

“A CHIASTIC READING OF I CORINTHIANS 5:1-13”

REFLECTION ON THE ROLE OF THE ‘AIGA’ AND THE PARISH REGARDING QUESTIONABLE AUTHORITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the Chiastic reading of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, from the perspective of the Samoan *aiga* and EFKS Parishes in relation to the authority relegated through the leadership of *matai* and ministers. Apostle Paul writes the letter to the church in Corinth about the sexual immorality in the church, the worse scenario is, they were arrogant or boasting about it, but they should be remorseful and remove or drive out the wicked person among them.

The challenge of this paper therefore is: As members of *aiga* and parishes, we have to practise our role of being part of God's family and our family, as the result of the exegetical section. The failure to act on such a person will reflect that we are not fulfilling our duties as Christians, so that as evidenced in Paul's writing, that the Christians in Corinth had condoned sinful acts because they did not 'weed' out and remove the persons who had committed wrongdoings. It surely is not a good reflection of the sacrificial life of Jesus Christ.

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

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Faafetai tatalo, Malo Tapuai

Introduction

Members of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa have high regard for the church and strongly believe the Ministers of the church and their fates are solely in God's hands. Thus, whatever wrong or sin they commit, people believe God is the sole judge and He alone judges His servants. In fact, when judgmental observations, gossip or rumours are spread about the ministers, our parents and elders say "Hush, let's not judge! Leave it to the Lord. It is not for us to judge!" This is precisely the focus of this paper as Paul writes to the Corinthian church, to tell them, that the role of the congregation 'is to remove the wicked person from among them, if he has committed a sin'.

As it is shown in the exegesis section, in particular the chiasmus table (p.5), the Lamb of God or Jesus Christ is to be the centre of any Christian's life. Therefore, whenever a Christian sins there is a chance to repent and turn away from sin by being constantly reminded of Jesus' resurrection. However, if a sinner does not repent and continues to sin, the leaders of the church then should act to remove him from the congregation, as he is a bad influence on the other worshippers and members of the congregation. This happen when a minister tells a fellow worshipper to quit drinking and the worshipper points out that the minister is doing the same thing, and it will seem the natural thing to do because the minister is doing it as well.

The aim of this paper is to provide counsel and advice from a biblical perspective for parishes that their role as Christians, is to drive out the wicked person from the church no matter what, if the wicked person does not obey according to the purpose of the sacrificial act of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover if there is any decision made by the church, it must be done by the parish according to God's will. But the question is, "What is God's will?"

I believe God's will is for every believer to be faithful and live according to Jesus Christ's teachings and obey the Lord's commandments. Similarly, as in the Samoan context, a *matai* tends to have an authority to rule with a cruel hand thus breaking the law of adultery, greed and robbery, as mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:10). Therefore, it is essential to the people of the church to remove a minister from the congregation and service if he does not abide by the law of the church and play his role as a true Christian. Moreover, the family should also do likewise to any *matai* who neglects his duties and role, in upholding the good reputation of the family and demonstrating justice and honesty in his life. The minister and members of a congregation should also practice and uphold this value in practice and what they do. If the minister breaks the law of adultery, greed or robbery as mentioned above, the congregation should act accordingly as Paul told the Corinthians.

This paper is divided into three parts. In Chapter 1 there will be an explanation of the exegetical tool that has been used, which is a Chiastic reading, about the problem of a person who has committed a sinful act but church members have done nothing followed by the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. In Chapter 2 the role of families in the selection and removal of *matais* will be discussed. Finally, Chapter 3 will look at the role of the church or individual Parishes and their relationship with their leaders and ministers.

Chapter 1

Exegetical Chiastic Reading of

I Corinthians 5

1.1 Exegetical Tool: A Chiastic Reading

Rhetorical Criticism attempts to understand two important aspects of biblical study.¹ Why did the author write the text and how did he put it together? The concern is with how the speaker advocates a position and seeks to convince an audience about the validity of that position.² Some assumptions underline this approach,³ but ultimately, Rhetorical Criticism hopes to reveal the historical situation.⁴ The method involves two major investigations; namely (1) the rhetorical unit must be identified and (2) the structure of the text and what rhetoric will be determined. In this paper, rhetoric criticism will be employed to analyze, 1 Corinthians 5.

As usual with Rhetorical Criticism, three categories of rhetoric will be employed in the analysis of the passage namely, *invention*, *arrangement* and *style*, that is the beginning, middle and closing.⁵ I will use the rhetorical unit, which runs from verses 1-13 for analysis. Therefore, the *invention* will begin with verses 1-7a. The *arrangement* is verse 7b, and the *style* contains verses 8-13.

¹ James Dunn, *1 Corinthians: New Testament Guides*, (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1995) 23.

² John Hayes and Carl Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1987), 74.

³ Raymond E. Brown, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, (Washington: Prentice Hall Inc, 1990), 803.

⁴ David S. Dockery (ed), *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 442-443.

⁵ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 75.

Chiasmus is the literary device found in Rhetorical Criticism, whereby a passage is structured according to the formula A,B,C,B',A', so that the *invention* of the passage (A B) is inverted in the end (A' B') and the *arrangement* (C) of the passage represents the main thought or the climax of the passage.⁶

Identifying the Rhetorical Unit

In trying to discover rhetorical units literary devices used as 'boundary markers', these are often in the form of inclusion, chiasmus, or repetition of words.⁷ Boundary markers identify the table of chiasmus to enable readers to read and tell the passage from a different view using rhetorical criticism.

Looking at 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (given below), it is evident that the body of the text is enclosed in a chiasmus bounded by the phrase '*from among you*' at the end of verse 2 and occurs again at the end of verse 13. This is the boundary marker for this rhetorical unit. Thus, verses 2-13 represent the main body of the rhetorical unit, with verse 1 providing an introductory discourse about immorality in the church as a springboard by which *removing* and *driving out* becomes the practical way of judgment while verse 7b is the solution to resolve this behaviour within the church.

Although Paul mentions incest as a serious immorality,⁸ which has also been wrongly used to demand Christian separation from the secular world, he corrects any misunderstanding, that he has condemned contacts in secular society with immoral

⁶ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 76.

⁷ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 79.

⁸ Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, Rev.ed. (Downers Grove IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1990), 460. The author mentions that incest was more serious than the using of the Greek word *porneia* meaning prostitution, instead of going to brothels, this man take his father's wife and living with her sexually in an ongoing relationship.

people, those greedy for gain, the swindlers or idolaters.⁹ This means, Christians and immoral people should not mingle or interact together as this can lead to negative influence on the Christians. If this was the case, then Christians would have to withdraw from the world in the manner of certain religious sects in Judaism e.g. *Therapeutae* and the *Essenes*.¹⁰ The members of the church in Corinth also are to withdraw from any Christian who is sexually immoral, greedy for money, an idolater, a drunk or a dishonest person (1 Corinthians 5: 11).

Chiasmus:

A-Removed from among you (v2)

B-Judgment (v3)

C-The man who done such a thing. (v4)

D-Hand over this man to Satan (v5)

E- A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. (v6)

F-Old yeast (v7a)

G- For our paschal lamb, Christ has been sacrificed (v7b)

F'-Old yeast (v8)

E' -Not to associate with sexual immoral person. (v9)

. D'-Need to go out of the world (v10)

C'-Do not even eat with such a one. (v11)

B'-Judged (v12)

A'-Drive out of the wicked person from among you. (v13)

The chiasmus structure above emphasizes the importance of 'removed' in verse 2 and 'drive out' in verse 13. They are two different words but have exactly the same meaning as our boundary markers. The two words signify the important acts of discipline which will be further discussed in the exegesis of this passage. Putting these

⁹ R. T. France, *New Bible Commentary*, (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2004), 1169.

¹⁰ Ibid.

duties into action is therefore following the rules and living Christ's word according to His resurrection. In addition, the climax of the chiasmus in verse 7b refers to the Paschal Lamb or the suffering of Christ as a way to emphasize that discipline is a necessary step to ensure salvation. Just as Christ suffered so too must we be disciplined to ensure that we reveal the meaning of salvation that Christ suffered and endured.

Invention. (Beginning)

This refers to the "proofs" and "refutations" of a speech or writing.¹¹ In the passage, the author uses the experiences of his audience as proof of his arguments.

