

**THE EUCHARIST IN LUKE 22: 14 – 21 AND THE KOLANUT AMONG THE UKWUANI
PEOPLE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

BY

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Introduction

The term "Eucharist" is derived from the *eucharistesas* (Greek: "gave thanks") of the institution and was the most widely used term in primitive times, as applied to the whole service, to the consecration of the bread and wine or to the consecrated elements themselves. Other Scriptural terms for the same ordinance are "Communion" (from *koinonia*, in the twofold sense indicated in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17), "Lord's Supper" (*kuriakon deipnon* (1 Corinthians 11:20)), "Lord's Table" (*trapeza kuriou* (1 Corinthians 10:21)), "Breaking of Bread" (*klasis tou artou* (Acts 2:42)). The Lutheran Confessions employ the term "mass," ("mass" derived either from *missa*, "things sent," because the materials for communion were sent to the place of celebration, or from *missio*, "a sending (away)".¹

Other names for it are the Lord's Supper; (Baptist) Holy Communion (Episcopal); the Holy Liturgy (Eastern Orthodox); and the Mass (Roman Catholicism).² The Eucharist has always been at the center of Christian worship, though theological interpretations vary, it is outside the scope of this paper. Differences in Eucharistic theology: transubstantiation and consubstantiation tend to vary though related in some sense but is not an issue for this paper.³ The aim of this paper is to show the Eucharist is *oji Igbo* (Igbo kola) that the Church must break because; humanity is divinized with the Eucharist.⁴ This would be down through a comparative study of ritualistic similarity and dissimilarity between the Eucharist and kola nut in Ukwuani worldview.

The book of Luke dates about 70 – 75 AD, though scholars claim the Gospel of Luke was written after Mark's gospel in the late 60's AD,⁵ but how much after is difficult to ascertain. Luke probably situated these events historically in order to stress the fact that the events described in his gospel took place in real history. His purpose may have been to counter the view that the stories about Jesus circulating in the early church belong to the realm of legend and myth.⁶ Luke had taken pains to follow up everything to its source, and had reedited the oral

tradition in the light of his historical researches (1:2, 3), and thus his account is rich in value. Writing for a wider circle of readers, he carefully separates and distinguishes the Eucharist from the paschal meal which preceded it, and puts the statement of Christ about not drinking "from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come," in its proper place as referring to the paschal cup (compare Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; and Luke 22:15-18). In describing the actual institution of the Eucharist, he gives us an almost verbal identity with the account given by Paul (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

The Eucharist is the Christian Passover, the institution of the New Covenant. The Jews, in the Passover Supper, celebrate the freeing of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt, and their formation into God's chosen people (Ex.12). The Christians, in the Eucharist, celebrate the freeing from sin, and the formation of Christ's Church, with Jesus in their hearts, until he comes the second time in glory (1Cor.11:23-26, Mt.26:28-29, Mk.14:25). In the Jewish Passover Supper Jesus instituted the Eucharist.

The Eucharist commonly called "Lord's Supper" or "communion," is one of two special ordinances that the Lord Himself instituted while He was still on earth. This ordinance of communion commemorates and typifies the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The other, being baptism, carries with it a picture of Christ's resurrection. Luke's account of the Last Supper, written from the standpoint of a Gentile convert and a non-eyewitness, probably heard the details of the Last Supper from Paul. Luke was a traveling companion of Paul. Luke also wrote in the 70's.⁷

The Eucharist Content and Context of Luke 22: 14 – 22.⁸

Luke 22:14 - 22 (Greek Version)

14 Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡ ὥρα, ἀνέπεσεν καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι σὺν αὐτῷ.

15 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς, Ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν·

16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, ὅτι οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῆ ἔν τῃ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.

17 καὶ δεξιόμενος ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας εἶπεν, Λάβετε τοῦτο καὶ διαμερίσατε εἰς ἑαυτούς·

18 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν [ὅτι] οὐ μὴ πῖω ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως οὗ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ.

19 καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων, Τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἑμὴν ἀνάμνησιν.

20 καὶ τὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι, λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον.

21 πλὴν ἰδοὺ ἡ χεὶρ τοῦ παραδιδόντος με μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης·

Luke 22:14 - 22 (English Version)

- 14 When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him.
- 15 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;
- 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."
- 17 And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves;
- 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."
- 19 And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
- 20 And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.
- 21 But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table.

In Luke's account, Jesus meets at the appointed hour with his disciples to eat the Passover meal in the upper room prepared for them (22:12, 14). After announcing the traitor, Luke's narrative deviates from the Gospel of Mark. Jesus tells his disciples that he is about to suffer, that he shall not eat the Passover meal until the kingdom, and then "he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and share it among yourselves. For I tell you, I certainly won't drink any of the fruit of the vine from now on until God's domain is established!'" (22:17-18).

After offering this first cup, the Lukan narrative moves straight into the Eucharist episode of the bread and wine as symbolic of the body and blood of the new covenant (22:19-20). The institution narrative in Luke seems to be influenced by Paul's wording in 1 Cor. 11:23-26. Johnson mentions that Luke 22:19 (when not dependent upon Mark 14:22) is closely related to Paul's wording in 1 Cor. 11:24 in its use of *eucharisteo*⁹ Additionally, the longer reading of v.20 in Luke, "and the cup in like manner after supper" is found exactly this way in 1 Cor. 11:25, which led some suspicious copyists to omit "after supper" from v.20.¹⁰

In contrast to Luke, Matthew follows Mark's outline so that right after the traitor is announced, Jesus immediately engages in the establishment of the Eucharist (Mk. 14:22-24; Mt. 26:26-28). Mark and Matthew then conclude the ritual with the language in Lk. 22:18; yet, they omit a second cup. Jesus' actions in 22:19 follow a liturgical formula involving the sequence of the four verbs *took*, *blessed*, *broke*, and *gave*. Luke foreshadows this action in 9:10-17 during the miraculous feeding of five thousand people. There, Luke writes that after "taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke

them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd" (9:16). This four verb formula is also repeated in an ordinary meal following Jesus' appearance on the road to Emmaus (24:30).

The institution narrative of 22:14-22 was originally separated from the Passover meal in which it was later set. Marshall considers it is likely that "the essential part of the story which related to the institution of the Lord's Supper was separated off from its framework for cultic use, as 1 Cor. 11:23-26 would appear to indicate, and was then replaced in a Passover setting when the passion narrative was being put together."¹¹ Jeremias and Marshall suggest that the institution wording of 22:19-20 was not part of an original Passover meal but rather stood on its own for cultic use.¹² The liturgy of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper in simple terms would suggest this. This suggestion is likely as the Eucharist was a Jewish Passover meal transformed by Jesus with new implications and meanings for His disciples.

