

**A SOCIO-RHETORICAL READING OF
2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-15 FROM A *TAUTUA*
PERSPECTIVE IN THE CCCS MAGIAGI**

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Faculty of the Malua Theological College
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Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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ABSTRACT

This work was an inspiration against the general allegation that Paul does not justify work. The allegation that affected the practice of giving and donating in the act of worship and offering in the local CCCS church is the issue which prompted this study. This study revisited 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 to examine Paul's teaching about the monetary gifts to appeal that Paul does enforce works. In determining the language used by the apostle in his letter, this particular passage encouraged the Christians to do works using socio-rhetorical elements to draw out the meaning embedded in the text's innertexture, intertexture and social and cultural texture. Although he does not expressly say it, the exploitation of socio-rhetorical methodology identified literary features from the passage Paul explicitly wrote about being patient in doing good works. The rhetorical ideal of the agrarian metaphor brings up the real life of the first century Mediterranean world peasants and farmers who relied on agriculture for living. Such living was only made possible through land cultivating in order to get food and money. By uncovering the social and culture values prevailed within the passage, the traditions of the CCCS can be imposed into the interpretation as a hermeneutical lens. Realisation of works that Paul has presented in silence shed light into the new perspective. This thesis will explore insights into these, and would utilize such reading methodology to validate good works of the CCCS offerings.

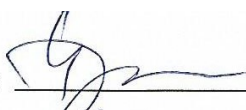
DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis, which is 15,138 words in length, excluding the bibliography, has been written by me, that it is the result of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, in any previous written work for an academic award at this or any other academic institution.

I also declare that this thesis has not used any material, heard or read, without academically appropriate acknowledgment of the source.

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15th Aug, 2016

DEDICATION

In loving memories of my parents,
The late TiaseuTapelu and Sili'aTapelu,

and also

to my wife IlasaTapelu,

and

My children: Covenant, Susiana, Sam Brian and Tuanai-keti

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Last but not least, *Faafetai tele* to my wife Ilasa and my children for your love and support. Without all of you this study would have never been made possible. I thank God for all of you.

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Timoteo Tapelu.

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List of Illustrations

List of Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
BCE	Before Common Era
CCCS	Congregation Christian Church in Samoa
CE	Common Era
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament

Introduction

The Study

This paper attempts to examine 2 Corinthians 9:6-15¹ using socio-rhetorical criticism. Robbins classifies five textures of texts: i) inner texture, ii) intertexture, iii) social and cultural texture, iv) ideological texture and, v) sacred texture. The study will use three categories of socio-rhetorical criticism – Inner-Texture, Inter-Texture, and Social and Cultural Texture based on Vernon K Robbins' work.² The use of socio-rhetorical categories enables this thesis to also draw upon its interdisciplinary interpretative strategies from sociology, cultural anthropology and socio-linguistics³ to provide an appropriate background for an interpretation of Paul's rhetoric in 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15. In this way the biblical text can be allowed to engage in dialogue with cultural contexts, while avoiding an anachronistic and ethnocentric reading of the biblical text. Such an approach shall enable a hermeneutical⁴ reflection on the biblical text, in the thesis my context as a Samoan, interpreting a foreign text and context.

¹ All biblical citations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless otherwise indicated.

²Vernon K Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. London: Routledge, 1996; and also Vernon K Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* London: Routledge, 1996.

³These works include the use of cross-cultural anthropology which offers models of what people's relationships might have been with one another, with their society, and with God in first-century Mediterranean. This study therefore intends to relate its interpretation from the world encoded 'within' the text, with the writer's context as a Samoan interpreter of the Bible, using a Tautua hermeneutic.

⁴ The developments in the field of hermeneutics see a shift from the classical hermeneutical approach to humanistic and critical approaches. This means the traditional focus on the world of the author now changes to include the world of the reader. Time and space for this study limits any discussion of what hermeneutics is in biblical studies. As this study focuses on the use of my understanding of 'faith and works' from my Samoan context as an hermeneutic to interpret 2 Cor. 9:6-15, the mention only of the shift from 'classical hermeneutics to humanistic emphasis' which considers important my world as a reader is only to emphasize my location as a Bible reader in my church CCCS in Samoa in this study.