Style of Writing. (closing)

The style of writing has aimed at the audience's emotions with the use of two different words with a similar meaning. This is found in verses 2 and 13 by the words *removed* and *drive out*, 3 and 12 with the words *judgment* and *judge*. 4 and 11, in *such a thing* and *such a one*, 5 and 10 with *Satan* and *the world*, 6 and 9 in *leavens* and *associate*, 7b and 8 was the repetition of the old yeast. Moreover, the climax of the passage was verse 7b, the paschal lamb. What this statement means is that Paul has used key words such as remove, judgment, such thing, Satan, leavens, old yeast, associate, world such a one, judge and drive out, as in the inversion of our chiasmus, to illicit important emotional cues, he wants to extract from his audience in order for them to believe and accept his argument. Paul uses these words to convey the message he was trying to give to the people of Corinthians so that they can repent and turn away from sin and be able to play their role as Christians. That is removing the 'wicked person from among them' by targeting their moral and ethical values through the use of

¹¹ Dockery, *Foundations for Biblical*, 442-443.

‘repetition’ and ‘words with similar meaning.’ As seen in the phrase in verse 7a “*the old yeast*” which is also reflected in verse 8, he is attempting to extract a positive emotional response to his argument that they must change their ways by removing the sinful behaviour from their midst.

1.2 A, A in I Corinthians 5: 2, 13

A: 1 Corinthians 5:2. And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you?

A’: 1 Corinthians 5:13. God will judge those outside. “Drive out the wicked person from among you.”

These verses show that the author is having or being troubled with this man’s sin, and he seems furious about the attitude of other members. What is meant by this is that the author understands that the man, who sins, has a problem, and his problem will soon corrupt or has already corrupted the congregation at Corinth, based on their behaviour towards this man’s sinful acts. “*And you are arrogant!*” In the Greek version, the word used is “*πηπθυσιόμενοι*”¹² which means ‘puff up’ or ‘make proud’. This word ‘*πηπθυσιόμενοι*’ appears again in 1 Corinthians 4:1, 8:1, 13:4 and also in the Letter to the Colossians 2:18. In a sense, they have noticed what the man’s sin was.¹³ Nevertheless, they are too proud! Being boast, yet such grievous sin surrounds their midst. In spite of this incest in your midst, you continue to hold your heads high towards me (author) as though nothing is wrong. Rhetorically, it is as if Paul is saying, what right do you have to be proud of this kind of behaviour going on and no one is

¹² Present, Passive, Participle, Nominative, Plural, Masculine. of the root word phusiow, meaning puff up or make proud translated as arrogant.

¹³ Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 61.

doing anything about it? Instead, you should be filled with grief and remove from your fellowship the man who did this!¹⁴

In verse 5, the author refers to a very severe type of discipline, ‘to remove him.’ According to the Greek version, the Greek word used is *αρθή*¹⁵ meaning ‘to take up or to take away.’ It appears again in 1 Corinthians 6:15, where *αρθή* is used to emphasize the act of ‘take’ meaning to remove and make the person been taken to suffer. In other uses such as the Acts of the Apostles 8:33 ‘*αρθή*’ describes the act of ‘taken away’ to mean being removed with the purpose to destroy.¹⁶ This appears to mean permanent removal. Even in its aorist tense, this could be understood, for the aorist tense refers to the completion of the action once with no regards to its continuance or frequency.¹⁷ If this is the case, then there is no hope for the individual for reconciliation. If this is the attitude of Paul and the early church, then how was the church able to thrive and grow during such tenuous times?¹⁸

Looking at the passage closely, it seems obvious that the emphasis was on the man who sinned, as mentioned earlier, but according to the analysis of the passage, it was the reaction of the church members in response to the sinner as well. Therefore, the members should openly accept the grievous wrong which is why Paul rebukes them, showing his concern for the community and their response indicates their understanding

¹⁴ Gordon D Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthian: The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Press, 1987), 201-202.

¹⁵ *αρθή*, 3rd person singular verb of the subjunctive Aorist Middle of the root word *airw*, meaning “to take up” or “take away”, translated “removed”

¹⁶ As well it is found in the Gospel of John to refer to the act of “taking up” meaning to be removed for destruction.

¹⁷ J.W. Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 98.

¹⁸ The meaning of this extract is the usage of the word ‘*αρθή*’ in the book of Acts of the Apostle 8:33 and the Gospel of John in the use of parsing in Greek. This shows the use of the word ‘*αρθή*’ in Acts and John as permanent removal. This means there is a difference in how the books of Acts and John use this concept and how Paul uses it in his letter to the Corinthians.

of themselves as Christians.¹⁹ Thus, the destruction evident in the repetitive use of ‘remove’ and ‘drive out,’ Paul refers to is not just the destruction of the individual who has sinned, but also the destruction of the church members’ attitudes, their pride, and their belief that there is nothing wrong. That is what Paul was hoping they would realize, for instead of being proud, they should be in mourning because of the acts of the man concerned, for it was wrong according to the teachings of Paul and the Gospel. Therefore, in the end of verse 2, Paul wanted this man to be removed and the members of the church in Corinth should show humility and be remorseful in their acts, instead of being proud and puffed up.

In verse 13 (A’) which is the inversion of A, Paul concludes with the point that the judgment of others, the non-believers outside of the faith is not theirs. Their focus is to judge those among them whose behaviours they know are wrong. This means they are to judge their fellow brothers and sisters in the church but leave the judgment of those in the world outside the church to God. They have no say against the world because that is not for them to judge, but for God alone. Therefore, they must then “drive out” the wicked and evil believers.

The Greek word for “drive out” is *εχαίρω*. Its aorist active imperative form is *εχαπατε*.²⁰ This word is used only once in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 5:13. Its use in 1 Corinthians 5: 13 indicated by its imperative form means something is needed to be done. In addition, because of its aorist active form, the word conveys a permanent one time only act. If this is the case, then the last part of the passage means that the offender must be driven out of the church, for God to judge him, if they cannot judge him from

¹⁹ J. Paul Sampley, NIB, The New Interpreters Bible, Community Definition As Seen in Two Related Instance, Edited by Leander E. Keck. (Nashville: Abington Press, 1994) 846.

²⁰ *εχαπατε*, 2nd person Plural of the Aorist Active Imperative, translated as to expel, to remove, to drive away from the root word *εχαίρω*. meaning to expel, to remove, to drive away and translated at “drive out”.

within. In all, the driving out of the offender is a last resort that they must turn to if they are unable to judge him internally and correct his wrongdoings. In this final verse, the unrepentant offender must then be driven from the midst of the believers and into the world for God to judge. Thus, the hope for him lies not in the final act of judgment. Though in the initial and mediating acts of trying to get that individual to change his way, if they refuse, then it is best to drive them out of the community of faith, before he infects the rest of the community of faith with his immoral behaviours.

Nevertheless, the purpose of ‘remove’ and ‘drive out’ expressed by the author in these verses is that the whole congregation should maintain purity so that the offender may not corrupt other members. Firstly, the offender is to be disciplined (removed from among you) for the sake of the whole congregation and secondly, for the benefit of the member who has sinned.²¹ Overall, the removal would help both the offender and the congregation come to terms with what has been considered inappropriate behaviours for the followers of Christ and the teachings of the Gospel left in the hands of the Corinthians by Paul.

²¹ Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 56-57.

1.3 B, B in I Corinthians 5: 3, 12

B: 1 Corinthians 5:3. for though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment

B': 1 Corinthians 5:12. For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge?

The author then parallels the judgment underline in line B that he knew of from the power of Jesus Christ, with the judgment of God underlined in line B' according to those who are outside of the church (Pagans). Nevertheless, what is meant by verse 3 is that Paul is not with them physically. However, what Paul wants, if he was there with them, is to cast judgment so that the people of Corinth would know that whether he is there physically or spiritually, his judgment is still authoritative. Therefore, they should act accordingly on the teaching that he taught them. The apostle seems to know what the people of Corinth have in mind. They are scared of telling the truth, or what it says in verse 2, that they are arrogant because this was the kind of life they were living. Furthermore, Paul is using his 'common knowledge' meaning his experience in life and the gospel to get his message across. He speaks of the range of discipline such as drive out, remove him, hand this man over to Satan. He wants them to recognize that they must live out what they had been taught. Words are only useful if they are converted into positive actions. In other words what they have been taught in the church through preaching, teachings, and sermons are only useful if they can practice them. They would have to take it from the church and translate it into practical interactions with others. For most Jews, this occurred in the household or towns that they lived in. Thus in order for the teachings to be meaningful, they must have practical experience with it. If this was the case, then it is likely that Paul was advocating ideal family relationships and interactions because it is in the family where these teachings are given meaning and made more real and tangible for the church member to live by.