During the meal in Luke, Jesus redefines the Passover imagery (22:14-22). Specifically, Jesus defines his own body and blood as the Passover sacrifice that initiates a new covenant between God and mankind. During Passover the whole nation reflected on its birth as a free nation. From the framework of Luke, as they recall how God saved the nation in the exodus, another age of salvation was dawning, which Jesus will commemorate in a meal that has the characteristics of a farewell meal. This new age of salvation will begin when Jesus completes his own personal "exodus" (9:31), the fulfillment, or completion being part of Luke's Passover motif.

When the meal begins, "Jesus reinterprets the symbols of the Passover and gives them new, interim meanings. Such meaning resides in the symbols until he returns. In fact, the symbols are a reminder that he is returning. He says the bread is his "body given for you" (22:19) and the last cup is the cup of "the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you" (22:20). This represents his death as a substitutionary sacrifice for others. This interpretation is clear from the Passover context, Jesus' assertion that his body would be broken and his blood would be poured out "for" the disciples, and from Jesus' attribution of Isaiah 53:12 to himself (22:37). The breaking of bread (Eucharist) bears strong similarity in the Ukwuani experience with the breaking of Kolanut.

2. The Breaking of kolanut in Ukwuani Experience.

Ukwuàni is both a people and a language. Sometimes spelt Ukwani, it is a language spoken by about 220,000 speakers in parts of Delta and Rivers States in Nigeria. Some notable Ukwuani towns are: Abbi, Aboh, Afor, Akoku, Amai, Ndoni, Onuabo, Ashaka, Ebedei, Emu, Ejeme Aniogo, Ezionum, Eziokpor, Kwale, Ndemili, Obiaruku, Owa Abbi, Obetim Uno, Obiakambu, Obikwele, Owa Alidima, Sovie, Umuaja, Umuleke Ossissa, Utagba, Umutu, Onicha

Ukwuani, Ike Onicha, Amoji, Ibabu, Umuolu, Umuebu, Azagba, Okpokirika, Ushie, Akpuafor, Ogume, Umukwata, Ugiliamai, Obiofu, Obinomba, Eweshi, Obiukpo, Obiezemili, Iselegu, Utchi, and Atragada.¹³

The Ukwuani people are a part of the Ndokwa race. The Ndokwa of today is made up of the Ndosumili and the Ukwani extracts. Ndosumili are people living within the water terrain (literally meaning; water people) while Ukwani literally means Nde-Ukwu-ani or the upland people. The names Ndosumili and Ukwani therefore are derived from their geographical locations. The Ukwuani language is related to several languages in the Niger Delta region which are collectively called Delta Ibo. Ukwuani belong to the people cluster group of Igbo and share certain things in common like the use of Kolanut in their social and religious lives.¹⁴

The Ndokwa people of today distinctively speak two related languages: Aboh language and the Central Ukwuani language. The two languages are relatively alike and sound like the Igbo language. The Ndosumili people speak Aboh while the Nde-Ukwu-ani people speak Ukwuani language.¹⁵

The Ukwuani people are notably peasant farmers, growing crops like cassava, yams, plantain, Mellon, okra etc. Those living in communities transversed by rivers and creeks are additionally engaged in fishing. Ukwuani people are very social among themselves forming community unions to fraternize with each other, wherever they share and use the kolanut as a symbol of life. Marriage and burial rites are also often highly celebrated with the kolanut like in Igbo societies of eastern Nigeria. Major religious and social festivals like Ikenge and Ukwata are celebrated with the use of the kolanut in prayers, blessings and as a mark of social connectivity.

Kola-nut is a nut content of a pod, produced by a tree called *Oji* or *Kola accuminata*. Kola is eaten by every branch Ukwuani's culturally diverse population while practically all appreciate the fruit's peace-making role. The Ukwuani people have a tradition of according kola special significance though the nut has varying degrees of importance to the three major Nigerian ethnic groups, the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. A Nigerian saying goes that the Hausa cultivate the kola for food, the Yoruba for commerce, and the Igbo out of reverence.

The Kola tree is cultivated in little quantity among Ukwuani people. The full-grown tree may reach a height of 65 meters. Traditional varieties yield from about eight to ten years while hybrids may yield much earlier. Each fruit pod contains between six and twelve nuts that can be broken into two, three or, rarely, four lobes each. The Kolanut is called "oji" in Ukwuani land.

Oji occupies a unique position in the cultural life of Ukwuani people. *Oji* is the first thing served any visitor in an Ukwuani home. *Oji* is served before an important ceremony begins: marriage ceremony, settlement of family disputes or entering into any type of agreement. It is

used as a channel of communication with the ancestral gods and the spirit world. It is also a means of contact with the Creator who is known by various names such as Ọgaga, Ọssai, Chukwu, Chukwu Abieme, Olise among the Ukwuani. The value which the Ukwuani attach to Ọji can be illustrated by a saying “mkpuru oshishi ikwa ese (fruit of the tree for sacrifice). Ọji is the king of all the fruits because it is used in communicating with ancestors. Also, because it is the king of all the fruits (a sacred fruit from the gods) it is used in showing goodwill to visitors and for entering into bonds and various forms of covenants.

Kola acuminata or *atrophora* is distinguished from *kola alba* or even *kola nitida* which the Igbo's call Ọji Awusa (“*gworu*”). Among the Ukwuani, *Kola atrophora* or *acuminata* or “oji Igbo” is distinct from *kola alba* or even *kola nitida* (oji Awusa) as it is used according to tradition for rituals, for marriage ceremonies, title taking, offering or prayers at traditional ceremonies, to welcome visitors and to introduce very important discussions and requests.

Ọji Awusa (*gworu*) or indeed any other kind of kola other than the Igbo Kola might though be broken and eaten, but it is never used for any other form of rituals. In other words, kola-nut excepting the Ọji Igbo with more than two cotyledons is not ritualistic. Ọji Awusa is a mere substitute. It is like “iweri ife adofi na go erushi” (it like taking what belong to Adofi to sacrifice to erushi”). So, Ukwuani people would say “ejiwe awusa na ago mmuo.” (You don't use Hausa for rituals). It is not outlandish then to maintain that kola-nut in Ukwuani culture plays a dual role – spiritual and social functions. It is pertinent to make this distinction as the Ukwuani most often use substitutes like Ọji Awusa (*gworu*), *Akinu* (bitter kola) and *ose oji* (alligator pepper) to entertain visitors. This is mainly due to the scarceness of Ọji Igbo, which because of its preciousness is in very high demand. It is therefore worthy to note that *Kola acuminata* and *Kola nitida* are both regarded as having the same symbolism in general and private cases except on occasions like serious traditional ceremonies like marriage and sacrifices where only oji Igbo is used.

Every visitor to an Ukwuani home expects to receive oji first as a sign of welcome and hospitality. A visitor on arrival observes his host's countenance “is he, the visitor welcome or is he a *persona non grata*?” He soon finds for himself when his host presents or even offers him kola-nuts in a particular manner. An added dimension in the modern era is that oji is not presented alone; it is “wagged” with money. This is because, for the Ukwuani people “*oji na gbakpuagbakpu*” (kola rolls). According to Joseph Aninze Ossai-Ugbah, “it is a sign of great misfortune for a presented kolanut to fall from the plate.”¹⁶ The Ọji signifies a clean mind and pure intention. Its shape resembles the heart as though it is the nature of the kola to speak a man's mind.

