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Soalaupule : A Tool for Christian Leadership Towards Achieving Peace and Justice in Samoa

by

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ABSTRACT

Customary, State, and Religious authorities are the three main powers under which the Samoans live. The interactive clash between these three different authorities at various facets of life has strongly victimised our Samoan people. To avoid such crisis at all levels of society, this thesis argues that the three powers mentioned need to be harmonized using the Samoan concept of *Soalaupule* as a practical tool for Christian leadership in Samoa. Having accomplished harmony between these powers, I believe Samoa as a Christian nation would eventually be a peaceful and a just society. Sociologically, *soalaupule* is the window through which one could comprehend other people's life-world. Politically, *soalaupule* bridges the gap between the state authorities and the people. Theologically *soalaupule* reaffirms Christian values of love, respect, humility, care, and cooperation which are vital to the effort of achieving peace and justice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Glossary

soalaupule	dialogue, *soa*-partner, *lau*-declare or yours, *pule*-authority= distribution of authority
aiga	family
nuu	village
matai	chief
inu	traditional welcoming kava ceremony
mu le foaga	refers to a severe punishment of a guilty person or family
ifoga	traditional way of reconciliation indicating remorsefulness
fa'a-Samoa	Samoan way of life
EFKS	*Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa* or Congregational Christian Church Samoa
pule	authority, distribute
talanoaga	conversation, a talk, meeting
aiga potopoto	extended family
saofa'i	transitional ritual of bestowing title names upon selected people
tama'ita'i	daughter of chief
aumaga	untitled men
tinifu	young children
faletua	wives of chiefs
tausi	wives of orators
measina	traditional treasures or assets
lufilufi	distribute
fa'asoasoa	distribute
aganu'u	culture
fono	meeting
tu le to'oto'o	traditional way of delivering a final order of the village council to a guilty person or family- *'tu'* stand, *'to'oto'o'* staff
fa'asili'aupule	countering the authority of others, opposing the leaders' authority

INTRODUCTION

This thesis discusses the characteristics of *soalaupule* as a way to create peace and justice. It reveals the reality of such a valuable norm which is often misinterpreted by many. The qualities of *soalaupule* covered in the discussion include its cultural, theological, and ecclesiastical values. The paper then looks at how *soalaupule* is utilised in order to achieve the goal of peace and justice. In this research, I employed literature research, and qualitative method of interviewing relevant people as well as being a participant observant within Samoan society.

Unfortunately, I admit that there are limitations of this study and research. Due to the words restriction, this research unable to cover conflicts within the wider community such as divergences between districts and between denominations and so on.

Why am I writing on this topic?

Most of the leaders of the local parishes in Samoa are the *matai*/chiefs of villages. These *matai* are the leaders and decision makers of their families and villages. They are all deeply involved in village, church, and state affairs. Such affairs have strong impacts on the lives of the Samoans. For example, a single family budget includes cultural, religious, and government expenses in addition to the normal family costs. They also live under customary, religious, and state rules and obligations. A recent case in Samoa in which leadership in the village milieu has been vigorously challenged by the church and the normal village life dynamics i.e. village customary norms. What appears to be seen lacking in the whole case is the non-use of the traditional leadership concept *Soalaupule* to re-establish peace and justice amongst the village populace in the effort by the village leaders.

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Case Study

During our school break in May 2012, I was invited by our village church minister to participate in the case of an EFKS deacon, a *matai*, a former mayor of the village, who was heavily accused by the customary power (village) when he was using his church leader power to overcome the village/customary power. The incident started when the village performed a traditional kava ceremony (*inu*) to welcome the EFKS minister and his elders who were travelling to Savaii island for a church function. The *matai*/deacon spoke on behalf of the minister and the EFKS to reject the village *inu* because he believed it was a church trip.

Consequently, two *matai* one from the Mormon church and the other from the Seventh Day Adventist attempted to physically abuse the *matai*/deacon of the EFKS in front of his minister. An urgent meeting of the village was called and decided to remove the EFKS *matai* from his family as soon as possible. The village, on the same day approached the accused *matai's* home and delivered their decision through the customary way of *'Tu le To'oto'o'*[1]. He was ordered to leave the village immediately, and the home will be checked by the village the next morning, and if he get caught there, then the extreme customary punishment of *mu le foaga*[2] will be applied. He refused to leave his family and decided to stay in his home, so he rushed to town and seek help from the court. He was told to stay in his land and if possible, approach the village through a *ifoga*.[3] He went ahead and took the *ifoga* the next morning infront of the mayor's house where the *matai* council gathered. He knelt outside and covered himself with a beautiful massive fine mat

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[1] *'Tu le to'oto'o'* is the traditional way of delivering a final order of the village through the *matai* council to a particular family who fail to abide with the village unwritten rules and customary regulations. Such order is given using the *to'oto'o* (staff) by a selected orator of the village. At the time of the order, such orator will be the only one standing holding the *to'oto'o* while the rest of the council remain seated behind him. This moment is extremely serious in the Samoan culture.

[2] The destruction of all the properties and belongings of the family.

[3] A traditional way of reconciliation. Usually, the *matai* of the guilty person's family had to kneel outside the affected family home covering himself with an *ietoga* (fine mat) for as long as the affected family decided to forgive them by unveiling the *matai*.

with his family and children sitting behind with huge pigs and other customary treasures. He was left outside for almost half a day while the *matai* heavily discussed the matter.

The majority of the council of *matai* refused to accept him back in the village. Two EFKS ministers and I entered the meeting house and humbly appealed to the aggressive council. One *matai* commented that no one messes with the customary laws of the village, not even the church leaders; and the decisions of the *matai* council would be determined by what they think is fair and just, not by any appeal whatsoever. He got unveiled in the late afternoon to hear the verdict. He was allowed to stay back in the village and continue his church duties, but not accepted as a villager anymore. It means that he is not allowed to enter any house of the village or involved in any village activities until the council say so.

In analysing this case, firstly, I learned that, the clash of leaders' authorities within the Samoan society is extremely risky because it victimises the innocent followers of the accused leader. Secondly, I noticed the absence of love, respect, humility, forgiveness and cooperation during the whole process of the incident. I also realized that both parties not only ignored the values of TRUE *soalaupule*, but the Christian values as reminded by the two ministers.

As a participant of the incident, it really challenged myself as a future minister of the Church of Christ. The case raises questions like: What was the root of the problem? How would I handle the case as a church minister? How could we see God in the incident? Where does the Church stand in cases like this? What is the true meaning of *soalaupule*, the most used term on the day of the case?

In searching for the true meaning, **chapter one** defines *soalaupule* and examines its cultural concept and originality. **Chapter two** examines the sociological aspects of *soalaupule*. It looks at how *soalaupule* relates to leadership. It also studies how people appear to ignore the cultural values but turn to modern cultures to solve internal conflicts. *Soalaupule* has Christian

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elements in itself although it is a cultural process. Therefore, as a trainee for the ministry, I ought to consult the scriptures and the church doctrines to read *soalaupule* from a Christian perspective. **Chapter three** then studies the theological and the ecclesiastical aspects of *soalaupule*. It talks about the creation of humankind in the image of God, "who chooses to create in a way that shares power with others."[4] It also explains how *soalaupule* is strongly reflected in the 'corporate and collective personality'[5] of the Church and its mission, and how it is reflected in the Doctrine of Trinity.

All the studies in the first three chapters are meaningless if people ignore their values due to insufficient understanding. **Chapter four** therefore integrates the cultural and Christian values of *soalaupule* as explains in the first three chapters, and develop a new model of *soalaupule* upon. Such model helps our people to distinguish *soalaupule* from *fa'asili'aupule,* its opposite. It also clearly explains how *soalaupule,* through its characteristics, is still valid and how it contributes in creating peace and justice in relation to leadership in the Samoan society. Finally, the Conclusion to the thesis.

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[4] Terence E. Fretheim, 'The Book of Genesis: Introduction, Commentaries, and Reflections', in *The New Interpreter's Bible,* vol 1, Genesis, ed. Keck. E Leander et.al, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 345.

[5] Jean de Fraine, *Adam and the Family of Man,* in *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today,* by Everett Ferguson, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,1996), 72.

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CHAPTER ONE

DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF *SOALAUPULE*

1.1. Cultural Definition

According to Aiono Dr. Fanaafi, *soalaupule* is a Samoan "inclusive decision making" strategy or process made up of three words; "*soa* means partner or pair *lau* means recite or declare, and *pule* means to distribute or portion out and conveys authority."[6] Such definition tells that *pule* or authority is something that is distributable, or can be shared with others. There is no condition mentioned in such distribution of authority. In other words, the distribution of *pule* has no limit or boundaries. Therefore, any person can qualify and have access to the *pule* or authority. But what is in *pule* that can be distributed? I believe that *pule* or authority is what one owns physically, mentally, and spiritually. Pule in other words is the right that controls what one has. It is the ability to share what one owns for the benefit of others. In a conversation with an elderly *matai*, Tuiloma Viliaiauma, he explained that *soalaupule* is the sharing of constructive thoughts and opinions in a respectful manner.[7] Ultimately, *soalaupule* is in fact the sharing of one's physical, mental and spiritual gifts regardless of their status in society. This reflects the reciprocity of love, care, respect, humility and cooperation which are Christian elements in *soalaupule* that will be employed to reveal the true essence of such a process.

Pule as defined by Pratt's dictionary is 'authority or decision.'[8] Therefore, the decision making is one's power or authority. The power of the rich and the poor (although holding different gifts) hold the same value in the process of *soalaupule*. It is the cycle of exchanging the

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[6] Aiono Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa, *The Samoan Culture and Government.* In *Culture and Democracy in the South Pacific.* Edited by, Crocombe Ron, Neemia Uentabo, (et, al). (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, 1992), 122.

[7] Conversation with Tuiloma Viliaiauma, elderly matai of Sapunaoa Falealili. 5th January 2012.

[8] George Pratt, *Pratt's Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language.* (Apia: Malua Printing Press,1862), 257.