The inversion B' talks about the judging of those inside by the new community but not of those who are in the outside world. The theme of 'judging' dominates in the same sense that the verb is used of Paul's action in B. God will judge those outside, His judgment in the future, and a judgment in which the church will also participate, but for now, the church takes the world as it finds it. As God's temple in the world, it offers a striking alternative to the world, and in that sense, it must always be judging the world. However, it is not ours to bring sentence against those who belong to another worldview, to another age altogether, the time for that judgment is coming.²²

In this verse, Paul refers to the Christians having to judge those who are committing sinful acts. This parallels our earlier discussion regarding the "handing over to Satan". We are not to judge the world, but to judge our Christian community, for we have all accepted a way of life that comes with standards and guidelines for appropriate living. If so, we have vowed to abide by those standards, therefore, we are bound by those guidelines and if we do not adhere to them, then we cannot truly say we have accepted Christ. Paul reiterates that the Corinthian Christians have no right to pass judgment on the world, if they cannot pass judgment on their own misbehaviours and sinful deeds. It parallels the passing of the judgment on others when we cannot see our own failures. Paul refers to this point in order to illustrate how Corinthian Christians cannot boast and brag about their faith to the world, when their own faith is flawed by the evils they allow to exist within their own midst.

²² Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinthian*, 151.

1.4 C, C in I Corinthians 5: 4, 11

C: 1 Corinthians 5:4. ...in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus,
C': 1 Corinthians 5:11. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do not even eat with such a one.

In C, Paul presents his judgment of the case by saying that though he was at a distance, he is with them in spirit and has already passed judgment on the offending person based not only that they are charged with the fact, but the aggravating circumstances of it.²³ In looking at the judgment passed by Paul, ‘*assembled*’ means the decision is to be made by the whole community, ‘*present in the spirit*’ meaning the duty of the community is to purify itself no matter what.²⁴

However, I would like to look at the beginning of this verse as a possible reference to hope. Here Paul invokes the name of Jesus against the man who is to be dealt with meaning that God’s grace towards undeserving people, which includes everybody and it is the great social leveller so that none of the Corinthians should have been puffed up in favour of one against another.²⁵ Understandably for Paul, the only boast that is acceptable is a ‘boast in the Lord’ that has graced the believers who of course did not deserve the grace. Therefore, to invoke Jesus to pass judgment on this

²³ Mathew Henry, *Commentary in One Volume*, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 1810.

²⁴ Brown. *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 803.

²⁵ Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 847.

man must also take into consideration that there is a possibility of hope for his rehabilitation.²⁶

Paul is trying to refresh the memories of the Christians in Corinth of the importance of their role by saying, “*I am with you in spirit*”. However, it goes deeper than a relationship between an apostle and the believers. It appears in the phrase that Paul takes on a more personal tone. Like a father who has taught his children many things, he was telling the Corinthian Christians that although he is not there physically with them, they should remember everything about being a Christian. As their father in faith, Paul hopes that his words would continue to resonate with them even though they are separated. Paul could have easily said, “When you are assembled, and the Holy Spirit is present and the power of the Lord Jesus...” but he did not. He made it more personal by insisting that his spirit is present. It is like a father who is not there for his children, but knowing that the trust is there. This is the same idea that is seen in this second half of the passage. Paul insists that his apostolic authority is also laced with fatherly advice and love.

Paul clarifies his earlier statement by saying, “now I am writing” in verse 9, and a clarification that this is the active command. Disregard the previous command, referring to vs. 9 when he stated, “I wrote” as a past action that was misunderstood because “you” (the people of Corinth) have now committed the sin that he warned them of. However, this verse tells he is more specific and direct with his charge. Earlier it was ‘do not associate with people who behave immorally’. Now Paul directly refers to a brother or sister in the faith that commits immoral acts. This adjusted charge by Paul is to ensure that there is no longer a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of what he means. This new command by Paul comes with a sense of urgency, because not only are

²⁶ Sampley, *The New Interpreter Bible*, 847..

the believers to disassociate themselves from such people, but they are to refrain from eating with them. Since this confrontation is leading to a case of judgment, then maybe here we see that Paul is using the law as a springboard by which to confirm and reaffirm the faith of the sinner and the community who have embraced the sinner. The use of the law is tangible evidence that illustrates that the actions of the offender are indeed sinful, according to the laws of God.

1 Corinthians 5, according to our chiasmus refers to the inversion of the gathering and not gathering. Verse 4 discusses the assembly of the members to discipline the offender, and here Paul adamantly states that the brothers and sisters who believe should not associate, should not gather, and should not be seen associating in the same social circles with other brothers or sisters that commit such acts. Therefore, Paul calls for discrimination about boundary markers, corporate identity, and the recognition of the Christian community as a corporate witness to overt beliefs, values and lifestyle. The addressee is to use their sense about how this works out so that no one is confused and so that a man such as the immoral offender is well aware of where he stands in relation to the community.²⁷ Therefore, Corinthian Christians' enemies are not the unbelievers outside who were their brothers and sisters in Christ. The enemies are from within the church, the gathering.

1.5 D, D in I Corinthians 5:5, 10

D: 1 Corinthians 5:5. ...you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

D': 1 Corinthians 5:10. ...not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world.

²⁷Anthony C. Thiselton, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: WB. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 2000) 409.

Paul informs the Corinthian Christians to hand the man back to Satan, so that the offender will be under the control of the Devil. Why did Paul want the members of the church to do such a thing? Perhaps we should understand why Paul wrote this, if we remember that the church in Corinth was very young and presumably weak.²⁸ Paul does not explain how the man's spirit would benefit, but by sending the offender away to suffer physically, his spirit would arise in the day of the Lord.²⁹ This is where a complication with the passage arises. When Paul refers to the flesh, he is talking about the flesh to be destroyed. It appears as though the person who is to be disciplined is not only to be removed, but is to be handed over to Satan to be destroyed. If Paul's thoughts are this extreme, then there is no hope for this man. However, hope rests in the fact that the spirit will arise on the day of the Lord. That is, putting him outside the sphere of God's protection and leaving him exposed to the satanic forces of evil in hope that the experience would cause him to repent and return to the fellowship of the church.³⁰

According to Old Testament understanding, the "Day of the Lord" refers to the day that the Lord returns to pass final judgment for all our actions (Daniel 12:1-13)³¹ If this is the case, then how would handing over of the man to Satan save his spirit? Based on a word study of the term "olethron sarkos",³² it is used mostly by Paul to refer to the destruction of the fleshly desires. The destruction of fleshly desires that causes the person to sin. A removal of the cause of sin so that the individual's spirit may not be corrupted but healed so that when the "Day of the Lord" arrives, there is hope that the

²⁸ Thiselton, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*, 412.

²⁹ Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 60.

³⁰ Sampley, *The New Interpreters Bible*, 397.

³¹ Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version.

³² Frederick W. Danker, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago and London: Chicago Press, 2000), 875.

man will be saved. Therefore, these words of Paul show that he wanted the man to arise in the end, not simply to suffer.

Verse 5 shows that the Corinthians thought that it was the non-Christians whom they should avoid, but in this verse, Paul proves them wrong, by saying no, it was the immoral Christians to whom he was referring, who cannot avoid the immoral of this world.³³ Indeed, from Paul's point of view, the only way they will be able to exist successfully with the world is for them to be in the world, but not of it. As an alternative, they must discipline those wishing to belong to the fellowship but at the same time insist on continuing their former pagan practices.³⁴

This is what Paul refers to in verse 5 as reflected in our inversion of the idea presented in our chiasmus. Verse 5 talks about how the person committing sinful acts should be handed over to Satan for destruction, the idea being promoted here is that the world is not the problem, but how the Corinthian Christians have allowed the world to dictate their Christian morals and ethical beliefs. It is understood that Satan represents the world which is contradictory to Jesus' teachings, however, Paul here reflects that the problem wasn't the world, but how Christians have integrated the practices of the world to distort and alter their beliefs and practices, that they have now come to be "of the world", and not just residing in the world. In other words, Paul is saying that the problem for the church is not the non-believers who are the so-called "enemy of the church" but that the true enemies of the church are the "believers" themselves, who have corrupted his teachings of the Gospel and have now used that corrupted or tainted interpretations of Paul's teachings to lead and guide the church and the believers in Corinth in the wrong direction.

³³ Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 60.