The breaking of the Kolanut is sheer beauty and ceremonial. Whether at private, public, communal, marriage and any ceremony, the breaking and sharing of kolanut goes with a ritual. Usually, it is the prerogative of the senior who is usually a man to preside over the breaking of the kolanut. The elder or senior might not necessarily be the one who breaks the kola with his hands, but since he gives the permission to a junior to do so, it is assumed that he breaks the kolanut.

In a private ceremony for instance like a home, the host having brought the kola leaves it to “ugo” (spokesman) to announce the presentation. Depending on the occasion, the kolanut is first either passed round for all to see before it is presented for acceptance or just lifted up by the elder. An “ugo” can be anyone who shares affinity with the presenter. The “ugo” depending on those present:

Odogwu, abi, (titled men, I greet you”

Ndikom osa aje, (non titled men, I greet you)

Ndiom otofe (women, I greet you)

Onyeni efa ekene e (everyone receive what you are greeted),

Onyewe uno, shi nme gwa shi oji abi o, (the owner of the house says there is kola)

Eka dozi n’oji dozini uno (the hand that cares for kola cares for the house),

Onyewe uno shi iyu nua o, oji bu ke yo o (the owner of the house says welcome, the kola is for you),

Ishegwari (this is the end of the matter)

All present would say “yoooooooooooo” (meaning, it’s okay or understood). At this point, the elder or senior also directs the “ugo” to say he accepts the kola. The “ugo goes ahead to say:

Odogwu, abi, (titled men, I greet you”

Ndikom osa aje, (non titled men, I greet you)

Ndiom otofe (women, I greet you)

Onyeni efa ekene e (everyone receive what you are greeted),

Ebiyie shi oweri wo oji iweseni (the visitor says your kola is accepted),

Ugbo ana osele, miri ekporu omu (the ship has entered the fast water current),

Ishegwari (this is the end of the matter)

All present would say “yoooooooooooo” (meaning, it’s okay or understood).

In the presentation of the kolanut above to show acceptance by the guest, the use of *Ugbo ana osele* and *miri ekporu omu* (the ship has entered the fast water current) means at this point the administration of the kolanut lies within the prerogative of the eldest person present.

The elder takes the kolanut (or one of the kola nuts if they are many in a bowl) and usually offers a prayer. The words of the prayer depend on the choice of the elder. However, there are certain predictable statements in the ritual which is called “igo oji” (the ritual prayer for the kolanut). Some elements of the prayer would most likely be:

Onyen weseni oji weseni ndu (he brings kola brings life),

Oji b’udo, udo yabe me (kolanut is life, may life remain among us)

Ochu wan okuku wen eda, (the one who chases a chick would fall)

Onyen obune kachoyi njo ogaga ya butu e(whoever chases you for evil, may the almighty make the person to fall)

Nkponkpo egbu wan agu (No form of abuse can kill a lion),

Ejo oku ek’abu ni esu yi (No negative word would prosper on you)

Ishegwari (this is the end of the matter)

All present would say “yoooooooooooo” (meaning, it’s okay or understood).

As the prayer goes on, the elder who is the presiding priest in “igo oji” breaks the kola (or one of it where they are many) and gives the kolanut to “oga”: the one to serve, usually but not often the most junior male present in the gathering, to serve the broken cotyledons. However, the elder takes the first lobe casts it to the ancestors as their portion then gives another to the one to whom the kolanut was presented sometimes kneeling. After this, the “oga” passes the plate round for all to pick their pieces. Women do not pick kolanut from the plate in an assembly where men are present. Rather, they are either given one by their husbands or by the elder. Oji is communion both with the living and the dead. Oji is revered and eaten in a communion of the loved living and the dear departed. It is a socio-ritualistic symbolic seed like no other among Ukwuani people.

One peculiar motif characteristic of the Gospel according to St. Luke is the meal motif with the Eucharist as a central distinctive. This is because, of all the Gospel evangelist, Luke demonstrates notable interest in the part played by meals in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Luke seems to display that when prophets break bread, the demands of the gospel become clearer. There appears to be a connection between Luke’s Eucharistic breaking of bread and breaking of kolanut in Ukwuani socio-cultural experience.

3. The Similarity between the Eucharist in Luke and Breaking of Kolanut in Ukwuani land

As early as the institution of the Lord’s Supper recorded in Luke 22:14-22, Christians recognize the presence of Jesus Christ in the breaking of bread. The traditional Jewish practice of taking bread, blessing and thanking God, and breaking and sharing the bread took on new

meaning for Jewish and Gentile believers in Christ. When followers of Christ gather in Jesus' name, the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup was a means of remembering his life, death, and resurrection and of encountering the living Christ. In the Eucharist believers experience afresh the presence of their risen Lord and receive sustenance for their lives as disciples. As the church organized itself, this custom of Eucharist became the characteristic ritual of the community and the central act of its worship.

A close observation from Luke's Eucharist liturgy shows the Kolanut as bearing certain ritualistic, social, spiritual and ceremonial elements. Some of these shall be examined to draw out the connection in content and context.

A. The Ritual

The context of the Eucharist in Luke was one of religious festivities: the Passover and a social ceremony: the departure of Jesus. "Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; and He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

This ritual is also repeated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:23 – 26:

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."

The practice of the Eucharist follows a similar ritual (pattern) in Christendom which includes prayers, Bible readings, confession, and a sermon (ministry of the Word). The Eucharist may begin with the singing of hymns and psalms, and includes readings from the Old and New Testaments as well as a Gospel reading. There are prayers of intercession (asking for God's help) and a sermon before the focal part of the service, which is the consecration, and sharing of the bread and wine. This ritual is maintained to keep the service sacred and sacrosanct.

As the service of the Eucharist a ritual so does the breaking of the Kolanut ritual. It is commonly believed by the Ukwuani about the symbolic ritual of presenting kolanut. There is a predictable, prescribed and even unprescribed pattern adopted every where the kolanut is broken. There is presentation by the host, the acceptance by the given, a prayer by the elder, an exhortation for the goodwill of the presenter, thanksgiving to ogaga for life and sharing by all present.

Amongst the Ukwuani "*oku bu uko oji*" (words are the forerunner of the kolanut). An Ukwuani-man fortunate enough to break a kola nut with four lobes – the usual is two or three – is considered especially lucky and blessed by the gods. It is believed that he will enjoy prosperity on each of the four market days in the Ukwuani weekly calendar (Afor, Nkwo, Olie, and Eke). Also, most communal Ukwuani rituals such as cleansing rites and giving of thanks attach special symbolism to kola.¹⁷

In Church traditions, after thanksgiving prayers, the 'breaking of the bread' takes place. The priest or minister blesses and consecrates the bread and wine. During the service, the priest moves to the sanctuary and stands by the altar. At the consecration, a special prayer is said over the bread and wine, and the bread is held up so that everyone can see it. In some churches, such as Roman Catholic and Episcopal traditions, consecration of the bread involves bowing, the use of incense, lifting of the bread and wine, bells, and the sign of peace. Christians greet each other with the words, 'Peace be with you.'