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authority values of the leaders and the followers for the sake of the community.Such exchanging must be balanced between the leaders and the followers. The imbalance of this reciprocal nature of *soalaupule* not only breaks the exchanging cycle, but it leads to corruptions and exploitations. In other words, conflicts occur when both parties refuse to distribute and share their authority/*pule*/decision values. For example, when the leaders ignore the voices of the followers, then the community in which they live is a one way process in terms of benefits. Then the poor become poorer while the rich become richer, or the powerful continue to grow while the powerless experience oppression. Hence, there is no such thing as a powerless person or powerless people in the process of *soalaupule*. However, in a conversation with some village *matai* and church leaders of the village of Falease'ela, they insisted that *soalaupule* refers to the decision making of leaders like the *matai* council, and church leaders.[9]

While the essence of *soalaupule* is inclusive, its cultural usage is bias to the decision making of the *matai* or chiefs. Because such usage or definition is confined to the meetings of the *matai* council, it turns a blind eye to the personal decisions of the rest of the community members. In this sense, it is in fact very exclusive from my point of view. I therefore argue that *soalaupule* is more than a decision making process. Instead, it is actually an interaction of decision making values of every single member of the community. This parallels Pratt's definition of *soalaupule* as *"to consult together, and not to confine the instuctions to the authority of one person."* [10] Faalepo Tuisuga insisted that *soalaupule* deals with the sharing of thoughts and ideas which involves giving, conferring, and delegation of one's authority. He extended this by stating that authority in the Samoan system include ideas, opinions, power, individual rights, and responsibility.[11]

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[9] Conversation with Chiefs of the village of Falease'ela, October 2011.

[10] George Pratt, *Pratt's Grammar and Dictionary*, 277.

[11] Faalepo Aveau Tuisugaletaua,. *"O Le Tofa Liliu a Samoa*: A Hermeneutical Critical Analysis of the Cultural Theological Praxis of the Samoan Context." PhD Thesis, (Melbourne: Melbourne College of Divinity, 2009), 67.

Ultimately, *soalaupule* bespeaks the sense of belonging, interdependence, and interconnectedness. It strongly reflects in a Samoan family.

1.2. *Soalaupule* in a Samoan *Aiga/* Family

The *Aiga* or family in the Samoan context is the extended family. A Samoan family in their everyday life is very communal, interrelated, and interdependent. The habitable members belong to one another and closely connect to each other. They consciously understand that they need each other in order to survive each day. This is how *soalaupule* is reflected in a Samoan family system.

In an explicit expression of *soalaupule* in this case, the *matai* holds the family title name as the result of his/her family's decision via a *talanoaga* or a special meeting in which all members of the *Aiga Potopoto* (extended family) who relate to such a title name has a say, including little children. Aiono Fanaafi insisted that: "As heirs of the *matai* title, they (young children) have the right to participate in the consultation of all heirs of the *matai* title, especially on the consultation and selection of bearers of the *matai* title."[12] In this special *talanoaga*, a family must come to a final decision through an agreement to which member of the family is the most appropriate one to take over their family title name. Following this is to find the most convenient date for the special ceremony for the *saofa'i* or a Samoan transitional ritual of bestowing a title name upon a selected member of a family to become a *matai* of his family and village.

The whole process within one's family towards the bestowing of a title name is of course the process of *soalaupule*. It is the expression of each family member's *pule* through decision making, to give the power to a special member to have authority over them (the decision makers).

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[12] Le Tagaloa, *The Samoan Culture and Government,* 119.

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The appointed one should always remember that the authority given to him/her belongs to the family. This means that the *pule* is to be done in a reciprocal manner for the betterment of the family. Therefore, the well being of any Samoan family is determined by the way a *matai* operates the *pule* given to him/her by the family. This reflects the sharing of power between the *matai* and the family. On one hand, the *matai* has to share the power of the *matai* to equally distribute land, shelter, food, and other family treasures for their everyday living. On the other hand, the family members need to share their power by serving and obeying their *matai*. This is ethically a clear expression of what *soalaupule* is all about in the life of any Samoan family. It is the contribution of the products of their *pule*.

Amaamalele Tofaeono pointed out that the members of each Samoan *aiga*, "including the head, cooperatively contribute the product of the labor for the common good of the whole family."[13] Cooperation is one strong aspect of *soalaupule*. The interdependence and cooperation life style that drives the lives of the Samoans strongly reflects the Christian elements of *soalaupule* in any Samoan family.

Lalomilo Kamu in his Book *"The Samoan Culture and the Christian Gospel"* insisted that:

> In a communal society where interdependence and cooperation are essential, the practice
> of sharing is prevalent in the life of the people. It is evident within the family, within the
> community and outside of the community. The expression that a Samoan's wealth is not
> measured in how much he has in the bank, but in how many friends he has is characteristic
> of the idea of sharing in Samoa. More deeply, however, sharing is an expression in action
> of the sharing of life's gifts and its symbolic of a caring people.[14]

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[13] Amaamalele Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology: AIGA The Household of Life, A Perspective from Living Myths and Traditions of Samoa.* (Erlangen: Erlanger Verlag fur Mission und Okumene, 2000), 31.

[14] Lalomilo Kamu. *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel.* (Apia: Methodist Printing Press, 1996), 52.

This fully spells the life style of any Samoan family. It is the sense of belonging to one another or belonging to a family. It is the life of reciprocity of love through the sharing of powers of both the *matai* and the family. The same picture of living interdependently and cooperatively is also practiced in the Samoan village life style.

1.3. *Soalupule* in a Samoan *Nuu/* Village

A Samoan village is made up of many families. Each family is represented in the matai council by their *matai* and the *matai* council administers the life of the village. A village contains five main groups of people: *Matai* (Chiefs), *tamaita'i* (daughters of the chiefs), *aumaga* (untitled men), *faletua ma tausi* (wives of the chiefs), and *tinifu* (young children). Every group plays certain roles in the everyday activities of the village for the well being of the local community. This echoes the nature of *soalaupule* in terms of sharing and cooperation. For example: The *tamaita'i* is the creator of many *measina* (treasures) like fine mats, *tapa*, ordinary mats, roof thatches, and many more. She is also the peacemaker, and "is the unit in the ideal social organisation that repeats the authoritative level of the *matai* group itself."[15] The *aumaga* are called the strength of the village because their tasks include planting, fishing, building, and cooking. They are also the warriors of the village in war times. The *faletua* and *tausi* group although not holding the same power as the *tamaita'i*, they are the mothers of the village. Because of their status as wives of the *matais*, they influence their husbands' decision making process.

Therefore, they are greatly involved in the process of *soalaupule*. On another level, they also play the part of the *tamaita'i* once they return to their home land or their family and villages. The *tinifu* or young children also have roles to play in the village like helping their parents and older siblings with duties at home. Even these young ones have the right in the consultation and selection of the *matai* titles. Amazingly, it is confirmed that many cases in the Lands and Titles

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[15] Le Tagaloa, *The Samoan Culture and Government*, 118.

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court at Mulinuu were filed by the little ones protesting the abuse of their rights to be consulted by the adult heirs of their *matai*.[16]

After all, the distribution of the power or the authority held by these different groups in the village are vital in the operation of the local community. From the *matai* to the little children, although they hold different roles, they all have equal rights in the family and in the village. Aiono Fanaafi also speaks of the 'Unity and the Holistic view of the Samoan Life.[17] In here, she reveals that the distribution of food and wealth within the extended family (and in the village) is the responsibility of the *matai*.

The system encourages the *matai* to be a good leader and to follow the tenets of culture and tradition that applauds the "*matai lufilufi lima lelei,* i.e. the *matai* who distributes and shares the food and wealth with all the members of the family or village, leaving nothing for self."[18] The term '*lufilufi*' or distribute can also mean *fa'a-soasoa. Faa-soasoa* contains two *soa* in it. This indicates that the distribution is to be done to the unlimited number of people. Aiono extended that this is the inclusive way of life that tries to look at the whole, not just a part; a way of life that recognises everyone and everything.[19]

Such expression escalates *soalaupule* to the level that undergirds the notion of inter-connectedness. This means that the relationship of the leaders and the followers should be centred in the sharing of their intellectual, spiritual, and physical gifts and talents. Thus, *soalaupule* is not limited to the sharing of thoughts and opinions. Rather, it about the sharing the attitude of love, respect, humility, and cooperative. It is the tradition upon which the Samoan communal and

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[16] Le Tagaloa, *The Samoan Culture and Government,*119.

[17] Ibid, 121.

[18] Ibid, 122.

[19] Ibid, 122.

reciprocal life style is based.

1.4. *Soalaupule* in the Samoan Culture and Tradition

Samoan *aganuu*/culture connects its people socially and spiritually. Tofaeono defines the term *aganuu* in "two distinctive characteristics; *aga* refers to the moral and social or behaviour of a *nuu* or village and also interprets the spiritual character of the community."[20] He further expresses that "the spiritual and social behaviours of the village are intertwined to foster a specific way of life of a society."[21] This clearly describes the closely connected life style of the Samoans. Such connection can be fully expressed by the process of *soalaupule*. From this point, this paper argues that the abuse of *soalaupule* leaves people cultureless. It simply means that the abuse of *soalaupule* causes people to lose their identity because land and culture identify the Samoans. To illustrate my point, if anybody commits a serious crime in the village, customary fines (fine mats, food, etc) will be paid to the village as a whole. In my village, a deadline will be given to pay the fine on the actual day of the *fono* (village meeting) for example, five 'oclock in the late afternoon.

If the *matai* and the family of the criminal fail to abide, the *matai* council will then proceeds to the front yard of the criminal's family to give the final order through the tradition of *tu le to'oto'o.* There are two levels of this traditional act depending on the crime committed.

On one level, the village officially informs the family while they may continue to stay and live at their home, they are no longer members of the village. On the extreme level, the family will be ordered to leave the village as soon as possible. On top of that, another deadline will be given to the family to leave. If not, destruction follows. This is how serious things are in the Samoan culture if *soalaupule* is abused. The failure of any member of a family to respect and to cooperate

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[20] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 28.

[21] Ibid.

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can lead to extreme damage not only to oneself but to the family. Some scholars like Lalomilo Kamu agree that 'culture is what holds a community together.'[22]

But *soalaupule* is more applicable and relevant if we say that it holds the community if wisely used, and it surely breaks a community apart if abused. Therefore, it is appropriate at this point to say that *soalaupule* is the breathing mechanism of a community. This means that it is useful for everyone especially those in the leadership roles. The next chapter shows how *soalaupule* is used as a tool for good leadership.

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[22] Kamu, *The Samoan Culture and The Christian Gospel*, 35.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF *SOALAUPULE*

2.1. *Soalaupule* in relation to Leadership

Leadership is simply about those who lead. *Soalaupule* is about those who lead people to peace and justice through love, respect, humility, cooperation, and in sharing authority and constructive ideas. When leadership and *soalaupule* merge, it is about the shared life between the leaders and the followers. To articulate more on this, Bill Allen shares that: "Leadership is not only about those who lead, but also about those who follow. It is the followers who determine whether someone is a leader or not."[23] Allen's statement undergirds the spirit of *soalaupule* as defined in the first chapter. The followers of state, religious, and customary leaders understand what they expect from their leaders and what their leaders expect of them. This relationship creates a question like: What then is the contribution of *soalaupule* in maintaining peace and justice between the leaders and the followers today?

