

A CHIASTIC READING  
OF I CORINTHIANS 5:1-13:  
REFLECTION ON THE ROLE OF THE 'AIGA'  
AND  
THE MNISTERIAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE EFKS  
REGARDING QUESTIONABLE AUTHORITY

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By

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## 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.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. It employs the chiastic reading methodology, which is a sub-section of Rhetorical Criticism, to study the passage indicated. The aim is to draw from the adopted reading of the passage what Paul was striving to convey to the Christians in Corinth. That is, the Corinthian believers should not tolerate the wicked man who is reported to be participating in the activities of the community as if nothing is happening.

According to Paul, the failure of the community in Corinth to remove this wicked man is a strong indication the Corinthian Christians are not executing the Christian way of life correctly. The same advice is related to a Samoan family that faces a corrupt *matai*. It is the same advice for an EFKS parish which has a member who has committed a sinful act, especially a minister. The decision making of the EFKS Ministerial Sub-committee regarding church ministers lay the base for the parishes to follow.

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*Faafetai tatalo, Malo Tapuai*

## Introduction

There is a traditional understanding (or a misconception) among members of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa that they can not remove a minister from a parish. This is somewhat based on an old adage that once a minister and a parish 'sign a covenant', it depicts that the partnership is for life. This similar traditional take is also reflected in the Samoan context of the *aiga* and its *matai*. I grew up with the understanding that once a person is being bestowed a *matai* title, the title must remain with that person until death. The same goes with the church minister.

From these contexts, the *aulotu* (parish) and *aiga*, I have struggled to make sense whether a change can be implemented from a biblical perspective. Thus, my interest in the issue Paul is discussing rhetorically in 1 Cor 5:1-13. There, Paul challenges the community of believers in Corinth to exercise its role by removing the wicked man who has sexual connections with his step father from their midst. Using the chiasmic reading to investigate the passage, the implication in the passage that it seems right to retain a person with such a character among the community is quite wrong. It does not adhere to the meaning of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection. It does not reflect a good understanding of what the apostle Paul has taught them.

The contention, therefore, in this paper is that an *aiga* or a parish has a biblical role to play in removing either a *matai* or a minister from the title and the parish respectively if they are proven to have committed serious ethical and moral offences.

This paper is divided into three parts. In chapter 1, I will present a brief history of the rhetorical criticism methodology from its secular background to its inclusion in

biblical Studies.<sup>1</sup> It will be followed by a discussion of the chiasmus and related rhetorical aspects that are used in this paper's reading of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. The last part of this chapter is the exegesis of the passage chosen.

In Chapter 2 the role of a Samoan family in the selection and removal of a leader, a *matai*, will be discussed. Chapter 3 highlights the role of the Ministerial Subcommittee of the EFKS that oversees all the ministers. The decisions by this committee show that a parish has a role in reporting to the Elders its minister if he has committed a wrongful act. It is a process towards removal. It will be followed by the Conclusion in which I will reiterate the main points of this study.

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<sup>1</sup> I am aware that there is a wide range of discussions on this literary reading but I will not be able to cover it in this paper due to its longevity. However, I only wish to outline where the chiasmic reading, an aspect of Rhetorical Criticism, fits within the wide platform of Rhetorical Criticism.

## Chapter 1

### Exegetical Chiastic Reading of

#### I Corinthians 5:1-13

According to George A. Kennedy, “the Greek word *ῥητορικ* [rhetoric] first occurs in Plato’s *Gorgias*, probably written in the second decade of the fourth century BC.”<sup>1</sup> Rhetoric was defined at the time as the “worker of persuasion.”<sup>2</sup> Kennedy also points out that the term rhetoric was understood negatively in ancient Greek because of its association with the expression ‘speaker’, a technical term for ‘politician’.<sup>3</sup> However, rhetoric later becomes primarily an art of speaking which was taught to young men<sup>4</sup> so they would be able to speak confidently on issues at various occasions or settings. These different settings show us the different genres of rhetoric. They include ‘accusation’, ‘defense’, ‘exhortation’, ‘dissuasion’, ‘praise’, ‘speech at a festival’, or ‘funeral oration’.<sup>5</sup> As Kennedy has shown, these genres of rhetoric are extensions of the two main genres, rhetoric and literary.<sup>6</sup> In other words, by the fifth century BC rhetoric as an art of speaking has found its place in letter writing.<sup>7</sup> Ben Witherington notes that “[e]arly in the first century A.D. rhetoric became the primary

