

Convergence Ecclesiology
Addendum 3: The Eucharist and the Episcopacy
ICCEC U.S. Theological Commission
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Introduction:

This addendum will primarily focus on the sacramental/liturgical stream of the ICCEC's three streams vision of the Church. This discussion revolves around the importance of the Eucharist and the Episcopacy as it emerges in the early Church, and for our purposes especially in Ignatius of Antioch (born *ca.* 35-40 martyred *ca.* 107-110 or a bit later). This essay concerns what has, in the last 75 to 100 years, been referred to as *Eucharistic Ecclesiology*.¹ The focus of this addendum will be to unpack the meaning of *Eucharistic Ecclesiology* and emphasize the importance of both the Eucharist and the Episcopacy in the life of the ICCEC without diminishing the crucial importance of the priesthood of all the believing faithful. "*Eucharistic Ecclesiology*" simply means an understanding of the Church strongly centered upon the Eucharist, without diminishing the Sacrament, of Baptism or the Word.²

In the remainder of this essay we want to make some general observations concerning "The Episcopacy and the Church" and "The Eucharist and the Church" in order to more fully appreciate the meaning of *Eucharistic Ecclesiology* and how it might enhance a Convergence Ecclesiology of ICCEC.

The Apostles Establish the Episcopacy:

The unique role of the NT Apostles (esp. the "Twelve") is established first by the fact that they were directly selected and appointed (Mt 10:2-4, Mk 3:13-19, Lk 6:12-16) as well as empowered and given authority (Mt 10:1, Mk 6:7, Lk 9:1) by Jesus himself. They were able to give eyewitness testimony to what Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry (Lk 24:48, Acts 1:21-22, 1 Cor 15:1-11, 2 Pet 3:2). They serve as the foundation upon which the entire Church is built (Mt 16:18, Eph 2:20, Rev 21:14). Collegially they have a universal jurisdiction over the whole Church. Throughout the book of Acts and the Epistles; the Apostles travel, preach and teach and make judgments across many geographical and cultural boundaries (e.g. the missionary endeavors of St Peter, Acts 9:36-11:18, 1 Pet 1:1-2; the

¹ In the 20th century *Eucharistic Ecclesiology* was pioneered by the Roman Catholic Cardinal Henri de Lubac, SJ and the Orthodox Theologian Father Nicholai Afanasiev. Cardinal de Lubac had a major impact on Vatican II and the documents concerning the Church, cf. *Lumen Gentium* (1964). A number of Russian Orthodox theologians who immigrated to Paris in the early 1900's along with Fr. Afanasiev (such as Georges Florovsky, John Meyendorff and Alexander Schmemmann) as well as the Romanian theologian Dumitru Staniloae, also contributed to this theological perspective. The Greek Orthodox Theologian Metropolitan John D. Zizioulas further develops Eucharistic Ecclesiology, especially in *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* and his later *Being as Communion* where he begins to clarify some of the differences between himself and Afanasiev in the "Introduction", e.g. pp. 23-25. Note that *Eucharist, Bishop, Church* is on the suggested book list of ICCEC Patriarch Craig Bates, "The Patriarch's Bookshelf", p. 29 in the *CEC Holy Orders Spiritual Formation Manual* (2012). Eucharistic Ecclesiology has been adopted and developed by a number of Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican theologians. Among the many studies that might be helpful, cf. the shorter and more popular Paul McPartlan, *Sacrament of Salvation: An Introduction to Eucharistic Ecclesiology*, 1995; and his more academic study, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue*, (1993). The latter is now in a 2nd edition with a forward by Metropolitan Zizioulas (2006). Also, the English Anglican, Paul Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology*, cf. especially ch. 5, "Anglicanism and Eucharistic Ecclesiology" pp. 81-104. Avis observes that the earlier Anglican theologian Bishop Charles Gore's (d. 1932) "writings, taken together, on the Incarnation, the Eucharist and the Church cumulatively amount to something close to Eucharistic Ecclesiology" (p. 103) and that while in Michael Ramsey's, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (1936) a "Eucharistic ecclesiology is not fully developed... the foundations are there." (p. 103). Also recommended is the edited vol. by Luke Ben Tallon, *The Eucharistic Communion and the World: John D. Zizioulas* (2011). (see Bibliography for references)