The original meaning of *soalaupule* as defined in chapter one is 'to distribute the authority or *pule,*' and the original meaning of *pule* is the power to command or instruct. Therefore, the contribution of *soalupule* is to enhance the post of leadership by distributing the authority of the leaders to the followers. The essence of *soalaupule* helps both the leaders and the followers to equally share their opinions, wisdom, ideas, gifts, talents, and even sharing their problems. In order to have a good leadership, this relationship between the followers and the leaders must be balanced in all dimensions. The leaders must understand how to lead the followers while the followers need to know how to follow the leaders. In addition, the leaders must share the authority of leading and the followers must share the authority of following. Politically, the leader

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[23] Bill Allen, *Pathways to Leadership:* in *Creative Church Leadership,* Edited by: John Adair and John Nelson. (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004), 32.

must not forget that the authority he/she has is not owned by her/him but a given one. It is not

owned by the followers also. Rather, it is a shared authority. It is an authority that belongs to both

the leaders and the followers. Unfortunately, both leaders and followers are strongly influenced by

the modern cultures which gradually fades away our own cultural values.

2.2 *Soalaupule* and Modern Cultures

Modern cultures strongly influence our people especially our leaders and it almost

overshadows our indigenous culture. Despite the many advantages of these modern cultures, they

are as well interfering with many of our norms and traditions socially and spiritually. Firstly, the

use of mobile phones is one of the fastest growing modern cultures. The advantages of these

devices include the speedy communications using texting, email, and many websites like Google,

youth tube and face book. These technological innovations greatly help our people in fast

communications especially in times of emergencies. It makes our lives easier than before.

However, these technologies are badly misused by many people. For example, the illegal

screening of pornography pictures online, using different websites. And the majority, if not all, of

the young people of Samoa have access on these websites. Even the mobile phones are used as a

theatre to share sexual messages and many secular items. Such actions, borne of these

technological innovations, firstly, give birth to disrespectful and offensive attitudes like raping,

indecent behavior, and even murder. Secondly, they lessens the Samoan cultural values of

soalaupule between parents and children, brothers and sisters, because of the free and easy access

to the exposition of such sexual items. Secondly, these globalised cultures seem to take over our

cultural values in dealing with conflicts between people today instead of using our traditional

ways like *soalaupule*. For example, fire arms are repeatedly chosen by many people in Samoa to

settle disputes instead of *soalaupule*. These weapons are used by many to threaten their opponents

or even kill them with. The recent example was the dispute between the Samoa Government and

the village of Satapuala where the government decided to use armed police to threaten the

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villagers in trying to settle their dispute. This becomes a bad influential habit and it drives

people's minds away from our own traditional values into these aggressive disrespectful

globalised cultures. Hence we are known as an independent country and yet we are still cultural

colonised by the influence of the modern cultures.

Moreover, these modern changes become a divider between the liberals and the

conservatives. Those who favour the modern changes especially the young generation seem to

ignore those who do not. Many of our people tend to prefer individualism than communalism.

Consequently, it leads to building tensions within families, community, and the church. The

essence of *soalaupule* is badly abused because we seem to lose our true identity as real Samoans.

For example, there are many Samoans born in here that cannot speak our native language. The

modern style of fashions leads our young people to wear half naked clothes which contradict our

Samoan culture and tradition. The point is about the misuse of the modern fashions or the usage of

them without respecting and considering our identity. Hence, disrespecting our culture is

disrespecting our own people and our own identity.

2.3. *Soalaupule* and the Environment

If people disrespect other people, it is not hard for them to disrespect the environment. The

interdependence and the communal life style of Samoa do not exclude the environment because it

is our origin and root. We, humans, live inter-independently with other creatures of the creation

that surrounds us. According to our oral traditions, we have our own creation story in which the

god Tagaloa was our creator, who created man from large maggots.[24] This is the first example of

how the Samoans are closely related to the environment. Another example is the origin of the

name *Samoa*. It is widely accepted by the Samoans that "*moa* (centre of the earth) when he was

born was washed and blessed by Salevao the god; and the word *sa* is defined as holy. Therefore,

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[24] C. Stuebel, Brother Herman & Iosua Toafa, *Myths and Legends of Samoa,* (London:A. H. & A. W. Reed and Wesley Publications, 1976), 10.

Samoa is simply the blessed or the holy centre of the earth."[25]

These handed down traditions teach the Samoans that in order to live life to its fullest, human and the environment shall live harmoniously. Tuiatua Tupua Tamasese Efi insists that the "four key harmonies that hold the balance of peace for Samoans include 'harmony with the cosmos, harmony with the environment, harmony with one's fellow men *(human)*, and harmony with one's self."[26] Moreover, the "many Samoan proverbs commemorating the sacred significance of the relationship of the Samoans and the environment; and the many Samoan terms which are still used today continue to bond Samoans and the environment."[27] In addition, a *"faalanu* (prayer chant) is performed before a tree was cut down. The prayer is the sought from the god of the forest pardon for taking the life of a tree."[28] This tells that the environment is deeply involved in the conversations of the Samoans. It is also a clear expression of *soalaupule* in a way that the human decision in cutting a tree is sharing not only with the spirit of the forest but also with the tree itself. Taking this bond of the Samoans and the environment to another level, it is appropriate to say that, if oral traditions are the handed down stories, myths and legends, then the conversation of the Samoans and the environment also involves our ancestors. To be more specific, the spirits of our ancestors surround us and are listening to our conversations. Their spirit of *soalaupule* or the authority of their knowledge has been distributed and it is a great legacy for many generations until today. In return, it is a must for our generation to *soalaupule* in a way of respecting, caring, and treating the environment as a subject or as part of us. The abuse of the *soalaupule* of human and environment leads to environmental crisis which affects all human life.

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[25] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Brief History of Samoa,* Updated 4th May 2004. http://www.Te Ara govt.nz/en/samoans/1

[26] Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, *In search of Harmony: Peace in Samoa Indigeous Religion,* in *Pacific Indigenous Dialogue: On Faith, Peace, Reconciliation and Good Governance,* edited by Tui Atua, Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, Tamasailau M. Suaalii, et.al, (Suva: The University of the South Pacific, 2007), 1.

[27] Ibid, 3.

[28] Ibid, 4.

From a Christian point of view, theologian and environmentalist Ken Gnanakan posed a

challenging question of "why should the Christians be concerned"[29] for the environmental crisis?

Gnanakan suggests that, "while most Christians will be alarmed about the disaster, they will still

question the need for any direct action"[30]; and "they would argue that environmental issues are

only for government and specialised non-government agencies, not for the Church and such

attitudes stem directly from our understanding of spirituality in terms of being otherworld."[31] This

is how the process of *soalupule* is abused when human treats the environment as an object; and

such an attitude is inconsiderate. According to Gnanakan:

> The traditional Christian view of human relationship to nature is termed 'anthropocentric' and
> has led to a call for a 'biocentric.' This view encourages the welfare of all non-human aspects
> of nature- animals and plants. Biocentrists will urge us to value every living thing. And, these
> views have further evolved into an ecocentric view which is all inclusive and holistic in its
> call for a right relationship to everything in nature. Whatever our particular standing point, it
> is important to develop the right attitude towards our God- given environment.[32]

This paper suggests that *soalaupule* nurtures that right human attitude towards the environment by

considering the value of the human-environment inter-dependence relationship. In other words,

humankind shall *soalaupule* with the environment not with a domination nor a stewardship

mindset but with the human-envoriment interconnectedness way of thinking. To further the

validity of such argument, it is important to study the theological aspects of *soalaupule,* and how

it is revealed in the nature of the Church of Christ particularly in Samoa. The next chapter speaks

of the values of *soalupule* from a theological and ecclesiastical perspective.

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[29] Ken Gnanakan, *God's World: A Theology of the Environment.* (London: SCM Press, 1999), 3.

[30] Ibid, 3.

[31] Ibid, 3.

[32] Ibid, 4.

CHAPTER THREE

THE THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL ASPECTS OF *SOALAUPULE*

3.1. *Soalaupule* in the Old Testament

There are two levels of *soalaupule* to be discussed in this part. The first one is the

soalaupule outside the Bible. This refers to the conversation of the scholars or the readers in

sharing their thoughts and opinions of how to read or approach the Old Testament. The second

part deals with the nature of *soalaupule* found inside the Bible itself.

The *soalaupule* outside the Bible involved biblical scholars who are heavily critiquing

what is already written in the Bible. For instance, the Documentary Hypothesis of Julius

Wellhausen of Germany countered the traditional belief that the first five books of the Bible were

the works of Moses.[33] Wellhausen argued that the first five books of the Hebrew Bible are the

collective works of more than one historian (J,E,D,P).[34] For example, the Bible opens with the

two accounts of the creation story (Genesis 1:1-2:4a, & 2:4b-25). These different accounts are

widely accepted as the works of the two different sources namely: 'Yahwist'(J) and Prietly'(P).[35]

This is of course complicated because we consider the Bible as the true Word of God; yet,

we are presented with two different stories of the creation. However, to deal with such an issue,

readers ought to *soalaupule* not only with the texts, but with others' opinions and perspectives.

For instance, Dale Patrick and Allen Scult agreed with Wellhausen in the documentary

hypothesis; but they suggested to read the two texts (Gen 1:1-2:4a & 2:4b-25) separately, then

read them together as one story because it will remain an incomplete narrative if we only read

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[33] John Bright, *A History of Israel,* 3rd edition. (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981), 68.

[34] Ibid, 68.

[35] Ibid, 68.

them separately.[36]The point here is the ability to hear, acknowledge, and respect the different voices behind the texts; and that both accounts of the creation story reminds us of the anthropomorphic view (first account), and the all-powerful image (second account) of God.

In the *soalaupule* inside the texts, both creation stories present two distinctive but universal faces of God. For example, in the first account, it says: *"Then God says, "Let us make humankind in our image....."* [Gen 1:26a, NRSV]. Firstly, the *'Let us'* portrayed the image of God as a Consultant of other divine Beings. Secondly, it indicated that the creation of humankind resulted from a dialogical act, an inner-divine communication rather than a monological one; human beings are created in the image of the one who chose to create in a way that shares power with others. [37] The God described in both stories is a powerful, intimate one. The intimacy image can be viewed in two levels. One is the intimacy that characterized by the consultation of other creator Beings, and the other is the intimacy with the created beings. The intimacy by consultation is prominent in the first account of the creation. But the intimate character with human beings is better described in the second account: *"then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (2:7).* In the first aid language, God mouth to mouth life into the human being. Therefore, humanity is an end product of the *soalaupule* nature of God. The Lord God practiced the process of *soalaupule* in consulting other divine Beings for the authority to create humankind; then *soalaupule* again in distributing such authority to humankind through the face to face process. It portrayed the dialogical aspect of *soalaupule* though it is more than a dialogue.

