

PMB 1395/24

**House of God is the Community of People: The
Communal Emphasis of οἶκος τοῦ Θεοῦ.**

**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Malua
Theological College in Partial Fulfilment of the
Bachelor of Divinity Degree.**

October 2004.

**By Semo Tapaleao.
B.Sc. Auckland**

This Paper is Dedicated to my Parents
my mother Saimealafo and my late Father Tapaleao Vaalele

Anisi.

Your values have inspired this work.

&

My Wife Theresa
and my little Joy and Inspiration

Tofuola Kesniel.

I really hope I can be a good husband and father to you.

Abstract:

The phrase "House of God" contains two meanings that are discussed in this paper. One, it refers to the building and two, the community of people. This paper argues that the latter meaning should be the primary one in understanding 'House of God.' To affirm this statement, I will first attempt to define the meaning of the phrase, and then trace the development of its meaning, the community of people, from the Old Testament to the New Testament. It will also look at how the Qumran community, see the idea, as the new dwelling place of God. A traditional understanding of the concept will also be investigated. The Samoan proverb, "*E le o le Fale, ae o lona Anofale*" (The House is not the most important, but its interior) reflects the importance of communal living to our culture. The hope is to substantiate the essential understanding of the 'house of God' as the community of believers.

Acknowledgements:

First , I would like to give thanks to God Almighty. Your guidance and love, has led me throughout this work.

I would also like to express my very sincere gratitude and thanks to my Supervisor, Rev. Alesana Eteuati. Thank you for your patience and perseverance. I respect your values, knowledge and wisdom. I hope I can learn from you. Faafetai Tele.

My thanks also go to Rev. Levesi Afutiti for valued input into this work.

To my Family, I thank you for your prayers and support.

Finally, to my wife Theresa, thank you for bearing with me, especially in testing times. I thank God for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Pages</i>
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv-vi
INTRODUCTION	vii-viii
<u>CHAPTER ONE: House of God:It's Meaning And Understanding</u>	
<u>in the Old Testament to Qumran Community</u>	1-17
I. οἶκος του θεου: It's Meaning and Development	1
A. Introduction	1
B. Meaning of the term οἶκος	2-4
C. οἶκος in the Formula οἶκος του θεου	4
D. House of God in the Old Testament and others	4-7
E. Temple: Meaning and Occurrences	7-9
II House of God is the Community of God: The true temple where	
God resides:	9
A. A New Emphasis: from Physical to Communal	9-12
B. Spiritualisation of the Cultus	12-13
C. Qumran Community: A New House of God: The True Temple	13-16
D. Summary	16-18
<u>CHAPTER TWO: House of God in the New Testament: A Communal</u>	
<u>Emphasis in place of the Temple.</u>	19-44
I. Communal Emphasis in the Gospel of Mark: Chapter 11.11-16.8	18
A. Mark's Purpose	19-21
B: Mark's Attitude: Differing Opinions	21-22
C. Significance of "House" in Mark	23-25
II. Exegesis in Mark 11:1-16:8	25-34
A. Failure of the Temple (Mark 11:11-21)	26-27
B. The Unfruitful Fig Tree (12-14)	26-27
C. Jesus Temple (Mk 11:11-18) A House For all Nations	28-31

D. Withered Fig Tree: Symbolic end of Temple (Mk 11:2-21)	30-31
III. Replacement of the Temple (Mk 11:27-12:44)	31
A. Jesus the Keystone: Replacement of The Temple (Mk11:27-12:12)	31-34
B. Coming Destruction of the Temple (Mk13:1-2)	34-35
C. House of God: The Responsibility of the Community (Mk 13:34-37)	35-36
D. New House of God: Not made with hands (Mk14:43-58)	36-37
E. Jesus the Keystone of a New House of God (Mk 15:25-16:8)	37-39
F. Summary	39-40
 <u>CHAPTER THREE: House of God in relation to the Samoan Context</u>	 41-57
 I. Fale ma lona Anofale (House and it's Interior: The Basis of Samoan Communal Living)	 42-43
A. Samoan Fale: Purpose and Significance	44
B. The Anofale (Interior)	44
B.1 The Household (The Aiga)	44-45
B.2 Household Activities (Galuega Faatino)	45-47
 II. Faasamoa and the Essence of Communal Living	 47
A. Definition of Samoa	47-48
B. Community Structure: The Nu'u Village	48-49
C. Values of Communal Living	50-51
C.1 Osi Aiga (Conforming to the needs of the Nuclear And Extended family.	52
C.2 Faaaloalo (Respect)	52
C.3 Ifoga (Reconciliation)	53
C.4 Feagaiga (Covenant)	53-54
 D. Falesa: A Brief Analysis	 54-56
E. Summary	56-57
Conclusion and Recommendations	58-62
Bibliography	63-66

Introduction:

The primary focus of this paper is to revive a vital meaning of the phrase 'House of God', which I believe is largely forgotten today. That is, it refers primarily as the community of God's people. Today we seem to take for granted every time we come across the phrase, by referring to it simply as the building, which we use for worship. Hence this paper argues that this physical idea is only a secondary understanding of the phrase. It seeks therefore not to invalidate this popular understanding, but to shed new light on what the paper believes shall always be the primary emphasis. That is, it is the community where God resides.

Discussion of this paper will be based on two premises of understanding. First, a biblical understanding which will endeavour to illustrate how the concept develops a communal emphasis from the Old Testament to Philo and the Qumran community, and then to the New Testament.

Secondly, a traditional understanding which seeks to relate the concept to the Samoan context. Special emphasis will be on how it can be understood in the framework of the *Fale Samoa* (Samoan Fale). Significantly, the Fale Samoa has always had a physical connotation attached to it. But as this paper reveals, a simple understanding of the Samoan proverb, "*(E le o le Fale ae o lona Anofale) The house is not the most important, but the actual activities in the House*), explain the notion that the emphasis is on the household of people, but not the building itself (Fale). Hence, with this understanding of the Fale, we can then relate it to the wider context of Samoan community, and the significance of its communal values.

This paper is formulated in a way that its structure and contents will hopefully explain what it sets out to achieve. Chapter One will look at how the communal emphasis of the paper develops from the Old Testament to the thinking of Philo, and

the Ideology of the Qumran community. An attempt is made to discuss the development of the phrase from a building, to a more communal connotation. The respective ideology and the understanding of the Qumran and Philo will also be discussed.

In the Second Chapter, we will see how the same motif is developed in the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament. An narrative interpretation of Chapter 11:1-16:8, will hopefully reveal, how the community replaces the Jerusalem temple, in terms of importance and significance.

Finally, in Chapter Three, we will take a look at a Samoan understanding of the phrase. This understanding is found in our knowledge of the Samoan *Fale* in its purpose and significance. The wider implications of the *Fale* reveal a communal emphasis, which reflect through its values, the sincerity of our communal living.

CHAPTER ONE:

House of God: Its Meaning and Understanding in the Old Testament and the Qumran Community.

I. *οἶκος του θεου*: Its meaning and development

A. Introduction:

The phrase 'house of God' and the term 'temple' are always understood to both mean the dwelling place of the Divine Being, or a place of worship. The former is frequently used, while the latter, 'temple', is the most utilized term. Such meanings of the phrase 'house of God' and 'temple' do not encapsulate a communal understanding of the two. That is, the phrase 'house of God', so as the term 'temple', is to be understood in two ways: First, 'house of God' refers to the dwelling place of God – the building, the place of worship. The second meaning of the phrase, which this paper focuses upon, is the community of God – the people.

This chapter discusses the meanings of the term *οἶκος*, house, and its connotations in the phrase *οἶκος του θεου*, house of God. The chapter surveys the meanings both in Greek and in English. The intention is to establish the correlation of the Greek meanings and those of the English. The chapter also discusses the development of the phrase *οἶκος του θεου* from its usual meaning as a 'dwelling' or 'building' to a more emphatic communal understanding in the Old Testament. In addition, the Qumran community and Philo's philosophical understandings are highlighted in regard to the communal meaning of *οἶκος του θεου*. That is, *οἶκος του θεου* is to be understood as the community of God's people, where God resides. It is a vital understanding of the phrase that seems to have been lost today.

B. Meaning of the Greek term – οἶκος

In general, the literal translation of the Greek word οἶκος, is a house or a dwelling.¹ It is a translation that is widely accepted by most writings.² According to the Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, the Greek word οἶκος is dated back to the time of Homer³ and it has a wide range of meanings. Thus, οἶκος means a building, a dwelling, a household or the ones living in a house including their possessions and belongings.⁴ It implies that the two distinct meanings of οἶκος refer not only to the physical dimension of the house but also refer to all the inhabitants and their belongings encased under one roof. In other words, οἶκος represents a number of people and their belongings, not just a dwelling or a house. Therefore, the term οἶκος has a dual meaning, the building and the inhabitants of the building.

The dual meanings of οἶκος are evident in an etymological study of the English word 'house'. Its roots are derived from a pre-historic Germanic word, *khusan*.⁵ The Dictionary of Word Origin suggests that 'house' also finds its roots in the Indo-European word *keudh* which literally means "cover or hide," the source of English words such as hut or hoard.⁶ This understanding of the term 'house' echoes the communal understanding of οἶκος. The term 'house' represents a large corporate body which is housed under one roof. This expression is supported by J. B. Sykes.⁷

¹ J.W. Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 195.

² Colin Brown, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 2 (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1986), 247

W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), 236,237. Hertz Balz and Gerhard Schneider (eds), *Exegetical Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. 12 (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 501.

³ Vine, 237.

⁴ Vine, 237. Brown writes that οἶκος is attested as early as the Mycenaean Greek, and it also echoes the meaning described by Vine, (247).

⁵ John Ayto, *Dictionary of Word Origins* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1993), 101

⁶ John Ayto, 102.

⁷ J. B. Sykes (ed), *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 288.

He refers to the house as an audience being seated in a legislative assembly in session and it also describes the seating in a particular performance.⁸

In the Bible, the two Greek words, *οἶκος* and *οἶκια*, are used interchangeably to refer to a house and its inhabitants.⁹ But in Greek, this has not been the case. *Οἶκια* has been used to refer to a dwelling place while *οἶκος* denotes a whole house including the inhabitants and their properties.¹⁰ This distinction has been maintained in times of the Attic law,¹¹ but has eventually lost in later Greek particularly after the Septuagint (LXX).¹² This implies that both terms, *οἶκος* and *οἶκια*, have been used synonymously to translate the Hebrew word *bayit* in the LXX. According to Colin Brown, because of the similar meanings of the two words and the fact that the Hebrew language has no word for small social units such as family, the two words are used alternatively throughout.¹³ Thus, the term *οἶκος* will be maintained in this study.

It is the most referred term in the New Testament writings (about 115 times), and it denotes a wide range of meanings. For example, *οἶκος* is used in the Gospels and Acts sometimes without the attributive genitive *του Θεου* to refer to the House of God,¹⁴ with the exception of Old Testament quotations in Mark 2:26; 11:17 and Luke 11:51.¹⁵ In Matthew 22:38, *οἶκος* is referred to as a city or a large community. In addition, 1 Timothy 3:15 and Hebrews 3:2, 5, 6; 10:21 are some of the instances where *οἶκος* is used with the understanding that it refers to the church or the people that make up the house of God. Furthermore, Hertz Balz and Gerhard Schneider write

⁸ Sykes, 288.

⁹ Brown, 247

¹⁰ Brown, 247.

¹¹ W.E.Vine, 238 . Attic law has been described in the light of Attic Greek language, the standard language during 5 B.C.E.

¹² Brown, 247

¹³ Brown, 247.

¹⁴ Brown, 247

¹⁵ Balz and Schneider, 501.

that *oikos* should also be understood to mean a 'sanctuary.'¹⁶ The connotation is that *oikos* has been understood to refer to a community, the people of God.

C. *oikos* in the formula *oikos tou theou*:

The term *oikos* plays a vital function in the understanding of the phrase *oikos tou theou*.¹⁷ The word *oikos*, 'house' and the genitive formula *tou theou* is translated 'of God,' thus the phrase is simply 'house of God.' Since the word *oikos* has a two fold meanings, the phrase *oikos tou theou* can simply mean 'a dwelling place of God' and most importantly, 'the community of God.' The latter meaning of the phrase is fundamental in this paper's argument, even though Bruce Button and Fika Van Rensburg argue that the word *oikos*, given its dual meaning, can best be understood by the context.¹⁸

In brief, the word *oikos* as mentioned earlier, has a wide range of meanings. It not only connotes the structural element, it also refers to the actual inhabitants of the house itself. Hence, *oikos tou theou* when understood in its communal meaning, it refers to the community of God's people.

D: House of God in the Old Testament & Others.

The following section examines the development of the concept *oikos tou theou* in the Old Testament. It discusses also the Qumran community's perception, and a brief account of Philo's philosophical understanding in relation to

¹⁶ Balz and Schneider, 501. Based on their researches of the Qumran community, the authors believe that the Qumran community viewed their community as the *oikos tou theou*, the sanctuary of God.

¹⁷ The phrase *oikos tou theou* occurs in few places in the New Testament, eg. Mark 2:26 parallel to Matthew 12:4; Luke 6:4; Matthew 21:13 parallel Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46, Hebrew 3:3, 6b; Timothy 3:15 etc.

¹⁸ Bruce Button and Fika J. Van Rensburg, "The House Churches in Corinth" in *Neotestamentia: Journal of the New Testament Society of South Africa*. vol 37, No 1 (Natal: NTSSA Press, 2003), 1-2.

oikos. These sources highlight the communal meaning of *oikos tou theou* as the community of God's people. It becomes the dwelling place of God, in opposition to the physical temple in Jerusalem.

According to Brown, the metaphorical use of the concept by certain Old Testament books reflects its allusion to the community as the dwelling place of God.¹⁹ For example, this communal meaning is reflected in the application of the propriety rights of God over his people which is reflected in the images of the vine, the vineyard, and the plantation, (Hosea 10:1; Isaiah 5:7; Jeremiah 2:21).²⁰ Furthermore, Brown argues that the use of the phrase 'House of David' in Amos 9:11 is meant to be understood as a reference to the people of God.²¹ The text speaks of the promise to rebuild the 'House of David' that has fallen. This meaning explicitly implies that the community is God's house.