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<sup>1</sup> George A. Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period: 330 BC-AD 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1997), 3: [www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=112003061](http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=112003061). Accessed November 17, 2011. I am indebted to my supervisor for this online source. Kennedy suggests that the term *ῥητορικ* (rhetoric) was likely to have been coined by Socrates, Plato’s teacher.

<sup>2</sup> Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 3.

<sup>3</sup> Kennedy, “Historical Survey of Rhetoric,” 3.

<sup>4</sup> I have not come across any reference about women being trained as rhetoricians in the Graeco-Roman world.

<sup>5</sup> George A. Kennedy, “The Genres of Rhetoric,” in *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period: 330 BC-AD 400*, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1997), 43. [www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=112003061](http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=112003061). Accessed November 17, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Kennedy, “The Genres of Rhetoric,” 43.

<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, “The Genres of Rhetoric,” 43. He gives by way of an example a title of a rhetorical manual that had been used for writing. It is believed the document originated in the third quarter of the fourth century BC.

discipline in Roman higher education.”<sup>8</sup> John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay point out that rhetoric was useful in ancient Israel.<sup>9</sup>

In biblical studies, rhetorical criticism is part of Literary Criticism.<sup>10</sup> Rhetorical criticism has become one of the methodologies that has been used in the studies of, first, the Old Testament and then the New Testament for quite some time. In the Old Testament, James Muilenburg is associated with Rhetorical Criticism while H. D. Betz is the pioneer in the New Testament with his work on Galatians.<sup>11</sup>

Rhetorical Criticism, according to David Dockery, is quite helpful when a biblical passage is studied with an aim to understand two aspects.<sup>12</sup> The first is the motivation of an author. That is, rhetorical criticism becomes the tool useful in an attempt to understand the author's choice of words and phrases to impart his/her thoughts. The choice of words and sentence constructions reveal whether the author is trying to either convince or dissuade an audience on his/her position. The second aim of rhetorical criticism is the speaker's point of view on an issue being discussed. That is, the way a speaker uses a particular genre of rhetoric to try and convince an audience to affirm or change its understanding of a particular issue.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ben Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 40.

<sup>9</sup> John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, Third Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 92.

<sup>10</sup> John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*, 91. Hayes and Holladay discusses Rhetorical Criticism under Literary Criticism, an indication the former is part of the latter.

<sup>11</sup> C. Clifton Black, "Keeping up with Recent Studies XVI. Rhetorical Criticism and Biblical Interpretation," *Expository Times* 100 (1989): 253-255. Black discusses the development of Rhetorical Criticism in biblical studies over the years.

<sup>12</sup> David S. Dockery, *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1994), 442-443.

<sup>13</sup> Hayes and Holladay, "Biblical Exegesis, A Beginner's Handbook," 93.



I will now summarize three main parts of rhetoric that should be found in a passage being studied using rhetorical criticism. These three are: invention, arrangement, and style and they have been evaluated by Jeffrey Weima.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.1 Invention:

'Invention' deals with the genre of rhetoric of a passage. Weima points out three main genres. These are "judicial, deliberative, and epideictic."<sup>15</sup> The judicial genre is normally located in courtrooms where an audience is presented with evidence so they can decide a verdict of guilty or not.<sup>16</sup> The deliberative genre "belongs to the setting of a public assembly where the audience must make a decision about the best course of action concerning some future activity."<sup>17</sup> This genre of rhetorical suits 1 Cor 5:1-13 and I will discuss that later. The epideictic genre is usually used in public places where a writer<sup>18</sup> attempts to convince readers to adopt a certain point of view. If a speaker or writer is successful, he/she will be praised; if not he/she will be blamed.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.2 Arrangement.