The *soalaupule* nature of God continues throughout the Old Testament through covenants with the Patriarchs and the chosen nation of Israel. Such process at the time was practiced in

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[36] Dale Patrick and Allen Scult, *Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation.*(Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 106.

[37] Fretheim, *The Book of Genesis,* 345.

different forms like dreams, visions, agents (angels and Prophets), and some through a direct

voice from the heavens. Phrases like, 'God saw.., the Lord spoke.., God said.., the word of the

Lord came to..' are very common in the Old Testament. When the first couple were settled in the

Garden of Eden, God through *soalaupule* instructed them with the conditions of their stay.

Regardless of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the *soalaupule* nature of God continued in the

covenants and the calling of the patriarchs.

In the formation of Israel as a nation, God ordered Moses to take a census and enrol the

congregation of Israel, and to appoint from each tribe leaders to represent their ancestral houses

(Numbers 1: 1-54). In this process, when God wills something for the chosen people, God spoke

to Moses, then Moses to the leaders, then the leaders to their families or tribes. The key words that

relate to the process of *soalaupule* are found in verse 44: "These are those who were enrolled,

whom Moses and Aaron enrolled *with the help of the leaders of Israel,* twelve men, *each*

representing his ancestoral house."(Num 1: 44 NRSV). It was not hard for God to speak loud

and clear to the whole nation at once but it was about the dedication of the work. It reflects the

matai system in Samoa and how each family is represented in the *matai* council by their

leader/*matai*. Such process continued throughout the periods of Judges, Prophets, Kings, and the

Diaspora era. This is how the original and the cultural concept of *soalaupule* is reflected in the

Old Testament.

3.2. *Soalaupule* in the New Testament

The New Testament is the new leaf of *soalaupule* in the Bible. Its theological meaning is

more profound. In the Old Testament, the other divine Beings were mentioned in the creation of

humanity in particular, but it was not specific who they were. The New Testament then is the

continuation of the story or the fulfilment of what was told in the Old Testament. The first

reflection of *soalaupule* is the continuity of the covenant from the Old Testament to the New

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Testament based on God's unconditional love. Testament means 'covenant'. It is a restoration or a

renewal of covenant. It is surely a result of the *soalaupule* of the divine Beings.

What is this new covenant? It is recorded in the institution of the Lord's Supper that Jesus

took the cup and said, *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood."*(1 Corinthians 11:25b). This

referred to the covenant that God promised to the nation of Israel in Jeremiah 31:31-34.[38] God

agreed to be merciful to the unrighteousness of Israel. Such behaviour of Israel was their failure to

honor their right to obey. This is when *soalaupule* is abused because they broke the old covenant.

Thus the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and the foundation of the new

covenant was laid through the cross.[39] The bread and wine symbolises the body and blood of

Christ. The old covenant and promise was given through words. In contrast, the new covenant was

made by the body and blood of the Son of God. It was God's unconditional love put in real action.

The institution of the Lord's Supper centred in the distribution of Christ's holy body and blood to

the family of God.

This parallels another Samoan original dimension of *soalaupule* where the *matai* is the

leader and carer of the family and out of his/her many responsibilities is the distribution of food to

the family, leaving nothing for self if materials are scarce. "Jesus Christ emptied Himself, taking

the form of a slave, being born in human likeness, and being found in human likeness"

(Philippians 2: 7), so that humanity gains eternal life. Such an institution centres in the restoration

of the broken relationship of God and humanity. It is about the coming together of two parties; the

Leader and the followers. It is a communion act and it is a Holy Communion, and a Sacrament.

The invisible and untouchable *soalaupule* of the divine Beings became visible and touchable in

Jesus Christ. It is about the invisible Word became flesh (John 1:1). Before Jesus' trial and death,

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[38] William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary.* Edited by Art Farstad. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1995), 1789.

[39] Ibid, 1789.

He distributed the power, authority and the gifts given by God to help the sick, poor, homeless, sinners and the outcasts. Christ was the Leader and a servant at the same time. A Leader who poured out Himself to heal, feed, comfort, and teach the followers.

Ultimately, the nature of the process of *soalaupule* mirrors the nature of Atonement. It is a "making at one and points to the process of bringing those who are estranged into a unity."[40] Atonement "is better translated reconciliation and it denotes the work of Christ in bringing sinners into right relation with God."[41] The Christian doctrine of sin tries to give an account of what went wrong; the doctrine of salvation deals with the restoration of the created order, and above all humanity, to its proper relationship to God.[42] Salvation is the visible act of the divine *soalaupule*. The decision making or the *soalaupule* was about the salvation of the created beings. The result of such a holy *soalaupule* was for Christ, the Son, to come to earth as a person to live amongst the sinners as the incarnation of God the Father. This is the anthropological significance of the divine *soalaupule*. It highlights the anthropomorphic view of God as presented by the 'J' source in the second account of the creation story. Such divine *soalaupule* greatly involved heavy decision making. It was heavy because firstly, it led to deadly sacrificial acts (Christ's death). Secondly, it required patience, endurance, and perseverance. Thirdly, it was a *soalaupule* that gave birth to atonement, incarnation, sacrament of Eucharistic, and the salvation of humanity. After all, it was God the Son who decided to accept the divine *soalaupule* for a salvation plan.

From another perspective, it was a decision making borne out of another decision making. But this *soalaupule* is not a one way process. This means that the sinners or followers also have a role to play. Firstly, the authority given to Jesus to forgive sins must be fully accepted and

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[40] L. L. Morris, "Atonement", in *New Bible Dictionary,* I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, D. J. Wiseman, et al, 3rd edition, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 102.

[41] Ibid. 120.

[42] Kennedy Philip, *A Modern Introduction to Theology: New Questions for Old Beliefs.* (New York: IB Taurus & Co Ltd, 2006), 326.

respected by the followers. The salvation plan of God highly requires the decision making of the sinners as well; the decision to repent and fully believe in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Secondly, the sinners after they accepted salvation must proclaim that whoever believes in Christ's death and resurrection, 'shall not perish, but have eternal life' (John 3:16b). It is the responsibility of the saved Christians to distribute the Good News of the New Testament which is the shared authority of God through Jesus Christ.

The process of *soalaupule* did not stop when Jesus ascended to heaven. Rather, it continued by the Holy Spirit as recorded in the Book of 'The Acts of the Apostle' on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1: 1-13). That day was promised by Jesus that a greater helper would be sent after the ascension. This is the continuation of *soalaupule* of the Triune God from the beginning of the universe. It started with God the Father, then the Son was sent, and lastly, the sending of the Holy Spirit through the Son. Ultimately, the fulfilment of the salvation plan of God is the integration of decision makings started by the *soalaupule* of the Trinity.

3.3. *Soalaupule* and the Trinity

In the New Testament, it is understood that God the Father is revealed in Christ through the Spirit. The relationship of the Trinity is more sensible if contextually explained in *soalaupule* because each person of the Trinity belongs to one another, share the same authority and the totality of the saving plan can only be achieved when all three are involved. Historically, "the term Trinity is not found in the Bible but was first used by Tertullian in the second century."[43] Therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity can be centred in three affirmations; one, there is but one God, two, the Father, the Son and the Spirit is each a distinct person, three, the Father, Son, and

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[43] M. Turner & G. Mc Farland, "Trinity", in *New Bible Dictionary,* I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard, D. J. Wiseman, et al, 3rd edition, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2004), 1029.

Spirit is each fully and eternal God.[44]

This relationship is also described by Moltmann using the perichoresis model. In this model, "the very thing that divides them becomes that which binds them together,"[45] and that "the Trinitarian persons are not to be understood as three different individuals, who only subsequently enter into relationship with one another;"[46] furthermore, "they dwell in one another and communicate eternal life to one another."[47] This is Trinitarian language which clearly expresses the communal related language of the process of *soalaupule*.

The Gospel of Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:13 are the two verses in the Bible with a Trinitarian Formula. Matthew recorded a commission to go out and baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Baptism stands at the beginning of the Christian life as a transitional ritual to consecrate the individual to the Triune God. This Christian initiation brings us first of all, into a personal family relationship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.[48] Such practice was the acting out of God's parental love so that people could have access to God's family. The practice requires the communal work of the Triune God and the agents (the disciples). It is about the putting into practice of what they have learned from their relationship with the Lord.

According to Jurgen Moltmann, one of "the objections and reservations towards the doctrine of the Trinity come from the sphere of practical application."[49] He insisted that what does

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[44] M. Turner & G. Mc Farland, "Trinity", 1209.

[45] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God.* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1981), 175.

[46] Ibid, 175.

[47] Ibid, 175.

[48] Avery Cardinal Dulles, *The Trinity and Christian Unity,* in *God The Holy Trinity.* Edited by Timothy George. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007), 69.

[49] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God,* 5.

not transform into act has no value at all because "the modern world has become pragmatic."[50]

Moltmann is saying that the real truth is with actions not words. The truth needs to be performed otherwise it will only be a meaningless one. Practice or actions make sense of the pure theory. Another "objection and reservation towards the doctrine of trinity according to Moltmann comes from experience."[51] He recalled on the theory of Friedrich Schleiermacher that the modern concept of experience and truth, as well as the 'immediate self–consciousness'.[52] In here, "we experience ourselves as 'quite simply dependent', that is to say, we become aware of ourselves in relation to God, the reason and the ground of ourselves."[53] It is all about being aware of our relationship with God as reflected in the Trinitarian relationship.

Since the doctrine of Trinity was formulated and developed in a different context from ours, we need to employ a model of our own as a tool to disclose the meaning of the doctrine of Trinity. This is where the process of *soalaupule* perfectly fits in as a cultural model and lens through which the Trinitarian relationship can be clearly expressed as our own theological reflection. The language of *soalaupule* is a Trinitarian language based on the notion of sharing one another's gifts. Hence *soalaupule* is not another interpretation of the doctrine of trinity. Rather, it is the reading of the Trinitarian relationship from another perspective using a Samoan model. A theological reflection is a fruit of the *soalaupule* of Christianity and any new context it covers. In terms of experience as explained above, we could easily understand the relationship of the trinity if we read it using our own cultural models like *soalaupule*.