² Cf. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism*, ch. 5, "Anglicanism and Eucharistic Ecclesiology" p. 104.

judgments rendered at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15; the missionary journeys of St Paul, Acts 13-14, 16-20). While it is clear that St Paul is called in a special way to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (e.g. Gal 2:7-9, Rom 11:13, 15:15-16, 1 Tim 2:7), this did not limit the right of all the Apostles to be involved in ministry among gentile churches; so, for example, St Peter is engaged in ministry together with St Paul in the church in Antioch (Gal 2:11). The word of an Apostle—especially the testimony given in the NT Scriptures of which they were authors or sources—has a binding character upon all Christians everywhere regardless of time, geography and culture.

There are three terms frequently used in the NT to describe Church leadership: ἐπίσκοπος³, πρεσβύτερος⁴, διακόνους.⁵ It is generally understood that *episkopos* and *presbuteros* are used interchangeably⁶: *episkopos* represents a Hellenistic background as the local “overseer,” while *presbuteros* represents the Jewish tradition concerning the “elder” in the community.⁷ During the expansion of the Gospel in the NT period, the three-fold ministry of the offices of Bishop (*Episcopos*), Presbyter/Priest (*Presbuteros*) and Deacon (*Diakonos*) emerged, possibly beginning with the ministry of the Deaconate (e.g. Acts 6:1-6) then the others (Acts 14:21-23, Phil 1:1, 1 Tim 3:1-13, Tit 1:5-9). *Episkopos* and *presbuteros* are not specifically distinguished in the NT but were distinguished in the late 1st to early 2nd century.

The Episcopacy and the Church:

1) The Emergence of the Historic Threefold Ordained Ministry of Holy Orders—Bishop, Priest and Deacon

As noted above it would seem that there is a threefold-ministry already emerging in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim, 2 Tim, and Titus) where Timothy and Titus are directed by St Paul to appoint “elders” (*presbuteroi*) in the areas they are responsible for, e.g. “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders (*presbuteroi*) in every town, as I directed you” (Titus 1:5). So, while the threefold ordained ministry cannot be supported by the specific word use of *episkopos* and *presbuteros*, it is, nonetheless, illustrated in the ministries of Timothy and Titus who function as St Paul’s Apostolic delegates. As Apostolic delegates they are assigned oversight and

³ BDAG (2000). ἐπίσκοπος, ον, ὁ *overseer, guardian, supervisor* of Jesus 1 Pt 2:25. The usage in the N.T., in ref. to officials, appears to be less tech. than a rendering as ‘bishop’ would suggest; thus *superintendent, supervisor* Ac 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Ti 3:2; Tit 1:7.* (* means all ref. in NT are given).

⁴ BDAG (2000). πρεσβύτερος, α, ον—1. of age *older*, often subst. *old(er) person* Lk 15:25; J 8:9; Ac 2:17; 1 Ti 5:1f. Of a period of time οἱ π. *the men of old, our ancestors* Mt 15:2; Mk 7:3, 5; Hb 11:2.—2. as a designation of an official *elder, presbyter*—a. among the Jews Mt 16:21; 27:41; Mk 14:43, 53; Lk 7:3; 9:22; Ac 4:23; 6:12.—b. among the Christians Ac 11:30; 14:23; 1 Ti 5:17, 19; Tit 1:5; Js 5:14; 1 Pt 5:1; 5:5; 2 J 1; 3 J 1; Rv 4:4; 7:11. [Cf. *priest*, Old English *preost* via Latin *presbyter*.]