³⁴ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 224

We can also extract from this verse the idea of judgment as in a court hearing. Paul talks about handing the “immoral person” over to Satan to deal with, thus, it is understood that the “sinful man” must be handed over to the world to be judged, but here, Paul appears to say the opposite. Paul states, “You would need to go out of the world,” meaning that if a man is judged, and then he needs to be judged by their Christian “world” and not by the outside world. Because to do so would mean to take that offender to be judged by non-Christian standards, when in fact the rules he has broken are the ethics and standards of appropriate Christian living. Therefore, the world would not know how to judge such act and that is why the offender must be judged by the church. This means if a person is disciplined by the church, he is punished according to the laws of the church, as it is how they should live. The world should not punish the person involved because it does not know what God knows as He alone knows and issues the just punishment to those who sin.

1.6 E, E in I Corinthians 5:6, 9

E: 1 Corinthians 5:6. Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough?

E': 1 Corinthians 5:9. I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons

Paul mentions the puffing up or boasting of the Corinthians as a bad sign. According to Paul, their being puffed up has blinded them to the sinful behaviour that was already infecting the Corinthian community. For Paul, the Christian community in Corinth should not look back with what is deemed normal in Corinthian society. In other words, Paul wishes to define clear boundaries between verse 2 to verse 13, in

terms of what is considered societal norms and appropriate behaviours of the church.³⁵ By doing so, this shifts their concern from worldly desires back to the idea of purity, because “purity and perception of danger in taboos are markers for group separation from the rest of the world, which is perceived to be impure.”³⁶ This re-emphasizes that the congregation in Corinth puffing up should not be on worldly things, but that of purity and righteousness, which is lost when leaven or evil and worldly desires are mixed up like a batch of dough.

According to Witherington, leaven and yeast are two different things. Leaven is a fermenting agent left over from a previous batch of dough to use as a rising agent for the next batch of dough.³⁷ Yeast with its impregnating capacity in bread making was not to be use in preparing the Passover bread. Instead, the permeating yeast was to be thrown away. It implies that, the offending person must be excluded from the midst of the community.³⁸ This simply means that the sinner is to be removed from the congregation of those who are living God’s ways, as the sinner will bring bad influence to the good people. What Paul states here is that if they allow this act to go unpunished, then it will illustrate how far they could push the Christian ethic and moral boundaries to include other sinful acts and behaviours to be regarded as acceptable by the church. Therefore, if the congregation does not play its role of removing this person from the congregation, the young generation will accept it as a way of life in the congregation. However, Paul’s exhortation here is for the people of Corinth to be what they already

³⁵ Ben Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: WB Eerdmans, 1995), 153.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 159.

³⁸ France, *New Bible Commentary*, 1169.

are, “live out what Christ has worked in you.”³⁹ As in verse 7b, it is the sacrifice of Christ. Thus, if you are already unleavened; you should be careful to keep free from malice and mischief, which is the fairest image of God. Therefore, it is no wonder that the beauty a Christian is to cast out the old habits and old ways and go on being the “new batch”. Get rid of immorality, sin, greed, malice, and all the other bad habits and cultivate truth and sincerity. Overall, Paul encourages them to live the transformed life that they already have through the Gospel.

Paul’s statement in vs.9 refers to an earlier letter that was written regarding sexual immorality in Corinth.⁴⁰ The importance of this statement is that sexual immorality was an issue in that previous letter and remains an issue in this letter.⁴¹ It appears here that the Corinthians did not resolve the previous issue and that sexual immorality continues to be an obstacle in their faith because they had yet to fully resolve it.⁴² According to Gordon Fee, this indicates that the failure to respond to Paul’s previous request is related to their misunderstanding of that former letter.⁴³ However, it could also be interpreted that their failure to respond was because the person committing such sexually immoral acts was a powerful and/or important figure in the church, and the church members were reluctant to do anything about him and his sinful ways. In other words, if the person accused was an ordinary member, why would it be so difficult for the members in Corinth to obey Paul’s command to expel the member concerned? However, failure to address Paul’s concern implies that the person concerned was someone with power and influence. If this is the case, then it can be

³⁹ Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ France, *New Bible Commentary*, 1169.

⁴² Henry, *Commentary in One Volume*, 1810.

⁴³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 222.

concluded, that Paul was reminding them that their initial disobedience had led to this serious problem.

The failure of the Corinthians to practise their role as Christians fits with our chiasmus structure, where Paul is reminding them not to associate with a sinful person and like the leaven from verse 5, verse 9 is an inversion of that previous idea. In verse 5, the leaven represents the “old batch”, the “old yeast”, the sinful behaviour and of course, evil. Then Paul use that example to illustrate the role of the leaven and its purposes in the baking and making of bread. Here he emphasizes that they should not associate with that “old yeast”, “leaven”, “sinful behaviour”, and “evil” for it corrupts them and causes trouble. The meaning of Paul’s analogy about the old yeast and the old batch is that it is not possible for the sinner to work together with the good person who fears the Lord because the sinner can affect the good person and ‘poison’ him, and ultimately lead to sinful behaviour. As one saying goes ‘if a thief be friends a good person, they will both become thieves’. Well that was then in the previous letter, but now, we see what their disobedience has led to, and that’s their current acceptance of the sexually immoral behaviour in the church.

1.7 F, F in I Corinthians 5:7a, 8

F: 1 Corinthians 5:7a. Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened.

F’: 1 Corinthians 5:8. Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul refers to the cleaning of the old yeast as a reference to the removal of something prior in order to restore it to its original or prior state. As in vs.6 in which leaven was the old batch of dough, to act as a growing instrument for the new batch,

here Paul refers to the fact that the Corinthian should begin with a completely new batch and not rely or use the old batch for it would no longer be a good batch.

According to Witherington he suggests that the Passover lamb was also a foreshadowing of the Paschal Lamb for the Christians of the New Testament,⁴⁴ as it is understood that the Christians share the same history as Israel, as descendants of Israel's history.⁴⁵ Thus, Paul shifts from the 'small' leaven and the 'whole' batch of dough in the proverb to 'old' leaven and the 'new' batch of dough from the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. The imagery is expressed as an imperative, "clean out the old leaven" on the ground that you are indeed without old leaven.⁴⁶ Purity is not simply a matter of social identity and boundaries, but of reflecting on a theological identity of a community as the temple of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ The purpose of this removal of the 'leaven' reflects the process of starting over with a new batch of unleavened dough, which is to apply directly to the mutual life of the community.⁴⁸ This is important to Paul, if the community of believers is to continue forward, they must be in solidarity. A solidarity founded on the correct and truthful teachings that he brought to them from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus their puffing up and their pride must be founded on correct doctrines and teachings of Christ, which means they must purge themselves of the incestuous and remove a sinful man from their midst.

Using another strong inferential such as 'ὥστε'.⁴⁹ Paul brings this part of the argument to its logical conclusion.⁵⁰ The use of the articular infinitive is to express the

⁴⁴Witherington, *Conflicts & Community in Corinth*, 159.

⁴⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 216.

⁴⁶ Thiselton, *The New International Greek Testament*, 403.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 216.

⁴⁹ An articular infinitive.

⁵⁰ Thiselton, *The New International Greek Testament*, 417.

result of the action of the main verb which is to “celebrate”. However, since the term “ $\mu\eta$ ” is also used, the infinitive becomes negative. Thus, the Christian in Corinthian are told not to celebrate unless the “old yeast” is removed so that you are “unleavened.”⁵¹ Thus, the removal of the incestuous man is like cleaning a house in order for them to become what they are, ‘God’s new loaf’ in Corinth. What made them God’s new people is the sacrifice of ‘the paschal lamb’, Christ Himself. Still keeping the imagery of the festival, “*let us celebrate the festival*,” Paul broadens the application of the death of Jesus Christ to the Christians as a whole.⁵²

They are to celebrate their new life in Christ without the ‘old yeast’ a command that ties the present broader imperative to the previous. This includes an elimination of the kinds of sexual immorality represented by the excluded man, but now the ‘old yeast’ is further qualified in terms of ‘malice and evil’. Here Paul equates the ‘old yeast’ to actual acts of sin (malice and evil), which must now be removed and returned to its ‘unleavened’ acts of purity (sincerity and truth). Paul though speaking plainly is getting to the heart and the truth of his argument. Therefore, he will allow them to celebrate this new Christian Feast by becoming the people of God through the sacrifice of the paschal lamb.⁵³

1.8 Climax in I Corinthians 5: 7b (Middle).

G: For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed.