Upolu Vaai employed a similar Samoan model of *fofola le fala* (spreading the mat), as a

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[50] Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*, 5.

[51] Ibid, 2.

[52] Ibid, 2.

[53] Ibid, 2.

contextual model to read the doctrine of Trinity.[54] Spreading the mat is a cultural symbol of

dialogue. 'On the mat, one receives from the other wisdom of his/her history'.[55] This is contextual

theology. However, no theology is without criticism and shortfalls. Even the doctrine of Trinity

was also developed from a particular context and it became a controversial issue. From observing

the doctrine of Trinity, one can find we are discussing in our time the products of the creative

minds of the formulators or the church fathers; and that is the focus of the next part of this

chapter.

3.4 The Ecclesiastical aspects of *soalaupule*

The term *'ecclesia'-ekklesia-Greek* means 'assembly', 'congregation', 'church', or

'meeting'.[56] It derives from the Greek word *'ekkaleo'*(call out), which denotes the popular

assembly of the competent citizens of a *polis*, city-state in Athens, they met 30-40 times a year,

especially in times of emergencies. Decisions are made on suggested changes in the law, on

appointments to official positions, and on every important question of internal and external policy

of the state. Such meetings opens with prayers and sacrifices to the gods; and every citizen had the

right to speak and propose matters for discussion; a decision was valid only if it won a certain

number of votes.[57] Hence, the nature of ecclesia involves inclusive decision makings or to put it

simply, it refers to a decision making assembly. The opening prayer and the sacrifices differs

ecclesia from other meetings although it was characterised as a 'political phenomenon rooted in

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[54] Upolu Limā Vaai, *Faaaloalo: Reinterpretation of the Doctrine of the Trinity from a Samoan Perspective.* PhD Thesis School of Theology, (Brisbane: Griffith University, 2006), 14.

[55] Ibid, 14.

[56] Verlyn D. Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Corporation, 2000), 170.

[57] Ibid, 171.

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the constitution of the democracy'.[58] This parallels the decision making process of *soalaupule* because it opens with the kava ceremony in which includes the acknowledgment of the presence of the true God.

According to the Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches (WCC), "the Church belongs to God, centred in the Word of God, is the creation of God's Word and Holy Spirit, and is the communion of those who live in a personal relationship with God who speaks to them and calls forth their trustful response as the communion of faith."[59] Faith and Order also insisted that, "there is no systematic ecclesiology in the Scriptures but the theme of the church is dealt with by way of various images; for instance, some are images of stability and locality, some of mobility, some are more organic images, some stress the relational character of the Church.. These are not mutually exclusive but they interact, and they support and comment on each other's weaker and stronger aspects."[60] Likewise the process of *soalaupule* is engaged with the nature of Church as defines by the WCC, through the power of working together with each other and especially with God who is the Creator of the Church. The process of *soalaupule* not only portrays the picture of sharing gifts and talents, but the sharing of duties and responsibilities.

The ecclesiastical nature of the church is the communal work of its individual members. It is obviously lighter to carry the work in partners than by individual. This is clearly elaborated by the Greek term *synago,* meaning gather, collecting, convening, bringing together or a hostile sense of joining battle.[61] *Synago* gives birth to the word *synergism* which is, according to Brian Dodd,

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[58] Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* 170.

[59] Faith and Order, *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A stage on the way to a common statement.* Paper Number 181. (Bialystok: Orthdruk Orthodox Printing House, 1998), 9.

[60] Ibid, 12.

[61] Verbrugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* 543.

"the principle that two or more people working together in the same direction can accomplish more than the sum of them working individually."[62] Dodd uses two strong aspects to define the term. First is the power of working together against the power of working individually. Second is the power of working in the same direction over the power of working in different directions. Dodd also reflects on the Apostle Paul's "ministry in the Spirit which is the ministry in partnership among co-workers."[63] It stresses that the working together of the church leaders and the followers or the minister and church members is more powerful and effective than working individually. It points to the sharing of different gifts for the common good as recorded in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.[64]

What Paul is trying to give is the togetherness and the cooperative spirit which is the inner most being of the Church of Christ. Such nature of church is also captured in the spirit of 'koinonia' "which is an appropriate model of unity."[65] Koinonia is the Greek term meaning 'association', 'fellowship', 'participation'; and it derives from koinos which means 'common', 'communal'.[66] "Koinonia, then, refers to the action of having something in common, sharing and participating in a common reality, acting together."[67] "The word could denote the unbroken fellowship between the gods and humans and also denoted the close union and brotherly bond among human beings. "[68] After all, the church encapsulates the essence of koinonia and

[62] Brian J. Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership: Ministry in the Spirit According to Paul.* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2003), 105.

[63] Ibid, 105.

[64] *"To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." [1Corothians 12:7 NRSV]*

[65] Aram Keshishian, *Growing Together Towards a Full Kainonia,* in *Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism,* edited by Gennadios Limouris. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 236.

[66] Verbugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology,* 310.

[67] Aram Keshishian, *Growing Together Towards a Full Kainonia,* 236.

[68] Verbugge, *New International Dictionary of New Testament,* 310.

soalaupule. Thus, the integration of the spirit of togetherness, cooperative, and sharing of love and respect is the nature of the church ministry.

3.5 *Soalaupule* and the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS)

The Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) was known by the name of the London Missionary Society (LMS) since the arrival of their missionaries in 1830 but in May 1961, the General Assembly decided to change the name to that which is given above.[69] The change of the name stemmed from the decision for the CCCS to be independent from the LMS. It was a huge movement based upon the results of the process of *soalaupule* of the General Assembly.

This paper studies two areas in the constitution of the CCCS. The first area is the relationship of the church members, especially the relationship of the church leaders and the people. The second area is the relationship between churches in villages/Samoa and churches in different countries. The study aims to compare and contrast the CCCS leadership structure and management with the Samoan cultural understanding of leadership (as mentioned in the first chapter). In the CCCS Church Order, it states that:

> Jesus Christ is the Lord who rules over His people and the Shepherd who cares for them. The oversight of the Church by its officers is an endeavour to manifest that rule and care. This should be reflected in the supervision of people by the Elder-Minister, Minister, Lay Preacher and Deacon, and in the spirit of the village Church Meeting, the sub- District Meeting, the District Meeting, and the General Assembly.[70]

The order speaks about the relationship of the church leaders and the rest of the church members; and it emphasizes the attitudes of the leaders in particular. It reveals to the church

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[69] *The Constitution of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa.* The 13th revision. (Ratified by the General Assembly, May, 2011), 7.

[70] Ibid, 7.

leaders the right ethics in relation to God's people. It also gives church leaders a better view and definition of being a leader. For example it addresses the church Ministers, Lay preachers, and Deacons as servants of God.[71] The key words in this Church Order which relate to the process of *soalaupule* are *rule, care,* and *supervision.* Each term contain an element of authority/*pule* in it. This is to say that the church leaders, who are called the servants of God, shall share the authority they have in caring for the members of the congregation. The authority/*pule* they have shall be practiced as a service; it means that, to care, to rule and to supervise, is to respectfully serve with love. Hence the church rulers and the supervisors are God's servants through God's people. They are placed in such positions not to be served but to serve. It relates to Jesus' teaching in Mattew 20: 26. *...whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant... just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. "*(NRSV)

From another perspective, becoming an elder, a Lay preacher or a church Minister is moving to another level or form of service rather than reaching a higher position of *pule*/authority. This parallels the transitional ritual of bestowing a *matai* title upon someone. Instead of considering it as reaching a higher position to rule and to dictate, it is rather reaching a higher level of service; meaning, more responsibilities are given to serve more people than before. Such state of mind challenges the Samoan saying *'O le ala i le pule o le tautua'*, meaning, gaining a *matai* title is gaining *pule*; and to achieve *pule* depends on how a *taule'ale'a/* untitled man perform his service to the village matais. This Samoan saying can be misleading without the right interpretations of the word *pule* in it. Because one could perform the service for the *matai*, only to gain the *pule* through holding the title name. Rather, it is the receiving of more *nafa*/duties for the betterment of the community. It is the opportunity to serve with love, respect, humility and cooperation to cater people's needs.

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[71] *The Constitution of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa,* 8.

Since the same Samoan saying can also apply to the achievements of church positions, the church leaders can also be tempted and misled by misinterpreting the term *pule;* especially Lay preachers and Deacons who are currently holding *matai* names, and church Ministers who were holding *matai* titles before they became church ministers. It is not hard to detect someone with the mentality of getting a *matai* title to gain power instead of extending service, likewise to church leaders. This paper argues that such frame of mind can be the root problem to Christian leadership today.

However, the CCCS constitution says that:

> Just as Church members in the village covenant to serve one another, village Churches also covenant with one another to share their gifts and to help carry each other's burdens; to cooperate in the building of new Churches within the country and outside it; and to appoint, educate, ordain, discipline, and support Ministers. Villages Churches also join together in improving and consolidating the work of societies, schools, and other agencies of the Church. They also deal with problems concerning the general social life of the country and the world, and endeavour to join other denominations in the work of the World Church towards the fulfilment of the Will of our Lord that His Church be one. These joint efforts may be achieved through the meeting of Sub-District, the meeting of the District, the General Assembly, and the World Council of Churches.[72]

This is such an inclusive, complete, and comprehensive general statement. It can be considered as the Christian version or expression of *soalaupule* because it covers a wide range of political, religious, and social issues both locally and globally. For example, the distribution of authority in carrying each other's burdens through the sharing of gifts, the cooperation attitudes of the community in building and improving societies, as well as the communal effort to appoint, educate, ordain, discipline and support Ministers. This part of the clause allows the congregation to fully participate in the development of the church socially, politically, and religiously. This not only reveals that church people (other than church leaders) also have power, but it also shows how

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[72] *The Constitution of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa,* 8.

to distribute such power. This is where the cultural and Christian expression of *soalaupule* meet. Because it is the responsibility of every Samoan family to appoint, ordain, discipline and support their *matai*; and that is their power and authority. On the other hand, it is the duty of every *matai* to care and serve the family and community not as a dictator but a servant. From this perspective, this paper argues that the misinterpretation of different responsibilities between the leaders and the followers can be the major cause of many corrupt practices not only in the community but especially the church.