The other important part of rhetorical criticism is 'arrangement'. It deals with how a writer structures his/her argument so that it will easily accepted by an intended audience. There must be at least four parts for a successful 'arrangement'. These include: (i) the *exordium* or the introduction. A good writer should be able to draw the attention of the audience at the outset of the discussion.<sup>20</sup> The (ii) is the *narratio*. This part of the arrangement is where the writer presents his/her proposition and provides supporting

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<sup>14</sup> Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," *Calvin Theological Journal* 32 (1997): 460-463.

<sup>15</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 460.

<sup>16</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 460.

<sup>17</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 460.

<sup>18</sup> I will insist on using the terms 'writer' and 'audience/reader' from here onwards because I am dealing with a written text in this paper but these discussions of various parts of rhetorical criticism originated in the context of a 'speaker' and 'audience' in public places.

<sup>19</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 460.

<sup>20</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 460-461.

information for the point of view discussed. The next one is the *probation*. It is the part where the writer brings further arguments that enhances the proposition. According to Weima, some rhetorical studies include in this section opposition views.<sup>21</sup> The last part of the 'arrangement' is the *peroration* or simply the conclusion.

### 1.3 Style

The third part of rhetorical pertaining to a study of a passage is 'style'. Weima indicates that style usually consists of 'diction' and 'synthesis'.<sup>22</sup> The former involves the author's selection of relevant words or metaphors to present his/her case. The latter, synthesis, is to be seen in the way the author construct his/her presentation in a persuasive manner.<sup>23</sup>

### 1.4 A Chiastic Reading

Chiasmus is a part of rhetorical criticism where a passage is structured according to the formula A B C B' A'. In this structure, A' is the inversion of A. Likewise with B' being the inversion of B. According to Charles D. Myers, a chiasmus is detected to have been used by a writer if the thought expressed in A is repeated but in a different expression in A', the same with B and B'.<sup>24</sup> C is the centre of the chiasmus and it is the main thought of the argument. In this case, C spells out what could be the solution to a problem being discussed. In the case of 1 Cor 5:1-13 the chiastic structure is in the form: A B C D E F G F' E' D' C' B' A'.

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<sup>21</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 461.

<sup>22</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 461.

<sup>23</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 461.

<sup>24</sup> Charles D. Myers, "Chiastic Inversion in the Argument of Romans 3-8," *Novum Testamentum* 35, 1 (1993): 32 especially Myer's discussion in footnote 14 on the same page.



### 1.5 Chiastic Structure of 1 Corinthians 5:1-13:

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 having 'removed' in verse 2 and 'drive out' in verse 13. They are two different words but have 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 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.

### 1.6 Exegesis:

Before I pursue the chiastic exegesis of 1 Cor 5:1-13, I now discuss the three main parts of rhetoric mentioned earlier. These are invention, arrangement, and style. I propose

that 1 Cor 5:1-13 fits the deliberative genre category discussed on page 5. There Weima points out that this type of rhetoric is normally employed in a public forum where a speaker (a writer in this case) tries to convince an audience to accept a change for the better in the future.<sup>25</sup>

Paul, in 1 Cor 5:1-13, is urging forcefully the believers not to be complacent by still accepting the presence of a sinful man who was known to have been engaged in sexual encounters with his step mother (vs 1). The deliberative rhetoric Paul is using here comes in the form of strong words and phrase he uses. These include 'remove' in vs 2; 'your boasting is not a good thing' in vs 6; and vs 13: "Drive out the wicked person from among you." These strong words and phrases imply that Paul wants the community of believers in Corinth to change their mind about the way they are dealing with the sinful man. They should decide to excommunicate him for the betterment of the community in the future.

In the arrangement part of the passage, the *exordium* fits vs 1: A strong introduction where Paul hits straight to the point. He writes: "It has been reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife." This verse would surely draw the attention of the reader.