⁵ BDAG (2000). διάκονος, ου, ὁ, ἡ—1. *servant* Mt 20:26; 22:13; Mk 9:35; specifically *waiter* J 2:5, 9. *Agent* Ro 13:4; Gal 2:17.—2. *helper* of people who render service as Christians—a. in the general service of God, Christ, or other Christians 2 Cor 6:4; 11:23; Eph 6:21; Col 1:23, 25; 1 Ti 4:6.—b. in official or semiofficial capacity Ro 16:1; Phil 1:1; 1 Ti 3:8, 12.

⁶ It is the position of this essay that in the NT documents there is not as yet an absolute order of Bishop, Presbyter (Priest) and Deacon. Cf. e.g. Fink, (2000) *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. “While it remains uncertain whether or not there was any strict regulation of Eucharistic presidency in the earliest domestic churches, e.g., as in Acts 2:42, it is clear that by the time of Ignatius of Antioch (c. 110) the role of the bishop was considered central: “Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is celebrated by the bishop, or by one whom he appoints” (*Ad Smyrn.*, 8, 2). By the 4th century, appointment of presbyters to the task had become normal practice.” Pp. 422-423. E.g. Phil. 1:1, “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons, (σὺν ἐπισκόποις [*episkopois, pl.*] καὶ διακόνους, [*diakonois, pl.*])” and e.g. Acts 14:23, “And after they had appointed elders (χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς κατ’ ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους [*presbuteros, pl.*]) for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.”

⁷ TDNT (1976) ἐπίσκοπος 2:608-620; πρεσβύτερος 6:651-683. The TDNT articles give a comprehensive background of these terms in Secular, Jewish (OT & LXX), the NT and early Christian usage.

jurisdiction over a number of churches and given the authority to select and ordain (i.e. “appoint”⁸) presbyter-bishops and deacons in differing local settings.⁹ What we see in the ministry of St Timothy and St Titus is the emergence of a distinction between *episcopos* as Bishop and *presbuteros* as priest. Along with this we have the “qualifications for (ἐπίσκοπῆς) *Episcopos* (singular)” listed in 1 Tim 3:1-7. cf. 3:8-13, also the equally important “qualifications for the (διακόνους) *diakonous* (plural)”. Also relevant is 1 Tim 5:17, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.” Our position would be that already in these Scriptural texts, we have the beginnings of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons serving as the primary leadership of the early Church.

2) *The Early Christian Witness to the Eucharist and the Bishop*

With the passing of the NT Apostles the three-fold ordained ministry continued to develop coming to mature expression by the time of St Ignatius of Antioch. There are numerous references in the letters of St Ignatius which establish the fundamental unity of the Church, the Eucharist, and the Bishop (see esp. *Eph* 5.2; 13.1; *Phd* 4; *Smyr* 7.1; 8.1-2). St Ignatius portrays the Church gathered, in unity with and under the authority of the Bishop, to experience the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, as the presumed ecclesiology of the Church.

The Church Gathered

“Therefore, make every effort to come together more frequently to give thanks (εὐχαριστία) and glory to God. For when you meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown, and his destructiveness is nullified by the unanimity of your faith.” (St Ignatius in *Eph* 13.1)

In Unity With and Under the Authority of the Bishop

“Wherever the bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) appears, let the congregation be there also. Just as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the *Catholic Church*. It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would look upon the Lord Himself, standing, as he does, before the Lord. As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, neither by Himself nor by the apostles, so neither do anything without the bishop and presbyters (πρεσβυτέρων). Be subject to the bishop as to the Lord, for he watches for your souls, as one that shall give account to God.’ In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church (ἐκκλησία). See that all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as would the apostles; and reverence the deacons (διάκονος), as being the institution of God. He who honors the bishop has been honored by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil. Give heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. Be subject to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons.” (*Smyr* 8.1-2)

To Experience the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist

“They [those who hold heretical opinions] abstain from the Eucharist and prayer, because they refuse to acknowledge that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father by his goodness raised up.” (*Smyr* 6.2)

⁸ *BDAG* (2000). καθίστημι, καθιστάνω—1. bring, conduct, 2. appoint, put in charge Mt 24:45, 47; Ac 6:3; authorize, appoint; Ac 7:10, 27; Tit 1:5.