Now, if the spirit of *soalaupule* is about sharing the authority between the leaders and the followers, then, the process involves the act of giving. This is the giving of good care and guidance to the followers by the leaders, and the giving of obedience to the leaders by the followers both with the spirit of love and cooperation. Such an act is the meeting point of *soalaupule* and leadership. Brian Dodd explains this type of leadership as a "Life-giving leadership."[73] What Dodd means is that, life-giving leadership strongly depends on Christ, "who empowers, cleanses, guides, and gives life"[74]. To elaborate more, "the Spirit's life-giving power flows through the Church leaders like the apostle Paul, and their ministry."[75] This is how Christ shares the authority given by God the Father. Jesus Christ exemplifies, not a kingship leadership but a servant hood leadership which is the essence of the process of *soalaupule*. This spirit of servant hood leadership parallels the definition of 'the servant of God' in The Constitution of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) which goes:

> The Servant of God is appointed to work in this special role for which he has received blessings which are befitting for such work. He who is thus appointed receives his authority from our Lord in accordance with his obedience to him, the Head of the Church.

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[73] Dodd, *Empowered Church Leadership*, 33.

[74] Ibid, 32.

[75] Ibid, 32.

The exercise of his authority shall be dependent upon the views of those under his care, and in accordance with his integrity in fulfilling the Will of God. This means that a Christian cannot exercise authority as the representative of Jesus Christ in respect of other people unless his authority is that of a servant, and that his integrity is clearly evident to the people.[76]

This is clearly saying that the Church Minister or the Leader of the Congregation is a servant of the Lord, and the people. Just as the Lord shared the authority by appointing a minister to be the servant of God, he/she shall also share the authority by showing integrity to both the Lord and others. Another way of sharing the authority of a church leader according to the constitution is to consider the views of those under their leadership. This clause of the constitution of the CCCS teaches that the church leaders need to learn more on how to follow and how to listen to others in order to become a good leader. This also can apply to customary and state leaders in order to accomplish peace and justice. However, the values of *soalaupule* could never be achieved if people do not fully understand its characteristics, its values, and how and when to utilize it. The next chapter speaks of these factors.

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[76]*The Constitution of The Congregational Christian Church Samoa*, 7.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SOALAUPULE MODEL: LEADERSHIP TOOL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

4.1. *Soalaupule vs Fa'asili'aupule*

This chapter offers a *soalaupule* model in order to harmonize the three powers under which the Samoans live. It is generally believed that such powers although different, were for the betterment of the people. However, the 'abuse of power is a perpetual universal human problem.'[77] Customary, Political, and Religious powers although work hand in hand for the sake of people, they are sometimes clash into one another, victimizing the citizens. When these power clashes, it is called *fa'asili'aupule*, meaning; 'trying to overtake the authority of others for one's own advantage'. The result of such attitude is oppression, corruption, and exploitation; and its nature include aggression and abuse. It is the opposite of *soalaupule*.

In the case of the EFKS deacon and the village in the case study above, the deacon used his church leader power together with his *matai* power to overcome the village power. The other two matai from other denominations (on behalf of the village) were trying to defeat the EFKS deacon's power by attempting to physically abuse him. The customary law stepped in when the village *matai* council decided to uproot the deacon from his family and village. The deacon responded using the Samoan tradition of *ifoga*. The village considered the deacon's *ifoga* act as an attempt to supersede the village decision to displace him from the village. The two EFKS ministers of the village appealed the village council's decision. The village council considered the appeal of the two ministers as a request to allow the deacon back in the village for his church duties, and accepted it. This is an act of respect for the church leaders. However, the ministers'

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[77] Ilitia S. Tuwere, *Towards a Fijian Theology of Place.* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific and College of Saint John the Evangelist, 2002), 158.

appeal to accept him and his family back as members of the village was declined. The reason being, the customary regulations have to be fulfilled and sustained by paying the set amount of fine mats, pigs, and so on for such a type of transgression.

After all, anybody can read this case study and could easily consider it as a failure of the process of *soalaupule*. I strongly argue that the case study was not even a *soalaupule* but a *fa'asili'aupule*.[78] Both the value and the process of *soalaupule* were ignored by both sides. They overlooked the values of love, care, respect and cooperation. The deacon disrespected the traditional *inu* of the village which is a cultural respectful way of welcoming people. In return, the two matai from other denominations retaliated using another disrespectful way of verbal abuse. At the same time, the two matai from other denominations disrespected the EFKS minister who was sitting beside the deacon. The village also ignored the cultural value of the *ifoga* which is the highest traditional way of showing remorsefulness. The whole extended family of the deacon were innocently sitting behind their covered *matai*. Those silent voices were ignored and displaced from their rights as village members. This is an unkind and careless act of the village. In considering all these values and avoid the negativity of thoughts toward others, I still insist that *soalaupule* is still valid and will always be. *Soalaupule* is more than just a mere conversation or dialogue in order to arrive at a reasonable decision by the parties involved. It involves the spirit of love, care, humility, cooperation, and respect and has a strong inclusive motivation. As defined in its original and cultural meaning, it is simply about the 'distribution of *pule* or authority'. **Soa-** *'pair'*, derives from the term *faasoa* or distribute which echoes love. **Lau-** *'declare'* also means *'your'*, which implies the involvement of more than one person and it reflects the concept of cooperation and respect. **Pule-** *authority*, which mirrors the concept of caring, responsibility, and

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[78] Made up of three words: *Faasili* means 'go beyond', 'exceeding', or 'extra', *'au* means 'team', *pule* means 'authority'. *Fa'asili'aupule* then is an implication of *faamaualuga* and it denotes the notion of looking down to others.

compromising. Therefore, love, care, respect, humility and cooperation are the main charateristics of *soalaupule*. If these characteristics are accomplished, then peace and justice are the fruits. In other words, *soalaupule* creates peace and justice because it operates with its characteristics. Hence any meeting, conversation, or dialogue without these characteristics is not *soalaupule*. This paper also argues that there is no such thing as a fail *soalaupule* because firstly, it is inseparable from its nature of love, care, respect, humility and cooperation, secondly, its fruits must always be peace and justice. Practically, everyone involve in any *soalaupule* has to prepare not only to share or give constructive opinions, but to respectfully contemplate others' views and ideas to maintain a balance of sharing.

The case study on one hand could easily be mistaken as a *soalaupule* because it included meetings, dialogues, conversations, and appeals. However, it was obvious that the languages and gestures were aggressive and abusive which clearly depicted *fa'asili'aupule*. On the other hand, the case study was a perfect example of how *fa'asili'aupule* stood against *soalaupule* and ignored it when the village council disregarded the appeal of the EFKS ministers to accept the deacon and his family back into the village. This is the point where *soalaupule* can be considered as fail; instead, I argue it was ignored.

Like any other useful process and practice of life, *soalaupule* can also be manipulated and ignored by people. Such manipulation could cause by people's ill desires and it can happen in both secular and religious organizations and communities. For instance, Amaama Tofaeono insisted that: "The influential nature of the Lotu (Church) has been developed in a manner whereby Samoans have gradually forced themselves to experience life as a process filled with religio-cultural obligations, struggles, insecurity and hopelessness."[79] What Tofaeono expresses is

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[79]Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 132.

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that the structure is not as helpful as it looks and it becomes a "hindrance to the integrity of the local living-earth community."[80] He strongly argues that these "institutional structures maximised stresses on both the human and natural eco-system."[81] However, Oomi Saifoloi views the similar issue from a different perspective. She blames the people not the systems and structures. She argues that:

> The *matai* and church leaders of those past times have passed on. They
> were responsible and are remembered for their wisdom and tireless effort
> to enhance and uphold the dignity and prestige of the village and the church.
> Today, however, the new generation of *matai* has attempted to destroy the
> foundation of the family. Worse still, they are constantly engaged in
> legal petitions to confirm their alleged authority over family property that has
> always been understood to be as belonging to all family members. The spirit of care and love
> for one another are not there anymore, nor in the spirit of cooperation and support. They have
> contributed to the uncertainty and confusion now experienced by young people in relation to
> their faith which was once the rock foundation upon which the Christian faith of church
> members and villagers was founded.[82]

Saifoloi believes that any system in Samoa could work if it is founded on the spirit of love, care, respect, humility and cooperation. If such spirit was working in the *matai* system in the days of the passed on generation, then it should still be working in our generation, because *soalaupule* goes with the manners of love, care, respect, humility and cooperation and it never work when forced without its features. The recent example is the dispute between the Samoan Government and two villages of Satapuala and Magiagi. According to the Media, a senior matai of Satapuala has publicly apologised to the whole of Samoa on behalf of the village, for the incident on

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[80] Tofaeono, *Eco-Theology*, 132.

[81] Ibid, 132.

[82] 'O'omi Saifoloi, *Remember Your Culture*, In *Changes In the Matai System*, edited by Asofou So'o. (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2007), 31.

Thursday 16th August.[83] They invited the Police High Commissioner and other Senior Officers and peacefully talked the matter. The village Mayor told the media that the Prime Minister refused to meet with them but forced the hospital project on their lands.[84] After their talk with the Police Officers, they agreed to stay away from the new project but arranged another meeting with the Prime Minister.[85] Afterall, the matter was settled when it was operated in its true cultural essence. In an intervew with the village mayor of Satapuala, he said that the Prime Minister decided to send armed Police to them (the village) but ignored their agreement about a day to meet the village and *soalaupule* the matter. He extended that "sending armed Police does not calm things down, but the traditional way of *soalaupule* laid down by our ancestors. It is a respectful way because the matter will be discussed by the village leaders and the government leaders."[86] The same incident happened to the village of Magiagi, and the dispute was also solved not by armed Police but by *soalaupule*. In terms of three or more systems ruling the lives of the Samoans, the same spirit is essential to sustain peace in our community. Care, love, respect, humility and cooperation are the core attitudes which are vital in the operation of the process of *soalaupule*.