This communal appreciation of the concept, *oikos tou theou*, is further clarified. Michel recognizes in the Old Testament that the formula is a fixed term for the earthly sanctuary.²² This implies that the application of the formula itself and the allusion to the community as God's House is dependent on the life setting of the text. The same can be said of similar concepts such as 'the House of Yahweh' and 'the House of Israel'. Thus, the dual meanings of *oikos* refer either to the physical temple building of Jerusalem or to the community of people. The two are intrinsic in the understanding of *oikos tou theou*.

However, problems arise when the communal meaning of the phrase 'house of God' is not reflected in its use. For example, R. E. Clements sees no difference

¹⁹ Brown, 248.

²⁰ Brown, 248.

²¹ Brown, 248.

²² Michel, 120.

between the term 'temple' and the 'house of God'. He uses the term and the phrase interchangeably.

"It is plain from the work of Haggai that the re-building of the **temple**, to which Deutero-Isaiah and Ezekiel has both looked forward, was not the first task to which the returning people set themselves, even though the account of the edict of Cyrus had made the restoration of worship in Jerusalem the basic motive of the return. The depressing conditions of Judah and the arduous struggle even to make a living appear to have overwhelmed the desire for a new **House of God**."²³

This transposable use of 'temple' and 'house of God' is also evident in the writings of Harold Turner. He explains that the temple as an appointed rendezvous of God can be called a House of God.²⁴ Menahem Haran proposes that the temple itself is an actual building.²⁵

In non-biblical references, the Qumran community perceive themselves as the *oikos tou theou*, the sanctuary of God.²⁶ In addition, Bertil Gartner on his work on the Qumran documents infers that in the Qumran community's ideology, the group believe that they are the new House of God, the true temple.²⁷ The belief of the Qumran stems from their dissatisfaction with the Jerusalem temple and its profane nature, and thus warrants their ideological call to consider their community as the new dwelling place of God.

Philo, on the other hand, sees the individual soul as God's House.²⁸ This spiritualisation is based on Philo's philosophical understanding that the whole creation of God is dependent on the good nature of the individual person. The

²³ R. E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 123. The words bolded are mine.

²⁴ Harold W. Turner, *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenological Theology of Places of Worship* (New York: Mowtown Publishers, 1979), 38.

²⁵ Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Indiana: Eisenbraun Press, 1985), 13.

²⁶ Balz and Schneider, 501.

²⁷ Bertil Gartner, *The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament: A Comparative Study in the Temple Symbolism of the Qumran Texts and the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 21.

²⁸ Michel, 123.

implication is that a community is made up of various individuals, which parallels the meaning of God's *oikos*. In other words, a good community is the product of how each individual lives a life that reflects the holiness of God's House.

In brief, 'house of God' denotes a building and also a community. However, the latter meaning does not become prominent when the term 'temple' is used. Nevertheless, the communal understanding of 'house of God,' replaces the centrality of the physical temple in Jerusalem. It is because the 'house of God' is where God resides.

E. Temple: Meaning and Occurrences.

The two most common Hebrew terms that are used to describe the 'temple' in the Old Testament are *heykal* and *bet Elohim*. On the one hand, *heykal* has a two fold general meanings with a non-sacral element and it is used sparingly.²⁹ On the other hand, *bet Elohim* refers directly to the residential place of the deity and therefore accounts for its more common use. The other two Hebrew terms used in relation to the temple to describe the dwelling place of Yahweh are *bayit* and *migdas* which respectively mean 'house' and 'sanctuary'.

The word 'temple' has always been identified as the place of the deity. In the Bible, it is the most commonly used term to describe the central religious historical building in Jerusalem. Literally, it comes from the Latin word, *tempulum*, and is used to translate the Hebrew word *heykal* which has its roots in the Akkaidan word *ekallu*, which means great house.³⁰ The connotation here is that the word 'temple' was

²⁹ It is translated, palace in 1 Kings 21: 1. In 1 Samuel . 1:9, the tabernacle is regarded as God's *heykal*.

³⁰ Carol Meyers, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, David. N. Freedman and others (eds.) vol 6 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 351.

originally referred to as a large building or a royal house which echoes its secular nature.

In contrast, the reference to the divine element of God's dwelling place is reflected in the way the term *heykal* has been used during the pre-Solomon period. At the time, the term 'tabernacle' was used to refer to God's *heykal*.³¹ Carol Meyers, along the same line of thought, recognizes that the term refers to the earthly dwelling place of Yahweh, which most notably was a shrine at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:9; 3:3) and to his earthly abode (Isaiah 6:1; II Samuel 22:7).³²

Therefore, the sacred, divine edifice that the temple has been normally associated with, takes a secondary role. For instance, both R. B. Girdlestone and Haran argue along the same line. Girdlestone points out that *heykal* rendered temple, does not necessarily suggest a sacred edifice, but refers instead to any palatial dwelling.³³ In 1 Kings 21:1, *heykal* is translated as palace. It refers to King Ahab's residence, the places built by the Israelites in Hosea 8:14, and also of the Babylonian king (II Kings 20:8).³⁴

The most common reference to the divine understanding of the temple is expressed by the preposition *beth* before the divine names. For example, the temple of Yahweh is expressed by the term *bethyhyh* (Exodus 23:19; 34:26). The temple of El, the house of God is expressed by *beth el* (Gen 12:8).³⁵ Furthermore, in the Hebrew Bible the more general terms rendered for the Solomon Temple, the postexilic temples and the shrines of Yahweh is *bet Yahweh* (House of Yahweh) or *bet Elohim* (House of God). This indicates a divine residential place and thus

³¹ R. B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Massachusetts: Henrikson Publishers, 2000), 249.

³² Meyers, 351.

³³ Girdlestone, 249.

³⁴ Girdlestone, 249.

³⁵ Meyers, 351.

expresses the intrinsic nature of the institutions which according to Haran, its primary function was to conceive God.³⁶

Generally, the connecting strand that correlates the different aspects of the term is the fact that the term 'temple' possesses sacral and a non-sacral meanings. The twofold meanings reinforce the thrust of the argument that the House of God refers to the community of faith. That is, the non-sacral aspect of the term 'temple' invalidates it from being associated with the Divine. It opens up the possibility of using the concept, House of God, as a term of reference for the Community of God, a place God dwells rather than a physical building.

II: House of God is the Community of God: The true Temple where God Resides.

The House of God as an image of the new temple establishment develops from the idea that the people of the community are referred to as a House. This shift of meaning is reflected in the ideology of the Qumran community, who see themselves as the new House of God, the true temple. This section discusses the development of the concept, 'house of God', from its communal meaning to a spiritual entity.

A: A New Emphasis: From Physical to Communal

The idea of temple replacement is seen as a way forward for the Israelites in the postexilic area. The re-establishment of the Jerusalem temple after its destruction has opened up new frontiers of interpretations and ideologies. The community for that matter is widely perceived as the new dwelling place of God, a shift from the traditional physical abode, central to Israelite religion, to a more spiritual communal emphasis. This new emphasis is seen in the light of many prophetic allusions by

³⁶ Haran, 13.

prophets such as Ezekiel and Haggai. They both see this replacement in an eschatological framework which is the establishment of a new temple.³⁷ This new temple, as this work argues, refers to the community of people, the House of God.

According to R. E. Clements, the Israelite religion proper begins with the events of the exodus and the conclusion of the covenant on Mt. Sinai, in which Moses is the prominent figure.³⁸ Mount Sinai has been seen by the Israelites as the original abode of Yahweh, the meeting and covenant place between God and his people.³⁹ In possession have been the two primary cult objects, the ark and the tent of meeting. Both objects are seen as symbolic of Yahweh's presence among his community, and subsequently the original influence of the Temple cult.⁴⁰ This cultic phenomenon and the longing of King Solomon to build a permanent place for God's dwelling has led to the eventual establishment of the so called temple tradition in the history of Israel. Haran traces the appearance of temples in the life of the Israelites, only after the settlement in Canaan.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC is seen as a direct result of the Israelites unfaithfulness in their relationship with Yahweh.

The re-establishment of the Jerusalem Temple requires a reinterpretation of the Jerusalem Temple cultic tradition, and therefore is given a new significance in the light of many ideological interpretations. It means the birth of what has been commonly termed as temple symbolism. It is a part of Jewish eschatological expectation, regarding the presence of Yahweh among his people, a subject of future hope.⁴²

³⁷ Gardner, 16.

³⁸ Clement, 1.

³⁹ Clement, 1.

⁴⁰ Clement, 1.

⁴¹ Haran, 18.

⁴² Turner, 75.

The symbolism gives birth to the belief of the Israelites in the community as the dwelling place, the New House of God. For example, the prophet Jeremiah in his oracle, 3:16-17, to the people of Jerusalem insists that they are to become the new throne of the Lord.⁴³ For the community, they see this as a message of hope in the framework of ideology that utters the call for a permanent replacement of the physical temple. Moreover, Jeremiah in Chapter 29:13-14 has indicated that he has the community in mind rather than the temple, when he assures the people in exile that on their return, they would be in an open and intimate relationship with God.⁴⁴ The absence of any particular reference by the prophet to the rebuilding of the physical temple gives weight to the above notion.

Ezekiel himself has seen the emphasis on the people rather than the places, (36:16-38) and the city'. That is, the community of people will know the Lord is there (48:35).⁴⁵ For Turner the significance is that Yahweh himself will be the temple for the people, and they in turn will be as a temple for his presence.⁴⁶ The allusion here is that the community will be the dwelling place of Yahweh.

Clements on the event of the exile has seen it in the theological framework of God's greatness. It means that God and his omnipresence cannot be restricted to any physical building. Moreover, the exile also points to the perception that 'God was to be found wherever men [sic] sought him with a whole heart'.⁴⁷ This view is echoed by the prophet Haggai (2:5), who refers to God being with his people in the spirit. So theologically speaking, it means that God's abode is in the totality of the community, no longer bound to any physical buildings. The argument here is that this new community, given its much broader dimension, is the House of God. This

⁴³ Turner, 75.

⁴⁴ Turner, 76.

⁴⁵ Turner, 76.

⁴⁶ Turner, 76.

⁴⁷ Clements, 133.

understanding of *oikos tou theou* as not only the community but the residential place of God is further enhanced through the spiritualisation of the temple cult in the following section.

B: Spiritualisation of the Cultus:

The basic definition that is vital to the understanding of this aspect is the so-called 'interiorization of the worship.' Spiritually, it is not so much the intention of the individual in the process of offering a sacrifice to God, but 'interiorization of the worship' has a deeper meaning than a mere act of the offering sacrifices. Turner prefers to call it in a more personal form in the sense that a human being is an embodied spirit, and the spirit is the temple of God.⁴⁸ Gartner and R. J. McKelvey both see the development of this spiritual understanding in the framework of the temple and its cultus and the Law and its Fulfilment. This means that there exists an understanding in a radical replacement of the building by the living community, and the sacrifices by the moral ways of the people according to the Law.⁴⁹ Hence, as this paper argues, this development correlates to the idea of the spiritualizing of the temple and its sacrifice aspect.

McKelvey also discusses how the spiritualisation of the sacrificial cult of the Israelites has come about. The sacrifice and the one offering the sacrifice must have a single motive. That is, the important value of one's sacrificial act can only be made the more meaningful by a righteous spirit.⁵⁰ According to McKelvey, the prophetic criticisms of sacrificial cult, a thought developed by the Psalmist (Psalms 40), questions the real essence of offering as an adequate response to the goodness of

⁴⁸ Turner, 77.

⁴⁹ R. J. McKelvey, *The New Temple: The Church in the New Testament*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 43.

⁵⁰ McKelvey, 43.

God.⁵¹ The thrust of this prophetic criticism centres on the idea of valued spiritual giving. This is in line with the argument that the cultus has lost its essential spiritual notion. The suggested remedy is not the offering of sacrifice but a moral obedient life to the will of God (Psalm 40: 4-8).⁵² It implies, as this paper argues, that one's personal relationship to God is essential on how he/she adheres to the will of the Divine. Furthermore, one's life of obedience is vital when it is utilized in the community of God's people.

McKelvey goes on to suggest that the major contributor to this spiritualisation of the cultus is the transformation of the Israelite religion to a religion of the law.⁵³ In other words, the cult was maintained to fulfil the Law.⁵⁴ This means that the sacrificial cult is no longer the heart of the sacramental life. Gartner sees this transformation in the light of Jewish religious development between the Maccabaeon period and the time of the Rabbis in 70 A.D. Gartner argues that the foci of this religious life are the worship of the temple and the observance of the Law which culminates in the latter replacing the former in terms of importance.⁵⁵

C: Qumran Community: A New House of God, The True Temple

The diminishing value of the sacrificial cult and its significance in the temple worship mean that the way is open to all kinds of interpretations and ideologies. It means that observing the Law is interpreted by communities such as the Qumran in a cultic sense. To McKelvey, such is the attitude of the community when founded.⁵⁶ They believe that atoning for sins comes via a personalised obedience and adherence

⁵¹ McKelvey, 43.

⁵² McKelvey, 43.

⁵³ McKelvey, 44.

⁵⁴ McKelvey, 45.

⁵⁵ Gartner, 18.

⁵⁶ McKelvey, 45

to the law, without any particular reference to the Temple sacrifice.⁵⁷ To Gartner, however, the dominant position of the law over the cultus should not in any way diminish the ideological point connected with the temple and the cultus.⁵⁸ The Qumran community has not totally severed its ties with the Temple and its cults but it has transferred the host of ideas from the Jerusalem Temple to its community. Gartner writes, "Transference of the concrete entity, the temple building, to a more spiritual realm in the living community, and of the sacrifices to deeds in the life lived according to the Law"⁵⁹

What Gardener prefers is that the concept of the Temple can no longer be solely confined to a physical entity, but has taken on a whole new meaning. The Temple is now rightly linked with the community. Its worship for that matter is now adhered and practised through the community's concerted effort to observe the Law through its own liturgical and cultus practices. This insistence of the community to see the law in the whole new light is all in the framework of their ideology as a community. That is, they are to be called the new people of the covenant and the new House of God.