In the Eucharist and breaking of kola in Ukwuani experience, the primacy of prayers or blessing is significant. Prayers serve as the connecting strand with the Supreme Being who is the source and reason for the occasion. The attitude behind this Ukwuani kola culture is that the nut cannot be broken without saying of prayers or incantations by the eldest in the gathering. Just as in Roman Catholic tradition, the sign of peace in Ukwuani breaking of kola This gave rise to the proverb 'He who brings kola brings life', because in the kola nut prayers, the elder in addition to his wise sayings normally requests for peace, prosperity, long life, happiness and protection from all ill fortunes." Not only does the priest say prayers before and during the Eucharist, so do the Ukwuani say prayers before the breaking of the kola nut to the ancestors. E. Elochukwu Uzukwu writes that "The kola nut, a symbol of life and commensality which is ever omitted in the morning cult, is broken. The traditional part for the spirits (the radix) is given to them, and those present share the rest."¹⁸

B. The Presiding Priesthood.

In the Eucharist context of Luke, Jesus was the officiating priest. This was in line with the Jewish Passover tradition where the head of a household presided over the Passover feast. Similarly, in Christian service of the Eucharist, administering and officiating is the exclusive preserve of ordained priesthood. This is because; the Eucharist is a "Sacrifice". Only ordained priests can offer a sacrifice all along the Bible, and when Jesus instituted the Eucharist gave "an order" to his Apostles, he "ordained" them as "priests", "*do this in memory of me*" (Lk.22:19), "*do this in remembrance of me*" (1Cor.11:24), "*do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me*" (1Cor.11:25).

Just like when God chose one of the twelve tribes of Israel: Levi, and set it apart for liturgical service; (Num.1:48, Josh.13:33), so, ordained priests are chosen and set apart for liturgical and cultic functions within the Church. The priest presents the elements of bread and wine, offers prayers of thanks, exhorts the people, breaks the bread, passes the cup and asks the people to eat.

Though the whole community of believers is priestly (1 Peter 2:9), in the Catholic Church, for example, in Baptism, each person is proclaimed as priest, prophet, and king. And in the sacrament of Confirmation, every believer is confirmed of the three same honors and duties... but, as in the Old Testament, there are special "priests" chosen by God, the Ordained Priests in the sacrament of Holy Orders. They differ essentially from the common priesthood.

A priestly similarity also exists in the Eucharist and the breaking of kola nut. The presentation of kola-nuts is a privilege reserved exclusively for the men. The ritualistic breaking of the kola nut at major events is an honor reserved for high chiefs, clan heads and other prominent figures. It is well known that the Ukwuani revere kola and often it is referred to as the food of the gods. This privilege is denied to women for cultural reasons. When the kola-nut is presented to a guest, the kola-nut travels around until finally it comes back to the host. The elder who is present at the ceremony holds the kola-nut up and says a prayer to the ancestors. Thus, such prayers are said often in Ukwuani ceremonial gatherings. The gods of the ancestors and all the friendly spirits are summoned together and offered the kola-nuts. The elder demands good health for the good people and ill health for their enemies and peace for all in the village.¹⁹

In Ukwuani experience, the eldest man blesses the kola because, he holds the *Ọfọ*, and represents the authority of the ancestors. One of the strongest reasons for religious activities like blessings by the eldest person is that in Ukwuani traditional society, the first born or eldest man in a family or *umun* (kindred) assumes some priestly functions ipso facto. It is more by reason of his priesthood and not necessarily because of his age that the eldest man is preferred; and this is why today, the eldest man gives an ordained minister the kola to bless as a privilege in a Christian gathering for instance.

According to Eze Ugbala of Okporo "The high degree of sanctity accorded the Kola nut throughout Igboland is likened to that of the biblical 'forbidden fruit of Paradise' in that women are forbidden from either planting, climbing, plucking or breaking the Kola nut."²⁰ This assertion fits in well into Ukwuani society too being of Igbo stock.). Amba Otike-Odibi notes that "ife shi ndiom b'ago nmo, shi ndiom b'ago oji" (what prevents women from presiding over ritual sacrifice, is also what prevents women from breaking the kolanut).²¹ In the same vein,

Chukwunedum Onakpoma says it is only men who break kolanut because “ekwa onyeke kuwa nu ni nmo (“it is only the cry of a man that is heard in the spirit world”).²²

However, the non acceptance of women breaking kolanut does not mean that men are holier than women in Ukwuani society. It is just a question of a patriarchal mentality similar to the biblical regard for women. The denial of women's right to break the ceremonial Kola is more of social character and organization and does not imply a letdown or inferiority. Women do break the oji Igbo when they gather in their usual cultural groupings of *umuada* (gathering of elderly women), *umumgboto* (gathering of young ladies) and also in the *ikpekpe* (Native council of women where no man has a say). It is only when men are in an assembly such as before the Onotu Uku that women are not allowed to break kolanut because it is *imeru nso* (committing an abomination). This is because, women are considered both as properties of the man and subordinates to the man.²³ In the same vein, women traditional do not carry the Ikenga (which the Igbo call “ofo”: family ancestral staff) because they are seen as another man’s property. Since, *ikenge* cannot be transferred to another family of which a woman naturally belongs; she cannot engage in igo oji a prerogative of onlt those who carry *ikenge*.²⁴

On the contrary, Ukwuani women have their cultural and social groupings which are completely independent of men. Ukwuani women have many customary rights and privileges in the society so that they may not complain over the kolanut tradition which appears to be a matter of division of labour or function.

While the eldest and youngest persons may break and share kola in social gatherings, it is the exclusive right of the priest to break kola during Ukwuani rituals to ancestors, as is made evident in *igo nmo* (ancestor worship).

C. The presentation

In Luke at the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus took the bread lifted it up and gave thanks. Jesus also took the cup lifted it up and gave thanks. This act of lifting up the bread and cup was an act of presentation both to the Almighty and the people. When Jesus had presented the elements He said “take eat this is my body broken for you”.

To take the cup and take the bread implies the same thing. The sentence actually read *καὶ δεξάμενος ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας* (and when he had taken the cup, He gave thanks) and *αὐτὸς λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας* (and when He had taken the bread, He gave thanks).

The placing of the bread and wine onto the altar reminds the congregation of the origins of the Eucharist and the presence of the bread and wine on the table at the Last Supper. The bread is called the host, and is carried on a shallow dish known as a paten. Communion wafers are often used in place of real bread. The wine is drunk from a cup.