The *narration* section fits vss 2-5 where Paul writes about an endless connection with the members of the church in Corinth. He is saying (vs 3) that he is with them in spirit though he and they are physically separate. The *probation* refers to the part of the letter where the writer brings further support for the point being argued. In 1 Cor 5:6-8, Paul appeal to the metaphor of the yeast and the sacrifice of the paschal lamb (vs 7) to make the point that they need to maintain the Christian values of life he imparted to them. Failing to send the sinful man away from their community is not a good sign of their current situation. As for the

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<sup>25</sup> Weima, "What Does Aristotle Have to do with Paul? An Evaluation of Rhetorical Criticism," 460.

*peroration* or the conclusion, vss 9-13 suits that category. Paul reiterates the issue and re-issued the command to drive the sexual immoral man from their midst.

The style of the rhetoric includes diction and synthesis, the choice of words and the presentation. The style aims 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 '*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.

We now come to the exegesis section where I will discuss verses in pairs. For example, A and its inversion A' are discussed together. I have taken this cue from the understanding that A and A' should reflect the similar, if not the same, thought of the writer.

### 1.1.1 A, A': verses 2 and 13

*A: vs 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': vs 13. God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."*

These verses show that Paul is being troubled with the wicked man's wrongdoing. He is also furious about the attitude of other members of the community. This can be supported by the use of the term 'mourn'. In other words, Paul 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.

However, the church in Corinth has noticed what the man's sin was.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, they are too proud! Being boastful, yet such grievous sin remains in 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 doing anything about it? Instead, you should be filled with grief and remove from your fellowship the man who did this!<sup>27</sup>

At the end of verse 2, Paul issues a very severe discipline, 'remove him.' The Greek word used is *αρθή*, meaning 'to take up or to take away'.<sup>28</sup> 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 use such as the Acts of the Apostles 8:33, '*αρθή*

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<sup>26</sup> Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, TEF Study Guide 17 (London: SPCK, 1978), 56-57.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1987), 201-202.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Bauer, William Arndt, Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd edition, ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2000), 28. It will be known thereafter as BDAG.

The term *αρθή* means: To raise to a higher position or place, lift up, take up, pick up. *αρθή*. Its parsing is third person singular, subjunctive Aorist Middle of the root word *αίρω*, meaning 'to take up' or 'take away', translated 'removed' *αρθή*.

describes the act of 'taken away' to mean being removed with the purpose to destroy.<sup>29</sup> This implies an act of permanent removal.<sup>30</sup> 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?<sup>31</sup>

Looking at the verse closely, it seems obvious that the emphasis was on the man who sinned, but according to rhetoric issued by the words Paul uses it is the reaction of the church members to the sinner that is at stake. 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 of themselves as Christians.<sup>32</sup> 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 vs 13 (A'), 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

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<sup>29</sup> As well it is found in the Gospel of John to refer to the act of "taking up" meaning to be removed for destruction.

<sup>30</sup> J. W. Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 98.

<sup>31</sup> The meaning of this extract is the use of the word 'αποθή' in the book of Acts 8:33 and the Gospel of John in the use of parsing in Greek. This shows the use of the word 'αποθή' 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.

<sup>32</sup> J. Paul Sampley, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," in *The New Interpreters Bible*, eds. Thomas G. Long, et. al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 846.



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 *εχαράτε*. 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 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.

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<sup>33</sup> Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 56-57.

### 1.1.2 B, B' verses 3 and 12

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

*B': vs 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.<sup>34</sup>

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.

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<sup>34</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 151.



### 1.1.3 C, C': verses 4 and 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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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.<sup>37</sup> 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 man must also take into consideration that there is a possibility of hope for his rehabilitation.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Mathew Henry, "First Corinthians," in *Commentary in One Volume*, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 1810.

<sup>36</sup> Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy, O. Caron (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1990), 802-803.

<sup>37</sup> Sampley, "First Corinthians," 847.

<sup>38</sup> Sampley, "First Corinthians," 847.

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 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.<sup>39</sup> 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.

#### 1.1.4 D, D': verses 5 and 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.*

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.<sup>40</sup> Paul does not explain how the

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<sup>39</sup>Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 409.

