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THE LORD'S SUPPER
DURING THE APOSTOLIC EPOCH
AND IN THE
CONTEMPORARY BAPTIST CHURCH:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

BY

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CONCLUSION

Having looked at the Lord's Supper during the Apostolic era and the contemporary trends in the Baptist Church, we have observed that in some areas we have not considered it our duty to strictly abide by the practice of the Apostles.

If we are to enjoy as we ought, fellowship together in Christ at His table we need a more Christian, and a more constructive approach to the practice of the Lord's Supper.

First, the Church needs to see the Lord's Supper or Eucharist as an occasion of thanksgiving to God - as the word Eucharist means thanksgiving. It is a time for thanksgiving to God for His gifts of creation and of redemption through Jesus Christ. But more importantly, this should remind us to remember the poor. The offering of gifts must play a significant role in Communion Service. A substantial part of Communion offerings must be used to support widows, the poor, the distress, and of course, those on our mission fields.

Secondly, while the deep-rooted Baptist conviction that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance and not a sacrament need not be abandoned, yet we need to remember that the Lord's Supper is the ordinance of memory. This is the only ordinance which carries the definite instruction from the Lord.

"Do this in remembrance of me" (I Cor. 11:24).

In view of this, the frequency of times of celebration must be increased at least to once a month. We need to teach people the importance and relevance of this ordinance.

Related to the above is the fact that many Ministers do not take pains to observe every detail of the service. Tables are not well furnished, distributions are not settled in advance, biscuits and pieces of bread are broken any how, and in fact irreverently. Consequently, it is observed merely as an appendage instead of the climax in our worship.

If this Ordinance is so significant as our respondents claim what happens to the Churches in villages and out of way places? We ask again, should such churches not be given the liberty to ask a student-pastor or deacon to act in the absence of a Minister?

Thirdly, as in the Early Church, the Lord's Supper must serve as the demonstration of unity in the Church. In as much as the joy of knowing the presence of Christ at the Communion Service is a foretaste of the final re-union in the Kingdom of God, the need for self-examination and Holiness from integral ingredient in the Christian life. The writer of Hebrews reminds us to:

strive for peace with all men and for holiness
without which no one will see the Lord (12:14).

When Paul was writing to the Corinthians, he warned:

He that eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he discerns not the body (I Cor. 11:29).

It was not for fun that in the early church, holy kisses and open forgiveness preceded the observance of the Lord's Supper. We must emulate this.

Finally, an ecumenical appeal! It is true that tradition must remain an element of great importance in preserving the identity of any Church through the changing age. But are not all Churches required to have the boldness to make way for new challenges as they follow the way of their Lord into a new millenium? Is it not the principle of an "ecclesia samper reformanda" that emerged at the time of the reformation in a real sense of an economical principle applying to all Churches in different ways? With all due respect for Baptist identity, are not all Churches simply "stewards of the mysteries of God" (I Cor. 4:1). Is a monopoly attitude to the Lord's Table at all permissible? Do we not - all of us - have to rethink in a new and more generous way the whole question of "admission" to holy communion? Should we not be thinking more energetically about manifesting our fellowship as Churches of One Lord at His Table? Is it not possible to embrace the possibility of a "Koinonia ton ekklesion" - a reconciled diversity or concilliar fellowship?

We must think about these!