On the first day of the dispute, the Police firstly tried to approach Satapuala in the way of *soalaupule*. However, the village *matais* refused to cooperate but wilfully tried to overpower the Government's initiative by their customary power. It was another clear picture of ignoring *soalaupule* but practise the *fa'asili'aupule*. Again, it was obvious that love, care, respect, humility and cooperation were absent from the case and it ended up in a road rage which the tourists described as scary and unbelievable.[87] Most of the senior *matai*, the village mayor, some church

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[83] Jasmine Netzler, "Satapuala Sorry, maintain plea", Samoa Observer, August 20, 2012, 3.
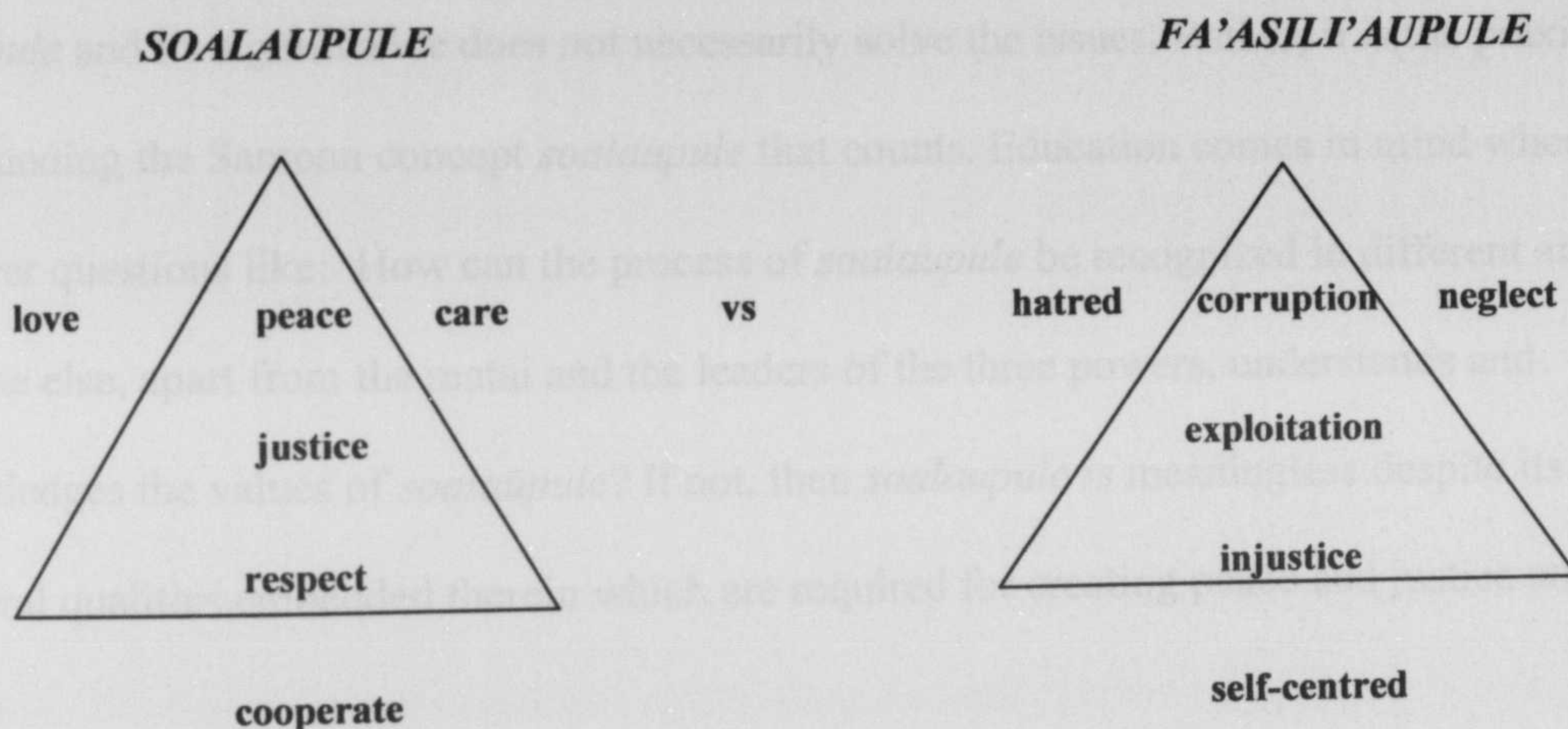
[84] Ibid, 3.

[85] Ibid, 3.

[86] *Interview with Satapuala Mayor,* Friday 31st August 2012

[87] Jasmine Netzler, "Road Rage", Sunday Samoa Observer, August 19, 2012, 3.

deacons and leaders, and even the Member of Parliament for the Constituency of *Aana Alofi* number two were among those who initiated the road rage. The armed police (ordered by the Prime Minister) was the last option to end the road rage which delayed the travelling routines of the land, sea and air for both civilians and tourists. The clash of powers also victimized the rest of the villagers who were not willing to join the rage. Such corruption and exploitation are always the products of *fa'asili'aupule*. After all the Prime Minister approached the village again with a *soalaupule* attitude and it perfectly worked. It resulted in peace and justice. The same problem occurred between the Samoan Government and the village of Tanugamanono and Maagiagi, and the *soalaupule* was the solution. *Soalaupule* has great theological aspects compare to *fa'asili'aupule*.

| *SOALAUPULE* | | *FA'ASILI'AUPULE* |

love   peace   care   vs   hatred corruption neglect

justice   exploitation

respect   injustice

cooperate   self-centred

The above diagrams illustrates that *Fa'asili'aupule* in contrast to *Soalaupule*, has the opposite characteristics of hatred, neglect, and self-centred; and the products of corruption, exploitation, and injustice. *Soalaupule* on the other hand is a Samoan cultural concept with a theological flavour. People find its best taste when put it into practice. Faalepo Tuisuga speaks about the Samoan cultural theological praxis as the nature of the Samoan lifestyle.[88] It is about the juxtaposition of the Samoan cultural values and beliefs, and their Christian ethics, morals and

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[88] Aveau, *O Le Tofa Liliu a Samoa*, 13.

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values that becomes a new or a modified form of life reality of the Samoans.[89] Tuisuga's theory affirms that cultural concepts with theological elements like *soalaupule* are still valid today.

However, as mentioned above, *soalaupule* is not immune from being ignored when people who are using it are not well versed with its nuances and how it should be implemented within the Samoan community. This paper deeply concerns about the misinterpretation of the term and its significant cultural and Christian values. Therefore, this chapter endorses the revitalisation of quality education in two levels namely; religious, and cultural, as a way to reach the goal of *soalaupule*. It parallels the early Christianity in Jesus' time. People rejected it regardless of its lifesaving nature. Hence, Jesus did not give up teaching people the reality and values of Christianity but most of all, Jesus lived it out. The fact is, by simply knowing the process of *soalaupule* and its significance does not necessarily solve the issues. Rather, it is the praxis and understanding the Samoan concept *soalaupule* that counts. Education comes in mind when trying to answer questions like: How can the process of *soalaupule* be recognized in different areas? Is everyone else, apart from the matai and the leaders of the three powers, understands and acknowledges the values of *soalaupule*? If not, then *soalaupule* is meaningless despite its ethical and moral qualities embedded therein which are required for creating peace and justice amongst people.

The many serious issues within the community and the church tells that many people suffer the devastation of confusion and uncertainty about their identity; who, what, and where they are. The confusion and uncertainty stem from deficient education. Limited education blinds people from seeing bright ideas and thoughts towards life and its obstacles. There is a usual saying that goes: *Where we stand is what we see.* Therefore, this paper identifies good education as the most important life solution for the Samoan people to reach the goal of *soalaupule*.

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[89] Aveau, *O Le Tofa Liliu a Samoa*, 13.

4.2 *Soalaupule* through Education

Sociologically, education opens people's minds and makes them feel responsible for major issues affecting the lives of our people. On the religious side, education teaches Christian values and nurtures spirituality. Culturally, education enhances cultural values such as *soalaupule* with *faaaloalo*/respect. The stability of this education triangle facilitates the awareness of people about the Christian and cultural values, which help them to value others as themselves. Charles Melchert's six criteria which are necessary for the concept of education suggests that: To call something education implies that it is of value; and it is contradictory to say that one has been educated, and yet has in no way changed for the better. Education also involves the entire person, the totality of his or her life, and it affects all of that person's relationship with self, with others, with things and with ideas.[90] This is exactly what is lacking and what is needed to be woven into the fabric of the communal living of our Samoan community. However, in the last forty years, academic education in Samoa is far advanced and competitive compare to the cultural and religious education. This picture obviously reveals the imbalance of education levels. The cultural and religious education ought to catch up with the academic pace in order to inject sufficient knowledge to intellectually equip people. Moreover, this lack of required knowledge at the levels of culture and religion indicates the lack of emphasis on such spheres of life in the education curriculum currently operating in the Samoan education systems.

Simon Oxley argues that "some of the most fundamental learning come without sitting in a classroom or taking a course."[91] The first example he provides is the learning of "our mother tongue through being immersed in a language environment."[92] The second example is "the way

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[90] Charles F. Melchert, *What is Religious Education?* in *Christian Perspective On Christian Education,* edited by Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis. (Herefordshire: Fowler Wright Books, 1994), 49.

[91] Simon Oxley, *Creative Ecumenical Education: Learning From One Another.* (Geneva: Risk Book Series, WCC Publications, 2002), 73.

[92] Ibid, 73.

we develop the values by which we live."[93] In here, he insists that "our values affect our behaviour and attitudes; values are also acquired informally through participation in communities that are significant to the person."[94] A community is where one belongs and can be called our home; and Oxley claims that "the primary place values are developed is home."[95]

Oxley's theory relates to our Samoan lifestyle. The more we participate in our cultural aspects and gatherings, the more we learn. The less we participate, the less we know of our own cultural values, and of our own selves; and if we do not know who we really are, then it will be difficult for us to understand and respect others. One of the vital cultural values that goes hand in hand with *soalaupule* is *faaaloalo* or respect. *Faaaloalo* is something that is learnt firstly in the immediate family environment. It is an everyday practise between parents and children, brothers and sisters, young and old, *matai* and their families and so on. I witnessed in years back the traditional way of rearing young children. It took the whole village to train one child. For example, any adult, *matai* or an old lady can discipline my children anywhere in the village when they misbehave especially when they swear in public places. No parents complained when their children were disciplined by other adults because of the belief that such discipline was based on true love. When these children become adults, they fully understand what respect is all about. Unfortunately, we witness the fading away of such valuable Samoan traditions. 'O'omi Saifoloi stated that mutual courtesy between people in the past meant that no one had the freedom to what one pleased, but everyone abided by the authority associated with the *matai* system; young *matai* are beginning to question their instructions from their seniors.[96] She strongly argues that some *matai* are too young and too inexperience to hold *matai* titles; and others have not had enough

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[93] Oxley, *Creative Ecumenical Education,* 73.

[94] Ibid, 73.

[95] Ibid, 73.

[96] Saifoloi, *Remember Your Culture,* 27.

training nor relevant experience to perform properly the responsibilities of a *matai*.[97] This lost of

mutual courtesy has a great impact on the lives of the Samoans especially the young generation.