⁹ Three older studies are worth special study, while the contemporary consensus of NT scholars is to argue that the 3-fold Ministry of Holy Orders is still evolving in the NT, these three studies, all done by Anglicans, are definitely worth attention and study: J. B. Lightfoot (1913a) “The Christian Ministry” pp. 181-269; Kirk (1946) *The Apostolic Ministry*, esp. chs. 3-4; Farrar, “The Ministry in the New Testament” 113-182 and Dix, “The Ministry in the Early Church, ca. A. D. 90-410” pp. 183-303. Remember these are historically and contextually influenced, yet they do have merit.

For St Ignatius, unity with the Bishop is directly related to experiencing the saving power of the Eucharist, “the medicine of immortality” (*Eph 20.2*), in the Christian community.

The Eucharist and the Church:

1) *The Eucharist in the NT*: One of the earliest references to the Church’s practice of the Eucharist is found in Acts 2:42, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” We often think of four dimensions here, and understandably so. The grammar, however, implies otherwise.¹⁰ In this passage we primarily have two movements, not four. This appears to be a very early allusion to the much later development of the expression “Word & Sacrament” that we find in the later development of the liturgy, i.e. Word (teaching and fellowship) and Sacrament (breaking of bread and the prayers). We see this again in Acts 20 where St Luke describes a gathering of the local church in Troas in about AD 57 where St Paul preaches and celebrates the breaking of bread.¹¹ Both events remind us that “Word & Sacrament” have been, in one way or another, practiced from the earliest days of the Church.

The original Eucharist was a Jewish Passover Meal re-interpreted by Jesus in the context of the Last Supper which established and created the Eucharistic celebration that the Church offers in worship and thanksgiving.¹² As in every Passover meal the past was actualized in the present. Jesus reinterprets the meal so that the Eucharist will not just be a past remembrance but will also become a present reality of the future *eschaton* by the power of Holy Spirit. The Eucharistic Prayer emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in the *epiclesis*.

“If we read the New Testament as a whole, we realize that it is precisely through the action of the Holy Spirit that Christ becomes an existential reality that concerns the Church in its historical dimension. Even the Incarnation as an historical reality is presented in the New Testament as the work of the Spirit (Mt 1:20; Lk 1:35),...Jesus is anointed by the Spirit (Lk 4:6). In the same way, the *eschaton* penetrates historical reality always by the power of the Spirit. Pentecost, the day *par excellence* of the outpouring of the Spirit, is described precisely as ‘*the last days*’ (Acts 2:17)

¹⁰ “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες τῇ διδασκίᾳ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ,.....τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ ταῖς προσευχαῖς. Note that the Greek text does not include an “and, καὶ” between apostles’ teaching and the fellowship—the breaking of bread and the prayers.” Grammatically it might be argued that we have 2 events here, not 4. “The apostles’ teaching & fellowship”—then—“the breaking of bread and the prayers.” This looks like a very early allusion to the much later development of the liturgical expression: “Word & Sacrament.”

¹¹ St Paul preached until the middle of the night, and in the overly crowded upper room which must have become extremely warm a young man, Eutychus, sitting in the window-sill (probably trying to get some fresh air) became overcome with sleep and then fell some three floors to his death. St Paul immediately went down and prayed for him and he was miraculously healed. Note that this is a “we” passage in Acts 20:5-6, St Luke is present at this meeting, so he is an eye witness to the events. Following this St Paul went back “upstairs, and after he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them until dawn; then he left. Meanwhile they had taken the boy away alive and were not a little comforted.” Also, note Rev 1:10; 1 Cor 16:2 & Acts 20:7 are the only 3 texts in the NT to mention worship on the 1st day of the week! Cf. Mt 28:1. Other NT ref. to the worship of the earliest Church could be noted, e.g. Acts 2:42-47 or I Cor 11-14, etc.