The symbolism in the kola presentation comes out clearly when many people are in attendance. The social aspect is clearly brought out because the *oji* is carried from one person to another according to a trace of kinship relationship starting from the home of the host, spreads out in the direction of left to right movement and comes back to the host. This symbolic action is a manner of headcount or a way of checking the identity of all the people in attendance in any gathering before any type of discussion could be had. The kola presentation symbolizes peace and welcome; and if one makes a mistake while carrying the kola round, *ibu oji* or *igoshi oji* ', he is traditionally dealt with according to norms in different communities. Such an error is considered as very grave and indicates that the offender is not so responsible and may not be a reliable person.

Oji is the first thing served in every function or ceremony, personal or communal agreements, welcoming of a visitor to an Ukwuani home, and settlement of family disputes. G.T. Basden observes that among persons of Igbo people group of which the Ukwuani are one, welcome is not complete without the sharing of the kola nut. Closely following the prolonged greetings in the traditional manner, "...the kola nut is brought forth on a dish or saucer or, what is more correct, on a wooden platter (really a small box fitted with a vocer) prepared and kept for the sole purpose of presenting kola nut."²⁵

For the kola presentation, "In the dish are one or more nuts. The owner first receives it from the slave attendant or one of his wives. He takes a nut and puts it to his lips, thus signifying that it is about to be offered in good faith. This symbolic action proves him (the host) to be free from malice (and the Kolanut without evil). The dish is, thereupon, passed to the visitor."²⁶ The kola presentation is not essentially descriptive; rather it is at the same time a symbolic action.

What can be observed is the close similarity in the presentation of both the Eucharist and the kolanut. In the Eucharist, the Priest lifts up the elements of bread in a dish and wine in a cup first as a presentation to God who is the host and then to the people who are the guest. The lifting up of the Eucharistic elements is for the blessings of the almighty and to show the people that they are welcome and invited to the feast. On the other hand, the kolanut is presented first by the host in a dish. The dish containing the kolanut is lifted as it were a presentation for the ancestors to see and be a part of the event. The kolanut is also passed round for either all present to see or the guest to see as a mark of welcome and invitation to the meal. Therefore, both the Eucharist and kolanut presentation share similar pattern of presentation both for the participation of the divine and physical guests.

D. The Act of Breaking

In the Eucharist the element of unleavened bread in traditional Jewish society is passed on from one person to another. This bread is flat and without yeast or any other element apart from flour because this would make it leavened. This bread can be round or spherical in shape and also not too large or weighty. Each person sitting at table for meal cuts a portion and passes it on to the other person until it has gone round the entire group. However, it should be noted that sitting at table was according to age or rank. Therefore, the bread moves from the eldest to the youngest beginning with the presiding head. The bread is cut or broken with hands as the sharing goes on.

In Church traditions, after the Eucharistic prayers, the priest invites the congregation to come to the altar to receive the bread and wine. In the Orthodox Church, Holy Communion is distributed to the congregation by dipping a piece of bread in wine and giving it to them on a long spoon. Baptists receive the wine in separate glasses. Roman Catholics and Anglicans (Church of England) usually receive the bread and wine while kneeling at the altar. After the 'sharing of the bread and wine', the dismissal takes place, during which the priest and congregation usually offer a prayer of thanksgiving and the priest closes the service with a blessing.²⁷

The kolanut is also broken with hands into its separate cotyledons before it is further divided with a knife for sharing if there are many people. Traditionally, it is more acceptable breaking the kolanut with hands. Why the kola is broken by knife rather than by hand appears to be due to health reasons, that is, for hygienic reasons as the immediate motive. Some people say it is because the kola is sacred, and as much should be treated holily.

However, a popular reason is that 'the kola is broken with a knife as a mark of honour to it because it is not up to the size of a piece of yam which people bite and chew'. The remote reason is essentially religious, for people who have shed blood have "eka ike" ("strong hand") and may not break the Sacred Kola for others using the soiled or profaned hand or bloody hand. The sacredness of the oji stems from the fact that oji is Ukwuani symbol of life.

Usually it is the privilege of the eldest man in a group to offer prayers and thanksgiving when the kola-nut is about to be broken and shared. In some parts of Ukwuani, the youngest breaks the kola-nut. Investigations show that in some other areas, the youngest one shares out the kola-nut as a service though the eldest man still prays for the well-being of all present. A grandson cannot break kola-nut in the presence of his grandfather and maternal uncles however young they may be, because it is held that he has no effective prayers to offer for them. It is they who will pray for his good health, posterity and progress in life. One cannot also

break kola-nut in the presence of one's in-laws. This is because it is also held that only one's in-law can effectively pray for the fruitful marriage between the latter and their daughter. Women do not break kola-nut in the presence of men though they can do so when it is an all women gathering. If a man is present, he would be called upon to break the kola-nut. This obtains because women do not offer rituals in Ukwuani tradition.²⁸

Kolanut is held by Ukwuani people to be sacred. Hence women who because of their monthly period are regarded as impure are barred from breaking kola-nut in order to avoid its defilement. It is even held that women should not climb a kola-nut tree as this could result in the tree going barren. An old woman herbalist however has a privilege to break kola-nuts. She should nevertheless precede this operation by an act of self-purification. This she does by waving seven seeds of alligator pepper over the head, one after the other, and throwing each of them away.²⁹

The similarity of breaking of bread in the Eucharist and kolanut also come close. The element of bread in the Eucharist is passed from one person to another to eat after it has been "broken" to signify how Jesus' body was broken. The Eucharist does not become significant without the breaking of the bread which is the highpoint of the meal. After the breaking of the bread, worshippers are called upon to "eat." Church denominational traditions vary at this point.

While in the Roman Catholic and Episcopal traditions worshippers are directly given the bread to eat without them touching it, in the Baptist tradition, worshippers take the elements by themselves and for themselves served by a deacon who has been presented with the elements by the presiding pastor. It appears that in the Catholic tradition worshippers are not allowed to touch the elements because of it is "Sanctae sanctae tractata sunt" (sacred and must be treated holily) which agrees with a part of the Ukwuani experience why the kolanut is shared with a knife because of those who have "eka ike" (strong hands because they have blood on their hands). Similarly too, the Baptist tradition of each worshipper picking his/her bread aligns with the Ukwuani experience of each person picking their broken kola to eat after the elder has offered the appropriate ritual.

E. The elements

The Eucharist is made up of two distinct elements: the bread and wine.³⁰ The bread is the body of Jesus while the wine is the blood of Jesus. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the theological issues of whether it is trans-substantiation or con-substantiation. This researcher opines that the elements are *fractio panis* in no other way that these elements do outside of such context of Eucharist.

Jesus in Luke said “take eat, this is my body broken for you.” Jesus also took the cup and said “drink this is my bloodshed for you.” Therefore, these two elements make up for the church the Eucharist, the Lord’s Table.

As the two elements of the Eucharist are significant, so does the number of cotyledons in a kola-nut. *Ọji Igbo* – Igbo kola-nut must have more than two cotyledons. An Igbo kola-nut with two cotyledons is malformed and so cast away. It is neither eaten by any titled man– *Inotu* nor by a woman. The number of cotyledons in a kolanut interprets for those present the manifest presence and pronouncement of the ancestors who are in each gathering.