<sup>40</sup>Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 412.

man's spirit would benefit, but by sending the offender away to suffer physically, his spirit would arise in the day of the Lord.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

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). 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",<sup>43</sup> it is used mostly by Paul to refer to the destruction of the 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 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.<sup>44</sup> 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

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<sup>41</sup> Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 60.

<sup>42</sup> Sampley, "First Corinthians," 397.

<sup>43</sup> BDAG, 875.

<sup>44</sup> Hargreaves, *A Guide to 1 Corinthians*, 60.

wishing to belong to the fellowship but at the same time insist on continuing their former pagan practices.<sup>45</sup>

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.

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

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<sup>45</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 224.



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.

#### 1.1.5 E, E': verses 6 and 9

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

*E': vs 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.<sup>46</sup> 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."<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> 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

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<sup>46</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 153.

<sup>47</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 153.

<sup>48</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

that, the offending person must be excluded from the midst of the community.<sup>49</sup> 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 are, "live out what Christ has worked in you."<sup>50</sup> 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.<sup>51</sup> The importance of this statement is that sexual immorality was an issue in that previous letter and remains an issue in this letter.<sup>52</sup> 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.<sup>53</sup> According to Gordon Fee, this indicates that the failure to respond to Paul's previous request is related to their

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<sup>49</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 1169.

<sup>50</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

<sup>51</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

<sup>52</sup> Murphy-O'Connor, "The First Letter to the Corinthians," 1169.

<sup>53</sup> Henry, "First Corinthians," 1810.

misunderstanding of that former letter.<sup>54</sup> 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 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 befriends 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.

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<sup>54</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 222.



### 1.1.6 F, F': verses 7a and 8

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

*F': vs 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,<sup>55</sup> as it is understood that the Christians share the same history as Israel, as descendants of Israel's history.<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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

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<sup>55</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

<sup>56</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 216.

<sup>57</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 403.

<sup>58</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 403.

<sup>59</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 216.

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'.<sup>60</sup> Paul brings this part of the argument to its logical conclusion.<sup>61</sup> The use of the articular infinitive is to express the result of the action of the main verb which is to "celebrate". However, since the term "μὴ" 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."<sup>62</sup> 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.<sup>63</sup>

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.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> An articular infinitive.

<sup>61</sup> Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 417.

<sup>62</sup> Wenham, *The Elements of New Testament Greek*, 85.

<sup>63</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 218.

<sup>64</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 219.

### 1.1.7 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 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.<sup>65</sup> This sacrifice was integrated with the understanding that they must remember how God set them free from the bondage in Egypt<sup>66</sup> (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.<sup>67</sup> 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

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<sup>65</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

<sup>66</sup> "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."

<sup>67</sup> Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth*, 159.

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 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.<sup>68</sup> 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.

### **1.7 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

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<sup>68</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 218.

faith as Christians. However, if they remember the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb then it should make it easy for them to 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' regarding the matai's authority

By exploring the Samoan perspective of the *aiga* in relation to the roles of the *matai* one can see the resemblance of the problem as mentioned in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. According to Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, when an heir of a family is given a *matai* title, "the person immediately assumes the responsibility of being the trustee for the family properties; the protector and promoter of the *aiga* welfare"<sup>1</sup>

As a *matai*, one has the authority to rule and lead families with love but some *matai* take advantage of people in the family and abuse their power as "protector" of the *aiga* welfare. Within Samoan custom, the family does not have the authority to remove titles from *matai* 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*. The following discussion revolves 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Aiono Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, "The Samoan Culture and Government," in *Culture & Democracy in the South Pacific*, eds. Ron Crocombe, Uentabo Neemia, Asesela Ravuvu, Werner Vom Busch, (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1992), 120.

## 2.1 What is a Matai?

The *matai* system is a form of polity in the Samoan village.<sup>2</sup> It is the governing system used by the *aiga*, villages, and country to ensure appropriate cultural conduct, behaviour, and tradition are maintained. Saleimoa Vaai claims that the *matai* also carries an important responsibility and that is the protection of family land.<sup>3</sup> This is an important issue, for it is here that issues about authority often arise because Samoans hold land as their inheritance from previous generations.<sup>4</sup> 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 is worthy enough 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> All *matai*s 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

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<sup>2</sup> Lange Raeburn, *Island Minister: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth Century Pacific Islands Christianity*, (Canberra: Pandanus Books, 2005), 78-79.