The issue

In Samoa, there appears to be a generalized misconception amongst church members in our village parish (Congregational Christian Church Samoa in Magiagi) that the biblical teachings of Paul's message regarding 'justification by faith'⁵ (Rom 3:27-31) is taken to mean that doing works or good deeds for the church is unnecessary. My experience of the struggles amongst our church members evokes the belief that Jesus did not want people to suffer. Thus the understanding of justification by faith re-emerged. According to some of our church members, this teaching of Paul emphasizes faith, meaning doing good works and good deeds, is unnecessary. Consequently, members are alleged to have left the CCCS due to the church's adherence to the Samoan culture of giving, donations, gifting to the bereaved during funerals and at weddings, saying these works are unnecessary and inferring Paul's message that justification is realized only through faith not by works. It is not an intention to interfere with the Church Executive and the Church at large (CCCS) however the fact is in our local village church, the Magiagi CCCS, members are moving to other denominations. It is hoped this study will inform relevant information for my church issue.

Why 2 Corinthians 9:6-15?

The selection of 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 as the main text for this study is due to the following reasons:

Firstly this passage is predominantly a passage about 'giving' or 'offering' to the needy. It resonates with the issue at hand with my church in that Paul is encouraging church members into giving.

⁵ Paul has specifically identified work here as work of the law. It seems here in this text that Paul apparently distinguishes work and faith as both having law each. In verse 27; "*By what law?...of works?...of faith?*". It means not work out of the law, but the principles manifesting faith;-that is freewill.

Secondly Paul is known as the apostle who led not only preaching the Gospel but how it is to be, by entrenching himself within Corinthian life. Jesus Christ in His ministry demonstrated as shown in the gospels, the only true model of what ‘giving’ is all about.⁶ Paul’s attempt in proclaiming the teachings of Jesus, in his mission to the Gentiles, exemplifies applying that teaching of giving to the reality of the world the Christians encounter. Therefore, Paul’s letters in the New Testament are important sources that tell and show those applications. For example, 2 Cor. 9:6-15.

Lastly, according to Witherington, 1 Corinthians is Paul’s attempt at reconciling the divisions and disputes among members of the church in Corinth, while his second letter ‘2 Corinthians’ accounts for reconciliation between Paul and the church in Corinth.⁷ In writing 2 Corinthians, he raises several issues that deal with the church matters such as giving money and gifts to the church.⁸ In addition, Paul as the person responsible for the managing of the money and gifts that the Corinthian church gives for the saints in Jerusalem reminds me of our church administration and their role in managing the money contributed by church members every year. Thus, I see 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15, as a passage about giving and managing as a relevant text for me to explore.

Thesis Outline

The thesis will be divided into three chapters. Chapter one entails a brief literature review of the various interpretations of the selected passage which are considered prevalent

⁶ In this section I refer to the work of salvation shown in the gospel accounts which reveal Jesus’ offering of his life as a voluntary offer to die for the sake of all. An illustration would be Matt 8:17 (*He took our infirmities and bore our diseases*).

⁷ Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 328.

⁸ Kar Yong Lim argues against a generally popular view that Paul’s concern for the needy is not of primary importance in his letter. Lim contends that 2 Corinthians 8-9 reveals that. The point here is that the people to whom Paul wrote to were the poor and needy. See Kar Yong Lim, “Generosity from Pauline Perspective: Insights from Paul’s Letters to the Corinthians,” *ERT* 37, no. 1 (2013): 20-33.

in current scholarship. Secondly I will lay out a framework for reading and analysing the text using the chosen three elements of Socio-rhetorical criticism – innertexture, intertexture, and social and cultural texture as a reading method. Thirdly, the analysis also involves an explanation of my Samoan hermeneutic, *Tautua* which will be used in interpreting the text. This generates questions which will guide my analysis of the text.