The purpose of this arrangement through the chiasmus table given earlier is the climax of the whole passage. It shows us that whatever judgment they make against the

⁵¹ Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament*, 85.

⁵² Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 218.

⁵³ Fee *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 219.

incestuous man should base on the root (doctrines) of their belief - that is the paschal lamb who has died for their sins. Jesus Christ was the origin of their faith and what He needs from His followers is not to live in a purified life, and so as the congregation of Christ. Therefore, all who go against Christ should be removed and driven away from the congregation.

Paul guides his argument to the point that he wanted to convey to the Corinthian believers that Christ, the paschal lamb, has been sacrificed for the wicked person to be saved in the day of the Lord. Here he emphasizes the point that the paschal lamb has died. For many of the believers in Corinth who were Jews, they understood this in the sense of the lamb that is sacrificed during the Jewish Passover celebration as an atonement for their sins.⁵⁴ This sacrifice was integrated with the understanding that they must remember how God set them free from the bondage in Egypt⁵⁵ (Exodus 12:5, 6). Therefore in the context of the New Testament, the Christians should remember that Jesus offered Himself to do God's will and as a result, to set them free from the overwhelming power of sin.

In addition, Paul does not simply tell the Corinthians what to do. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand that a major sacrifice has been made by an innocent man in order for them to have salvation and life eternal. He is trying to help them get on with living out of what they are.⁵⁶ Therefore, they must reflect this gratitude and appreciation in their faithful walk and in their daily living and acceptance of the Gospel. To continue to sin and commit sinful acts would be equivalent to forgetting and throwing away the vicarious sacrifice and hard work of the Messiah, the anointed one of God, which

⁵⁴ Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

⁵⁵ "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight."

⁵⁶ Witherington, *Conflicts & Community in Corinth*, 159.

indirectly would be the same as the Corinthians going against the will of God. Paul broadens the application of the death of Christ to Christian life as a whole.⁵⁷ This is why the congregation at Corinthian must play their role as Christians to ‘remove’ and ‘drive out’ the ‘wicked person’. This shows they are living in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1.9 Conclusion:

Based on the chiasmic study of the passage, discipline has shown to be a vital message for the church in Corinthians, to ensure that they are practising their role as Christians. That is to say, Paul began, as shown in the chiasmic structure of the passage, with a focus on the individual as a means to address the whole body of Christ. However, he concludes the latter half of the chiasmus with the focus on members of the church. Thus, the final judgment to drive the offender out into the world is not to illustrate that there is no hope for this individual, but the fear that this individual will corrupt the rest of the church if allowed to stay among the members. Driving out is the last resort for the offender if he or she refuses to change their ways and return to their “unleavened” state.

Paul also unmasks the Corinthian’s self-righteous attitudes as they boast and brag about being a community of believers who are right while the world is wrong. Here, Paul repeals that attitude by illustrating that their boasting is of no use since their faith is not correct and pure. It is one thing for them to boast and brag about Christ but what they are preaching and doing are two different things. In other words, one can not preach to be faithful and living a Christian life when in reality he or she is doing the complete opposite. This is the criticism of the Christian in Corinth that Paul sees as a great stumbling block in their full grasp of the faith as Christians. However, if they remember the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb then it should make it easy for them to

⁵⁷ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 218.

prevail in the end by ensuring that they repent of their sins and turn to God. That is why the “Paschal Lamb” in the arrangement of this chiastic is the climax of 1 Corinthians 5. It ensures that the only way for them to overcome their limitations and weaknesses is to remember the sacrifice of Christ every time they are tempted (1 Corinthians 5:7b). By doing so, they will remember that it was because of Christ’s sacrifice that they are made a new creation, a new batch.

This strives to highlight from its exegesis, the importance of being strong in performing ones duties as a Christians. The same applies to a community of believers. In addition, Christians who act in faith reflects people who are living the resurrection of Christ accordingly. This will show the sinners that the church does not and should not back down from punishing those who do not obey God’s law and that there is always hope for those who sin to be forgiven through repentance.

Chapter 2

Samoan Perspective of the ‘Aiga’

This is also why we need to look at the Samoan perspective of the *aiga* because its role in relation to its *matai* bears resemblance to the problem mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5. As a *matai*, one has the authority to rule and lead families with love but some *matais* use it for wrong doings. According to the Samoan custom, the family does not have the authority to remove titles from *matais* as they are seen as representatives of God in the community and what they do is for the betterment of families. However, some *matai* choose to act differently from what is expected of them. This is why I am trying to explain and outline the *matai* and his duties and also the rights of the family in collaboration with the *matai*.

Discussion in this section will revolve around the issue of the *matai* (titled man) and the *aiga* (family). Looking at the development of these two entities and their roles within the Samoan context will help to shed light on the authority dynamics that exist in leadership in the family and how the role of the *aiga* struggle is resolved, allowing us to put into practice what Paul teaches, and writes about, to the Corinthians.

2.1 What is a Matai?

The *matai* system is a form of polity in the Samoan village.¹ It is the governing system used by the *aiga*, villages, and country to ensure appropriate cultural conduct, behaviour, and tradition are maintained. The *matai* also carries an important responsibility and that is the protection of family land. This is an important issue, for it is here that authority issues often arise as Samoans hold land as their inheritance from

¹ Lange, Raeburn, Indigenous Island Ministers,

previous generations. The *matai* is a leader. The title is bestowed upon a *tautua* (servant) of the family who has served and worked his/her way up the hierarchical ladder of leadership within the Samoan family or village. This refers to the authority of the *matai* to select someone to take over from him and that is anyone he deems fit to carry the role, from within the family or even one of his children.

The *matai* titles are historically linked to the genealogies of the Samoans. They are 'sacred' titles, believed to carry the *mana* of the gods.² With such prestige, their governance and authority over the family proceeded without question. They are viewed as being god-like. Other *matai* titles are executive titles and carry special duties such as service to other *matai*, some with leading war parties, or reciting historical knowledge.³ All *matais* have authority over the *aiga*, and the *aiga* play their role as servants of the *matai*.

The role of the *matai* is to represent his/her family. The *matai* is the voice of the family in village *fono* (meeting). The *matai* networks with others on the appropriate conduct and discipline needed to be carried out. An example is when a member of the family is to be disciplined, the *matai* speaks to one another to resolve this issue and do not confront the family member personally. However, the *matai* for that family would be the spokesperson of that family to discuss the matter with the offender then would voice the concerns of the individual before the village *fono* and represent that person before the village. Whatever disciplinary measure is decided, the *matai* would convey it

² Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 27.

³ Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 27.

to the family member and ensure that the wish of the *fono* is carried out upon that individual.⁴

The *matai* in the Samoan context is an individual with great authority and prestige. The role that he/she plays within the family is very important for harmonious family interactions within the family and village. He/she is the role model who determines the path and route the family should follow. Thus, with great authority a *matai*, carries great responsibilities.

2.2 What is the Aiga?

According to an interview with Ulu Kini, the most important unit of the Samoan social life is the *aiga*.⁵ Such a family is not merely a biological group consisting of parents and children, but a wider family group of blood and marriage or even adopted connections who all acknowledge one person as the *matai* or head of that particular family.⁶ The *aiga* controls the *matai* titles with which they are associated, thus when a *matai* passes away, the *aiga* would meet and decide which member of the *aiga* would succeed to the title.⁷ This is an interesting point offered by the author, because in the conducted research, the only mention of the *aiga* discussing *matai* titles are in the event of death, which implies that it is only through death that a *matai* title is then re-delegated to the next elected member of the *aiga*. This has been the traditional understanding, however, the aim is to show if changes have occurred to this practice.

⁴ Interview with Ulu Kini, Tiakono Toeaina Matagaluega Faleata, 27/09/2011. The interview focused on the role of the *matai* and their functions within the families and villages.

⁵ Interview with Ulu Kini, Tiakono Toeaina Matagaluega Faleata, 27/09/2011. The interview focused on the role of the *matai* and their functions within the families and villages.

⁶ F.J.H. Grattan, *An Introduction to Samoan Custom*, (Auckland: R. McMillan, 1984), 10.

⁷ Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 27.

2.3 How is a Matai Selected?

As mentioned earlier, a *matai* is selected by the *aiga* from within the *aiga* to replace a *matai* who has passed away. Within the decision of the *aiga*, there are three ways in which a *matai* is selected, a *suli moni* (biological children), *tautua* (servant), *tamafai* (adopted).⁸ The decision of the *aiga* is an arduous one that can vary from one day to many years. The dependence is on whether the family can come to an agreement as to which candidate will be best suited to represent the family. Thus the decision is not one taken lightly, and because of the nature of the title, it is one that is traditionally held until death.

