequently used in the Septuagint, like its cognates. These usages also seem to be akin to Classical Greek, where it is utilized conventionally to denote sharing, partner and partaker; and it is never used to express relationship between God and Men. Although the conventional usage is more pronounce, *koinonia* is occasionally used in a religious sense as used by Plato in Classical Greek. Next is an examination of usage of *koinonia* in the New Testament.

An Overview of Usage of *koinonia* in the New Testament

Research reveals that *koinonia* occurs about nineteen times in the New Testament. According to Alexander (2012:5) these nineteen occurrences span "over four different authors and ten out of the twenty-seven different writings." These four New Testament writers made used of the word *koinonia* to communicate to their audience the ideas they had in mind, however, each of them as noted by Carver (1964:18-19) "…took and filled it with his own content of meaning which is coincidently similar, due to that same great salvation-reality which occupied them." However, more than other New Testament writers, Paul uses *koinonia* about thirteen times in his epistles; while the word appears once each in Acts, Hebrews and the Revelation, and three occurrences in 1 John. It is observed that, Revised Standard Version translators use four words to translates koinonia. It is rendered as fellowship in Acts.2:42, 1Cor.1:9,2 Cor.13:14, Gal.2:9, Pil.2:1, 1John 1:3,6-7 as contribution in Rom.15:26, 2 Cor.9:13 as participation in 1Cor.10:16, as share in Phlm.6, Heb.13:16 and as partnership in 2 Cor.6:14, Phil.1:5. The King James New Version uses five words to translate *koinonia*. It is translated as fellowship in Acts.2:42,1 Cor.1:9,Gal.2:9,Phi 1:5,.2:1, 2 Cor.6:14 1John1:3,6-7; as contribution in Rom.15:26;distribution in 2 Cor.9:13;and as communion in 1Cor.10:16; 2 Cor.6:14;13:14; as communication in Phlm.6 and in Heb.13:16. New International Version translators use seven words for *koinonia*. As fellowship in Acts.2:42,1 Cor.1:9, 2 Cor.6:14,13:14, Pil.2:1, 1John1:3,6-7 as contribution in Rom.15:26, participation in 1Cor.10:16, partnership in Phil.1:5 as common in 2Cor.6:14, sharing in 2Cor.9:13 and as share in Phlm.6 and Heb.13:16.In all its 16 appearances in the New Testament, *koinonia* is used with genitive construction indicating the common thing shared or held in common in 1Cor.1:9 as *koinonia* in the Son;1Cor.10:16 as *koinonia* in the blood and body of Christ; in 2Cor.13:14 as *koinonia* in the Holy Spirit and *koinonia* in the ministry in 2Cor.8:14 and *koinonia* in the faith in Phlm6. In 2Cor.6:14 and Phil.1:5 *koinonia* is used with a dative construction of the thing shared in relation to the gospel.

The New Testament also uses *koinonia* in an absolute state in Acts.2:42, Rm.15:26, 2Cor.9:13, Gal.2:9, Heb.13:16 in reference to Christians and their concern for one another. In Johannine writings, *koinonia* appears only in the first epistle of John; with 4 occurrences in 1Jn.1:3,6-7 its contextual usage reflects a close relationship and fellowship between two persons. According to Alexander(2012:6), John's usage of *koinonia* "…offers a healthy understanding of the relationship Christians have with each other through their relationship with Christ the manifested Word of God." In all the four New Testament writers employed *koinonia* in each given context to primarily express the religious idea they intend to communicate to their audience.

Pauline Usage of *koinonia* in 1 Corinthians 10:16

1 Corinthians 10:16 exists as part of the literary context of 1 Corinthians 10;16-22, here Paul lays the foundation for his prohibiting on associations with idols on the personal participation that believers have with both Christ and other believers in the celebration of the Lord's Supper also called the Eucharist among others.1 Corinthians 10:16 seems to be fundamental to the understanding of Pauline usage of *koinonia* in a Eucharistic context, as this unique usage appears only here in the entire New Testament. George V. Jordon (1948:119) writes: "It is in 1Cor,10:16 that we perceive the fullness of the meaning of *koinonia* further expanded and given definite and particular application." Seltz (1994:7) corroborates Jordon when he posits that, "No matter what the interpretation, it must also be stated that for all the authors researched,1Cor.10:16 is seen as fundamental passage for a full understanding of *koinonia*."In an attempt to uncover and understand Paul's usage of this word in a Eucharistic context as depicted in 1Cor.10:16,it is germane to examine some key phrases in the text.

