The Attitude of Members of Charismatic Churches in Ghana towards the Lord's Supper.

A Case Study on Five Selected Churches in Kasoa (Ghana)

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Abstract

This study explores the perceptions, attitudes, and views of members of charismatic churches in Ghana towards the Lord's Supper. Through a case study approach, tailored and focused on five selected charismatic churches in Kasoa, an investigation was conducted leveraging focused group interviews and individual one-on-one interviews. During the research, four (4) focused groups and twenty (20) individuals engaged in the interview, making a total of two hundred (200) people. The research study explored and examined the diversity in the various churches regarding qualifications, mode of administration, significance of the Eucharist, its frequency, and perceptions of emblems used in the Lord's Supper. The study aims to shed light on some of the variations in the charismatic churches and how theological, cultural, and personal experience has contributed to it. The research study will play a significant role in understanding the spiritual significance of the Lord's Supper in the lives of all charismatic Christians and the need to have a unified approach in the mode of administration and rendering of the Lord's Supper.

Keywords: Communion; Lord's Supper; Koinonia; Charismatic; Eucharist; Christianity, Didache;

Introduction

The Lord's Supper, also known as Communion (Holy Communion: which has its root in the Greek word, Koinonia) means fellowship. During the communion service, it is believed that we have fellowship with the resurrected Christ who denied Himself of His position and came so low to take my position as a sinner or Eucharist (Eucharist: thanksgiving. Much as we take Communion as a means of participating at the Lord's Table and also as a means of having fellowship with the Lord and with one another, it is also a means of thanking God for what He has done for us through the Lord Jesus). This holds significant theological and spiritual importance in various Christian denominations worldwide. It is a sacred ritual that commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples, symbolizing the body and blood of Christ through the consumption of bread and wine.

Charismatic churches in Ghana are part of a global Pentecostal denomination that emphasizes the teachings of the Bible, the Holy Spirit, and the vibrant practice of spiritual gifts. Investigating their attitudes towards the Lord's Supper can shed light on how these denominations interpret and engage with this sacrament, contributing to a deeper understanding of the religious culture within the Ghanaian context.

The church has several beliefs that guide the practices of its activities. Among these include baptism, the Eucharist, holy matrimony, and the like. Within the Christian faith, some diverse beliefs and practices are accepted and practiced. Charismatic Christians often seek meaningful and spiritual encounters with God. One such encounter is the belief in the Eucharist commonly referred to as the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a central sacrament in Christianity, embodying the symbolic representation of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for the redemption of humanity. This sacred ritual is approached with reverence and holds diverse interpretations across Christian denominations. Charismatic churches as a Pentecostal denomination, are known for their enthusiastic worship, emphasis on spiritual gifts, and adherence to biblical teachings. Despite the commonality of the Lord's Supper across Christian denominations, each group may manifest unique perspectives, practices, and attitudes toward this ritual.

The final meal that Jesus had with his disciples immediately before his betrayal and arrest was the traditional Passover meal, but Jesus infused the meal with a new significance tied to his impending death. Matt.26:26-28. A memorial of his suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26 [KJV/NIV]), and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26 [KJV/ NIV]), and this is enjoined on all believers until His return.

The Members of charismatic Churches perceive and receive the Eucharist as a revelation to drawing near Christ and for the transformation of the work of the Spirit.

Individual attitudes toward the Lord's Supper can be influenced by theological perspectives, denominational traditions, and individual experiences within the charismatic community.

Problem Statement

Among the members of charismatic churches in the study area, there exists a notable diversity of views and practices surrounding the Lord's Supper. This diversity is manifested in the varied interpretations and engagement with the emblems (bread and wine) used during the Lord's Supper, as well as in the individual understanding and interpretation of the sacrament's significance among members. However, various details of the Patristic observance of the Lord's Supper, including its distribution, frequency, and elements, have been preserved in history. The authorized distributors were exclusively individuals who had undergone baptism. The Didache in the late first or early second century teaches that "none shall eat or shall drink from the Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord.

On the other hand, other believers argue that the Lord's Supper has lost its original meaning and spiritual connection. They contend that the separation of the love feast from the ceremony of the Lord's Supper renders it meaningless.

Main Objective

The main aim of this thesis is to understand the attitude that Members of Charismatic Churches in Ghana have toward the Lord's Supper

Research Objectives

. To meet this aim, the study shall have the following objectives;

- To identify and analyze the diversity of views and practices surrounding the Lord's Supper within the charismatic Church community in the study area.
- To explore members' perceptions about the emblems used.
- Probe into the individual understanding and interpretation of the significance of the Lord's Supper among members.
- Assess challenges Members of charismatic Churches have towards the Lord's Supper.