2.4 Where does the authority reside: Matai or Aiga?

Traditionally, all power and authority reside with the *matai*. This is supported by the views of Malama Meleisea, who compares the authority of the *matai* to that as being god-like.⁹ Thus to question the *matai* was almost questioning God. Christian Samoans still believe that chiefs have divinely-inspired authority. But that power comes from the Christian God, and required the chief to follow God's law and to set a Christian example for his family and village.¹⁰ Even Jesus himself said God chose all leaders; therefore, we have to obey the leaders, because obeying leaders is obeying God.

2.5 Traditional Samoan Belief of the Authority of the Matai.

As mentioned above, *matai* have the trust of the family in looking after and controlling the family. So whatever the *matai* wants, everyone has to obey. This is why

⁸ Interview with Ulu Kini, Tiakono Toeaina Matagaluega Faleata, 27/09/2011. The discussion revolved around the possible candidates to carry the *matai* title during *aiga* deliberations.

⁹ Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 69.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

it is not easy for a family to take away that authority from him if he does not carry out his responsibilities as a *matai* because of the power he holds. In the Samoan culture, a family cannot punish a *matai* if he is cruel and does not perform as a Samoan *matai* is expected to perform. The only people who have the power to punish the *matai* are the other *matai* who hold the same title or higher title than his own, and this is through the village meeting (*fono a matai*). According to Meleisea, the final decision on a punishment comes from the high chiefs of the village upon the advice of other *matais*.¹¹ The punishment that is decided depends on the seriousness of the crime. Sometimes, food is provided to feed the village. Other punishments vary from banning the *matai* and his family from the village. If the crime is very serious and the *matai* disobeys the decision of the village *fono*, then that *matai* will be forced to leave the village and all his belongings will be destroyed. These are forms of punishment the village *fono* can use to punish a *matai* who breaks the rule, but it really depends on the seriousness of the offence. The village *fono* can only punish but they cannot remove a *matai* title from holding a *matai*. They do not have the authority to do so.

2.6 The Changes to the Matai Authority.

Samoa is one of the Pacific Islands that embraces Christianity without much difficulty. The introduction of the 'Word of God' to Samoa came at a difficult time. It was hard to change the pre-Christian customs not only within villages but also between one village to another. This is because some villages wanted to hold all the power and authority as portrayed in the legend of the war in *Aana* when Christianity reached Samoan shores. *Malietoa* fought in this war and during the war, *Tamafaiga* the fierce

¹¹ Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 27.

warrior and chief was slain.¹² These acts started to change when Christianity was brought to Samoa. According to our interview with Kini, it is unsure when this change started but village customs were still carried out and there were still a few villages practising this tradition but most villages changed their ways because of Christianity.¹³

It is also unsure when the *matai* system changed, but its power has weakened because most *matais* forget to care and love their families once they hold this power. Many tend to seek self-prestige and wealth. Since foreigners brought Christianity, the power of the *matai* within families weakened and as proof, the *Tafa'ifa*¹⁴ of Samoa was divided and spread out to the whole country.¹⁵ This is shown by the many changes made to the Samoan national *fa'alupega* (national ceremonial address) when they require to swear an oath of allegiance to the German Emperor.¹⁶ This change shows how weak the *matai* system was and families have realized that they will not gain prestige by serving the *matai* or their presumed gods.

2.7 Why the Matai System had to be Changed or Amended?

The *matai* system of pre-Christian times has to be changed because it seems non-Christian compared to nowadays. The *matai* system of those times differs greatly as they were rulers of everything. Whatever they said had to be obeyed without comment or complaints. So if a *matai* rules with an unloving heart that family will suffer greatly. Even if a *matai* shows misgivings and lack of responsibilities the family cannot remove

¹² Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 56.

¹³ Interview with Ulu Kini, Tiakono Toeaina Matagaluega Faleata, 27/09/2011. The interview focused on the role of the *matai* and their functions within the families and villages.

¹⁴ Four of the highest title called papa, they are *Gatoaitete*, *Tamasoali'i*, *Tuia'ana* and *Tuiatua*. When all four papa are held by one person that person called the *Tafa'ifa*, and the first *Tafa'ifa* was *Salamasina*.

¹⁵ Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 32.

¹⁶ Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 115.

him from being a *matai*. In my view, this kind of *matai* system should be banned as I feel it is unchristian except the *matai* who loves his family and rules fairly. This is shown in Meleisea's book of the story about *Tamafaiga* and his harsh and cruel ruling over his people.¹⁷ I believe even his family did not approve of him as a *matai*. This is why I strongly feel the *matai* system should change because *matais* should be fair and love their families as families see them as gods.¹⁸

2.8 Modern Roles of the Matai: Balance in the Matai authority and the role of the Aiga.

Christianity together with the influence of government rule started to bring change to the *matai* system. The power of the *matai* started to weaken whilst the power of the family grew. The power of the family started to take effect and can now remove the title from any *matai* who rules selfishly and without love.¹⁹ However, the power of the family cannot do likewise to one that is carrying out his duty honestly and responsibly.²⁰ According to the Chief Executive Officer of Justice and Court Administration, Masinalupe Tusipa Masinalupe, there are still many cases of *matai* being strip of titles for being cruel and unjust to families. He said there have been cases of families taking their *matais* to court for being irresponsible and had won these cases.²¹

¹⁷ Meleisea, *Lagaga*, 56.

¹⁸ Kuatemanie Ulutui, *A Study on the Role Of Tulafono (law) In Samoa Society an analysis on its Social Implications from a New Testament perspective*, (B.D. Thesis, Pacific Theological College, 1989), 4.

¹⁹ Interview with Ulukini, Tiakono Toeaina Faleata Sisifo Matagaluega, 27/09/2011. The interview focused on the role of the matai and their functions within the families and villages

²⁰ Aukuso Taumate, *Theology Interpretation of the Samoan saying, "E le po pea se Nu'u,"* (B.D. Thesis, Malua Theological College 2005), 7.

²¹ Inter view with Masinalupe Tusipa Masinalupe, Chief Executive Officer of Ministry of Justice & Court Administration, about the result of this cases, but he mention that there are many cases its already being done, but this result are confidential.

2.9 How is a Matai Reprimanded?

The *matai* holders are observed and evaluated according to their status, service, and behaviour in the family. One must have an outstanding attitude in performing his duties. The family needs time to consider each delegate, and its decision has to be fair because the family's welfare and future depends on it.²² Whoever they choose will be the leader of the family and must be obeyed by everyone, but the family must not use their power to force the *matai* they have chosen to do what they like. So according to the law if by any chance the *matai* who is stripped of his title or punished, changes his ways and is remorseful, he can be reconsidered by the family and given a second chance.

2.10 New Role of the Family.

The role of the family now is to do the right thing and carry out their responsibility of removing leaders who are corrupt and are giving the family a bad name. This is because if they ignore their faults they will influence the young generation who may think this is the proper way to rule and that the *matai* is doing the right thing. We must not be afraid to correct any wrongdoing of the *matai*. To my belief, the family now has the same power as the *matai* if he does not act accordingly. This to my belief is real love, not only for the family and future generations but especially the *matai*. A blessed and prestigious family is a family that works together with their *matai* but a family that does not stand together with their leader is one that needs hard work and bound to experience problems.

²² Interview with Ulu Kini, Tiakono Toeaina Matagaluega Faleata, 27/09/2011. The interview focused on the role of the *matai* and their functions within the families and villages.

Chapter 3

EFKS Parish Perspective

3.1 The authority of the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning Ministers and the role of Parishes.

The EFKS management structure is divided into sixteen sub-committees under the umbrella of the General Assembly.²³ This discussion will focus on the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning Ministers, and their role.²⁴ The Ministerial Sub-Committee has the authority to remove and drive out a minister who breaks the law of the EFKS. This is the case with the church nowadays. The church now is responsible and has the power to remove any minister who breaks the law of the church or who rules without love. In the beginning, ministers are eligible to serve as ministers until death, and the church did not have the power to remove any minister. He performed his ministry whichever way he preferred.

²³ They are the Missionary Committee, Elders Committee, Land Development Committee, General Purpose Committee, Education Committee, Finance Committee. Below that, are the Sub-Committee of the Missionary Committee, The Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning Ministers, The Board of Malua Theological College, Christian Education Committee, Sub-Committee of the General Purpose Committee, Sub-Committee of the Education Committee, Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee. Moreover, the Printing Bookshop, and Printing Press Sub-Committee, The Ioane Viliamu Sub-Committee and the Board of Trustees.