Passage in Greek

> 16Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐστίν; Τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐστίν;

Passage in English

> 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

There are about ten nouns and four verbs, two rhetorical questions, several articles and particles in verse 16.Attention will be on the two rhetorical questions as they contain phrases crucial to the understanding of how Paul uses the word *koinonia* .The particle οὐχὶ which introduces the two rhetorical questions is an emphasized version of οὐ is an important Greek particle appearing twice in this verse .It is an interrogative conjunction denying what is entirely non-factual meaning, definitely not, certainly not, not at all or is it not; and occurs about fifty-six times in the New Testament. Nordling (2018:188) notes that: "the grammatical form of these rhetorical questions requires the answer yes."Another vital particle is ὃν, a relative pronoun meaning who, which, that. Paul's arrangement of the elements use during Eucharistic celebration 1Cor.10:16 of placing the cup ahead of the bread, seems to be a reversal of the order as presented in the Gospels narrations and 1Cor.11:22-26;and this reversal has also been a matter of concern to biblical scholars. For instance Bornkoun (1960:113) posits: "… the liturgical order in Paul's time was probably not fixed. And it is possible that the reversal is literary only and that this order allows Paul to formulate his own Eucharistic deduction in 10:17 on the basis of the bread." Nneji (2017:2) adds "…Paul names the cup first not because at the sacrificial feasts men thought less about food than about wine…but because he means to speak at more length about the bread, and in connection with it, especially to discuss the Israelites partaking of the sacrifices, as it suited his theme of the meat offered to Idols."

There are several phrases in this verse such as the cup of blessing *Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας*; bread which we break [*Τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν*] an inverse attraction occuring when the antecedent is attracted to the case of the Relative Pronoun.However,attention will be given to the phrases *κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ χριστοῦ, κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ* (*koinonia*

in the blood of Christ and *koinonia* in the body of Christ),because of there in the *koinonia* word is mentioned.The noun *κοινωνία* is used twice in 1 Cor.10;16. It is a nominative, singular feminine of *κοινος*. and appears about nineteen times in the N.T. From the lexicon meaning, Thayer (2003:70) describes it as signifying;"…fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse both in the N.T and Classical Greek." As observed earlier, *koinonia* is rarely used in both Classical Greek and the Septuagint to express relationship between God and men, however Paul coined a special usage here, utilizing it to express relationship between God and Men;as reflected in the double genitive phrases *κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ χριστοῦ, κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ* (*koinonia* in the blood of Christ and *koinonia* in the body of Christ).In these two phrases, three Greek words call for attention before finally uncovering how Paul uses the word *koinonia* with these two phrases. *Σώματος* is a genitive singular neuter of σώμα appearing one hundred and fourty-two times in the N.T denoting body, bodies. According to Vine (2000:77) it signifies "… the body as a whole, the instrument of life, the complete man, physical nature as distinct from the spirit, metaphorically of the mystic body of Christ with reference to the whole Church."*σώματος* occurs thirty-six times in the N.T in passages like Mt.6:22,26,12; Lk 11;34, Jn.2:21; Rm.7:4,24;8;23, 1Cor.7;4;10;16;11;27 e.t.c. *αἵματος* is the genitive masculine singular of *αἷμα*. The word means blood either of men or animals (Thayer,2003:70). It is used of those things which by their redness resembles blood. In the N.T it is used about ninety-six times for human blood, animal blood and Jesus blood which is linked with the saving significance of His death in passages such as ;Mat. 16;17;23;230,35;Mk.5;25,27;Lk.8;43,44;Jn.1;13;Acts 1;19;Rm.3;15;1 Cor.10;16 e.t.c. The noun word *χριστοῦ* which appears twice in 1 Cor.10;16 is a genitive masculine singular of *χριστος* meaning Christ, Anointed one; derived from the Greek word *χριω* denoting to smear or anoint. The word occurs 531 times in the N.T except in 3 John, with Pauline corpus without Hebrews having altogether 383 occurrences(Abarim,2024).Passages in the N.T where the word can be found include Mat.1;1,16-18;Mk.1;1;8;29;Lk 2;11,26;Jn.1;17; Acts.2;31; Rm.1;1;1 Cor.1;1-9,23-24,30;10;16 e.t.c.

BDAG (1979:110) identifies *κοινωνία* as having four primary definitions in both the N.T. and other early literature.Firstly, *κοινωνία* can be translated as association, communion, fellowship; secondly, *κοινωνία* can be translated as generosity, altruism, or fellow-feeling; signifying a close relationship that stems from a positive inclination to the other. In the third instance, *κοινωνία* can be used as an abstract term for something concrete, such as sign of fellowship, proof of brotherly unity, gift, or contribution. Lastly, *κοινωνία* can be translated as participation in,denoting participation or sharing in something. More promising in the opinion of the researcher is BDAG's fourth option, where *κοινωνία* is translated as participate *in/with*. This translation is consistent with its usage in both Classical Greek and Septuagint with the genitive of things shared. Carver ((1964:18-19) remarks "According to Greek rules, when koinonia is used with a genitive construction the idea of participation is the first and occasionally the exclusive meaning, however, due to its flexible nature, koinonia can assume other ranges of meaning depending on the specific context."