The other significant point to the discussion is the insistence of the Qumran community to remain tied to the Temple and its cults. Despite their ideological understanding of their community as the true temple of God, there exists the need to reflect on the temple moralities. The historical nature of the whole idea implies that the Qumran community's ideology has merits and it is subsequently justified.

Shermaryahu Talmon in his article "The Community of the Renewed Covenant Between Judaism and Christianity" dates the existence of the Qumran

⁵⁷ Gartner, 18.

⁵⁸ Gartner, 18.

⁵⁹ Gartner, 19.

Community to a period approximately between 200-100BCE.⁶⁰ Other scholars like John R. Bartlett dates it to a similar period but at a much lesser date between 133 – 37 BCE.⁶¹

The ideology of the Qumran Community in identifying itself as the new House of God takes its roots from the defiling nature of the Jerusalem Temple.⁶² Its priests have acted wickedly. The community's main emphasis has been to live a life of perfect obedience to the Law, which means a life full of purity and obedience. The exile has been understood as the abandonment of Israel by God, and thus, in the re-establishment of a new House of God, they have been searching for a new replacement, and they consider themselves as having the ideal authority.⁶³

Talmon calls the Qumran Community the "Covenanters."⁶⁴ He argues that these people, apart from identifying themselves as a "house of truth", also identify themselves as the "sole legitimate representative of biblical Israel."⁶⁵ The community identifies themselves as the bearer of truth, truly known as the "New House of Truth." Their exegesis of the word truth is seen in their strict adherence to religious life, upholding law and purity. Purity in this sense can be seen in their strict but rather unnatural "abstention from all sexual intercourse."⁶⁶ Their strict religious agenda

⁶⁰ Shermayahu Talmon, "The Community of the Renewed Covenant Between Judaism and Christianity: in The Community of the Renewed Covenant." In *The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (eds) Eugene Ulrich and James Vanderkam (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 3.

⁶¹ John R. Bartlett, "The Archaeology of Qumran." In *Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 81.

⁶² Gartner, 16.

⁶³ Gartner, 16.

⁶⁴ A. Dupont Somer, (43-44) one of the leading figures in the field of Qumran research, also echoes the argument of Talmon. He writes that the Dead Sea Scrolls revealed the insistence of the Qumran to call themselves as the New Covenant. Moreover he cites also that the Qumran documents constantly return to the idea of a community.

⁶⁵ Talmon, 12.

⁶⁶ Talmon, 12.

finds evidence in their profound expectancy of two Messiahs.⁶⁷ One of whom may have been identified as Melchizedek.⁶⁸

My argument here is that the community takes very seriously the fact that they are the new house of God. Clements writes, "The Qumran sectarians combined a regard for the practises concerning the temple with a more personal understanding of the divine presence by describing their community as a sanctuary and a holy of holies".⁶⁹ The Qumran community has identified themselves as the house of truth, representative of the new abode of God, and they can rightly claim themselves as the symbolic representation of the true 'House of God.' These are on the grounds that those who call themselves the New Community have now permanently replaced the temple of Jerusalem.

D. Summary:

The argument of this chapter is based on the transition from the physical place of God's dwelling to its replacement by the community. This communal notion of the temple replacement evolves from the Old Testament times. It proposes a new understanding that nullifies the significance of a physical temple. It focuses on the community of God's people and it highlights the fact that the worship of God is not confined to one locality. Thus, the new understanding of *οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ* is ecclesiastical in nature. God cannot be confined to a building but dwells among his people, his house.

This communal notion of *οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ* is explicitly reflected in both the Greek and the English meanings of *οἶκος*. The term has a dual meaning: it denotes a

⁶⁷ L.D Hurst, "Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?" in *Bulletin for International Biblical Research* (eds) Craig Evans and Stanley Porter (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 155.

⁶⁸ Paul Rainbow, "Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran." in *Bulletin for International Biblical Research* (eds) Craig Evans and Stanley Porter (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 179.

⁶⁹ Clements, 133.

building and a community of people living together under a single roof. The latter understanding becomes prominent while the former meaning loses its vitality. Thus, the *oikos tou theou* refers foremost to a communal and corporate dimension and the physical meaning is secondary. The importance of the communal meaning is also evident in the understanding of the term 'temple'.

The reformed communal meaning flourishes in the prophets. Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Haggai, to name only a few, propounds on the reformed understanding that the community of God has been the permanent replacement of the Temple. God resides in the midst of his people instead of the Temple. In addition, this replacement understanding is given more light when the temple cultus is being replaced by the Fulfilment of the Law. McKelvey and Gartner see the slow decay of the significance of temple cultus as an indication of changes to have occurred. Hence, the fulfilling of the law becomes more spiritual. That is, obedience to the Law is more personalized without any reference to the temple. This is the line of thought taken up by the Qumran community. Its ideology is based on their dissatisfaction with the temple, and therefore believes that through their strict adherence to the Law, they rightly lay claims in regarding themselves as the house of truth, the true people of God.

The vital point is that the communal concept and its understanding is not confined to a particular period but continues to develop as new communities of God's people emerge. For example, O. Michel suggests that the New Testament designation of the Christian Community as the House of God is an "integral part of the primitive Christian kerygma."⁷⁰ The following chapter discusses the enhanced development in the understanding of *oikos tou theou*.

⁷⁰ O. Michel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffery Bromiley. vol 5 (Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 125.

CHAPTER TWO:

House of God in the New Testament: A Communal Emphasis in Place of the Temple.

The development of the communal emphasis as the new house of God is a concept that prevailed throughout the ministry of Jesus. This chapter discusses the development of this understanding in the Gospel of Mark.

I. Communal Emphasis in the Gospel of Mark: The Significance of the Temple Theme: Chapter 11:1-16:8

Some scholars have identified the Gospel of Mark as the one that discusses the significance of the temple theme extensively.⁷¹ Hence, the purpose of this chapter is to identify the development of this theme in the narrative. Special attention focuses on how the community is identified by Mark as the replacement for the Jerusalem temple. In other words, the community is proposed as the new dwelling place of God.

Therefore, the first step we need to take is to understand the purpose of Mark for his readers. An understanding of Mark's intention will enlighten us on how it relates to Mark's radical attitude towards the temple.

⁷¹ John. Paul. Heil, *The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark* in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol 59, No 1, (Michigan, Catholic University of America, January 1997), 76

David Seeley, *Jesus' Temple Act Revisited: A Response to P.M. Casey* in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* vol 62, No 1, (Michigan, Catholic University of America, January 2000), 55

A. Mark's Purpose:

The purpose of Mark in writing the Gospel has been a subject of different scholarly opinions.⁷² For example, different views have been proposed whether the book has been written for Christians in general, or it is only targeting a specific Roman Christian community. The different views cannot be condensed into a single purpose. Thus, Alan Cole proposes four main purposes why Mark writes this book:

- (i) To make the good news accessible to Gentiles
- (ii) To encourage those facing persecutions
- (iii) To defend the faith
- (iv) To explain the significance of the Cross.⁷³

This paper adopts the second one on the grounds that it is the one that has been given weight. For Cole, the Gospel was written mainly to encourage the persecuted Christians of Rome. This view is supported by those who regard it as a book written to address "real persons facing a real crisis."⁷⁴

Ben Witherington III, articulates the intention of the author by arguing that the majority of Mark's Gentile Christian audience, were those facing not only marginalization in their own culture, but also possible execution.⁷⁵ Therefore, for Witherington, the purpose of Mark is to explain to them the way of the cross that Jesus takes, and how his first disciples fail to follow his examples.⁷⁶ Bas. M. F. Van Ieserel offers a slightly different perspective. He claims that the Gospel is written for Christians in Rome, who have betrayed their fellow Christians by disclosing their

⁷² Alan Cole, *Mark: New Bible Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press, 2000), 947-948

Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark:-A Social Rhetorical Commentary* (Michigan/Cambridge, U.K, William B. Eerdmans, 2001), 28

⁷³ Alan Cole, 947-948

⁷⁴ Glenn W. Barker, William L. Lane, J Ramsey Michaels, *The New Testament Speaks* (San Francisco, Harber Collins Publishers, 1969), 251

⁷⁵ Ben Witherington III, 28

⁷⁶ Witherington III, 36

names to the Roman authorities.⁷⁷ Hence his conclusion is that, the Gospel is intended by Mark to resolve the crisis prevailing in the divided Christian community of Rome. He also believes that the context Mark is writing to has a strong sense of a family being incorporated into a household community.

For Robert A Guelich, Mark writes the Gospel to preserve a tradition concerning Jesus Messiah, Son of God, who is qualified by Mark in terms of suffering and the cross. He goes on to propose that this, shall always be a point of departure for any one trying to determine Mark's purpose.⁷⁸ He also claims that the gospel clearly indicates that Jesus himself inaugurates God's sovereign rule, the Kingdom, through his deeds and words, and this Kingdom has a future component.⁷⁹

This futuristic element of Mark's purpose parallels in nature to the thrust of Howard Kee's thesis, which interprets Mark apocalyptically. Kee defines the element of apocalypticism as a "community, which regards itself the recipient of a revelation through a God-sent prophet. It concerns the destiny of the world and its eschatological vindication, which is to occur in the near future."⁸⁰ So the connotation here is that the Gospel's intention has an apocalyptic community in mind. According to PHEME PERKINS, the social context presupposed by Mark is inclusive of Roman house church congregations during the first two centuries. These congregations have been organized in several quite diverse house church communities.⁸¹ So one can see that the life of the early church has an eschatological element to it. In the context of

⁷⁷ Van Ieserel, *Failed Followers in Mark: Mark 13:12 as a Key for the Identification of the Intended Readers*, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* vol 58 No 2 (Michigan: Catholic University of America, April 1996), 245.

⁷⁸ Robert. A.Guelich, *Mark 1-8: 26 : World Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1989), xl.

⁷⁹ Guelich, xli

⁸⁰ Howard Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 106

⁸¹ PHEME PERKINS, *Jesus as a Teacher in New Interpreters Bible* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), 514

the Roman persecutions, the common view is that the community, the kingdom of God, will first be consolidated before it disperses to the world.

In summation all these different views point to a futuristic entity by which God will establish his kingdom forever. In saying that, it also invalidates the old order of Judaism, which has been, "placed under the judgement of dissolution."⁸² C. S. Mann points to the fact that the new Community of Jews and Gentiles will replace it. Therefore, the implication is that for the intended audience of Mark, it gives them hope for vindication in times ahead. The cleansing act of Jesus in the temple and the development of the temple theme indicates a challenge to the heart of old Judaism. Hence, the proposal that the new Community of believers becomes the new true House of God, replacing the old Temple.

B. Mark's Attitude:Differing Opinions.

The Gospel of Mark, when compared with the other three Gospels, is more critical at the way Jesus dealt with the Temple, and its significance to his ministry.⁸³ Its distinctiveness is reflected in some of the intrinsic evidence of parallel accounts that the other three Gospels have left out. For example, in the direct quotation of Isaiah 56:7, Mark includes the words "for all peoples" in Mark 11.17. Both Matthew 21.13 and Luke 19.46 leave these words out.⁸⁴ In addition, the trial in Mark 14.58, Mark

⁸² C.S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1986), 94

⁸³ According to Craig.A.Evans, *Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Potent for Destruction?* in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol 51, no 2, (Michigan: Catholic University of America, April 1989) 240-241, the anti-temple motif of Mark is clearly seen in the passages, 12: 1-12 where the Parable of the wicked tenants implies the total destruction of the religious establishments, 13: 1-2 which shows Jesus' explicit prophecies of temple and adjacent buildings' destruction, 14:58 which implies the replacement of the temple by a superior one, and 15:38, the tearing of the temple veil symbolizes the partial fulfilment of the early prediction of temple destruction in 13:1-2.

⁸⁴ Harold Turner 62-63:He explains that the different in emphasis in regards to the Temple significance helps explain the omission in Luke and Matthew. He cites that for Mark it is more a case of 'particularism against universalism', whereas in the two above it is insincere worship against sincere worship.

alone gives a description of the 'handmade' house Jesus will destroy and the house that he will build as 'not handmade'.

The radical tone of Mark's account is peculiar to Mark only. This peculiarity in Mark presents Jesus showing a unique and a stricter attitude to the temple. As a result, a number of attempts have been proposed for a more viable interpretation of Mark's intention.

Many scholars have offered different views over the actual hermeneutics of the temple theme and the cleansing act of Jesus in particular. For example, P. M. Casey's article on the historicity of the act, attempts to justify the genuineness of the event. He interprets it as the immediate cause of Jesus' death.⁸⁵ David Seeley, in response to Casey, sees it as merely a 'Marcian Composition'.⁸⁶ He concludes that it is hard to consider the temple act as 'historical' otherwise Mark would not have elaborated more on the significance of Jesus' actions. Hence it is hard to understand.

Turner offers a more general view on the significance of Mark's portrayal of Jesus regarding the temple. He writes that Jesus never attacks the temple and its cult. In doing so, he cites examples that define Mark's attitude. One, a leper who has been cleansed is told to perform a thanksgiving ritual needed for temple sacrifice (Mark 1.44). For the temple act, Turner argues that it is in no sense a purification act, but rather Jesus is throwing the house which has been restricted to Jews only, wide open to all nations.⁸⁷ Craig Evans believes that the way to perceive Jesus' act in Mark's account shall always be in line with the traditional way the account has continued to be seen. That is, the cleansing or the purification act. In brief, Mark is referring to a true temple, the House of God, established within the community.