²⁴ EFKS, *The Constitution Of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa*, 43. The chairman and the secretary of the Elders Committee shall be the officers of this Sub-Committee. One Elder-Minister from each district elected by ballot for a term of five years by the ordained and probation ministers who have covenanted with the Congregations of the district and confirmed by the Elders Committee, and the General Assembly to be notified accordingly.²⁴ The duties of this Committee;

1. To submit to the Elders Committee the names of Graduates for Ordination at the General Assembly in May.
2. To act as a Ministerial Candidates Committee.
3. To regulate in matters of the conduct and discipline of Ministers.
4. To submit for reinstatement of Ministers to the Elders Committee.
5. To select leaders for all services of Worship of the General Assembly, and submit the selected names to the Officers of the General Assembly.
6. To conduct Lay-Preachers Examination.

3.2 Punishment made by the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning Ministers.

According to Reverend Elder Apelu Lelevaga,²⁵ punishment for ministers of the church who break the law is not easy. But according to the law of the church, any minister who commits adultery or commits indecent acts is to be suspended from his duty and shall no longer serve as minister in that congregation.²⁶ This clearly portrays the act of repenting is more important to the Lord than the sin, and the church elders based their decision on the same way.²⁷ But what important is the parish and their role as Christians, in relation to the leader if he breaks the law of the church. The Parish should remove or drive out the leader if he's confirmed breaking the law.

3.3 Punishment already made.

Lelevaga stated that many ministers have broken this law and are now being suspended for five years. For example is Litala Tuimaualuga of Sydney Australia. He was suspended though he did not admit to have committed the crime but was driven by the desire of his heart to leave the parish. To the elders of the church, that is a sin in the eyes of God. The elders feel that to punish ministers who commit such crimes will teach all ministers a lesson; thus conveying a message that this type of crime is unacceptable to God. Meaalofa Peteru who also served Toamua Congregational Church as Minister

²⁵ Interview with Reverend Elder Apelu Lelevaga, Minister of Tuana'i Congregational Christian Church, on 28/09/2011. The interview focused on the authority of the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning ministers, and the function of the Parishes against their ministers.

²⁶ He referred to the story of the woman accused of adultery in John 8:1-11, of the scribes and Pharisees who brought an adulteress to Jesus to be stoned to death and he said to her, "Has no one condemned you? Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

²⁷ Interview with Reverend Elder Apelu Lelevaga, Minister of Tuana'i Congregational Christian Church, on 28/09/2011. The interview focused on the authority of the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning ministers, and the function of the Parishes against their ministers.

and Danny Ioka who was the Director of Youth and Sunday Schools also faced the same punishment. Alafau Ipiipi who served the Samatau Congregation Christian Church, Fofoa Temese who left his wife and Frank Togafau who served at Si'unui parish.²⁸ Those ministers got removed and drive out from their positions as leaders of parishes. Not only by the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning Ministers but parishes as well.

3.4 The Role of the Parish.

The growth in knowledge and understanding of the bible especially the ministers led to many changes to the customs and ways of the church as relayed in this paper. These changes include the terms given to ministers. Covenant between parish and ministers used to be until death, but were limited when they used the authority to rule without love and for their own personal needs and it ends up breaking laws. This is why the churches should have practice their role as Christians to remove and drive out ministers who break God's law as Paul urged the Corinthians to remove or drive out the wicked person among the congregation says 1 Corinthians 5:2.

3.5 The Correlation of the Samoan Perspective.

The point I wish to make with regards to the cultural perspective and the EFKS perspective is that times have changed and practices that were once thought of as written in stone and unchangeable have now been amended. In other words changes are very possible and likely to occur. The rule of the *matai* in the Samoan family was once thought of as being unquestionable and authoritarian, has now ceded some of its

²⁸ There are also ministers who committed such crimes but have been reinstated because of their impressive reports from their districts. These decisions were made by the elders as they felt the person was more important than the sin committed.

authority to the *aiga*. The conduct of ministers in the EFKS was once believed to rest with the local minister themselves and the elders (*au fa'atonu*). However that has now become inclusive of the congregational members.

What this shows is exactly what Paul talks about in driving the wicked from amongst their midst. The problems the Corinthian have is the problem that once plagued the Samoan family and the EFKS Church and that is questioning the authority of the head of the church. The question Paul raises is how can a Corinthian Christian allow such an act to go unpunished and such a person to remain in the church? It speaks volumes of their faith. If the Corinthian allows this sin to go on, then what has once been considered a sin to them is no longer a sin, but would be considered an acceptable act, for no punishment was given.

However, Paul insists that they drive the wicked person from their midst, not only because that individual is wicked, but because that wicked individual has compromised their belief as to what is sinful and what is righteous. By allowing him to stay, the sinful act becomes an acceptable act before them and when such a thing occurs, then the faith that he brought to them is no longer the faith in Jesus Christ, for such acts were shunned by Christ.

Just as the *aigo* the *Au Faatonu* and the Congregation have a role to play in the Samoan context, so do the Corinthian have a role to play to ensure that the Gospel Paul brought to them is rightfully the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

According to Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, they are to remove or drive out the wicked from their midst. According to the exegesis conducted earlier, the purpose in remove and drive out was not to punish the person committing the act, but it was for the benefit of the members of the church so that they are aware of acts deemed sinful and so they do not lose sight of that in their everyday dealings in Corinth. In the Samoan and

EFKS context the removal of the wicked person is an act of punishment for the culprit or the one found guilty of not conducting his/her duties for the family and/or parish. However, the punishment or the act of removing according to the use of the verb *ἐξάρατε* meaning to remove or drive away once. If this is the case, then the person being removed or drive out is left in the hands of God for judgment and no longer the responsibility of the family and church. This is where theory and practice converge as we have it today.

In matters concerning the *aiga* and the EFKS church, there is still hope for the individual being removed. Although the punishment may appear severe, to be driven out of the village and the church, there is a likelihood that the individual will be accepted by the family and the EFKS church if that individual shows remorse and has changed his ways. Maybe indirectly Paul allows for that individual to return to the church, however, according to the language used, the punishment is severe and permanent, which leads to the question of whether Paul was referring to the driving out from the church to mean something other than fellowship?

This could be a question left to the scholars to resolve and rectify, however, its permanence would then lead to the understanding that being driven from the church no longer makes it the problem of the congregation, but makes it a problem between the offender and God. Thus, God becomes the only judge of that individual when he/she commits an act that is deemed punishable by permanent removal from the fold of the congregation and believers. Hope can then reside in this permanence, because now the individual must face the ultimate judge and maybe presented with such an adversary, any believer will surely change his/her way. Maybe that was the intent of Paul, so that punishment is not that of the congregation, but that of the individual offender to rectify on his/her own. Meaning, if the individual sins, then it is left to the individual to make

the necessary changes so that he/she could be part of the church once more. As is the case of the *matai* and the *EFKS* church, although punishment is decided by the *aiga* and the *au faatonu*, the ultimate authority in which a punishment is carried out is the individual who offends, because in the end, it is his/her remorse and change of recourse that allows for their re-entry into the family and the *EFKS* church.

Conclusion

This paper portrays the way of life people are living nowadays and how the effect of their knowledge, wealth and foreign lifestyles, influence their decision-making into abusing the use of the authority by leadership. As this paper has shown, there is a biblical perspective that supports the following.

First, the parish has the duty to remove the minister if he is proven to have committed a sinful act. Using Paul's admonition to the Christian in Corinthians about the immoral person among them, it becomes clear that removing such person is the right act. As I have shown in the exegetical section, the failure to act on such a person implies that the Christian in Corinthians seems to have condoned the sinful act. It can also endanger the spiritual welfare of others who may be influenced by this person if he or she is allowed to stay in the congregation. It surely, is not a good reflection of what Paul taught them about Jesus' sacrificial life.

Secondly, the *matai* as the leader of the Samoan family portrays a similar image to the problem within the congregation at Corinthian. This is because despite the unfairness of the decisions made by the *matai*, the family would not say anything because it is the tradition of Samoa. This is where the culture and Christianity differs, because to let the sinner continue with such acts, is a sin in the eyes of God. Thirdly, as mentioned before, ministers in the past served for life in parishes by swearing their oath of covenant, and whatever happens the congregation will not drive him out. However, this decision has some good sides though it shows weaknesses as portrayed by the exegetical message of this paper. Having no say in correcting a mistake can be taken as a sin and this will greatly affect Christianity and the resurrection of Christ if the church continues to make decisions like this.