When Paul relates the cup to the blood of Christ and the bread to His body, he may be pointing to the saving significance of Christ's death. The body of Christ here in the opinion of the researcher is neither a reference to the spiritual body of Christ nor to the Church as verse 17 seem to indicate. Instead the body of Christ as noted by Hauser (1912:95) "…contains a special reference to the event of the crucifixion and thus to the vicarious death of Christ." Hence,

relating the elements of the Eucharist namely the bread and wine to the body and blood of Jesus is a symbolic representation and remembrance of His death; which is loaded with several symbols for both the Corinthian Christians and contemporary followers of Jesus.Therefore, to have *koinonia* in the blood and the body of Christ *[κοινωνία τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ χριστοῦ, κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ χριστοῦ*] that is, to participate in the blood and body of Christ, suggests the idea of sharing in the benefits of His atoning death. Paul seems to indicate that, through participation in the Eucharistic celebration, the Corinthian Christians set up a relationship with Jesus, which may be regarded as vertical; this participation also sets up a relationship with other participating Christians as reflected in verse 17,suggesting the idea of a horizontal relationship.This act of participation carries with it serious implications for the participants as noted by Newton (1996:48) when he asserts that: "… believers must never forge any other union or partake of any activity which would damage their unique and exclusive relationship with Christ, the Head of the body of which they have been made members." In his reflection on the implication of participation in the Eucharist,Lennon(2001:2) submits that "…it will make no sense to take part in the Eucharist and thereby become part of the community intended by the Eucharist, and then to go out from the Eucharist and do things which works against that community."

Application to Social Justice in the Contemporary Nigerian Society

The word Justice denotes various things to different people in different places, however it is simply defined here as, rendering to someone, what is his or her own, or due to him or her by right. By this definition, two facts can be deduced; first, justice is a relational term underscoring man to man relationship. From the Christian view point Ukpe and Gbinde (2022:114) note that it relates to "…people living in right relationship with God, one another, and the natural creation… justice means loving our neighbours as we love ourselves, and is rooted in the character and nature of God. As God is just and loving, so we are called to do justice and live in love." Second, justice has a demand. It demands a proportionate distribution or share of benefits or fruits; thereby making no individual or group to be cheated. In his word, Eric (2013:4),defines Social justice as "…the promotion and application of basic human rights,basic human needs, and the means of impartially protecting and enforcing them legally in any given society in time and space."

Attempts have also been made to define it as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources and obligations in the society to all people regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, status, sexual orientation or religious or spiritual background.On this, Social injustice as noted by Ekanem and Emajulu (2024:1458) may be described as the "unfair manner the resources, opportunities, offices, responsibilities e.t.c. are distributed in the society,resulting to oppression and all actions that undermined and prevent the citizens from actualizing their full potentials and the exercise of their self-determination." Social justice ought to be the ideal in all human societies, but this is not the case as, social injustice in various forms seems to be the order in Countries of the world, including Nigeria. Furthermore, at a time in Israel's history when social injustice thrived inspite of the religious zeal of His people, God raised Prophet Amos to address the social menace. The situation is not different in the contemporary Nigeria society, where Churches continue to spring up in the cities and even in the villages. A recent survey shows that Nigeria ranks among the nations with the highest number of churches in the world (Otuibo,2006:56).

Inspite of this proliferation of Churches and with the high level of religious activities that take place in each of these centres, social injustice and other social vices are on the increase. Social injustice in the contemporary Nigerian society is tetragonal in nature as namely, socio-economic injustice, socio-political injustice, socio-religious injustice and socio-judicial injustice (Akintola,2021:425). What therefore is worrisome is that some of those in attendance are top government officials, political leaders, and people in privileged positions who are behind the oppression and injustice in the society (Akintola,2021:425). Here in Nigeria, corruption seems to be a major form of social injustice that has eaten deep into fabric of both the Church and society. For instance, of recent some members of the Oyomesi saddled with the sacred traditional responsibility of trust in the selection of the next 46th Alafin of Oyo are speculated to have collected bribe or financial gratification to favour one of the contestants. In reaction to this allegation, Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo has threatened to prosecute and punish all Chiefs or Kingmaker within the Oyomesi or others, who might have collected bribe in the selection process (Business Day Newspaper, Assessed on 13/01/2025). Today, the way in which corruption is also flourishing in religious houses as tool for, moral and financial exploitation is a matter of concern. Ojo (Punch Newspapers,Accessed on 21/01/2020) laments "religion has been so commercialized and commoditized to the extent that, we now have prayer consultants and contractors whose task is to assist spiritually weak people to fast and pray for divine solution to their problems."