⁸⁵ P. M. Casey, *Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple in Catholic Biblical Quarterly* vol 59, No 1 (Michigan: Catholic University of America, January 1997), 306

⁸⁶ David Seeley, *Jesus' Temple Act Revisited: A Response to P.M. Casey* in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol 62, No 1, (Michigan: Catholic University of America, January 2000), 55.

⁸⁷ Turner, 111

C. Significance of "House" in Mark.

There is a strong sense of communal living in the Gospel of Mark. As I have referred to before, Van Iesrel is able to identify the strong sense of community life in the Marcan audience that evolves around a strong family composition.⁸⁸ This is well backed up in the numerous numbers of occasions in which Mark is able to refer to the use of houses in his account. The implication here is that the house is the physical entity by which families are based in. Furthermore, John Painter identifies the uniqueness of Mark's literary style in reference to houses. For example, he deduces that the only houses whose ownerships are not identified are the ones that have been identified, as Jesus' own.⁸⁹ On the contrary, houses that are identified are the ones used by Jesus. For instance, the one used by Simon the leper (14.3), the house in Judea (10.10), the house in Tyre (7.24), the house in the region of Gennesaret (7.17) and the house of Simon and Andrew (1.29).

Immediately after he heals both the Gerasene demoniac and the paralytic, they are then told to go into their houses (εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου).⁹⁰ The general view here is that Jesus in his missionary work depends on the hospitality of certain households for the spread of the good news. Jesus himself encourages his disciples to follow the same route (6.6b-12). It implies that Mark is suggesting that the most successful form of mission is not through preaching and teaching in the temple and the synagogue respectively, but through preaching and teaching in a house-to-house strategy. It is the abrogation of the temple and synagogue centrality, and the introduction of a new ministry that emphasizes the need to go to the house of the ordinary people in the community.

⁸⁸ Van Iesrel, 244

⁸⁹ John Painter, *When is a House Not a Home?: Disciples and Family in Mark 3.13-35*, in *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* vol 45 No 4 (New York, Cambridge University Press, October 1999), 500

⁹⁰ Painter, 500

Elizabeth Struthers Malbon gives an extensive argument on the significance of the houses in the Marcan narrative in opposition to the temple and synagogue.⁹¹ It is based on the trend after the healing act of Jesus in the synagogue (1:21,23) and his subsequent rejection by the Pharisees. That is the second half of the narrative finds Jesus confine his teachings and healings to the houses of fellow followers (5:38). This suggests that there is a shift from the synagogue to the house. This is intensified with the anointing of Jesus at the house of Simon the leper by a woman, not at the temple or the synagogue. For Malbon, Jesus the Messiah, the anointed one is being anointed at a house of an ordinary person.⁹²

Another interesting trend that has been identified is the narrative change of emphasis from the 'synagogue' in the first half to the 'temple' in the later half of the narrative. The temple in this case has been identified as the most dominant physical entity in this latter half. However, Mark depicts Jesus visiting the temple once, while staying at the house of Simon the leper. For Malbon, the significance of Mark's strategy is that a house becomes Jesus' base of opposition before the cleansing act.⁹³

The opposition of 'house' to the temple is explicit when Jesus states metaphorically in 14:58 that he will build a temple 'not made with hands'. Thus, as this paper argues, Jesus is referring to a new house, the House of God, the community of believers.

This section presents a narrative interpretation of this final section of the Gospel. I have adopted John Paul Heil's approach in "*The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark.*" The 'pragmatics' looks at the text's message for its audience to practise in their lives. It means that as the narrative

⁹¹ Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *TH OIKIA AYTOY: Mark 2:15 in Context. In Journal of the Study of the New Testament* vol 31 No 2 (New York, Cambridge University Press, April 1985) 286

⁹² Malbon, 288

⁹³ Malbon, 288

develops, it thrashes out through the acts of the people how they are going to replace the temple as God's community. Therefore, this section highlights the emphatic role the temple plays in the progression of the narrative. That is, as the narrative develops, the contention is that the temple is being replaced by the community as Mark presents

II. Exegesis: Mark 11.11-16.8.

Mark 11.1-16.8 has been identified as the Passion and Resurrection section of the Book.⁹⁴ Many commentators see this section, beginning with the grand entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, as the fulfilment of the eschatological hope of the coming of the Messiah to Zion.⁹⁵ For some, the section is littered with images and allusions to the temple narrative.⁹⁶ The images and allusions reveal how Mark presents them in a way to convince his audience and readers that the temple has no longer fulfilled its divine purpose. Hence, the implication that the temple is to be superseded and eventually replaced by the community of God's people.

A. Failure of the Temple: Jesus Proposes a New House Open to All Nations: (Mark 11.11-21).

This section begins with Jesus entering Jerusalem. He immediately goes to the temple. At this point, Mark uses the Greek word *ιερον* which means 'temple area,' not the building (verse 11). The Greek-English Lexicon explains that *ιερον* designates the "whole compass of the sacred enclosure, embracing the entire aggregate of buildings, balconies, porticos, courts."⁹⁷ This indicates that there is no particular reference to the whole building; instead it refers to a certain larger section

⁹⁴ Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark : New Century Bible Commentary Series*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, W. M. B. Eerdmans Publ.Co, 1987), 259

⁹⁵ McKelvey, 59

⁹⁶ Refers to articles of P. M. Casey and John Paul Heil

⁹⁷ Greek English Lexicon, 299

of the building. For Mark, after viewing this section of the temple building, Jesus goes out to Bethany with the disciples.⁹⁸ This verse has no parallel in both Luke and Matthew who presents the cleansing act following immediately after the inspection.

There are contrasting views regarding the significance of Jesus' so called inspection. Anderson sees it as a "preparation for the temple episode".⁹⁹ Walter. W. Wessel concurs and interprets the whole episode as "the Lord examining the institution to see whether it was fulfilling its divinely appointed mission and the examination is in preparation for the prophetic act of cleansing."¹⁰⁰ McKelvey offers a slightly different interpretation. He suggests that it is basically a "sequel to the entry in Jerusalem, not a prelude to the cleansing."¹⁰¹ However, the significance as this work contends, is made the more dramatic and understandable with Mark's insertion of the Fig Tree incident (Mk 11:12-14).

B. The Unfruitful Fig Tree (12-14)

The incident of Jesus' encounter and the cursing of the fig tree, is problematic.¹⁰² The physical needs of the Lord not being fulfilled and the failure of the fig tree to produce fruits symbolize the people of God and the temple respectively. The temple fails to provide for the people of God. The strong

⁹⁸ The Greek phrase περιβλεπταμενος παντα (to look around) occurs only in Mark 11.1. J. Duncan M. Derett, "No Stone Upon Another. Leprosy and the Temple", in *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* vol,30 (1987), 3-20, argues that the act is seen as Jesus searching for suspected leprosy, which means sins in the temple.

⁹⁹ Anderson, 263

¹⁰⁰ Walter W. Wessell, *Mark : The Expositor's Bible Commentary* volume 8, Frank .E. Gaebelein(ed) (Grand Rapids Michigan, Zondervan Publishing, 1984), 725

¹⁰¹ McKelvey, 62

¹⁰² Anderson believes it is irrational and out of character for Jesus to do such, and also it was out of season. Because of such, many question its historicity. He goes on to suggest that the actions of Jesus represent a legendary concretising of the parable of Luke 13:6-9. where the fig tree is an image of the House of Israel.(264) Old Testament eg. Jer.8.13, Joel 1.7, Ezek 17.24.... Philip Carrington in, *According to Mark : A Running Commentary on the Oldest Gospel* (Cambridge, University Press, 1960) more or less endorses the action of Jesus in the sense that he cites that there are many different kinds of fig trees in Palestine and therefore some do bear fruits during passover. His argument thus is that Jesus expected fruits on the fig tree but found none (235-236)

condemnation by Jesus (verse 14) because of the failure of the temple, is indicated by the use of the Greek words *μηκετι*.¹⁰³ The employment of the negative devices connotes the emphatic nature of Jesus' stance. The temple will never again be the centre of divine worship, nor the dwelling place of God.

The severe overtone of Jesus' prophecy also indicates his divine authority over the temple and what it stands for. The way is definitely open for a new replacement. It is out with the old and in with the new. The fig tree which symbolizes the House of Israel as Luke 13: 6-9 cites it, will now be replaced by a new House, a cooperate entity that will provide fruits forever. If the House of Israel represented by the temple, and symbolically portrayed by the fig tree, fails to fulfil its God-given purpose, then the time has come for a replacement. This is the intention of Mark. A new House of God in which he will dwell in it forever, and can adhere to his divine purpose.

C. Jesus' Temple Act , (11:15-18): A House For all Nations.

The cleansing of the temple has been widely accepted as the 'Messianic Act' of Jesus. Wessel for example, describes it as the second part of "the fulfilment of Malachi 3. 1-3, the first having been the Triumphal Entry."¹⁰⁴ Gartner says that the pericope of the cleansing of the temple is an expression of Jesus' Messianic consciousness.¹⁰⁵

The pericope begins when Jesus enters the temple for the second time. The Greek word *ιερον* denotes that Jesus may have again entered the same area of the temple as he has done the day before. Many have argued that this area is the

¹⁰³ from *μη* translated 'not' and *ετι* —meaning, no more), *μηδεις* (no one) and *εις τον αιωνα* (forever).

¹⁰⁴ Wessel, 727

¹⁰⁵ Bertil Gartner, 107

outermost court, the court of the Gentiles, which is consistent with the interpretation of *ιερὸν* (page 8). This implies that Jesus enters the court by which the Gentiles are restricted to and it is precisely here that the bazaar is staged. The buying, selling, and changing of money are done here, which everyone including the foreigners are allowed to enter. Pigeons are sold to those offering sacrifices.

The severity of Jesus' attitude and the intention of his actions are once again debatable. Graig Evans argues that these activities are legitimate and necessary for the Temple, and therefore questions the basis of the actions and the charge in verse 17.¹⁰⁶ Others support the same argument.¹⁰⁷ For others like Wessel, because the money brought by the pilgrims were Roman currency, they would then have to be changed into Temple coinage. He therefore, believes that this is where the act becomes profaned because "exorbitant prices were often charged for changing the currency."¹⁰⁸ This implies that Jesus is not happy with the defiling nature involved with the sacrifice. Hence he refers to the words of Jeremiah 7.11,

" Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight " (Jeremiah 7:11).(NRSV).

Such acts disqualify the Temple from its divinely appointed purpose. This interpretation correlates with Jesus' citation of Isaiah 56:7, **" These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.."(NRSV).**

¹⁰⁶ Graig Evans, *From House of Prayer to Cave of Robbers: Jesus' Prophetic Criticism of the Temple Establishment in The Quest For Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*: (eds) Craig A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon (Leiden, Netherlands, Brill), 417.

¹⁰⁷ David Bruce Taylor in, *Mark's Gospel as Literature and History* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 268-269, presents a conclusive account that defends the necessity and the legitimacy of the sacrifices and the money changing of the temple. Hugh Anderson also argues that the commerce of the Temple was an accepted part of the total life of the Temple.(266)

¹⁰⁸ Wessel, 727.

That is, Jesus expects the area that is normally reserved for Gentiles as their place of prayer, but it has been subjected to trade.¹⁰⁹ It means that what is more important to Jesus is the relationship between the people and God through prayer. Therefore, Jesus surely must have been driven by the above reasons and thus warranted his actions. The use of the Greek word *κληθησεται*¹¹⁰ renders it as an action that is yet to be completed. It means that the fulfilment of the purpose of God's house as a house of prayer for all peoples is soon to be acted upon by God.

Mark's use of the phrase means that the house is for the people, which suggests that the people, the community, prevails in Jesus' mind. The phrase "for all peoples" is omitted in both Luke and Matthew but Mark finds it important for his cause. Its significance is that Mark is alluding to a new House that is open to everyone. The placing of the verb "made" *πεποιήκατε* perfect form of the verb "make" means a completed action in the same sentence. It means that Mark presents Jesus not as a reformer.¹¹¹ Instead he is presented as the one who has witnessed the profanity in the temple. As a result he displays his authority over the temple and the whole institution, which he is about to replace. The purging of the carrying of the vessels in the temple simply adds to the show of authority of Jesus but it also means that Jesus is willing to renew everything.¹¹² It symbolizes what is to come. It is the

¹⁰⁹ P. M. Casey in his article, 'Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple', gives a thorough analysis of this verse. By doing so he attempts a reconstruction of the Aramaic source of Mark 11:15-18a. In this verse, he takes into account the contexts of both Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiaiah 7:11, as well as the cultural context in which Jesus spoke. He asserts that Isaiah 56:6-7 is concerned with foreigners and verse 7 is concerned entirely with their acceptance into the temple. He goes on to suggest that foreigners were only allowed into the area for gentiles. Accordingly, if the foreigners are to be joyful in "my house of prayer", then surely the 'house' which according to Casey refers to this area of the temple, is for all peoples.

¹¹⁰ 3rd person. Singular. future indicative passive of the verb *καλέω* meaning 'I call'

¹¹¹ McKelvey (66) suggests that the act of Jesus in the temple, possesses the characteristics of a traditional cultic action and was performed within the existing cult, it was capable of being interpreted as a cultic reform

¹¹² Carrying of vessels is peculiar to Mark. Casey(310) believes that the act defends the sacred place of the temple. Anderson (266) suggests that Jesus is conforming to a rule of the Mishnah against entering the temple with staff, sandle or even a wallet.

coming judgement on the temple and its corrupt leaders, which is reinforced by the parable of the vineyard that Mark inserts in Chapter 12. The consequences mean that the focus will now be on the people instead of the actual building itself. The outcome of Jesus' action and the significance of his teachings, strikes fear in the hearts of the authorities.¹¹³

Feeling that their own influence has been challenged, they started plotting Jesus' death. R. H. Gundry writes that Jesus "strikes fear in the hearts of the hierarchs who are trying to destroy him."¹¹⁴ The point is that the jurisdictions of the authorities have been completely made void, and the heart of the worship of Judaism has been thrown wide open by Jesus for all peoples and nations. The door is now open for a house that "shall be called a house of prayer that enables all people to worship God."¹¹⁵

D. Withered Fig Tree: Symbolic and Definite End of the Temple and Significance: (11:20-21)

This short section resumes the interrupted story of the fig tree. Most commentators¹¹⁶ extend this section to verse 25 to show that the incident of the withered fig tree illustrates Jesus' faith instead of God's judgement. However, the contention is that, the symbolic end to the temple and its significance is assured at these two verses. The withering of the fig tree after the strong condemnation by Jesus in verse (12) is fulfilled here. The significance of the Greek word *ξηρανται*,¹¹⁷ has withered away means that the incident has a lasting effect. For Jesus, it is symbolic of what is

¹¹³ The word "taught and said to them" comes under the teaching formula of Mark. The Greek word (*ἐδιδασκεῖν*) means Jesus taught continually even in the midst of his violent actions.