Finally, this paper challenges the old perspective that the *matai* and the ministers can not be removed by members of the *aiga* and the parish. According to Paul's letter to the Corinthians, all Christians should perform their duties as Christians because failing to carry out these duties reflect negligence which is a sin and may pose a threat to their lives. The message this paper wishes to convey to everyone is to be strong and not to be scared to do what is right in the Lord. Perform your duty as a Christian and remove those who lead without fearing the Lord, and live according to the will of God. Hence, to perform our duties as Christians mean to speak out with courage and ensure that those who fall short of God's grace by committing sinful acts are removed and given an opportunity to repent and seek God's forgiveness. The act of removing a sinful individual is an act of love not only for the congregation at large as this sets an example for all to note, but it is also an act of love for the offender so that he or she is given a lesson to learn but more importantly seek God's forgiveness to be able to be part of the church again. Neglecting your duty as a Christian means you have betrayed the paschal lamb of God who was slain for us so we can be forgiven of our sins.

Appendix A



SAMOA

VILLAGE FONO ACT 1990

Arrangement of Provisions

TITLE

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | Short title and commencement | 8. | Courts to take account of penalty imposed by Village Fono |
| 2. | Interpretation | 9. | Limitation of jurisdiction of Village Fono |
| 3. | Village Fono continued | 10. | Exemption from Income Tax |
| 4. | Written records not required | 11. | Right of Appeal |
| 5. | Powers of Village Fono relating to hygiene and economic development | | |
| 6. | Punishments | | |
| 7. | Power of delegation | | |

THE VILLAGE FONO ACT 1990

1990

No. 3

AN ACT to validate and empower the exercise of power and authority by Village Fono in accordance with the custom and usage of their villages and to confirm or grant certain powers and to provide for incidental matters.
(30 July 1990)

1. Short title and commencement - (1) This Act may be cited as the Village Fono Act 1990.

(2) This Act shall come into force on such date as shall be specified by the Head of State acting on the advice of Cabinet, by Order.

2. Interpretation - In this Act unless the context otherwise requires:

"Village Fono" in relation to any village means the assembly of the Alii and Faipule of that village meeting in accordance with the custom and usage of such village and includes the plural.

"Registrar" means the Registrar of the Land and Titles Court.

"Village land" does not include government land or freehold or leasehold land.

"Village misconduct" in relation to any village means any act conduct or behaviour which is or has been traditionally punished by the Village Fono of that village in accordance with its custom and usage and has the extended meaning required by section 5.

3. Village Fono continue - (1) The Registrar shall compile and keep up to date a register of Village Fono in which shall be recorded the name of every village in which a Village Fono is functioning.

(2) Every Village Fono in the exercise of any power or authority shall exercise the same in accordance with the custom and usage of that village.

(3) The past and future exercise of power and authority by every Village Fono with respect to the affairs of its village in accordance with the custom and usage of that village is hereby validated and empowered.

(4) In addition to the power and authority preserved or granted under this Act, every Village Fono shall have such other powers, authorities and functions as may be provided in any other Act.

(5) A certificate under the hand of the Registrar to the effect that a Fono is entered on this register under this Act shall be prima facie evidence of the existence of such Fono.

4. Written records not required - No written record of any enquiry by a Village Fono into any allegation of village misconduct, or of any punishment imposed, need be kept and no person found by any Village Fono to have been guilty of village misconduct shall by reason only of that fact be deemed to be guilty of a crime or offence under any other enactment, nor except with the consent of that person shall evidence be given in any Court of the decision of the Village Fono or of any punishment imposed by it.

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5. Powers of Village Fono relating to hygiene and economic development - (1) Every Village Fono shall in respect to its village have the powers set out in subsection (2) notwithstanding that such powers may not in a particular village form part of its custom and usage.

(2) The powers referred to in subsection (1) are:

- (a) The power to make rules for the maintenance of hygiene in the village;
- (b) The power to make rules governing the development and use of village land for the economic betterment of the village.
- (c) The power to direct any person or persons to do any work required to be done pursuant to rules made in accordance with the powers granted or preserved by paragraphs (a) and (b).

(3) Every person is guilty of village misconduct and may be punished by his Village Fono who fails to obey and rule or direction made or given in accordance with the powers granted or preserved by this section.

6. Punishments - Without limiting the power of Village Fono preserved by this Act to impose punishments for village misconduct the powers of every Village Fono to impose punishment in accordance with the custom and usage of its village shall be deemed to include the following powers of punishments:

- (a) The power to impose a fine in money, fine mats, animals or food; or partly in one or partly in others of those things;
- (b) The power to order the offender to undertake any work on village land.

7. Power of Delegation - A Village Fono may delegate to a committee of its members all or any of its powers.

8. Courts to take account of penalty imposed by Village Fono - Where punishment has been imposed by a Village Fono in respect of village misconduct by any person and that person is convicted by a Court of a crime or offence in respect of the same matter the Court shall take into account in mitigation of sentence the punishment imposed by that Village Fono.

9. Limitation of jurisdiction of Village Fono - The jurisdiction of any Village Fono shall not extend to include:

- (a) Any person who does not ordinarily reside in its village; or
- (b) Any person who not being a Matai of its village ordinarily resides in its village on Government, freehold, or leasehold land and is not liable in accordance with the custom and usage of that village to render tautua to a Matai of that village.

10. Exemption from Income Tax - The income of every Village Fono shall be wholly exempted from income tax.

11. Right of appeal - (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (6), every person adversely affected by a decision of a Fono (including a decision as to punishment) shall have a right of appeal to the Court against such decision and the Court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the matter.

(2) Every appeal shall be commenced by a petition in accordance with section 44 of the Land and Titles Act 1981.

(3) Every appeal shall be commenced within one month of the date on which the decision was made, or within such further time as the Court may allow on application made either before or after the expiration of that month.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Land and Titles Act the Court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine every appeal under this section.

(5) The Court may determine the appeal in one of the following ways:

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- (a) It may allow the appeal and the decision appealed from shall thereupon be null and void;
- (b) It may dismiss the appeal;
- (c) It may refer the decision back to the Fono for reconsideration,-
but it shall not have power to impose any punishment or penalty to substitute one punishment or penalty for another.

(6) There shall be no right of appeal from a decision of a Fono given after reconsideration pursuant to subsection (5)(c).

(7) In all other respects the procedure shall be as prescribed by the Land and Titles Act 1981 or as directed by the Court.

(8) For the purposes of this section "Court" means the Land and Titles Court continued under the Land and Titles Act 1981.

REVISION NOTES 2008

This law has been generally edited as provided for by section 5 of the *Revision and Publication of Laws Act 2008*. The following general revisions have been made –

- (a) References to Western Samoa have been amended to Samoa in accordance with an amendment to the Constitution of Samoa in 1997.
- (b) All references to the male gender have been made gender neutral.
- (c) Amendments have been made to conform to modern drafting styles and to use modern language as applied in the laws of Samoa.
- (d) Amendments have been made to up-date references to offices, officers and statutes.
- (e) Other minor editing has been done in accordance with the lawful powers of the Attorney General.

There were no amendments made to this law since the publication of the *Western Samoa Statutes Reprint 1978-1996*.

The Village Fono Act 1990

This law has been consolidated and revised by the Attorney General under the authority of the *Revision and Publication of Laws Act 2008* and is an official version of this Act as at 31 December 2007. It is an offence to publish this Act without approval or to make any unauthorised change to an electronic version of this Act.



Aumua Ming Leung Wai
Attorney General of Samoa

Revised and consolidated by Graham Bruce Powell
Under the supervision of Teleiai Lalotoa Sinaalamaimaleula Mulitalo
(Parliamentary Counsel)

REVISION NOTES 2008 No. 2

There were no amendments made to this law since the publication of the *Consolidated and Revised Statutes of Samoa 2007*.

This law has been consolidated and revised by the Attorney General under the authority of the *Revision and Publication of Laws Act 2008* and is an official version of this Act as at 31 December 2008. It is an offence to publish this Act without approval or to make any unauthorised change to an electronic version of this Act.



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Under the supervision of Teleiai Lalotoa Sinaalamaimaleula Mulitalo
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**The Village Fono Act 1990 is administered in the
Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.**

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