<sup>3</sup> Saleimoa Vaai, *Samoa Faamatai and the Rule of Law*, (Papa i Galagala: NUS Quality Print, 1999), 43-47.

<sup>4</sup> Saleimoa Vaai, *Samoa Faamatai and the Rule of Law*, 47.

<sup>5</sup> Malama Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1987), 27.

<sup>6</sup> Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 27.

conduct and discipline needed to be carried out. An example is when a member of the family is to be disciplined. The *matai* discusses among each other whether to resolve the issue and not to confront the family member personally. The *matai* of the family of the person implicated would be the spokesperson who discusses the matter with the offender before it is brought before the village *fono*. The *matai* also represents that person before the *fono*. Whatever disciplinary measure the *fono* decides on, the *matai* would convey it to the family members and ensure that the punishment is carried out.<sup>7</sup>

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 should determine the right path 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*.<sup>8</sup> Such an entity in the Samoan context does not merely consist of a biological group of just parents and children. It is much wider than that. It is a family group related by blood and through marriage or even adopted connections who all acknowledge one person as the *matai*, or *sa'o*, as the leader of that particular family.<sup>9</sup> The *aiga* controls the *matai* titles with which they are associated with. Thus, when a *matai* holding the title passes away, the *aiga* would meet and decide which member of

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<sup>7</sup> Ulu Vaomalo Ulu Kini, "Interview with author," 27 September 2011. Kini is the *Tiakono Toeaina* for the *Matagaluega a Faleata*. The interview focused on the role of the *matai* and their functions within the families and villages.

<sup>8</sup> Kini, "Interview with author," 27 September 2011.

<sup>9</sup> F. J. H. Grattan, *An Introduction to Samoan Custom*, (Auckland: R. McMillan, 1984), 10.



would be next to hold the title.<sup>10</sup> In other words, it seems that the change of the title holder takes place only when the current one dies. This is also implied in the interviews I conducted. In an interview with Ulu Kini, the only mention of an *aiga* discussing a successor to a *matai* titles is after an event of death. That is, it is only through death that a *matai* title is then re-delegated to the next suitable member of the *aiga*. This tends to be a pseudo traditional understanding.

### 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), or a *tamafai* (adopted).<sup>11</sup> 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, the power and authority reside with the *matai*. This is supported by Malama Meleisea who compares the authority of the *matai* to be god-like.<sup>12</sup> Thus to question the authority of the *matai* is almost like questioning God. Samoans still believe that chiefs have divinely-inspired authority. But that power comes from God and

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<sup>10</sup> Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Kini, "Interview with author," 27 September 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 69.

requires the chief to follow God's law and to set a Christian examples for his/her family and village.<sup>13</sup>

## **2.5 Traditional Samoan Belief of the Authority of the Matai.**

As mentioned earlier, *matai* have the trust of the family in looking after the welfare of the family. So whatever the *matai* wants everyone is expected to obey. This is why it is not easy for a family to take away the title from a *matai* if he does not carry out his responsibilities. In the Samoan culture, a family should not punish a *matai* if he is cruel and does not perform as expected. The only people who have the power to punish the *matai* are the other *matai* of 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*.<sup>14</sup> 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.

## **2.6 Why the Matai System had to be Changed or Amended?**

The *matai* system of the past has to be changed because it does not reflect good leadership. Whatever a *matai* says has to be obeyed without comment or complaints. So if a *matai* rules with an unloving heart the family suffers. Even if a *matai* lacks responsibilities, the family cannot remove him from being a *matai*. I contend that this

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<sup>13</sup> Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 27.

<sup>14</sup> Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 27.

kind of *matai* system should be changed as it does not reflect Christian values. This is shown in Meleisea's retelling of the story about *Tamafaiga* and his harsh and cruel acts over his people.<sup>15</sup> I suspect that there were members of his family who did not approve of him as a *matai*.