¹¹⁴ R.H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology For the Cross*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 641.

¹¹⁵ Heil, 78

¹¹⁶ Both Anderson (268) and Witehrington (317) argue along the same line

¹¹⁷ 3 pers, sing, perf ind passive of the verb *ξηραίνω* which means 'dry out', is translated- 'has withered away'

to come. The temple has ended its significance and all its functions will now be surely replaced forever.

III. Replacement of the Temple: Chapter (11:27 –12.44)

This section deals with Jesus' teachings regarding the replacement of the doomed temple. The development of Mark's narrative presents Jesus' teachings pointing to the upstage replacement of the temple. It also proposes the community as the most preferred place for God's dwelling with Jesus as the keystone.

A. Jesus the Keystone: Authoritative Replacement of the Temple: (11:27-12.12)

The narrative again continues with Jesus entering into the temple, the one that is soon to be replaced because it fails to serve its rightful purpose. Because of his alleged authority over the temple and its authorities, the scene is therefore set for a series of confrontations. Mark's account at this point,(11:27), indicates that the representative delegation of the Sanhedrin¹¹⁸ came to Jesus. The authority issue is not about a political or any other religious order, but the legitimization of Jesus' authority. The use of the Greek word *ἐξουσία* in verse 28, in contrast to the Greek word *δυναμὶς* meaning power, implies that the Sanhedrin representatives want to make sure that Jesus' authority is divinely associated.

This is a clever ploy by Mark. The use of *ἐξουσία* is a reminder to the audience that the purpose of God for them is rooted in the authority of God. It is that authority that establishes them as the new house for God to dwell in. This is the same authority given to Jesus which has also empowered the ministry of John

¹¹⁸ C.S Mann (100) believes that this group was only a casually assembled group of all three orders, the Sadducees, Pharisees and the Elders.

the Baptist earlier in the Gospel. It also enables Jesus to do "these things" (referring to both his cleansing act and his teachings). These acts of Jesus, according to Mark, not only give confidence and assurance to the new community that they will be empowered, but they do indicate their new status as the house of God.

The parable of the wicked tenants itself (12:1-12) has caused doubts because of its allegorical features.¹¹⁹ Comparing this pericope with Chapter 11: 27-33, C. Myers identifies a "near identical five step pattern" to both narratives that surround the parable of the vineyard. This pattern has been identified as:

- Jesus approached by religious opponents
- Jesus being questioned about the authority
- Jesus poses a counter question
- Opponents respond
- Jesus answers the original question accordingly.¹²⁰

This pattern is called the sandwich technique. That is, the parable helps the readers discern the meaning of the controversies that surround the narratives and vice versa. Here, Jesus is telling the temple authorities another example to convince them further that their time is up. The Markan form of the parable of the vineyard has a background in Isaiah 5: 1-2,¹²¹ where the people of Israel is depicted as God's own vineyard. The implication is that Jesus is the strong foundation, the rock, and the keystone of the new House of God.

¹¹⁹ Wessel, 731

¹²⁰ C. Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, N.Y. Orbis, 1988), 306

¹²¹ Mark's Greek is very similar to the LXX of Isa. 5: 1-2

The parable of the vineyard Ἀμπελωνα which is being overlooked by a tower is interpreted as representing the temple.¹²² It is being built ὡκοδομησεν¹²³ by God, and is put in the care of the authorities. The implication here is that God builds the temple for his people and entrusts the leaders to oversee its purposes. The significance of the verb ἐξέδετο¹²⁴ means that it is farming out for financial advantage. It means that God wants the people and the temple to be fruitful.

Relating this parable to the fruitless fig tree of Chapter 11 despite its violent nature,¹²⁵ they both correlate well. Mark here emphasizes the failure of the leaders, the Jewish authorities to oversee God's people and the temple purposes. Myers claims that the severe attitude of the tenants,¹²⁶ is that they not only fail to serve their purpose but they even try to lay claim and authority over the vineyards and the temple.¹²⁷ The Greek word κληρονομος indicates that¹²⁸ Jesus the only son, has himself lay true claims to the people and the temple to be his own. Yet he is put to death. The ramifications are that the authorities lose their claim over the people and the temple. The focus now shifts to the "others." They have been interpreted as the apostles who have been hand-given the responsibility instead. Their function was to oversee the vineyard, the people of God, to make sure that they would be fruitful and become "God's communal household of prayer for all peoples".¹²⁹ The placing of verses 10-12 is understood to be an addition to the Marcan parable by most

¹²² Heil, 81

¹²³ (3 person sing, aorist ind act) from οἰκοδομέω —meaning 'to erect or build'

¹²⁴ (3rd person singular, aorist indicative middle) of the verb ἐκδίδομαι to let out, lease, rent.—meaning being rented out -,

¹²⁵ Withering ton (321) comments that the parable reflects a crescendo of violence.

¹²⁶ (γεωργοῖς noun dat masc pl) from γεωργός, οὗ meaning farmer, tenant, vinedresser)

¹²⁷ Myers, 307

¹²⁸ (noun nom masc sing) from κληρονόμος, meaning the one who receives what God has promised to his people; heir.)

¹²⁹ Heil, 82

scholars.¹³⁰ It emphasizes the point that Jesus has now been legitimately entrusted the ownership of the House of God.

According to Witherington, the likening of Christ to a stone is a popular theme in early Christianity. Mark's citation of the LXX version of Psalms 118: 22-23 has been interpreted eschatologically.¹³¹ The Greek formula *κεφαλὴν γωνίας* is literally translated as the 'head keystone',¹³² makes 'cornerstone' ambiguous. Hence, it interprets Jesus as the one who is rejected, but is now becoming the heart of God's own household, the true temple, not made with hands.

B. Coming Destruction of the Temple; (13: 1-2)

Despite the endless number of scholarly works and interpretations of Mark 13, the paper focuses on the exegesis of verses 1 and 2. The call by Mark, here early in this chapter, is that Jesus himself believes that the destruction of the temple is an eschatological judgment of God. The two verses themselves come under the larger section of the long discourse of Jesus' teachings (13:1-37). These two verses probably sum up the definiteness of the prophetic doom placed upon the Jerusalem temple. They also depict how the temple will be replaced by the community, the new House of God.

In verse 1, after the question from one of the disciples regarding the temple structures, Jesus answered, "Do you see?." In Greek *Βλέπετε*¹³³ carries with it a slight rebuke by Jesus on the unbelieving attitude of his disciples. The employment of the two negatives *οὐ μὴ*, both in the emphatic positions, twice in verse 2 is a solid

¹³⁰ Witherington, 322

¹³¹ witherington, 322

¹³² Witherington (323) argues that in the Psalmist's context the reference is to one of the stones meant for Solomon's temple which was rejected in the construction of the sanctuary, but became the keystone in the porch area.

¹³³ (verb ind pres act 2nd per sing), from βλέπω meaning to see or to look,

indication of the definiteness of the coming judgment on the doomed temple. The placing by Mark of the phrase 'stone by stone' is indicative of the total devastation by which the temple will be destroyed. The images of the physical buildings or houses,¹³⁴ being erected by the magnificent works of man's hands¹³⁵ indicates that the temple, built by Israel will now be replaced by the new house of God, not made with hands.

C. House of God :The Responsibility of the Community: (13 : 34-37)

This section once again echoes the use of the parable of a man who goes away but entrusts the ownership and the care of his property (vineyard) to the tenants in 12:1. In this case, the house has been left to the care of the servants of the house, presumably the new community of God, which is responsible for its welfare. The emphasis is that Mark once again employs the imagery of a house in opposition to the temple. The two derivatives of the Greek root word *οἶκος* namely *οἰκία* and *οἰκία* translated literally as home and house respectively in verses 34-35, also indicate the primary meaning, household, which refers to a corporate connotation.

The significance of the authority given to the servants means that they also inherit the authority of the house immediately. The work left by Jesus means that each member of the community of God has a role to play in maintaining the integrity of the house itself. So the intention of Mark is for the Community to keep awake.¹³⁶ The imperative mood of the Greek verb *γρηγορεῖτε*, renders the vigilance of the Community to be a must, as the Lord of the House will return at an indefinite time. One can also take note of the use of the Greek words *ἄνθρωπος* man, in verse 34 and

¹³⁴ οἰκοδομαί and οἰκοδομάς

¹³⁵ Wessel (743) comments that the records of Josephus show that the stones of the temple were 25 by 8 by 12 cubits wide.

¹³⁶ γρηγορεῖτε (verb imper pres act 2nd per pl), from γρηγορέω to keep awake; watch, be alert; be alive) also in 1 Timothy 5: 6

the word *κύριος* in verse 35. Here, as it begins, the master of the house is a man, but it ends with the master becoming the Lord. The implication is that Jesus is the Lord of the house. The positioning of the four watches of the day in verse 35, at the evening, at midnight, at cockcrow, and in the morning, enhances the emphasis placed upon the total commitment of the community in order to fulfill their God given purpose.

D. New House of God, Not made With Hands: (14: 43- 58)

This section begins with the arrest of Jesus by the authorities. Ironically, the temple officials accompany the arresting crowd. This reflects their deep hatred of Jesus and the way he has condemned not only them and their corrupt leadership, but also the temple itself and its worship. The arrest can only add to the strong anti-temple feeling of the Marcan Jesus. It also connects Jesus' teachings about the replacement of the temple to his death and resurrection.¹³⁷ These events are seen as a stepping stone to the fulfillment of the building of a new House of God, by which Jesus himself would be placed as the keystone.

In verse 43, the Greek word *ὄχλος* meaning, crowd or multitude, indicates that Jesus is mobbed by an irregular and unorganized force. It emphatically portrays the strong anti feeling of the authorities against Jesus.¹³⁸ In saying so, the unorganized nature of the mob means that the people themselves are incited by the cunning ways of the authorities.¹³⁹ Jesus' charge about the attitude of the authorities, even though they have been dialoguing in the temple, is hardly significant. But the non violent nature and the ease by which he gives himself up, means that Jesus really sees himself as the true builder of a new house of God. It is done through the instigation of his

¹³⁷ Heil, 97.

¹³⁸ Ezra P. Gould: *Gospel According to St. Mark in International Critical Commentary*: (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1982), 273

¹³⁹ John 18.3 on the contrary says that the arresting party was the *σπειρα*, a detachment representing the Roman cohort.

death and resurrection. The charge leveled at Jesus in verse 58 when he says that, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands", heightens the emphasis of temple abrogation, and the building of a new House of God.

A further understanding of this statement is illuminated when we consider the sayings of Jesus in verse 11.7 and 13.2. What needs to be understood is that even at the metaphorical level of the Gospel, the temple is rejected and house is affirmed.¹⁴⁰ According to Malbon, even though Jesus is falsely charged, the temple not made with hands he is referring to is none other than the House of God.¹⁴¹ This house is built *οἰκοδομησῶ*¹⁴² among the community of people, with Jesus as the keystone.

E. Jesus the Keystone of a New House of God: (15:25-16:8)

This section marks the official time of Jesus' crucifixion. Mark records it at nine o'clock in the morning, but Witherington claims that this is problematic.¹⁴³ The significance of the verse 25 and the recognition of the time of the event validates the historicity of Jesus' death. To Anderson, despite the difficulties, the marking of the hours presents a theological significance. It was simply God's time, and the death of Jesus is all part of his plan for the salvation of all people.¹⁴⁴ The implication of the historicity of the event, and its theological overtone, signifies that the establishment of the new house of God is all in God's plan. It is his divine power that will enable the erection of the new temple in three days.

¹⁴⁰ Malbon, 288

¹⁴¹ Malbon, 288

¹⁴² (verb ind fut act 1st per sing), from *οἰκοδομέω* which means build, erect; build up, encourage, strengthen, edify; rebuild, restore

¹⁴³ Witherington, 396, says that it is problematic because of its apparent irreconcilable with the account of John 19:14.

¹⁴⁴ Anderson, 342

In verse 29, Mark presents the taunting of Jesus on the cross by the passers-by, as an allusion to the end of the physical temple. According to Witherington, this is pure Markan irony. The people are mocking the one who will bring judgment on their temple. In his words, "ironically, the true conclusions are found on the lips of the mockers."¹⁴⁵ The challenge to Jesus to come down from the cross, and his eventual response to remain on the cross, signifies that he wishes to remain focus on his call, to build a new House, as he is the keystone.¹⁴⁶

The tearing of the inner curtain (*καταπέτασμα*) of the temple in verse 38 is one event of special significance. The book of Hebrew 6-9 alludes to the traditional knowledge that the renting of the veil to the Holy of Holies means that God's presence is no longer confined to the temple. Symbolically, Anderson sees it as the declaration of the meaning of Jesus' death,¹⁴⁷ and C. S. Mann claims that it signifies "an end and a new beginning."¹⁴⁸ For Heil, the tearing of the veil from top to bottom, is a divine act of God (*Εσχισθη* divine passive).¹⁴⁹ Both C. S. Mann and Anderson agree that it symbolizes the end of the temple system. It means that God opens a new way for everyone to him. The tearing of the veil also symbolizes the total destruction of the old temple. Therefore a new way is opened for the establishment of a new House of God not made with hands. To Mark the progressive sequence of the narrative from the witness of the centurion (verse 39) to the presence of the two women (verse 40), complements the emphasis above. The emphatic nature of the placement of the two verses means that in relation to the new House of God, people of all kinds are accepted in this house.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Witherington, 397

¹⁴⁶ Heil, 98

¹⁴⁷ Anderson, 347

¹⁴⁸ C. S. Mann, 653

¹⁴⁹ Heil, 98

¹⁵⁰ Heil, 99

The event of the resurrection, confirmed in verse 4, with the empty tomb, and in verse 6, by the witness of the young man is significant. For the early Christian community, it gives them faith and conviction in the risen Lord. For the purpose of Mark, it confirms emphatically that Jesus is now the keystone of the new House of God, the community.