But what do the young generation get out of this tradition of *faaaloalo*? If the disrespectful

behaviour of the younger generation borne out of their confusion and uncertainty, then who gets

the blame, and who is going to correct it? Simon Oxley answers these questions by insisting that

"the influence comes not from the stated values of, for example, the family or the church, but

from the practised values."[98] The problem here according to Oxley is that, "what the parents tell

their children is good or right is not what they practise themselves."[99] Likewise with the "church

when they proclaim the love of Christ and practises bad relationships between members or

between groups and/or congregations."[100]

Christian education is also lacking today compare to the last forty years. I can remember in

the early seventies that the *Aoga Faifeau/* Pastor School system of the EFKS was very active,

constructive, educational, informative and competitive. The school was from three to six o'clock

in the afternoon for seven days. The classes were from levels one to thirteen. Some were still

staying in the Pastor school in their late twenties or even early thirties. They held two or three

exams a year. There were great celebrations at the end of the year exams and prize giving. Church

ministers were so busy training children and young adults and such Christian training occupied

most of young people's time. Such religious education style goes in line with the theory of Oxley

that says:

We need to begin with the Christian nature offered to children in the home and the faith community.
It is here that the framework of thinking begins to be erected. Children need to be exposed to

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[97] Saifoloi, *Remember Your Culture*, 27.

[98] Oxley, *Creative Ecumenical Education*, 73.

[99] Ibid, 73.

[100] Ibid, 73.

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multiple perspectives if they are to grow up with an openness of outlook. We need to continue the process with adults. If we have the experience of looking at situations and events from different points of view, we are less likely to adopt explanations that are over simplistic and one-dimensional.[101]

Today, these Pastor schools are fading away and most church ministers if not all, are not doing it anymore. Some of them are too busy with other personal matters like golf and entertainment aspects. Sunday schools are only for one hour on Sundays. This is where Christian education lapse. It dropped from twenty one hours to one hour a week. The young people have more free times and many occupied these times with drinking and smoking cannabis. This is a real challenge for our generation and as students for the ministry. These education foci must be revisited, reconstructed and reformed. It is a wakeup call for church, community, and government leaders. Religious leaders of churches like the EFKS should reconsider its Christian educational structure and reinforce its pastoral school system while the state helps the *matai* and the public to revive cultural values in people's minds. Public seminars in villages, relevant television programmes, and the modern technologies could be used to escalate the education process. Transforming words into action is how leaders of today contribute to the future of the new generation. Paulo Freire insisted that: "There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis."[102] It is such a profound and strong statement in terms of the wisely usage of words in dialogue methods such as *soalaupule*. Freire's theory in dialogue expressed that: "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people... on the other hand, dialogue cannot exist without humility."[103] This is to say that the effectiveness of a dialogue such as *soalaupule* relies on the positive attitudes of both parties toward one another. Because "dialogue, as the encounter of those addressed to the common task of learning and acting,

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[101] Oxley, *Creative Ecumenical Education*, 43.

[102] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Translated by Myra Bergman Ramos, New Revised 20th-Anniversary Edition. (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company 1993), 68.

[103] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 70-71.

is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility."[104] Upon Freire's theory, I offer an idea

below to further acknowledge the profound utility of *soalaupule* in sustaining peace and justice in

our society. This may help our people especially our leaders in avoiding the carrying into

soalaupule the negativity thoughts such as 'regarding myself as a case apart from others mere

"its" in whom I cannot recognize other 'I's.[105]

4.3 *Soalaupule* Model: <u>Words + Actions = Peace and Justice</u>
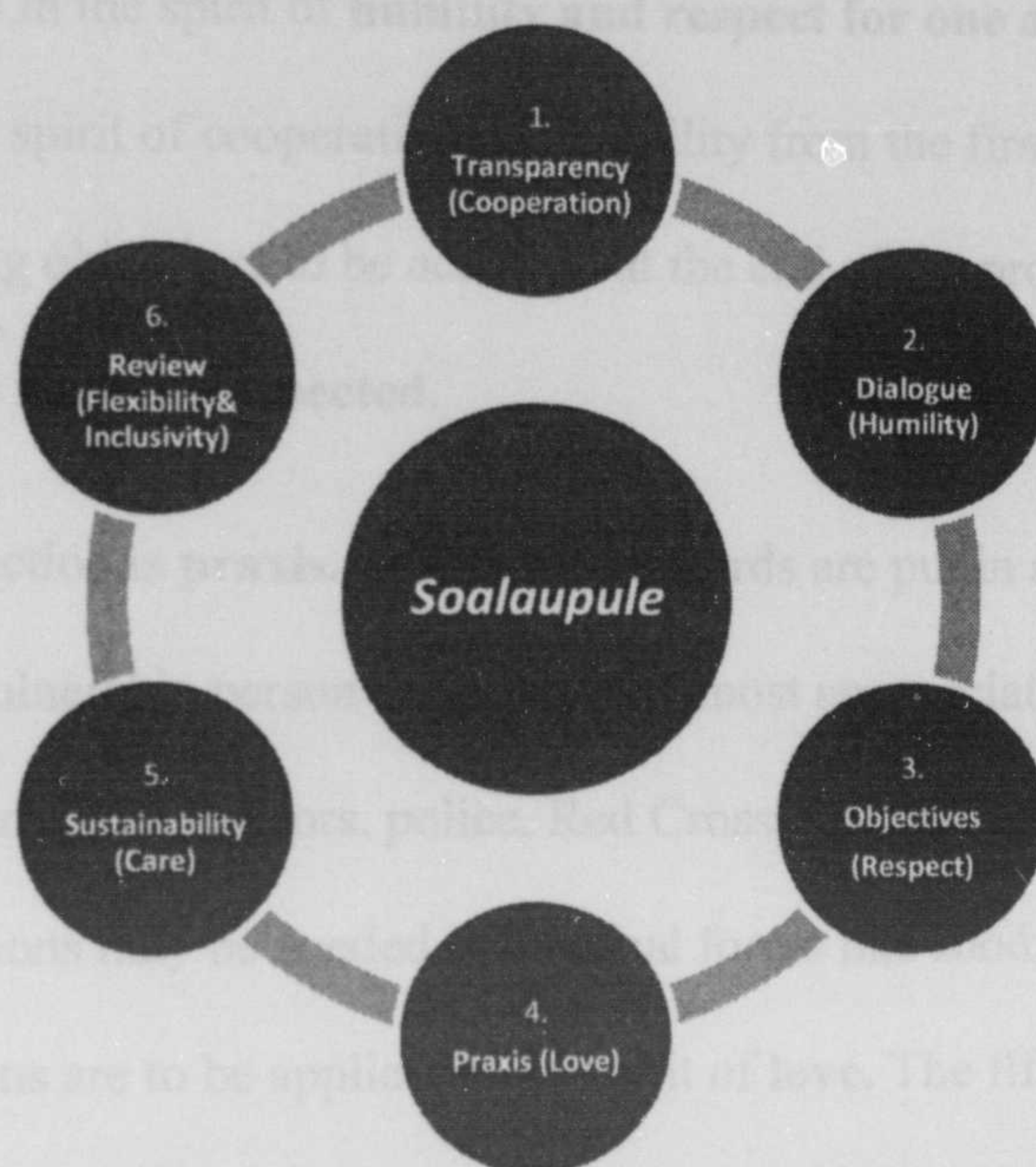
The above diagram shows a much effective way to utilise *soalaupule* in order to avoid

conflicts but achieve peace and justice. The first step is **transparency.** It is important for all

parties involved in the *soalaupule*, to fully understand and clear of the issues they are to discuss,

in all dimensions. Clarify the issue by asking critical questions like; who is involved? What kind

of assistance needed? Who benefits from it? What are the risky areas? How can we approach? It

is a section that gathers information of the issue/s from all parties involve. This reflects the

essence of **cooperation,** one of the characteristics of *soalaupule*.

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[104] Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 70-71.

[105] Ibid, 71.

The second step is the **dialogue.** Once the information are collected and clear in the first step, then parties can easily get down to the dialogue part. This is where the issue is discussed thoroughly and analysed by all parties involved. Parties, however, need to expect some difficulties throughout the process, and prepare to let go of some of their opinions in order to make rooms for other's opinions i.e. prepare to compromise. They must also acknowledge one another's views and appreciate one another's strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, this part of the process is to be done in the spirit of **humility and respect for one another.** The third step is **objectives.** With the spirit of cooperation and humility from the first two parts, the parties should easily work on setting objectives to be achieved at the end of the process. Again, one another's idea and suggestions must be **respected**.

The fourth section is **praxis.** This is where words are put in actions. Such actions involve the referrals of the vulnerable person or party to the most appropriate persons. For instance, medical doctors, counsellors, pastors, police, Red Cross, rescuers, village mayor, and the list goes on. Furthermore, actions may be needed in physical forms like food, drinks, shelters, monies, and more. All these actions are to be applied in the spirit of **love.** The fifth step is **sustainability.** This step ensures the effectiveness of the work applied to the vulnerable situations or persons. In addition, it verifies that the objectives set in the third section are fulfilled. Hence, this part reflects the characteristic of **care in continuity.**

The final approach is the **review** part. This section is very important because it invites anyone to re-examine, critique, and to authenticate the validity of the model. It is the opportunity for others to review and to adjust the model in order to meet and cater the contemporary needs of the people. In other words, this section allows others to revisit and reconstruct the model for the sake of modern changes and future generations. It reveals that the fundamental nature of the model include **flexibility and inclusivity** in order to attain peace and justice within Samoan society.

CONCLUSION

After my study and research, I conclude that the process of *soalupule* is a vital tool for Christian leadership today. I confirm after my research that *soalaupule* is still valid today and its values remain useful and needed in generations to come. However, I realized in this study and research that people today especially leaders, assume that they understand what *soalaupule* really is, but rather, they totally misinterpret it; and consider *soalaupule* as fail, out of date, and invalid.

I strongly argue that many people today ignore *soalaupule* for two major reasons. First, many young leaders today do not understand the reality of *soalaupule* and its natures of love, respect, humility, and cooperation. Such misunderstanding leads them to the opposite way of corruption and exploitation. Second reason is that people, especially leaders, choose to turn to the modern ideologies to solve issues over the traditional ways like *soalaupule*. What people need to know is that, when they turn away from *soalaupule,* they walk straight into *fa'asili'aupule*. It is like choosing between right and wrong. That is where troubles lie because its characteristics include hatred, neglect, and self-centred. Its end products include corruption, exploitation, and injustice.

After all, there is a great demand in illuminating *soalaupule* and its traditional values which create peace and justice. Therefore, this paper encourages cultural and Christian education. I also offer a model as a guideline to confirm that the values of *soalaupule* are still there, and are always available to all who are willing to do peace and justice.

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