¹² We are aware of the difficulties and the differing critical opinions concerning the time and events of this final meal (esp. e.g. between the Synoptic tradition and the Gospel of John) but we continue to be convinced that it was a Passover meal. Jesus reinterprets the elements of the meal to his disciples in order to clarify for them the reality of the New Covenantal/Sacramental meal he was revealing to them (cf. Lk 22:15-16). Especially note J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. J. Behm, *TDNT*, Vol. 3, κλάω, “to break,” “to break off,” pp. 726–743. W. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, *NINTC. en. loc.* 14:22ff. There is an accessible review of the issues in *DJG* (1992) “Last Supper” pp. 444-450. Cf. Zizioulas (2011) ch. 1, “Biblical Aspects of the Eucharist” pp. 1-38.

....The Church in general and the Eucharist in particular follows immediately upon the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:46). Pentecost is the natural atmosphere of the Eucharist.”¹³

Jesus emphasizes this charismatic dimension of the Eucharist in Jn 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your *remembrance* all things that I said to you.” When they remembered Christ in the Eucharist it was through the work of the Holy Spirit that Christ became “spiritual food” and “spiritual drink” (1 Cor 10:3-4, 16-17).

The eschatological dimension of the Eucharist is always a part of its celebration, hence the proclamation of faith in the Liturgy: “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.” “In the Eucharist, proclamation of the death of Christ is placed in the light of the resurrection, the ascension, and his second coming....The proclamation of the Lord’s death in ‘joy’ and ‘until he comes’ is in tension with a history always dependent upon the Spirit in ‘these last days’—seen by the Church since Pentecost as it undertakes the remembrance of the whole of salvation history through its eucharistic epiclesis.”¹⁴

2) *The Eucharist in the Early Church*: One of the earliest descriptions of the celebration of the Eucharist outside the NT is found in the *Didache*, 9-10.¹⁵ Specific prayers are given and instructions are given (e.g. the Eucharist is only for the baptized, *Did* 9.5). In the prayer concerning the bread (*Did* 9:4) the unity of the Church is emphasized: “Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom....” (As we have seen this theme of the “unity of the Church and the Eucharist’ was also primary in St Ignatius).

Finally, the *Didache* emphasizes the eschatological nature of the Eucharist revealed in the final cry of “Maranatha” *Did*. 10.6 (cf. 1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:20) probably the very first confession of faith and cry of acclamation! The Aramaic word has two possible meanings: *maran atha* = the Lord comes; *marana tha* = Lord, come. The double meaning may actually be intentional and point to both the history of the Lord’s first coming (Advent) and also to his Second Coming.

The Fathers of the Church that gathered at the First Ecumenical Council (AD 325) summarized the early Church’s view of the Eucharist:

“At the Divine Table we should not see simply the bread and the cup which have been offered, but raising our minds on high, we should with faith understand that on the sacred Table lies the Lamb of God Who takes away sins of the world, Who is offered as a Sacrifice by the priest; and truly receiving His Precious Body and Blood, we should believe that this is a sign of our Resurrection.”¹⁶

¹³ Zizioulas (2011) p. 7.

¹⁴ Zizioulas (2011) p. 11.

¹⁵ AF, Holmes (2007) pp. 337-338; The date of the *Didache* is difficult, dates ranging anywhere from the 60’s to AD 150. Holmes says, “The *Didache* may have been put into its present form as late as 150, though a date considerably closer to the end of the first century seems more probable. The materials from which it was composed, however, reflect the state of the church at an even earlier time. The relative simplicity of the prayers, the continuing concern to differentiate Christian practice from Jewish rituals (8.1), and in particular the form of church structure—note the twofold structure of bishops and deacons (cf. Phil. 1:1) and the continued existence of traveling apostles and prophets alongside a resident ministry—reflect a time closer to that of Paul and James (who died in the 60s) than Ignatius (who died sometime after 110).”