K. Summary.

The narrative development of the temple theme as this work presents, begins at chapter 11:1 and concludes at chapter 16:8. The emphasis of the whole narrative is that the temple has failed to fulfill its divinely given purpose. As a direct result it will now be replaced by a more permanent form of the temple, the community of God's people, the house of God. The argument of this work therefore depicts the household of God, basically the New Community as the true place of God's dwelling.

As mentioned earlier, the allusions and images of house and temple, which are scattered throughout Mark's Gospel, point to the residential meaning of 'house'. Jesus' inspection in 11:11 of the temple is a premeditated act to see if the temple has been fulfilling its given function. It also identifies very early Mark's intention. That is the house of God will be opened to people of all nations. For Mark the community of people is in his mind. The cleansing of the temple (14-18) represents Jesus as the one whose actions are incited because of the profane nature of the sacrificial acts. Therefore, he wants to open its door as a house of prayers to all people. The significance of the phrase "shall be called" is that it calls for a future fulfillment. Mark presents that fulfillment banks on a much more cooperated and concerted effort of the community of people.

The incident of the withered fig tree (20-21) after the strong condemnation by Jesus (12-14) can only add more emphasis and truth to the future destruction of the temple, thereby ending all its significance and value to the Jewish people. The parable of the wicked tenants illustrates the idea of the vineyard, as symbolic of the House of Israel. That is, the people and the temple being entrusted within the care of the leaders, but they fail to respond. The consequences of their actions means that Jesus is now destined to be the keystone of a new house built by God, on the strength of its new community(12:10-12).

Chapter 13, begins with the confrontational style of the Marcan Jesus. The imagery of buildings, *οἶκος*, *οἰκίας*, and *οἰκίους* built by the work of man's hands is now destined to be utterly destroyed and eventually replaced (1-2). This also sets up the progressive nature and purpose of Mark, of how his community would fulfill their role as the new House of God. That is the temple made with man's hands would definitely be replaced by a house not made with hands. The reference to three days means that the event of death and resurrection would be the seed of the new house of God, the community of which Jesus would be the keystone. The events leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection (14-16.8) can only be seen in the light that its instigation starting from his arrest is seen as a mere stepping stone to how Jesus will build a new House of whom he will be the keystone. Simply it is the fulfillment of prophecies.

For Mark the tearing of the temple veil means that it no longer serves its purpose and thus it is now open to every one. The resurrection of Jesus confirms the intention of Mark, that he will be the true keystone by which a new house of God will be built on. That house is the community of his people.

CHAPTER THREE.

House of God: In Relation to the Samoan Context

The *οἶκος τοῦ Θεοῦ* has been understood primarily as a community. Hence, the place, which has been referred as the primary dwelling place of God, is the community. The emphasis on the community is derived from an understanding of the Greek term *οἶκος* which has dual meanings.

The word *οἶκος* in the Samoan language is *fale*. *Fale* has a special significance to all Samoans. First, it is the basic dwelling place for a family. This meaning is associated with the physical understanding of *οἶκος*. Second, *fale* relates not only to its household, but also to the household activities that take place in it. This meaning correlates with the primary emphasis of this paper. According to Ulu Vaomalo Ulu Kini, this primary sense of the *Fale*, illustrates the true meaning of the Samoan proverbial saying, "*E le o le Fale ae o lona Anofale*", (The House is not the most important, but what goes on inside the house).¹⁵¹ The implication here is that the *Fale* cannot serve its function if the people inside are not responsible, and the activities are not adhered to.

The point of discussion in this chapter is that the Samoan understanding of the *Fale* and *Anofale* relate to the defined components of the Greek meaning of *οἶκος*.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Ulu Vaomalo Ulu Kini, Personal interview on May 23, 2004. He is the former Minister of Youth, Sports and Culture and a current highly respected orator in Parliament.

¹⁵² Upolu Vaai, *A Theological Reflection on God's oikos (House) in Relation to the Samoan Context*: in *Pacific Journal of Theology*, Series ii, issue 16, 1996), 73

I: *Fale ma lona Anofale* (House and its Interior): *The Basis of Samoan Communal Living.*

A. The Samoan Fale: Purpose and Significance:

The Samoan *Fale* is associated with the building, and therefore it relates to the idea of a dwelling place or habitation. But this meaning does not entirely reflect the whole meaning of the *Fale*. Upolu Vaai rightly states that every thing which relates to the *Fale* is what is called the *Fale*.¹⁵³ He is basically referring to the totality of the house in all its dimensions, the *lumafale* (front), the *tafale* (sides) *tuafale* (back) and the *anofale* (inside). In practical, all the activities that are performed at these particular sides contribute to maintaining the beauty and stability of the house. Some writings¹⁵⁴ have focussed their attention on the actual design of the *Fale*, and the respective significances and functions of each individual part. This paper on the other hand attempts to express the significance of the *Fale* in its totality.

The traditional Samoan *Fale* is a place of many functions. It is the normal place for accommodation. It is a place that conducts village meetings (*fono*), and basically, it is the normal place for any family dwelling. It is a place that is designed especially to accommodate the hot, humid weather, with its more open, round, style that, "is by design and construction is admirably suited to the tropical environment."¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, the Samoan *Fale* means a lot to any Samoan. Naturally, it defines one's identity because it gives a sense of belonging to the *Fale* and his *Aiga* (family) in general. *Aiga* here refers to both the nuclear and the extended family in

¹⁵³ Upolu Vaai, 73

¹⁵⁴ Lowell D. Holmes, *A Samoan Village* (New York: Rinehart Holt and Winston, 1974), 78
R. P. Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900: The Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community with Introduction and Conclusion* by J. W. Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 10-11

¹⁵⁵ Gilson, 10

general. According to Ale Vena, the *Fale* is a place where a Samoan is nurtured; a place of identity. A Samoan belongs to a *Fale* and it connects that person to the extended family as well as one's own culture (*"O le Fale e tapue ai le lagona o le tagata e piimau i lona Aiga ma lana aganuu."*)¹⁵⁶ In Ulu Kini's understanding, *Fale* symbolizes the essence and the splendour of communal living (*O le Fale e atagia mai ai le fatu ma le matagofie o le ola i totonu o se nuu.*)¹⁵⁷ These views express the fundamental nature and the significance of the *Fale*. It is a place that symbolizes unity within a community.¹⁵⁸

Furthermore, Ulu Kini extends on this notion by implying that the unifying symbol of the *Fale*, reflects the consent of every member of the *Aiga* to build the *Fale* in the first place. He goes on to suggest that *"e le mafai ona faia le Fale pe a le faamalieina le Fale."* (A House cannot be built without the unifying consent of the House).¹⁵⁹ The connotation is that the latter reference to *Fale* implies the community.

Moreover, the openness of the house's plan format, which allows people to enter from any direction, symbolizes its willingness to welcome anyone seeking rest or nourishment.¹⁶⁰ This view correlates with Talia Tapaleao's observation, in the sense that it symbolizes "simplicity, openness and freedom."¹⁶¹ In all, the *Fale* is a place which signifies in its totality, the beauty of a Samoan way of living. But as has been stated before, it is not what the *Fale* presents that makes it glitter, but it is the activities that go on in the *Fale* that makes it unique and true. It is the *anofale* that complement the *fale*.

¹⁵⁶ Ale Vena, Personal Interview on May 24, 2004. He is one of the Paramount Chief and Orator of his village, Toamua. He is also the current Commissioner of Public Service Commission

¹⁵⁷ Ulu Kini

¹⁵⁸ Tunupopo Patu, *"Faamalama Theology"* B.D Thesis, Presented to the Faculty of Malua Theological College, 2001, 30

¹⁵⁹ Ulu Kini

¹⁶⁰ Patu, 30

¹⁶¹ Talia Tapaleao, *Faavae I le Atua Samoa (Samoa Founded on God)*. B.D Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Pacific Theological College, 1990, 23

B. The Anofale (interior).

The *Anofale* is a basic term that defines the interior of the *Fale*. This includes both the household and the activities of the house. The important connection between the two is that it is the activities a person perform that defines one's integrity in a household community. This section will look at both aspects of the *Anofale*, and how they consolidate the idea that the *Anofale* is the actual heart of the whole *Fale*.

B.1 The Household (Aiga).

The basic household of any Samoan *Fale* consists of the *matai and his auaiga* (chief and his extended family).¹⁶² This in itself makes a community. To Gilson, this household is the "basic economic work unit in a Samoan society, which comprises an extended rather than an elementary family."¹⁶³ The *matai* (chief) is usually the head of any household, whose authority extends to every member. According to Amaama Tofaeono, the simplest form of this household "signifies a relationship of people, a social unit in a village where a *matai* (chief) directs its religious, economic, and political activities."¹⁶⁴ Each household is a self-sustaining unit, which in cooperation each member contributes in providing for the *Aiga*.

This household (*Aiga*) can also be described in the framework of its communal nature. Samoans do believe that in a simple village setting, every family member is related. It means that every one is related in the sense that all belong to one whole body. This group of people all work together to help each other out in any way possible.

¹⁶² Except for isolated cases whereby a single *Fale* consists of the *Matai*, his wife and his children only.

¹⁶³ Gilson, 15

¹⁶⁴ Amaamalele Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: Aiga. The Household of Life: A Perspective From Living Myths and Traditions of Samoa*, (World mission, Erlanger Verlag fur mission und Okumene, 2000), 30

To a larger setting, the household of any village consists of all the *matais* (chiefs) from each individual household. This is the governing body or the village council, which convene every now and then to discuss matters pertaining to the village. The average village *fono*, (village household) consists in order, the *Alii Sili* who is the paramount chief of the village, the *tulafale* (orators) who are the talking 'chiefs', who are normally responsible to speak on behalf of the *alii sili*, the *faleupolu*, who represent chiefs of lower ranks, and then the *aumaga* or the untitled men. These divisions then make up the core of the village household, and they also have a collective role to play in sustaining peace and unity within the village. In other words the betterment of the village as a whole depends on this community of people.

B.2. Household Activities (*Galuega Faatino*)

This normally represents the most important part of the *Anofale*. It refers to the activities and functions that take place in the *Anofale*, which help strengthen the whole of the *Fale*.

In the basic set up of a family household (*Aiga*), the *matai* is the head of the family. His most important role is to oversee the well being of his household. This includes decision-making, which must reflect his fairness which considers the rights of every one to speak out. This in essence must reflect the *tofa* (wisdom) and the *moe* (knowledge) of any *matai* to ensure peace and unity are maintained. Gilson echoes this view, stating that the decision making process for any *matai* indicates that he is "ultimately responsible for decisions affecting the household as a corporate group."¹⁶⁵ Muao Sua also claims that this role "reflects the administering function of the *matai* in

¹⁶⁵ Gilson, 16

controlling all family affairs.”¹⁶⁶ The reference here is to all aspects of a household life, be it the land issues, the subsistence of the household, religious worship, etc.

Overall, the implication is that the *matai* must ensure that all aspects of his service to his household are adhered to. This means that with the *Anofale* as his base of operation, he makes sure that not only everyone is directed to his/her duty; he will also ensure that he leads them to the right path of life. This will surely reflect well on the *Fale* and its illuminated image.

Significantly, other members of the household themselves have activities to undertake. This is to make sure that in return they are performing their roles and responsibilities as needed. This can be done through their concerted effort in rendering the service not only to the *matai*, but also to each other who is in need. In Samoan, this service is simply called, *tautua*. Sua simply describes it in the sense that it is “rooted in the concept of reciprocal offering of service.”¹⁶⁷ This is the idea of giving back in return what has been given. Manoo Kato consolidates this view. He states that, the beauty of *tautua* is that, before the coming of Christianity, the Samoans always believe in reciprocity(*Ua leva ona talitonu Samoa i le taua o le tau i atu ole lelei i le lelei, ae le i oo mai le talalelei*).¹⁶⁸ It simply means that Samoans always believe in the virtues of loving one another, in order to sustain peace and tranquillity in every facet of everyday living.

Moreover the simplicity of either rendering service or household activities, like worshipping, eating, deliberating over an issue, or simply sleeping under one roof, indicates that Samoans have a remarkable character of communal living. For

¹⁶⁶ Muao Sua, “*Congregational Christian Church in Samoa(CCCS) and Investment in the Church: A Biblical Component of Stewardship*” B.D Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Malua Theological College, October, 2002, 42

¹⁶⁷ Muao Sua, 44

¹⁶⁸ Manoo Kato, Personal Interview on May 22, 2004. He holds a *matai* title in the village of Falelatai, and also in the village of Toamua.

example, the proverbial saying, '*Se i Fale le mataupu*' (Let's discuss the matter in the house) recognizes the need for every voice in the household to be heard. The significance of communalism and unity in the vicinity of this household (*Anofale*), is that it reflects holistically the true nature of the *Fale*. More importantly it reflects the true nature of the community that help sustain the integrity of the *Fale*. The point is, either within the confines of the Aiga or the larger village setting, the community of people holds primary importance. We will see how this view is portrayed in a larger setting, the village (*nuu*).

The idea is that the *nuu* equates to the body idea of οἶκος. More significantly, the community and its values, (which relates to the communal idea), indicate, that we have always been a community where God resides. This is even before the arrival of the Gospel to our shores.