## **2.7 Modern Roles of the Matai: Balance in the Matai authority and the role of the Aiga.**

Christianity together with the influence of government rule has brought changes to the *matai* system. The power of the *matai* is subject to the approval of the family. The family plays a much more influential role to the extent that it can remove the title from any *matai* who rules selfishly and without love.<sup>16</sup> According to the Chief Executive Officer of Justice and Court Administration, Masinalupe Tusipa Masinalupe, there are still 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 families had won these cases.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.8 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

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<sup>15</sup> Meleisea, *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa*, 56.

<sup>16</sup> Kini, "Interview with author," 27 September 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Masinalupe Tusipa Masinalupe, "Interview with author," 30 September 2011. Masinalupe is the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Justice and Court Administration. In this interview, I enquired about the result of cases but he mentions that there are many cases which have already being brought before through court and the court of Samoa has issued its decisions on them. However, Masinalupe was reluctant to reveal the results because they are confidential. According to Masinalupe, in order to scrutinize the court rulings, I need to have a lawyer.

because the family's welfare and future depends on its decision.<sup>18</sup> 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.

### **2.9 New Role of the Family.**

The role of the family now is to do the right thing and carry out its responsibility by removing leaders who are corrupt and are giving the family a bad name. This is because if the *matai* is ignorant of his/her faults, that brings bad influence to the young generation who may think it is proper to commit bad behaviours. The family must not be afraid to correct any wrongdoing of the *matai*. The family has the same power as the *matai* does if he does not act accordingly. This is reflection of fulfilling a duty of 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 its *matai*. However, a family that does not stand together with its leader is one that needs hard work and bound to experience problems.

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<sup>18</sup> 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

### A Perspective of the Ministerial Sub-Committee.

The discussion in this chapter focuses on the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning ministers and their roles.<sup>19</sup> Within the EFKS management structure, there are sixteen sub-committees under the General Assembly.<sup>20</sup> The Ministerial Sub-Committee is the committee which deals with issues that concern ordained ministers. It has the authority to remove and strip ministers of their ordination status and roles when they break the EFKS regulations, guidelines, and rules. This sub-committee consists of Church Elders.

There is an unwritten traditional understanding of the members of the EFKS that once a minister is installed in the ministry, he would serve that particular parish until death.<sup>21</sup> In other words, the local church does not have the power to remove any minister from a congregation. His duties are carried out in the way in which he sees fit.

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<sup>19</sup> EFKS, *The Constitution Of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa* (Apia: Tamaligi Printing Press, 2006), 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.<sup>19</sup> 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.

<sup>20</sup> This Sub-Committee shall act as the Emergency Committee of the Elder's Committee. However, the whole Elders Committee shall be called by the officers of the Committee should there be any matter requiring them to meet. This Sub-Committee shall report all its findings to the Elders Committee. The Elders Committee's decision shall be final.

<sup>21</sup> This is the view I grew up with. In a recent case where the minister in the parish my family attend was about to be voted out by the parish, three deacons stood up to clarify that a parish cannot remove a minister.



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

According to Reverend Elder Apelu Lelevaga,<sup>22</sup> punishment for ministers of the church that breaks church law is always a complicated and complex issue. This is because each case is very different and circumstances are not always the same. As mentioned earlier, the Ministerial sub-committee has the authority to suspend ministers and also expel them from the ministry for ethical and moral mistakes such as adultery and indecent acts.<sup>23</sup>

According to Lelevaga's interpretation, the act of repentance and the feeling of remorse are helpful because they portray the belief that repentance is more important to the Lord than sin. He claims that the Committee always base their decisions and outcomes on these Christian values, repent and remorse.<sup>24</sup>

The role of the Parish in cases where the Minister has broken ethical and moral standards as expected by the Church is important. According to Lelevaga, the parish must be able to seek where the Minister has indeed caused or broken any ethical and moral standards. If the parish has reliable evidence that a wrongdoing is being committed the parish should report to the Elder of that particular district (*pulega*) for further investigation. This shows that a parish has a responsibility to do that can result in the removal of a parish minister.