Chapter two is the exegesis which will focus on the three elements indicated – innertexture, intertexture and social and cultural texture of the text. The innertexture will show how the language of this particular passage associates Paul as the implied author to the context of hard works. The intertexture stage will explore the relationship of Paul to the traditions and the socio-political background of both Judah and the Greco-Roman world. Illustrations of sowing and harvesting on the wheat field encode the world of the text on the other hand. Intertextural analysis explores the recitation of Psalm 112:9 and Proverbs 11:25 to clarify Paul's point being discussed throughout the whole letter. The social and cultural texture examines the worlds outside the text to understand how the social and cultural factors may have influenced the lives of the Corinthians. Lastly I will briefly explain my *tautua* hermeneutic.

Chapter three juxtaposes the analysis of the text with my response using my hermeneutic the '*Tautua*' in the CCCS context. In my experience of the *tautua* (services) in the church, I will discuss the connection of serving God through the church and the *tautua*. The offering of the *tautua* is not because someone is obligated to it but because the spirit inspires people to submit themselves as heirs to the Lord. Being heirs is a belief that the Lord has made them so through the ultimate work of Christ through his crucifixion and resurrection. Chapter three therefore relates the context of *tautua* to Paul's intention to do works as an act of sharing grace and achieving his goal as the workmanship of Christ.

Statement of the limitations of the thesis

In the conduct of his study, and as a beginner in biblical studies, I have been made aware of the limits of responsible interpretation in that the resulting interpretation from this study shall only be a contribution to the discussion, in the field of biblical studies, and our church ministry as such. Under the understanding that all methodologies and interpretations have their limitations, this study will be confined within the boundaries of responsible interpretation.⁹

⁹ Mark Ledbetter, "Telling the other story: a literary response to socio-rhetorical criticism of the New Testament," *Semeia* No. 64 (1993):289-301.

Chapter 1: Towards a Reading Methodology and Hermeneutic

I will begin with a brief literature review to scan some of the popular works in relation to interpretations of Paul's discourse in 2 Corinthians and specifically 2 Cor. 9:6-15. I will then briefly discuss an awareness of an interpretation issue which necessitates the use of my Samoan hermeneutic of *Tautua* to engage my world as a reader. Next I will discuss how my selection of the reading methodology eventuated. This will be followed by descriptions of the socio rhetorical elements that will be used in the exegetical analysis. At this stage, questions will be asked for each of these interpretative categories that shall guide the ensuing analysis in chapter 2.

Brief Literature Review

The emphasis of this section is mainly to scan the levels of meanings in the prevalent interpretations to try and find out where my study may be placed in the sequence of existing researches. The review also looks at the methodologies used to bring out the interpretations in each discipline, mainly to gauge effectiveness and can also aid in determining a reading methodology for this study. The section will end with a summary of findings and contribution it provides for its intended emphasis.

Hans D. Betz

Hans D. Betz leans more towards a Literary and Rhetorical approach in his book '*2 Corinthians 8 and 9*' (1985) and expresses from the rhetorical point of view that 2 Cor. 9:6-15 is a clarification of the collections Paul has previously informed the Corinthians about (1 Cor. 16:1-4). His analysis, based on the rhetoric "gift of blessing" which is employed by Paul in this passage gives the following literary structure:

- (v.6) – The Thesis in the form of a statement
- (vv.7-14) – Interpretation; Five proofs
- (v.15) – Prayer of thanksgiving

He argues that the clarification of the collection as the gift of blessings is in the set of proofs¹ (vv. 7-14) that defines the act of giving². The proofs are exhibited in a ‘point-by-point’ discourse from v.7 to v.14, whereby Betz concludes them in five proofs. It turns out that his literary analysis pertaining to Paul’s explication by ‘proofs’, focus on the answers (given by each proof) to why Paul encourages the collection. These answers explain in an argumentative³ interpretation the analysis of Betz to Paul’s notion about the gift of blessing. The notion that is defined throughout the entire passage highly requires a good mind set and an impressive understanding⁴. In a short outlook, Betz focuses his details of 2 Cor. 9:6-15 on the literary form which is hypothesized in verse 6 and then followed on with the clear explanations in vv. 7-14. Based on the rhetoric of the literary structure, Betz follows the metaphorical use of agrarian imagery by Paul, which he regards as an argument that needs to be acted on. The sequential justifications which Betz calls the ‘five proofs’ are i) v.7 – the giver; ii) v.8 – God, the provider; iii) vv.9-11 – proof from scripture; iv) v.12- comparison; and v) vv.13-14 – increase in thanksgiving, is the logic of verifying the work on the gift of blessings from God. This way, Paul requires the Christians in Corinth to show that they can afford to share with the Christians in Jerusalem the gift of blessing they have received.