¹⁶ Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*. 3rd Ed. Trans. and ed. by Hieromonk Seraphim Rose. Platina, CA. Saint Herman Press, 2005. p. 285.

3) *The Church as “Eucharistic Community”*

As alluded to earlier, in the description of the Body of Christ as both the Eucharist and the Church, Jesus Christ is the head of his Body the Church, but at the same time the Body of Christ is present and offered by the Church at every Eucharistic celebration. In light of this we must always remember that central to *Convergence Ecclesiology* is the affirmation that the Eucharist is the real presence of Christ and the central act of worship when the Church is assembled as stated in the ICCEC Catechism.¹⁷

The real presence of Christ in the Eucharist is central because it affects every part of our experience of and with God.

"But how, somebody asks, can Jesus, if indeed he is God, dwell especially in any one place? Is he not everywhere? He is everywhere, truly, and yet he is in particular in the Sacrament. This is surely not difficult to believe. You walk abroad on a sun-lit day. All about you is the light. It is so all-present that for the most part you fail to notice it. Let a burning glass be focused on your hand. Now you feel the heat. You look and the light is brilliant. Yet it is the same sun-light. You recognize the light and heat about you because for the moment it has in concentration touched you. The Sacrament is the burning-glass of God. Having at the altar realized his Presence vividly we remember the better how that Presence is ever about us, how always beneath us are the everlasting arms, how all-embracing is his love, how ever vital is his friendship."¹⁸

The Eucharist is the embodied Word, making visible the presence of God in his gathered community, the Church.

4) *The Church as “Eucharistic Mission”*

On the first day of the week Jesus said, “*Even as the Father sent me, so I send you.*” (Jn 20:21) The original disciples understood very clearly that their first task was to speak and spread the Gospel. That is witnessed to in Acts 2 when St Peter proclaims the resurrection of Jesus and calls people to faith and repentance. In the church at Antioch the Holy Spirit called out two disciples during worship to be sent out in mission. Just as the church at Antioch included both Jews and Gentiles, the missionaries they commissioned would become missionaries to both Jew and Gentile. It was in the midst of “liturgical worship” that the Holy Spirit spoke and initiated the mission of St Paul and St Barnabas to take the Gospel to the world. In Acts 13:1 we read, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered (**Λειτουργέω**: *leitourgeo*, “they were doing the liturgy”) to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.” The Ecclesiology of the ICCEC affirms that the fruit of Eucharistic worship is to be witness and service to the world.

The Convergence Ecclesiology of the ICCEC: Eucharistic and Episcopal

For our purposes Eucharistic Ecclesiology emphasizes at least three aspects concerning the meaning of the Eucharist and the Church:

1) *Eucharist is Central*: The Ecclesiology of the ICCEC is primarily centered upon Eucharistic worship (along with the Sacrament of Baptism which it presupposes and the “Proclaimed Word” which must always accompany the celebration of the Eucharist). In the ICCEC we believe, “We live a Eucharistic

¹⁷ (Q-176), What is the Holy Eucharist? A. The Holy Eucharist is the central act of worship in the Church ordained by Christ Himself, in which He is mystically and actually present under the elements of bread and wine. Jn 6:27; 33-34; 41-59. I Cor 10:16-17; 11:24-25. Is 55:1-3. Gal 2:20. Phil 3:7-10.