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<sup>22</sup> Reverend Elder Apelu Lelevaga, "Interview with author," 28/09/2011. Lelevaga is the minister of the EFKS parish at Tuana'i. The interview focused on the authority of the Ministerial Sub-Committee for matters concerning ministers and the function of the Parishes against their ministers.

<sup>23</sup> He referred to the story of the woman accused of adultery in John 8:1-11 where the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman accused of adultery to Jesus to be stoned to death.

<sup>24</sup> Apelu Lelevaga, "Interview with author," 28 September, 2011.

### **3.2 The complexity of punishments and its affects.**

Lelevaga states that it is always difficult to punish ministers who break church rules and regulations. However, when matters of moral and ethical standards are violated (like adultery, using church funds, alcohol consumption, leaving the parish unnecessarily for a long time) the Ministerial Sub-Committee is quick to act to discipline the minister involved. It is believed that the punishment is more like a time of reflection and a time to re-evaluate one's calling. Lelevaga claims that most ministers, after they have been punished by the Church, are rehabilitated and brought back to 'normal.' He claims that he has observed that in most times when the ministers have served their punishment, they become stronger minister in the faith. They show willingness to amend the past.

Lelevaga mentions the many different cases which were brought before him while he was the Secretary of the Ministerial sub-committee. There were cases of adultery, ministers who have admitted to the sinful act and those who have not. One example he refers to is the case of an EFKS minister in Sydney, Australia. Lelevaga says that he is suspended because his parish brought a report on him committing a sexual affair with a woman of the same parish, even though the minister has not admitted the accusation. There are also similar cases but with different wrongdoings where ministers have been punished after a report from a parish. This elaboration by Lelevaga implies strongly that a parish has a responsibility to do in removing a minister or any other person who has committed an offence against the EFKS rules.

### **3.3 The Correlation of the Samoan Perspective.**

The point I wish to make with regards to the cultural perspective and the EFKS is that time has changed and practices that are once thought to be traditional 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 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'atomu*). However that has now become inclusive of the congregational members.

The role of the parish in removing a minister who violates the EFKS regulations is highly implied in 1 Cor 5:1-13. In particular is when Paul talks about the role of the Corinthian Christians to drive the wicked man from their midst. The problem the Corinthians has is the problem that once plagued the Samoan family and the EFKS Church and that is questioning the authority of the leaders 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 allow this sin to go on then what is once been considered a sin, is no longer a sin. The wrong act would be viewed by others to be an acceptable act because the person involved is not given a punishment. Paul, therefore, insists that the Corinthian Christians drive the wicked person from their midst.

Just as the *aiga*, so as the Ministerial Sub-Committee, has a role to play in the Samoan and the EFKS context respectively, so does the Corinthian parish has a role to play to ensure that the Gospel Paul brought to them is rightfully lived out as the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that: first, the parish has a duty to remove the minister if he is proven to have committed a sinful act. Using Paul's admonition to the parish in Corinth about the removal of the immoral person among them, it becomes clear that removing such person can be supported biblically. As I have shown in the exegesis, the failure to act on such a person demonstrates that the Christians in Corinth have condoned the sinful act. In likely situations, it can endanger the spiritual welfare of others who would be influenced by such 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 role of the parish in Corinth Paul has spelt out can be compared to the role of a Samoan family towards a wicked *matai*. Paul's strong advice to the family of believers in Corinth is to excommunicate the sinful man. It is the same biblical advice to Samoan families struggling to live life normally because of the wicked ways of their leaders.

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 respectively. 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 before the Lord.

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- Ulu Vaomalo Ulu Kini. "Interview with author." 27 September 2011.
- Apelu Lelevaga. "Interview with author." 27 September 2011.
- Masinalupe Tusipa Masinalupe. "Interview with author." 29 September 2011.

## Appendix



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.

**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:



- (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*.

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.



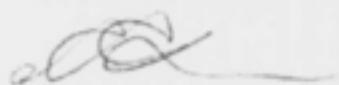
Aumua Ming Leung Wai  
Attorney General of Samoa

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.



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)

**The Village Fono Act 1990 is administered in the  
Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development.**