¹ H D Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, Fortress: Philadelphia, 100.

² Ibid., 101.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Stephen Joubert

Stephen Joubert (1999) adopted this ‘agrarian principle’ of the ancient Israel and Graeco Roman world to support the rhetorical analysis of the collection as gift⁵ of blessing, even though his emphasis leans toward the reciprocal⁶ principle of the ancient Graeco-Roman. He concludes his argument by stating the message of 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 to be God’s compassion⁷ over the giving in freewill. Joubert views that the obligation of the Corinthians to give enough is hard, however eases by the Χάρις of God that he would provide them with everything; both material and spiritual. It appears to the readers here that Joubert perceives the commitment of the Corinthians as being positive, and in return would find a positive response from the saints through thanksgiving of their souls.

Bruce Malina and John Pilch

In their commentary; ‘*Social-science commentary on the Letters of Paul*’, Malina and Pilch (2006) support the theory that chapters 8-9 are part of a separate letter⁸. Thus they treat chapter 9 as one part which starts with a recurrent topic maker; ‘Concerning...’ which starts and develops the letter on a basis that has social-science proofs. One of those proofs is in vv. 2-5 which is Paul’s use of Honour and Shame to push the Corinthians to fulfill the task by boasting to the Macedonians then letting the Corinthians know about it. To avoid being shamed himself, he sends ‘the brothers’ instead of himself for the collection. The use of scriptural citations as motivating agents, and the differences between the Greek and the NRSV suggests an allusion to Jewish

⁵ Stephan Joubert. *Religious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ*. *Neotestamentica* Vol. 33, No 1 (1999): 81.

⁶Ibid., 79.

⁷Ibid., 89.

⁸ Bruce J Malina and John J Pilch, eds., *Social Science commentary on the Letters of Paul*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 175.

understanding by his audience (hearers) and that unspecified “all others” praying for the donors is implying emphasis is on the honour that one can give God by glorifying His name through giving for the saints in Jerusalem. The honour for the donors is being prayed for by the saints and “all others.”⁹

Ben Witherington III

Ben Witherington’s work on *Conflict and Community in Corinth: A Socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (1995) provides a thorough discussion which includes Paul’s whereabouts during the writing of his letter – 2 Corinthians (mainly chapters 8-9) – as well as other Pauline letters which mention the subject about the collection (Galatians 2; 1 Corinthians 16; and Romans 15). Witherington infers the effect of the social nature behind the motive of the apostle. The Christians at the time (except a few offenders to Paul) could easily relate to the apostle and his mission, and thus accepted to make the collection as a religious ‘liturgy’¹⁰ which was a similar practice to the Romans. This is a socio-cultural act of ancient Israel and Graeco-Roman where they make offering sacrifice to the gods. Thus Witherington lightens up the ‘trans-cultural’ and ‘social’ relationship functions in the subject of the collection.

Witherington emphasizes ‘honour and shame’¹¹ social relation features whereby Paul’s insistence that their boasting about the Corinthians to the Macedonians could result in an “empty case”; and that a failure by the Corinthians to complete the collection, would be to their humiliation (2 Cor. 9:2-3). For the Corinthians to complete

⁹Ibid., 176.

¹⁰Ben Witherington III. 1995. *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 425.

¹¹Ibid., 426.

the collection they had promised, will bring honour to the Corinthians in the eyes of the Macedonians, as well as Paul and his colleagues' ministry (2 Cor. 9:3-5). To Witherington, honour in the Graeco-Roman culture places a person in good social relation of reciprocity. It denotes a mark of respect, distinction and privilege in the society with traditions and cultural values which affect the person's passion about the collection. This is revealed by Witherington's view of the giving as the public service which is obligated to the human's relation to God. Thus in the community, a person is obliged to do good works in both one's relationships within the society, as well as his obligations to God. These good deeds are evident in a person's giving and sharing the blessings God has given through his grace.