II: *Faa-Samoa* and the Essence of Communal Living.

The communal element of any community life is incorporated in the framework of our *Faa-Samoa*, our normal way of living. Hence, in order to comprehend our task, we will first have a look at the connection between the *Faa-Samoa* and the idea of communalism.

A. Definition of *Faa-Samoa*.

Faa-Samoa is a very broad term that encapsulates the system by which a Samoan lives. It is a total make-up of the Samoan culture. According to Pa'u Lautu, it "comprises visible and invisible characteristics and in turn forms the basis of

principles, values and beliefs that influence and control the behaviour and attitudes of Samoans."¹⁶⁹

Its wider influence means that it is applicable to any arena of dialogue, be it social, religious, economic or political. Iati Iati, believes that it is 'essentially a traditional governance system', when speaking of its political nature.¹⁷⁰ He talks about the connection between the revered motto of good governance, which preaches accountability and transparency, and the *Faa-Samoa*. Consequently, the *Faa-Samoa* is then seen as a system that preserves and upholds the finer points and values of any Samoan. This normally rubs off on the whole community.

So, to understand this communal nature and significance within the community, one must understand the essential features of its structure, namely, in this case, the *nuu* (village).

B. Community Structure: The *Nuu* (Village)

A simple definition of the term, *nuu*, is that it is a collection of groups of *Aiga*. To Malama Meleisea, it is basically the political unit of *Samoa*.¹⁷¹ The term itself is usually translated as 'village', but the term *nuu* is more than just a geographical location of a settled community. The point is that the term has a far more complex understanding, in that it is a 'group of extended families with a shared history which is summarised in the *faalupega*¹⁷² which gives the village its identity.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Pau Tafaogalupe Manoo Tilivea Mulitalo Lautu, *Faa-Samoa and Social Work Within the New Zealand Context* (Palmerston North, Dunmore Press Ltd, 2000), 15

¹⁷⁰ Iati Iati, The Good Governance Agenda for a Civil Society; Implications for the Faa-Samoa, in "*Governance in Samoa*", Elise Huffer and Asofou Soo (eds) (Australian National University, Asia Pacific Press, 2000), 71

¹⁷¹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga; A Short History of Western Samoa*, (Suva, Institute of Pacific Studies & Western Samoa Extension Centre of the USP, 1987), 28

¹⁷² *Faalupega* refers to the honorific phrases of Address for any village.

Each family has the matai as the head, and he is the one responsible in making the final decisions. The *nuu* consists of the '*fono a le nuu*', which is the village council, whereby matais from each *Aiga* sits in as a representative in village affairs. This group is also the one of the two major groups, which make up the *nuu*. It also can be called '*o le nuu o Alii*' (village of the men) of which also consists a group of men called the *aumaga* (untitled men). At the head of such organizations, are the *Alii* and the *Tulafale*. The primary role of the *Alii* is to make the utmost final decision, having listened to the advice of the *Tulafale*. The second group is normally called '*o le nuu o tamaitai*' ('the village of the ladies') and they too contribute tremendously to the defined role of the *nuu*, that is to keep peace and harmony amongst each members.

Therefore the implication of such defined structures is that every one knows his or her role. This is according to rank and status and thus is able to contribute accordingly to the welfare of such community. The common belief is that any Samoan male or female who grows up in this particular setting, is usually well versed with the Samoan culture (*aganuu*). Hence, such person is able to reflect the values and protocols in his or her actions. The term *aganuu*, can be easily defined as *aga*- which literally means, virtues and values, and *nuu* refers to the total learned experience of anyone growing up in the village.

Thus, a connection is made between the good virtues of the Samoan culture, which Makesi Neemia defines as divinely given,¹²⁴ and the *nuu*, which simply represents a Samoan community.

¹⁷³ Meleisea, 28

¹²⁴ Makesi Lene Neemia, "*The Book of Qoheleth as a Critique of Samoan Wisdom*" B.D Thesis Presented to the Faculty of Malua Theological College, October, 2000, 32

C. Values of Communal Living.

Communal living can simply be defined as the way or how the people of any simple community live. For a Samoan community, it depicts the totality of norms, values and protocols, by which any community lives. In reality they reflect the true essence of the Samoan culture (*aganuu*). It is a joyful and friendly environment of which everyone feels the sense of belonging to one family (*Aiga*). There is no individualism and everyone would mobilise to help out one another whoever is in need of help. I quote from Tunupopo Patu's experience,

"As I was growing up in *Samoa*, I remember that during certain times when we were preparing meals and an ingredient needed for the meal could not be found, then without hesitation I like many would seek this amenity from any other house in close proximity. Conversely it was not surprising when at certain times of the day someone from a neighbouring house would show at my family's home also looking for a certain commodity. This demonstrates the communalism that was prevalent in the Samoan community."¹²⁵

Patu's experience speaks for many. He reflects well on this element of communal living, which indicates for most Samoans a family background nurtured by love and a willingness to share. The respect and honesty are normally taught and valued in the close vicinity of each *Fale* in the community. To each *matai* in the family setting, there is the need to discuss and agree unanimously with all members of the family in all-important issues. This is to ensure peace and cooperation within the family.¹²⁶ In the village arena, the paramount function of any village council (*fono*) is to make sure that peace and unity is maintained. Makesi also claims that the communal structure of any Samoan community is the most democratic form of government.¹²⁷ The connotation is that within the confines of village governing, there

¹²⁵ Tunupopo Patu, 29

¹²⁶ Neemia, 30

¹²⁷ Makesi Neemia, 30

is usually the consensus to delegate authority to each one present, to voice his opinion. This is normally termed as '*soalaupule*.'¹²⁸ It means that authority is not overly dictated and a concerted show of hands is what is required to be able to come to a unified decision. The real onus of such is to foster fellowship and create unity in a community and thus make it a prosperous place to live for everyone.

Perhaps it is also good to note further at this stage some of the defined values of a Samoan community, which uniquely makes it a pleasant place to live. These values signify the true fundamental nature and essence of communal living, and also emphasize the point that our culture (*aganuu*) is divinely inherited. It also adds merit to the notion that the Samoans and their culture had been guided by Christian principles even before the arrival of Christianity to our shores. More importantly, it highlights once more, our contention, that the community of people is the true heart of any society.

C.1 *Osi Aiga* (Conforming to the Needs of the Nuclear and Extended Family)

The principles of this cultural code are very much well known worldwide. I say this because the impact of the *Faa-Samoa* overseas can be understood in the framework of the value of *Osi Aiga*. It refers to one's ability to embrace and meet the demands of any family projects when it arises. The true essence behind the whole value is derived from the principles of *tautua* or service that any member of the family gives to the family. To the community, it means giving, service, support, love and commitment to make sure that the one in need is provided and cared for. Kato

¹²⁸ Soalaupule simply means a delegation of authority to each person, to voice their opinions and concerns to matters arising.

believes that this code of the *Faa-Samoa* can only strengthen our beliefs that our culture was God-given.¹²⁹ He talks about the beauty of looking out for one another, and reaching out to make sure that the one who is need is cared for.¹³⁰

C.2 *Faaaloalo* (respect)

Samoans have often been applauded because of their show of respect (*faaaloalo*), not only to the community confines, but also to the wider spectrum of life. *Faaaloalo* is often a powerful tool and a revered value of the *Faa-Samoa*, which often imitates the manner by which one behaves towards one another. It often means a show of respect, courtesy and politeness to one another and is often conferred to a particular person in respect of his/her gender, status and ethnicity. It is often regarded as "part of the elaborate etiquette which forms the basis of the culture."¹³¹ For Derek Freeman in quoting both George Pratt and George Brown respectively, call the Samoans as, "the greatest observers of etiquette in Polynesia if not in the world" and "arguably the most polite people in the world."¹³² It means therefore that *faaaloalo* has spread our ethical ways of sharing and communicating universally. In reality it preaches the message of humility and compassion. It simply portrays that we are prepared to play second fiddle to the next person. It also plays an important role in the life of the community, as it preaches good virtues and manners, which help build and strengthen relationships within the community.

¹²⁹ Manoo Kato

¹³⁰ Manoo Kato

¹³¹ Lautu, 21

¹³² Derek Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1983), 122-123

C.3 *Ifoga* (Reconciliation):

The *Ifoga* can often be described as a 'confessional and humiliating act asking for pardon.'¹³³ It is normally an act submitted in apology asking for forgiveness, by instigating a long and arduous act of bowing in front of the house of the offended. The real significance behind the whole gesture is not only it asks for forgiveness but it also seeks reconciliation between the two parties involved. The religiosity element behind the whole act is culturally inherited. This is reflected by the observation of Gilson when he says, "When an *ifoga* was undertaken, it was customary that the other party should accept the gesture and agree to a peaceful settlement."¹³⁴

The act normally is called for when someone in the severe acts of murder, or an assault, or disrespecting a high chief(*Alii*), violates the norms that sustain the integrity of communal life. Therefore the *ifoga* is thus carried out so as the tainted integrity and peace of the community can be restored. The whole act itself bespeaks and signifies high moral and cultural values. These help transcend the true essence of belonging to a community. It is an act that shows the uniqueness of the Samoan cultural values. He/she is always willing to care for each other and to maintain personal inner peace.

C.4. *Feagaiga* (Covenant)

Feagaiga in the Samoan culture is normally an obligation or moral duty of a Samoan male to her sister. Traditionally, the *feagaiga* was a lifetime commitment of any Samoan male to her sister. This is before the arrival of Christianity and the subsequent bestowal of this cultural code on the *Faifeau* (Pastor).¹³⁵ It is a duty that

¹³³ Tofaeono, 162

¹³⁴ Gilson, 45

¹³⁵ *Feagaiga* (covenant) is now often understood as an agreement for life between the village or the congregation and the pastor.

denotes love, commitment, care and respect. For any community it means that all female members are liable to the care of their respective brothers for all her life.

In brief, the fundamental nature of the communal living in any Samoan society is reflected in some of the virtues as mentioned above. It is interesting to note that these values have all been part of the Samoan culture that echo Christian principles even before the arrival of Christianity. The whole idea behind these values is that peace and harmony is upheld, and that everyone is able to enjoy the fullness and richness of living in a community. For Samoans, the concerted effort to observe the principles of communal living, to make sure solidarity is sustained, is paramount. The need to recognize every voice in matters pertaining to the village is a normal way of life. It is also an approach that is recommended for every facet of society, be it social, religious, economical etc, so that it illuminates through our values and morals of communal life, that God is in our midst.

Having established the emphasis on the community as the primary meaning of both *οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ* and *fale*, the Samoan understanding of the *falesa* (house of worship) should also reflect the same meaning. This stems out of a personal experience that most people refer to the *falesa* as the place of worship instead of a reference to its communal meaning.

D. Fale Sa: A Brief Analysis.

The term *Fale Sa* is often translated as the church building, but a literal translation of the term is taken as the house (*Fale*) of the Sacred Being (*Tagata Sa*). The word *Sa* therefore simply means sacred. Given the context by which the church buildings were first established (since 1830's), the adoption of Christianity as a

national religion means that the word *Sa* refers directly to the almighty God. It means therefore that *Fale Sa* is literally the House of God. It is the dwelling place of God, so to speak, and for the community it is a place of communal worship to the Almighty.

The *Fale Sa* itself has often been recognized as an object of 'village pride in every community, and a symbol of religious commitment.¹³⁶ To Charles. W. Forman, the erection of impressive church buildings was a matter of 'village pride and often in rivalry with other villages.¹³⁷ It denotes the idea that irrespective of its abstract side, the people are more inclined to put emphasis on the physicality of the building. Despite that, the *Fale Sa* in principle is often regarded as a symbol of unity and for many a place dedicated to God showing ones commitment to his faith.

The Samoans according to Lowell 'have often been accused of having a church-building obsession.¹³⁸ Sad to say, such fascination with the building idea has never waned as more and more buildings have been erected, many of which to such enormous proportions and at the same time accumulating massive costs. Many church buildings have been erected with the normal misconception that it will bring more people to the church on Sunday.

The sad truth behind the whole idea of building is that, some church ministers or pastors see the building of a church as a 'potential landmark for his ministry' an icon that he can be remembered by. The identification of these respective aspects of church building nevertheless are accompanied by the many problems that it creates. The interesting thing to note is that the identified problems created by this dilemma, affect all facets of communal structure. The ordinary household struggles to provide

¹³⁶ Lowell Holmes, *Samoa Village*, (New York, Rinehart Holt and Winston, 1974), 79

¹³⁷ Charles W. Foreman, *The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century*, in *American Society of Missiology* Series, No 5 (New York, Orbis Books, 1982), 71

¹³⁸ Holmes, 78

and care for itself financially. The community at large faces the problem of sustaining peace and unity because of conflicting views and ideas.

The hope of this paper is that it offers an alternative view, and hopefully remind us that the *Fale* is about people. More importantly, the House of God is about the community of people.

E. Summary:

The components of the Greek word *oikos* □□ as this work proposes, is related to the primary meaning of *Fale* which refers to its interior, the *Anofale*. This makes a community in itself. It includes the members of the household and their belongings and the activities taking place inside the house. The secondary meaning of *oikos* relates to the building understanding. The emphasis however is that the heart and soul of any Samoan *Fale* is in the *Anofale*. The Samoan saying "*E le o le Fale ao le Anofale*" (The House is not the most important, but it is its interior), simply expresses the nature of the *Anofale* and its essence. In simple words, the *Fale* is made to look good because of the good work of the *Anofale*. This latter concept is communal in nature. It is the mutual co-operation and the co-existing element of the household not only to each and also to its activities that contribute to the fine image portrayed by the *Fale*.

The corporate component of *oikos* □□ relates to the Samoan community, with the village (*nuu*), portraying the body idea, the *Fale*. It represents the structure of any Samoan community. The *Anofale* of any basic community therefore is expressed by the community household, and the values and ethics it presents. As this paper has laid out, the said values of this communal way of living in a Samoan community reflect that our culture (*aganuu*) is indeed divinely given. It also reveals that our virtues of

communal living mean that God dwells in our midst. In simple words, it is a Samoan community that houses the good images of God.