It is observed that the Eucharist as a sacred religious meal is celebrated by some Christian denominations in Nigeria, in different forms with varying significance and conditions for admission. The exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 10:16 reveals that the Eucharistic *κοινωνία* has both vertical and horizontal dynamics. On one hand, the vertical dimension depicts the unity of Christians with Jesus, while on the other hand, the horizontal points to the union of Christians with one another. According to Akintola (2021:427) "the understanding is that for any vertical relationship (human–God) to be intact, the horizontal relationship (human–human) must not suffer any strain." This act of joint participating in the blood and body of Jesus during the Eucharistic celebration can be used to promote social justice among Christians, and make them its advocate in the contemporary Nigeria society in quite a number of ways. Participating in the celebration is a reminder of the covenant which Jesus established and sealed with His blood. Through this participation, members at the table affirm their covenant with Jesus and fellow Christians as members of the same community of faith.On the basis of this covenantal vertical and horizontal relationships, members are also reminded of the need to live in faithfulness to their Jesus and refrain from social vices against one another, and non-Christians as members of the same human society. Lennon (2001:2) writes: "…it will make no sense to take part in the Eucharist and thereby become part of the community intended by the Eucharist, then to go out from the Eucharist and do things against this community."

Participating in the Eucharist is a Christian religious rite that calls to mind the love of Jesus for sinners. Love is an essential ingredient of social justice. True love centers on life of sacrifice and service for the sake of others devoid of oppression as practically demonstrate by Jesus. At the table during the celebration of the Eucharist therefore, members are not only reminded of the love of Jesus for all, but are called to make this love count and make a difference in their day to day relationship with others. Ukpo (1992:16) asked: "What is the efficacy of the one bread and the one cup? You who have received the Holy Communion…what have you

received, what will you do as a result of your participation? Remember, the Eucharist is simply love." This question raised by Ukpo, underscored the ethical responsibility of participating in the Eucharist.When all participants at the table see in it a remembrance of Jesus' love and as a call to replicate same to others, the religious, economic exploitation and social ills that have eaten into the fabric of the Church and the society will be curbed to an extent. Thereby fostering better human relations, leading to a better society where the rights of everyone is respected and maintained.

In addition, at the Eucharistic table, Christians are afforded the opportunity of self-examining their lives before partaking. Paul underscored this in 1Cor.11:28 while affirming the sacredness of the religious meal, instruct Corinthian Christians to examine themselves first, before taking part in the Eucharistic fellowship. Genuine self-examination in the opinion of the researcher requires humility, deep self-introspection and deep self-reflection of one's relationship with God, fellow Christians and non-Christians alike. It is perceived that, this will go a long way to help members seek forgiveness from God, offended neighbours and refrain from practices that are inimical to the lives of fellow humans as members of the same Nigeria society, thereby advocating for social justice.In the same vein,a proper understanding of Eucharistic *κοινωνία* call for man to man welfare responsibility has the potential of promoting social cohesion, justice, support for one another especially in times of hardship, and a shared commitment to addressing societal challenges such as injustice, domestic violence, corruption, internet or cyber Freud and prostitution among others. It holds that as Christians partake in the Eucharist they are reminded not only of their responsibility to remain committed to the covenant relationship they have with Jesus, but also of their responsibility to remain committed to the covenant relationship they have with fellow Christians and contribute to the welfare of one another especially the less privilege, not only among Christians but also non-Christian alike.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, this study has attempted to interpret *κοινωνία* in the Eucharistic context of 1Corinthians 10:16 by examining its usages in Classical Greek, Septuagint, works of Jewish writers like Philo, Josephus, along with its usage in the New Testament. The research discovers that, in Classical Greek and Septuagint, *κοινωνία* is primarily used in conventional senses to refer to union in common areas of interest, participation and partnership in various activities, denoting sharing, partnership and partaking; but rarely in a religious context to express relationship between God and humanity. However, some later Jewish works occasionally use in a religious sense. The study reveals that the coinage of word predates its usage by the four New Testament writers who adopt and employ *κοινωνία* in each given different context to primarily express the religious idea they intend to communicate to their audiences.Paul seems to be the only writer to coined a special usage of *κοινωνία* in a Eucharistic context to express relationship between God and Men in the entire New Testament, as found 1 Corinthians 10:16-17. The research concludes that, Christians *koinonia* in the blood and body of Jesus do not only unite them with Him;but also with one another as members of His body the Church, hence advocating among other things for equality, equity and social justice. The study recommended that,through proper participation in the Eucharist and harness of its robust symbolic functions, Christians can be the salt of the Earth and light of the World according to Jesus' mandate in Matthew 5:13-14 by promoting social justice in Nigeria.

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