Summary

For the purpose of this thesis, I am interested in the above studies because these are popular works not just in the area of social sciences, but also in the field of Biblical Studies on this text that has been made available during this study.

The methodological approaches used by these works are closely related to the exegetical features of socio-rhetorical criticism. This highlights the inter-relational features of these approaches which is characteristic of Robbins' socio-rhetorical method, and also confirms his theory that interpretation is concerned with relating levels of meanings. While some focus mainly on the literary rhetorical features of the text and some have employed features of socio-rhetorical criticism looking into insights from Greco-Roman rhetoric and drawing from their historical, sociological and rhetorical features to analyze the text.

Overall while all interpretations reviewed tend to use features of socio-rhetorical criticism and social sciences, none has focused on the argument of this thesis that when Paul is talking about faith, he is encouraging the Corinthians about work.

An Interpretation Issue

The vast distance between the worlds set in the text of Paul's message in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15, and my world as a Samoan interpreter must be connected to enable a proper comparison and therefore a relevant application for the Samoan reader. The task therefore in this section of the thesis is to recognize the issues we run into in the reading and interpreting of the Bible from the Samoan context. It is important for this thesis to choose a methodology that enables this space between the Samoan reader and Paul's discourse to be filled as much as it can possibly be. The approaches used in some of the popular interpretations of the text studied in this thesis, numerous differences and similarities between the contexts that influence the text - those of first century Palestine and Greco-Roman - and my Samoan context. The proposed hermeneutical interpretation from my *Tautua* perspective may not always agree on every point of comparable values. However, responsibility must be to commit to the value of utilizing models from the evaluation of this interpretative exercise, to reduce the distance and offer alternative views of biblical texts; and consequently meaningful application for the Samoan interpreter.

Socio-Rhetorical Criticism: The Reading Methodology

In analyzing the current scholarship on the text used in this study, the recent developments in biblical interpretation in social sciences, the socio-rhetorical method is selected as my reading methodology for this thesis. The choice for this method is based on the following:

One: The Socio rhetorical approach is highly regarded due to its ability to relate to other contexts and cultures other than those of the text. Its inter-relational and interdisciplinary features, allow my *Tautua* hermeneutic to interpret 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15 as a Samoan interpreter of biblical texts. In other words, my world as a reader is now considered important.

Two: The traditional approaches tend to emphasize specific details pertaining to each particular methodological approach. As a result attention is confined to some parts according to the practices of that particular discipline of investigation¹² and therefore lacks focus in others. The Socio rhetorical approach however, enables an interdisciplinary analysis of the text and therefore allows a broader analysis.

What is Socio-Rhetorical Criticism?

One of the leading scholars who arguably is the main contributor spearheading socio-rhetorical criticism to its present status as a reading methodology, is Vernon K. Robbins. The approach combines the work from the various disciplines. These include interpretative strategies arising in sociology, anthropology, and socio-linguistics. The method looks to find meaning(s) in texts through exploring values, faith and beliefs in the world of the text.¹³ It examines how those values influence and mould meaning(s) and as readers, how we juxtapose them with our worlds as readers, in order to make meaningful application in our lives.¹⁴ In this study, I will bring my world as a Samoan

¹² Vernon K Robbins, *The tapestry of early Christian discourse: rhetoric, society, and ideology*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 14.

¹³ Ibid., 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., 26.

in a Christian community using *Tautua*, to create a dialogue with the socio-rhetorical reading of 2 Cor. 19:6-15.¹⁵

The significance of the socio-rhetorical method is its strategic approach of bringing the reader into communication with the text, that it treats the text as a 'message which is read'.¹⁶ In this communication, the reader becomes part of the dialogue while the social, cultural and ideological setting that is implied within the text is identified. So the socio-rhetorical approach is not limited to the implied author and the reader's medium of reading and response, but it extends beyond those boundaries to consider the different settings in the text; social, political, cultural, ideological, theological, emotional, economical, and others.¹⁷

There are five categories of Robbins' socio-rhetorical approach - 'innertexture', 'intertexture', 'social and cultural texture', 'ideological texture', and 'sacred texture'. Three categories – innertexture, intertexture and social and cultural texture - are employed to analyse the selected text.