For instance, Kola with one cotyledon is a dumb kola or *Ọji odi*. It is called *ọji nmọ*, that is, kola of the spirits. It is not eaten. Kola with two cotyledons is equally a dumb kola and it is not eaten. This is the main reason *oji Awusa* (Hausa Kola) is not used for rituals or in serious traditional celebrations. A three cotyledons kola-nut foretells good omen. It is *Ọji Oma*– kola-nut of goodwill implying that those gathered have distinguished themselves in noble deeds. Every Ukwuani man considers a four cotyledon kola-nut most acceptable. Kola with four cotyledons is called “*ọji udo na ngọzi*”, that is, “kola of peace and blessing.” It is indicative of the acceptance and approval of the gathering by the gods of the four market days – Eke, Orie, Afọ and Nkwọ.³¹

Furthermore, a kola-nut of five cotyledons is symbolic of productivity and wealth. Kola with five cotyledons is “*ọji ụba nmarụ, esuiké ni ụkwụoma*” that symbolizes increase in procreation, protection and good luck. All assembled are happy when it is announced that “*Ọji keni bu ise*”- this kola-nut has five cotyledons. All quietly laugh to themselves as though the children and wealth promised are already realized. A combination of six cotyledons spells bad omen “*Ishii ne shieshi*” – “six is like what smells.” It is bad luck just like thirteen in some American and English traditions. Kola with six cotyledons indicates communion with our ancestors, that is, “*ọji ndi mmụo na ndi mmadụ jiri gbaa ndụ*”. The smallest part or cotyledon is not eaten but is thrown away for the ancestors to eat. A kola-nut with seven or eight cotyledons is very rare but highly valued when found. In some areas, the householder redeems it. It means he pays some money to buy out some of the luck supposedly wrapped up in the seven or eight cotyledon formation. The money is used to feast the members present.³²

Furthermore, since the kola is a symbol of life, many profound interpretations and sometimes mysterious formalities are accorded it. *Oji Igbo* is always accompanied by wine or drink because the Igbo for instance say that “*Onye nyere agbara ọji ga enye ya mmiri ọ ga eji elofe ya*” (“One who gives a deity kola has to give him water with which to assist him swallow it”).³³ In Ukwuani experience, the kola nut and palm wine are jointly used in the atonement of *ikwa ese* – sacrifice of reconciliation of man with God in all disputes or misunderstandings.

The similarity of significance given to the elements of the Eucharist and cotyledons of the kolanut is important. For the Church, the elements are *fractio panis*: it is the body and the blood of Jesus present. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 alluding to the significance of the Eucharist infers that the elements have made some sick and ill because it was consumed in improper state and manner.

In the same vein, the Eucharist carries with it therapeutic and prophylactic essence as the healing presence of the Lord. This appears to be the reason it is offered to the sick in hospitals and even the about to die in Catholic and Episcopal traditions to put them in the right state for departure. The number of cotyledons of the kolanut on the other hand just like the elements of the Eucharist, has spiritual significance for the Ukwuani people. The number of cotyledons exposes the beneficence or benevolence of the ancestors present in every gathering. As the elements of the Eucharist also form a table for humanity to dine with the divine, so does the kolanut provide a platform for the living to dine with the living dead.

4. The Dissimilarity between the Eucharist in Luke and Breaking of Kolanut in Ukwuani land

While there are strong similarities between the Eucharist in Luke and breaking of Kolanut among the Ukwuani people, there are some differences. This paper shall proceed to point out some of these.

A. In the Eucharist, the bread is the host as it the representation of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is because the bread is the reason for gathering. But, oji (the kolanut) is not the host in Ukwuani worldview; rather, oji is used to complement an occasion. Oji is not the reason for a gathering; it is at a presenter's discretion for its presentation. The host is the reason for the gathering which makes the Eucharist spiritually peculiar.

B. The Eucharist is a symbol of life and peace. In fact, in some Church traditions like the Catholic Church, the Eucharist is administered to persons near death as a life affirming essence and peace for transition. The Eucharist cannot therefore, be used for evil. However, *oji igbo* (*kola acuminata*) can be used for evil purposes. In local societies like among the Ukwuani people, oji can be used for witchcraft initiation, casting of spells (*utangba*), divination (*igba efa*) and other forms of satanic afflictions.

C. The Eucharist is universal and does not discriminate in rituals and language. The host in the Eucharist who is Jesus Christ is universal in salvation and relation. The *oji igbo* (*kola acuminata*) on the other hand is discriminatory. It must be *oji igbo* for use in rituals and cultic ceremonies to communicate with the ancestors because that is the only language for

communion. The administration of the Eucharist and the life giving essence of Jesus Christ transcends cultures, tribes and language. In this, oji igbo is limited as it lacks universality.

5. The Implication of the Similarity in the Eucharist in Luke and Breaking of kolanut in Ukwuani land

The breaking of kolanut in Ukwuani experience share similarities with the Eucharist which has been pointed out above. This paper shall proceed to attempt to draw out some implications of similarity for socio-spiritual experience for Ukwuani people and all who like the Ukwuani break and eat the kolanut.

A. Spiritual Implication

The Eucharist is a life affirming service. This is significantly stated by Jesus in Luke “take eat this is my Body broken for you... drink this is my bloodshed for.” The Eucharist for the Christian Church is a time for “eating the body of Jesus” and “drinking the blood of Jesus.” The Eucharist is participating and accepting the divine life revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. This is the same note that runs through the kolanut ceremonies in Ukwuani people.

The kolanut on the other hand is a spiritual unification with the living dead and the living. Ukwuani kolanut attitude is life asserting because it is centered on human life. The kolanut as life affirming is depicted in the presentation, ritual, breaking and sharing. The ritual invocation often includes Lise Abieme, ancestors, clan deities, and spirits that control the market days. A kolanut prayer would normally proceed with an avowal of life:

Ndibe enyi, (our people)

Ifeoma beme (may good things come to happen)

anyin nago ndu (we are praying for life)

obu owun (not for death)

This prayer for life is significant because it is a predictable kolanut breaking ritual in Ukwuani land. The statement often made is: *Onyen weseni oji wese ni ndu* (He who brings kola brings life). Therefore, kolanut breaking and sharing is an Ukwuani expression of the divinity in every person. It is one way of exhibiting the knowledge of God and expressible the inexpressible consent of religiosity. This is because every context of kolanut breaking begins with an affirmation of the existence of God. This is expressed in the names with which the Almighty is invoked especially during special occasions like naming, house warming and dedications. Before the kolanut is broken, God is acknowledged in naming calling and praise singing:

Ogaga nzei wan ogene (The Almighty, the Son of Clouds and spokesman)

Agbagara awun nama osa (the mighty sun that shines on everyone)

Iyu keni okuku pia'nu (you created the chicken and fashioned its peak)
Iferife bu ote nunu (the sky is the pathway of the birds)
Ogaga duni gbruru gbarara (your presence is like a sound)
Onye iwe eburu oso (the wicked person (hears it and runs) runs)
Bu omari shi ebe ogba je ko (he doesn't know that where he is running to)
Ki iyu ka nsue (is where you are very close)
Otete miwere (unending fountain)

The kolanut is the Ukwuani aspiration that everything that is, has a life and is living. Oji (kolanut) is life because he who brings it brings life in the dual sense that: it signifies reception and camaraderie. It is also an expression of life because of the prayer for good and long life which precedes its breaking and eating so that the eater would be accepted by the ancestors. In the kolanut like the Eucharist, humanity is elevated to interact with the divinities.