¹⁸ Father Bernard Iddings Bell (1886-1958) was an American Episcopal Priest and Christian author.

life. Our life together is founded upon celebrating the Eucharist, where we are made one body in Christ, who gave Himself sacrificially for the life of the world.... Our life together is therefore sacramental, offered back to God in this thanksgiving.”¹⁹ From the beginning and its episcopal founding the ICCEC “is a worship movement, not a theological movement. What we pray is what we believe. Both are intrinsically united and depend on one another in order for the other to exist.”²⁰

2) *Eucharist and Bishop*: The Ecclesiology of the ICCEC presupposes that the Eucharist is inseparably linked with the Bishop and the unity of the Church. In the ICCEC the Bishop and those he appoints, are those who offer God’s gifts.²¹ The Bishop and those he appoints, are the icons of Christ and the Bishop is the one who provides priests and deacons with the authority to conduct his liturgy with his people.²² St Ignatius instructs us:

“Let no one do anything that has to do with the church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself designates) is to be considered valid. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the congregation be; just as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not permissible either to baptize or to hold a love feast without the bishop. But whatever he approves is also pleasing to God, in order that everything you do may be trustworthy and valid.” (*Smyr 8.1-2*)²³

3) *Eucharist and Church*: The Ecclesiology of the ICCEC calls forth the participation of the people of God gathered around the Bishop and is made visible wherever the Bishop or his representative celebrates the Holy Eucharist. Every ICCEC member participates in the priesthood of all believers and is equipped for worship, witness and service through the ministry of Word and Sacrament. We affirm the common priesthood of all the faithful, distinct from but complementary to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons: “The baptized, by regeneration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated as a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, in order that through all those works ... they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the power of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.... The faithful, in virtue of their royal priesthood, join in the offering of the Eucharist.”²⁴

Conclusion:

Much more that could be said about a *Eucharistic and Episcopal* reflection; the last word belongs to the ICCEC Canons:

“We live a Eucharistic life. Our life together is founded upon celebrating the Eucharist, where we are made one body in Christ, who gave Himself sacrificially for the life of the world. All worship, pastoral care, education, works of mercy, preaching, teaching, government, everything that encompasses the

¹⁹ *ICCEC Constitutions and Canons*, p. 6. Cf. the full quote at the end of the document

²⁰ *ICCEC Catechism*: Q-324), How does one describe the ICCEC?

²¹ See *ICCEC Constitution and Canons* (February 2014) Part II (Canon 5, Ministry) E. The Ministry of a Bishop, p. 32.

²² (Q-195), What is the sacrament of Holy Orders? A. The ministers of the Church are all baptized members. However, within the Church Christ has established Holy Orders, which God has given for the preaching of the Word, the faithful and orderly administration of the sacraments, and the governance of the Church. These orders are: diaconate, priesthood and bishop.

²³ (Q-201), What is the inward grace given to a bishop? A. A bishop is a man who is called and chosen by God and his Church and is given the grace to make visible the shepherd’s heart of Christ. He does this in the care, protection and safety of the flock. He receives the grace to father the church and his men in Holy Orders. He is empowered to defend the faith from all heresy, error and schism. He along with his brother bishops, and with the assistance of the priests (presbyters) governs the Church. A Bishop stands in apostolic succession to the first Apostles who were called and chosen by Christ for the mission of the Kingdom.

²⁴ *Lumen Gentium 10.1* of the II Vatican Council.

ministry of the church flows, from the sacrificial love of God made flesh and suffering for us on the Cross. Our life together is therefore sacramental, offered back to God in this thanksgiving. We remain in fellowship with our bishop, and with the body of believers to build families, trust and relationships. We believe that where the bishop is, there is the church. The visible unity of the church is in each congregation, where the bishop or his representative celebrates the Eucharist. We take seriously Our Lord's command to love one another and to seek the unity of the church."

ICCEC, Canons: PART 1 (PREAMBLE) c. Our Vision, p. 6.

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BDAG *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature.* (3rd ed. rev. by Frederick W. Danker, based on previous English editions by William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, and Frederick W. Danker; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

DJG *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels.* Edited by Joel B. Green and Scot McKnight. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.

CAT: ICCEC *Catechism of the International Communion of the Charismatic Church*

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