These objectives collectively aim to comprehensively understand the diverse landscape of attitudes towards the Lord's Supper within the specified context and contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors at play within the Charismatic Church community, in Ghana.

Research Questions

1. What are the diverse views and practices surrounding the Lord's Supper within the charismatic Church community in the study area to be identified and analyzed?
2. What are the perceptions of members regarding the emblems used in the context of the Lord's Supper?
3. How do members interpret and understand the significance of the Lord's Supper on an individual level?
4. How do personal experience, theological education, and cultural factors contribute to variations in the understanding of the Lord's Supper among the members?
5. What challenges do members of charismatic churches face in their attitudes and practices towards the Lord's Supper?

Significance of the Research Study

This research study is significant for several reasons:

The study provides a deeper understanding of the Lord's Supper, within the Members of the Charismatic Church community. This knowledge can contribute to discussions on the role of religious rituals in shaping the spiritual lives of individuals and communities.

Insights gained from the research can inform church leaders within the Members of the Charismatic Church community about the diversity of attitudes and practices among their members. This knowledge can be crucial for adapting pastoral guidance, teaching methods, and communication strategies to better address the needs and concerns of the congregation.

Understanding the various perspectives on the Lord's Supper can contribute to promoting unity and fellowship within the church. By recognizing and respecting diverse viewpoints, the church community may find common ground and enhance cohesion.

Research Methodology

The research will adopt qualitative approaches. This design allows for a more holistic exploration of attitudes, providing both statistical data and in-depth insights into individual experiences. The research will make use of the following data collection methods: In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussion.

Literature Review

A thorough review of existing literature on the institution of the Lord's Supper by our Lord Jesus Christ, Confession of the different sacraments through the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions, debates surrounding the Supper's significances Protestants reject transubstantiation (By the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This review will include academic articles and religious faith in the Lord's Supper to create a solid theoretical framework for the study.

Comparative Analysis

The research will involve a comparative analysis of five selected Charismatic Christian churches in the Kasoa Municipality of Ghana namely: emerging markets to identify commonalities and differences in how evolving standards impact business operations and financial transparency. Markets will be selected based on criteria such as economic size, growth potential, and regulatory environment.

Case Studies

Detailed case studies of businesses operating in selected emerging markets will be conducted to provide practical insights into the challenges and opportunities arising from evolving standards. Case studies will focus on industries that are highly impacted by regulatory changes, such as finance, manufacturing, and technology.

Surveys and Interviews:

Primary data will be collected through interviews and questionnaires with key stakeholders in these five selected charismatic churches and also focused groups, made of five (5) members, to present their ideas and reflections on what they think are the practices and views of their church members relating to the Lord's Supper. Questionnaires will be designed to capture quantitative data on ideas

and reflections related to the Lord's Supper, while interviews will provide qualitative insights into the experiences and perspectives of stakeholders.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and diverse views of members of selected charismatic churches concerning the Lord's Supper and their practices. Qualitative data from interviews and case studies will be analyzed thematically to uncover key themes and patterns.

Ethical Considerations

The research will adhere to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity and validity of the study. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, and their confidentiality and privacy will be protected. The research will also comply with institutional and national ethical standards for conducting research.

Research Findings

To ensure that the research objectives and aims have been attained, the researcher focused and used the research questions to tailor and guide the entire process. Because of this, the findings of the study will hereby be organized according to the chosen research questions for the study.

1. What are the diverse views and practices surrounding the Lord's Supper within the charismatic Church community in the study area to be identified and analyzed?
2. What are the perceptions of members regarding the emblems used in the context of the Lord's Supper?
3. How do members interpret and understand the significance of the Lord's Supper on an individual level?
4. How do personal experience, theological education, and cultural factors contribute to variations in the understanding of the Lord's Supper among the members?
5. What challenges do members of charismatic churches face in their attitudes and practices towards the Lord's Supper?

Conclusion

The Lord's Communion is the Holy Sacrament accepted and recognized in most charismatic churches. While all churches believe that the sacrifice of Christ is what paved the way for their salvation, the way and manner they administer the Lord's Supper differ. The researcher identified varying concepts, understanding, and perceptions of the emblems used, and the interpretation of the significance of the spiritual activity. The various levels of confusion, frustration, and misconceptions therefore underscore members of the charismatic counsel to consider a unifying approach to the Lord's Supper and also teach members about it.

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