From the macrobiotic point of view, the kolanut is also life confirming. Lovejoy for instance has discovered forty medicinal uses of kolanut, which includes reprieve from hunger, exhaustion and thirst, cures from headaches and sexual impotence amongst others.³⁴ The kolanut's medicinal uses justify its life affirming principle. In other words, kolanut in Ukwuani world view touches on the principal essence of existence and what sustains it. This is the basis of the Ukwuani saying: *Onyen weseni oji wese ni ndu* (He who brings kola brings life). In the context of breaking and sharing of kolanut healing essence can be released and transferred just as in the administration of the Eucharist to the sick and invalid.

The kolanut is also a symbol of continuity, that is, of human life as a continuum. In this sense, the kolanut is an Ukwuani expression of eternal life as expounded through the Eucharist. Life for the Ukwuani is cyclical and not linear. Thus, the idea of cessation or termination does not occur. In the kolanut breaking this fact is reenacted, reemphasized and represented. In other words, the Ukwuani Christian should see the spiritual extension of life each time the kolanut is shared and broken as a privilege for life and living.

As with the Igbo, the Ukwuani people use kola when ancestors are being invoked through incantations, songs and annual ceremonies of restitution. Kolanut ritual especially in special occasions has to do with sanctification of animate and inanimate objects in Ukwuani cosmology. The ritual practice of *ofeyi ndeonmo* (ritual offering of food to the spirits in general Umutu, or *itu eka ezi* (ritual throwing of food outside for the spirits) as in Utagba Uno are highly illuminating because they also show the purpose for such a practice. The ritual of *itu eka ezi* is aimed at giving the spirits their share.

In Umutu for instance, *itu ebubu* (throwing of mashed yam mixed with Palm oil) is almost synonymous with *ofeyini nde nmo* (throwing of food to the spirits. The food is either food matter or kolanut). The purpose is both thanksgiving and an acknowledgement of favours from the spirits. Thus the whole ritual of *ofeyini nde nmo* is designed to effect communion with the spirits through the agency of the celebrant and kola. The ritual words of *itu eka ezi, itu ebubu and ofeyini nde nmo* shows the dependence of the human life on the transcendent life of the invisible spirit world. The kolanut then should be a way where participants are engrafted to the source of their spiritual life - the transcendent.³⁵

B. The communal implication:

The Eucharist is a communal is a sense that it involves a people who share faith and allegiance as a community of faith. In the Eucharist, the “I” become lost in the “we” as each individual becomes in a sense an indefinable part of the community. The Eucharist is a faith confirmation rite that one belongs to community in which they share the same belief and aspiration. “Take eat this is my body” depict oneness, a collective union of hearts and minds.

The Kolanut is also in this sense a communal meal. This is because, while one can personally buy and eat the kolanut, the ritual of *igo oji* is never enacted in a personal act except in a communal context. The breaking of kolanut should be binding force just like the Eucharist should. Since kolanut sharing is “a communion with the living, some even look at it as a communion with the dead.” To an Ukwuani person, kola is the ultimate sign of benevolence or the absence of hostility. The presence of kola also represents love and communality of purpose.

According to Ikiddeh, “Offering kola to a visitor is seen as a gesture of friendship.”³⁶ Whether at ceremonies or peace meetings, kola is the champagne with which agreements are sealed.” In Igbo socio-cultural experience, “the kola nut is the 'bread' of Igbo Sacramental communion, and must therefore be specially presented, broken, shared and partaken by all the parties and families in every marriage ceremony as the final consummation and blessing.”³⁷ The reference to the bread of Igbo sacramental communion is a veiled reference to the bread of the Eucharist. The import of this is that like in the Eucharist, in Igbo Traditional Religion, everyone present at a sacrifice participates in the consumption of the sacrificial meal just like the Ukwuani people of which children are not left out. The significance of the people’s communion in Ukwuani native rites is analogous to the priest’s communion in the Catholic Church in the sense that every priest who celebrates is bound to partake of the communion. No other symbol represents Ukwuani communal spirit more than the kola nut.³⁸

C. The covenantal implication

In Luke 22: 14 – 20 at the institution of the Eucharist, the ceremony was an act of reenacting faithfulness by Jesus and allegiance from the disciples. By “take eat this is my body broken for you” and “drink this is the new covenant in my blood” it was reference to a new community bound in faith and faithfulness to their Lord and themselves. This covenantal aspect comes to the fore in verse 20 when Jesus said αὐτὸ ποτήριον ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι, λέγων, Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον After supper, he took the cup in the same way saying, this cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.)

The Eucharist as celebration of life is also a covenant for life so does the kolanut. It is expected that as Christians celebrate the Eucharist, it is a covenant to live in faithfulness to their Lord and restrain from evil against one another. By Jesus’ statement πλὴν ἰδοὺ ἡ χεὶρ τοῦ παραδιδόντος με μετ’ ἐμοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς τραπέζης (but, behold the hand of the one betraying me is with mine on the table) in verse 21, He restates what is said in Ukwuani “*yegbu onye iyuni ya nata oji* (you don’t harm the you share kola with).

Chimaraoke succinctly captures this covenantal dimension with an incidence in Igboland. In Eastern Nigeria Abala and NA communities were at war for seven years without peaceful resolution of the conflict. In Igbo society kolanut (*Cola accuminata*) and the fresh palm frond (called locally *omu*) are key instruments of peace, negotiation and resolution of conflict. Once one community presents these to the other, in spite of the conflict, the receiving must accept them and also to return a similar gift to the sending community. In a war situation, the kola nuts are shared, while the palm fronds are displayed at the boundary of the warring communities. Thus, the elderly men of NA community presented the gift of kola nuts and one fresh palm frond to Abala community, and Abala quickly responded. On the same day, the two palm fronds from the two communities were put on display. Immediately this happened, peace returned.³⁹

Conclusion

In all societies therefore where kolanut is taken each participant should be seen as heartily partaking in a near-ritualistic consumption of this “food of good omen”. This understanding can curb the vices and various other indecent acts plaguing humanity today especially in Nigeria. Such is the symbolic power of the kola nut in Ukwuani experience and the Eucharist in Christian life. The challenge presented by the import the Eucharist and breaking of Kolanut in Ukwuani experience is one of regularity. No gathering in Ukwuani land is considered complete without the breaking and sharing of kolanut because *oji bu ndu* (the kolanut is life). Thus, like the Eucharist, the kolanut is the glue that holds society together *ab initio*. However, the challenge of

regularity is preserved by the Catholic Church unlike some other denominations where the Eucharist is a service of once a while. If the kolanut is the Ukwuani communion with both the living and the living dead, the Eucharist is the communion with the transcendent and the worshippers. Worship therefore is not complete without the Eucharist which only the Catholic Church practices in the prescribed context of Luke: (οὗτο ποιείτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν) “do this in remembrance of me.” Denominations like the Baptists should make the Eucharist her *oji Igbo* to make communion real with both the finite and infinite.