Likewise, our established understanding of the primary meaning of the House of God is also related to our perception of the concept, *Falesa*. This paper reveals that in principle, it refers primarily to the community of people, and the physical meaning is only secondary.

Conclusion

The primary focus of this paper has been to revitalize an essential meaning of the phrase; House of God which I believe, has been widely ignored. Often, the general reference and emphasis regarding the phrase οἶκος τοῦ Θεοῦ has been mainly understood to refer to the physical building. Hence the primary intention of this work emphasizes and prove that, the phrase 'House God', on the one hand, refers primarily to the community of God's people. On the other hand, the paper argues that the physical meaning of the concept is only secondary.

The etymological study of οἶκος validates the paper's contention. It reveals a dual meaning, with a primary focus on its wider and corporate element. Moreover, the attempt to define the meaning of the term, temple, reveals a non-sacral nature. This invalidates it from being associated with the Divine. Hence this confirms our position by referring to the House of God as God's community.

The communal emphasis is explicit in the Old Testament. Non-biblical views of the Qumran community and Philo allude to this understanding. The prophetic allusions of prophets discussed reveal that the temple is to be replaced by the community as the new House of God. The slow decay of the temple cultus in terms of significance and the subsequent personalization or spiritualization of the Law adds weight to our argument. That means as a community of God, it should obey and uphold the Law. This is simply, the same approach which prompts the ideology of the Qumran, and their belief that they represent the ideal community in which God dwells.

This communal understanding, as this paper concludes, is also evident in the New Testament. The Gospel of Mark not only echoes a communal emphasis, it also presents a more critical attitude towards the temple. The significance of houses in the

Gospel narrative indicates both a strong sense of communal living and presents the term house in opposition to the temple.

The narrative from Chapter 11:1 – 16:8 has been presented by Mark in a way to convince his audience that the temple no longer serves its purpose. Hence the focus is primarily on the community of God's people, as the new House of God, where he resides. The narrative begins with Jesus' temple act, which implies Jesus throwing his house open to all nations. It ends with the death and the resurrection of Jesus, which emphatically portrays Jesus as the keystone of the new house of God, which is the community of God's people.

In relation to a traditional understanding, the communal emphasis of the paper correlates well in principles and significance. Simply, this is the way Samoans prefer to live. The dual meanings of the Greek components of οἶκος does agree in principle with our traditional understanding of the *Fale*, the Samoan house. The *Fale* itself in all its totality relates to the body, or the physical idea, the secondary meaning of οἶκος. In correlation with the primary emphasis of this paper, the community, the Samoans do believe that the *Fale* is not the most important, but what goes on inside the house. It simply means that *Fale* cannot serve its purpose well, if the household of people, the community is not being responsible.

To the wider picture of the *nuu* (village), the same principles apply. The communal emphasis of this paper is reflected in the way Samoans live as a community. It is their God-given way of living, which is reflected by values and protocols they uphold as people. In relation to the primary contention of the paper I conclude that as a Samoan, the significance and meaning of the *Fale* and its *Anofale*, and the values that we uphold as a community, is a powerful tool to argue and support

our primary emphasis. That is, the community of God's people is the place where he resides, the new House of God.

An Alternative Perspective.

Our developed understanding so far on the analysis of the *οἶκος του θεου*, literally translated 'House of God', formula, has presented us with two different meanings. The Greek word *οἶκος*, in all its richness, expresses a primary meaning, which connotes the idea of the community of people. The secondary meaning therefore refers to the building idea. Therefore in relation to our concept of *Falesa* it proposes first and foremost the primary idea of the community of people. The emphasis on the wider meaning of the formula means that the *Falesa* is therefore seen primarily in the framework of God's community. The connotation here is that the community of God's people should always be given the first priorities. In regards to the issue of establishing any physical building, the concerted consent of people is paramount as they are primarily, the House of God, the *Falesa*.

The bulk of this chapter has focussed so far on the significance and meaning of communal living in the Samoan context. It argues excessively that in relation to the wider components of *οἶκος*, the Samoan *Fale* and its totality correlates well in comparison. The point is the household of any *Fale* is the most important part of the *Fale* and this also applies to the community in a village setting. It is the people of the community that makes a village prosper. It means that the values and ideals of any community reflect its 'goodness' which make it a better place to live.

Recommendations.

The following personal recommendations reflect the outcome of this work. These recommendations do not criticise the EFKS and its normal practices and projects.

Rather, they propose an alternative approach of which hopefully can influence the thinking of some, and in return will help address some of the issues in the ministry. This approach is based solely on the main arguments of this work, which directs the emphasis back to the roots of any society. The accentuation of the individual in the community is therefore emphasized in his/her relationship to other members of the society.

The argument of the paper so far has revealed the importance of the community of people in a religious-cultural setting, as indicative of the place of God's dwelling. Therefore the recommendations are rooted on these premises:

- The Congregational Christian Church and all its religious practises and affairs are directed by the principles of Congregationalism. It means therefore that each person in the congregation has the right and the freedom of conscience to voice his/her own opinion as matters arise within the Church. Such emphasis is also stressed very strongly in any communal living environment. The significance of '*soalaupule*' which simply delegates the authority to each individual *matai* in discussion, means that every voice is heard in decision making. For the church the current '*Fale Fono*' dilemma is creating a few headaches financially. Once again it all goes back to the building idea. We need to be aware that some are still opposed to the whole project. It may be true that we cannot please everyone but there has to be some kind of compromise.

In light of the argument of this paper, the *Fale* in its essence is first and foremost, about people. The community of people is the most important asset to our religion, and to the ministry of the Church as a whole.

- Our independence from the London Missionary Society has meant that we have solely relied on our financial resources for survival. It means that the idea of 'giving' to the church takes paramount importance to any member of the Church. The amount of money that goes into church developments in all facets, can be quite excessive for some especially the under privileged who would normally struggle financially. They are also the usual un-heard voices when it comes to church discussions as the more powerful and privileged members of the church can often drain their voices out. What the Church needs to remember is that these particular people are all equal members of God's House who should be given the right to speak out and voice his/her concerns.
- Finally, our obsession with the building concept has over the years landed us in hot waters. I cannot help but remind some of the major projects that the Church has involved in which fiddle with the idea of building. One of these projects was the payment of an overdraft in the excess of millions of a church building, which the congregation concerned could not afford to pay. Once again there is a need for everyone to be reminded. The primary meaning of the House of God concept refers directly to the community of God's people. The implication is that when one considers all aspects of God's *oikos*, then there is a need to appease every aspect of the community, before such momentous project can get the go-ahead. Hence, by doing so, not only it will reflect the essence of our communal values, it also consolidates our position as the rightful place where God resides.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- Anderson, H. *The Gospel of Mark: New Century Bible Commentary Series*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. M. B. Eerdmans Publ.Co, 1987.
- Ayto, J. *Dictionary of Words Origins*. New York: Arcade Publishing, 1993
- Balz, H. & Schneider, G. (eds). *Exegetical Dictionary of New Testament Words*, vol. 12. Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Barker, G. Lane. W and Michaels, R. J. *The New Testament Speaks*. San Francisco, Harber Collins Publishers, 1969.
- Bartlet, John R. "The Archaeology of Qumran.": in *Archaeology and Biblical Interpretation*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Brown, C. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 2. Michigan, Zondervan, 1986
- Button, B. & Van Rensburg, F. J. House Churches in Corinth in *Neotestamentica: Journal of the New Testament Society of South Africa*. vol 37, No 1 Natal: NTSSA Press, 2003.
- Carrington, P. A. *Running Commentary on the Oldest Gospel*. Cambridge: University Press, 1960.
- Casey, P.M. Culture and Historicity: The Cleansing of the Temple. in *Catholic Biblical Quaterly*, vol 59, No 1. Michigan: Catholic University of America, January 1997.
- .Cole, A. *Mark: New Bible Commentary* Leicester, England: Inter Varsity Press 2000.
- Derret, J. D. M. No Stone Upon Another: Leprosy and the Temple." in *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* vol 30, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- Evans, C. A. Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Potent for Destruction? in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol 51, no 2, Michigan, Catholic University of America, April 1989.
- Evans, G, From House of Prayer to Cave of Robbers: Jesus' Prophetic Criticism of the Temple Establishment. in *The Quest For Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*: (eds) Craig A. Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.
- Foreman, C. W. The Island Churches of the South Pacific: Emergence in the Twentieth Century ,in *American Society of Missiology Series*, No 5, New York: Orbis Books, 1982.

- Freeman, D. *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Samoan Wisdom Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1983.
- Gartner, B. *The Temple and the Community in Qumran Texts and the New Testament*. Cambridge: University Press, 1965.
- Gilson, R. P. *Samoa 1830-1900: The Politics of a Multi-Cultural Community with Introduction and Conclusion by J. W. Davidson*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Girdlestone, R. B. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*. Massachusettes: Henrikson Publishers, 2000.
- Gould, E. P. *Gospel According to St. Mark in International Critical Commentary*. Edingburgh, T&T Clark, 1982.
- Guelich, R. A. *Mark 1-8: 26: World Biblical Commentary*. Dallas, Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1989.
- Gundry, R. H. *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology For the Cross*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- Haran, M. *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School*. Indiana: Eisenbraun Press, 1985.
- Heil, J. P. The Narrative Strategy and Pragmatics of the Temple Theme in Mark. in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol 59, No 1, Michigan, Catholic University of America, January 1997.
- Holmes, L. D. *A Samoan Village*. New York: Rinehart Holt and Winston, 1974.
- Hurst, L.D. "Did Qumran Expect Two Messiahs?" in *Bullentin for International Biblical Research* (eds) Craig Evans and Stanley Porter Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- Iati, I. The Good Governance Agenda for a Civil Society; Implications for the Faa-Samoa, in *Governance in Samoa*, Elise Huffer and Asofou Soo (eds) Australian National University, Asia Pacific Press, 2000.
- Ileserel, V. Failed Followers in Mark: Mark 13:12 as a key for the Identification of the Intended Readers, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* vol 58, No 2. Michigan: Catholic University of America, April 1996.
- Kato, M. Interview- 22. 05. 2004. Samoan Matai, Toamua, Samoa.

- Kee, H. C. *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977.
- Kini, U.V. Interview 23.05.2004, Former Minister of Sports, Youth and Culture. Current Minister of Police Department, Apia, Samoa.
- Lauta, P. *Faa-Samoa and Social Work Within the New Zealand Context* Palmerston North, Dunmore Press Ltd, 2000.
- Liddel, Henry, G. Robert, S. *English-Greek Lexicon*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1961
- Makesi Lene Neemia, *The Book of Qoheleth as a Critique of Samoan Wisdom* B.D Thesis Malua Theological College, October, 2000
- Malbon, E. S. TH OIKIA AYTOY : Mark 2:15 in Context. in *Journal of the Study of the New Testament* vol 31, No 2 New York: Cambridge: University Press, April 1985.
- Mann, C. S. *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1986.
- McKelvey, J. R. *The New Temple; The Church in the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969
- Meleisea, M. *Lagaga; A Short History of Western Samoa*, Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies & Western Samoa Extension Centre of the USP, 1987.
- Meyers, Carol. *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, David. N. Freedman and others (eds) vol 6. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Michel, O. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey Bromiley. vol 5, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991.
- Myers, C. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknoll, N.Y. Orbis, 1988.
- Painter, J. When is a House not a Home?: Disciples and Family in Mark 3:13-35, in *Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, vol 45, No 4 New York: Cambridge University Press, October 1999.
- Patu, T "Faamalama Theology" B.D Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2001,
- Perkins, Pheme. *Jesus as a Teacher in New Interpreters Bible*. Cambridge: University Press, 1990.
- Rainbow, P. Melchizedek as a Messiah at Qumran in *Bulletin for International Biblical Research* (eds) Craig Evans and Stanley Porter (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997.

- Seeley, D. Jesus' Temple Act Revisited: A Response to P.M. Casey in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol 62, No 1. Michigan: Catholic University of America, January, 2000.
- Sua, M. *Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS) and Investment in the Church: A Biblical Component of Stewardship* B.D Thesis. Malua Theological College, October, 2002,
- Sykes, J.B. (ed). *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Talmon, S. *The Community of the Renewed Covenant Between Judaism and Christianity: In the Community of the Renewed Covenant.* The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls (eds) Eugene Ulrich and James Vanderkam. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994.
- Tapaleao, T. *Faavae I le Atua Samoa (Samoa Founded on God)*. B.D Thesis. Suva. Pacific Theological College, 1991.
- Taylor, D. B in, *Mark's Gospel as Literature and History*. London: SCM Press, 1992.
- Tofaeono, A. *Eco-Theology: Aiga. The Household of Life: A Perspective From Living Myths and Traditions of Samoa*, World mission, Erlanger Verlag fur mission und Okumene, 2000.
- Turner, H. W. *From Temple to Meeting House: The Phenomenological Theology of Places of Worship*. New York: Mowtown Publishers, 1979.
- Turner, Rev. G. *Nineteen Years in Polynesia: Missionary, Life and Travel and Research in the Islands of the Pacific*. Papakura N.Z: R. McMillan Publishers, 1984.
- Vine, W. E. *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.
- Vaai, U. A Theological Reflection on God's *OLKOS* (House) in Relation to the Samoan Context: in *Pacific Journal of Theology*, Series ii, issue 16, Suva: South Pacific Association of Theological Schools, 1996.
- Vena, A, Interview- 24.05.2004. Commissioner of Public Service Commission, Samoan Matai, Apia, Samoa.
- Wenham, J. W. *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965.
- Wessell, W. W. *Mark: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, volume 8, Frank E. Gaebelin (ed) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1984.
- Witherington, Ben III. *The Gospel of Mark: A Social Rhetorical Commentary*. Michigan/Cambridge, U.K: William B. Eerdmans, 2001.