ENDNOTES

¹ See McClintock and Strong, **Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology and Ecclesiastical Literature**, V, 863.

²“The Baptist Faith and Message,” Internet material from [http://www.sbc.net/ file download.asp?file=/bfm/pdf/The%20Baptist%20Faith%20and%20Message.pdf](http://www.sbc.net/file/download.asp?file=/bfm/pdf/The%20Baptist%20Faith%20and%20Message.pdf) accessed on 25th June 2008.

³ George E. Koehler, The United Methodist Member’s Handbook, Revised and Expanded by (Discipleship Resources, 2006). “This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion,” Internet material from [http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.2247711/k.C611/ Communion Over view.htm](http://www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4KnN1LtH/b.2247711/k.C611/Communion%20Overview.htm) accessed on 30th June 2008. Over the centuries, various understandings and practices of the Eucharist have developed. Roman Catholicism teach that the substance of bread and wine are changed (although not visibly) into the actual body and blood of Christ (sometimes called transubstantiation). For Protestants it is a representation and not the real thing.

⁴ Interview with I.O. Umejiesi, Associate professor, Department of Religious Management and Cultural Studies, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, Nigeria 7th July 2008.

⁵ John Martin Creed, **The Gospel According to Saint Luke**, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1953), xiii

⁶“The Gospel of Luke,” Internet material from [http://www.abu.nb.ca/ courses/ NTIntro/IndexNTIntr.htm](http://www.abu.nb.ca/courses/NTIntro/IndexNTIntr.htm) accessed on 24th June 2007.

⁷ John Martin Creed, **The Gospel According to Saint Luke**, (London: Macmillan and Co Ltd, 1953) p. xiii.

⁸ Translation adopted from New American Standard Bible

⁹ James Still, "The Institution Narrative of Luke 22:19-20," quoting Luke Timothy Johnson. Internet material from <http://www.infidels.org/library/> accessed on 24th June 2008.

¹⁰ Still quoting Luke Timothy Johnson

¹¹ I. Howard Marshall. "The Institution of the Lord's Supper 22:19-20," **Commentary on Luke**, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 799-807.

¹² Marshall.

¹³ Ukwuani-Aboh, Kwale, internet material retrieved from <http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php?rop3=110380&rog3=NI>, accessed on 2nd June, 2008.

¹⁴ See www.ethnologue.com

¹⁵ Ukwuani," Internet material retrieved from "<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukwuani>" accessed on 2nd June, 2008.

¹⁶ Chief Joseph Aninze Ossai-Ugbah, a 72 year Old red cap chief who belongs to the inotu: titled chief and a member of the Onyewe isi (Heads of wisdom) council of Umutu in Ukwuani LGA, Delta State.

¹⁷ Interview with Joseph Aninze Ossai-Ugbah, " 13th May 2008.

¹⁸ E. Elochukwu Uzukwu," Igbo World and Ultimate Reality and Meaning," in **Lucerna, Enugu, Bigard Memorial Seminary**, Vol.4, No.1. 1983, 14.

¹⁹ Chinua Achebe, **Things Fall Apart**, (London: Heinemann, 1958).

²⁰ J̄n Ōf̄oḡebu Ūkaeḡbu, "Igbo Cultural Symbols" quoting Eze Ugbala of Okporo. Internet material from igbo.net.com/jukaegbu/ accessed on 23rd April 2008.

²¹ Interview with Amba Otike-Odibi, 62 years old from Utagba Ogbe on 3rd July 2008. See also Maureen Duru, "When Signifying Goodwill is no longer enough: the Kola Nut and Gender among Igbo's in Nigeria and Belgium", **Food and Food ways**, volume 13, July-September 2005.

²² Interview with Chukwunedum Onakpoma, Ph.D. Bursary Department, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria 3rd July 2008.

²³ Interview with Chief Joseph Aninze Ossai-Ugbah, a 72 year Old red cap chief who belongs to the inotu: titled chief and a member of the Onyewe isi (Heads of wisdom) council of Umutu in Ukwuani LGA, Delta State.

²⁴ Interview with Chukwunedum Onakpoma, Ph.D. Bursary Department, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria 10th July 2008.

²⁵ G.T. Basden, **Niger Ibos**, (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1966), 161-162.

²⁶ Basden.

²⁷ <http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Baptist>

²⁸ Interview with Okolugbo Olise, 70 years old from Utagba Uno on 30th May 2008.

²⁹ Interview with Chief Joseph Aninze Ossai-Ugbah

³⁰ The Eucharist: (a) The broken bread represents the "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:16) "which is broken for you" (1 Corinthians 11:24 the King James Version); hence, the symbol of sacrifice. It is a memorial of Christ's sufferings, and a consecration to suffer with Him. It means also feeding on Christ, whose flesh we must eat (John 6:35, 51, 53, 54). (b) The cup represents the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16; John 6:53, 54). It is the blood covenant that symbolizes the unity of man with God (John 17:21). Jesus is the vine, we are the branches (John 15). The same mind, spirit, life and love which are in God and Christ are to be in us.

³¹ Interview with Chief Godferry Diokpala on 21st March 2008.

³² Chief Godferry Diokpala

³³ Jọn Ofoegbu Ukaegbu, "*Igbo Cultural Symbols*" Internet material from igbo.net.com/jukaegbu/ accessed on 23rd April 2008.

³⁴ Emmanuel Nlenanya Onwu, "ỌZỌ NDU NA EZIOKWU: Towards an Understanding of Igbo Traditional Religious Life and Philosophy," quoting Paul E. Lovejoy (1980:2). The Ahiajoku Lecture 2002. Internet material from <http://if.igbonet.com/> accessed on 24th March 2008.

³⁵ Chief Joseph Aninze Ossai-Ugbah.

³⁶ *Crispin Oduobuk*, "Celebrating the kola nut: Harbinger of good fortune," quoting Ime Ikiddeh, **The Washington Times**, September 30.

³⁷ Njoku, John E. Eberegbulam, **The Igbo's of Nigeria: Ancient Rites, Changes and Survival**, (New York, N.Y.: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1990).

³⁸ M. O. Ené, "Kolanut as communion," Internet material from <http://www.kwenu.com/> accessed on 30th May 2008.

³⁹ I.O. Chimaraoke, "Participatory communal conflict resolution (PCCR) – a tale of two Nigerian local communities," **PLA Notes**, 43, 2002, 61-63. Internet material from www.wipo.int/export/sites/www/tk/en/consultations/customary_law/biblio_tulalip.xls accessed on 30th June 2008.