Innertexture

The inner texture of texts deals with the language of the text - ways the text uses words, such as word structures, devices, and contraries.¹⁸ In Robbins' model on inner texture¹⁹ the focus is on the implied author, the narrator and characters in the passage. Robbins identified six kinds of inner texture to look for in the text. The aim is to explore these textures in 2 Cor. 9: 6-15.

¹⁵Ibid., 11.

¹⁶ Ibid., 19.

¹⁷Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁸Ibid., 7.

¹⁹Ibid., 28.

This part of the analysis focuses on three of the six kinds of inner texture: repetitive progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing. The aim for this is to make available a context for both meaning and meaning-effects that are interwoven in the text. As a reader, we must understand this language of the text. It is the mode through which we can engage in dialogue with the implied author, and other people who are involved inside the text. Discovering the innertexture informs us about the placement of 2 Cor. 9:6-15 into the whole rhetorical unit 2 Cor 8-9 and to the larger extend of Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

Intertexture

Inter texture is the second category of Robbins' classifications of textures in a text.²⁰ This category examines how other facts are evidenced in 2 Cor. 9:6-15. Intertextural analysis explores how Paul's recitation of Psalm 112:9 and Proverbs 11:25 enlighten the message of the work. How does Paul's recitation of these OT texts explain the encoded message of works in the text?

Social and Cultural Texture

According to Robbins the social and cultural texture of the text examines what kind of a social and cultural worlds the characters in the text exists in. This category allows the interpreter to explore the foreign social and cultural worlds of the text.²¹ In this study the question to guide this part of the analysis is what were the social and cultural values that were prevalent in the Corinthian society in Paul's time? How did they influence the lives of the Corinthians?

²⁰Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 96.

²¹ Ibid., 71.

Chapter 2: Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15

Introduction

This chapter contains the exegetical analysis of 2 Cor. 9:6-15 using the social rhetorical criticism method. Focus as indicated earlier will be on the three categories: Firstly I will explore the innertexture of the text. It focuses on the supposition that Paul in motivating the Christians to collect enough charity for the people in Jerusalem is in fact encouraging them to work. The aim here is not to criticize the concept of ‘justification by faith’ but to sound out the significance of good works which are muted in the text. Secondly, the analysis will look at the intertexture analysis of Paul’s discourse. The final section will explore the social and cultural texture interpretative strategies.

Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians from Macedonia (1 Cor. 16:5-7) while he was on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:20-23). Despite the scholarly debate regarding the unity²² of 2 Corinthians, evidences²³ show that this letter was written after the apostle’s first journey. Confronted with more disputes than conformity in his mission to the gentiles Paul’s experience is faced with danger from people, danger at sea, danger from bandits, rod beatings, stoning, hungry and thirsty without food and water, and many more (2 Cor. 11:23-29). His relationship with the Corinthians was often very problematic. Some people rejected him (1 Cor. 3:4; 2Cor. 10:10) and he was sometimes upset with them (2 Cor. 2:1). The church in Corinth during those times was

²²Ben Witherington III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 333.

²³ Richard Jr. R Melick, “The collection for the saints; 2 Corinthians 8-9.” *Criswell Theological Review* 4.1, (1989): 98.

not united, that there were divisions among the members (1 Cor. 1:11-12). Emerging out of the multiracial and a multicultural city, the Christian church in Corinth was only a minority religion amongst the more prevalent local pagan religions (Acts 19:28).

The city of Corinth at Paul's time was just over eighty years old since its reconstruction from the destruction by the Romans in 146 B.C.²⁴. Since this time, it remained unpopulated for more than hundred years, not until Julius Caesar reconstructed it in 44 B.C. Kent Hughes in his book '*Preaching the Word; 2 Corinthians*' states that in the A.D 50, "traditions were few"²⁵. This means the city of Corinth was populated merely by immigrants and opportunists of all sorts including slaves, and escapees from Rome's overpopulation crisis. This reveals that the social and cultural background at the place was influenced by people of different ethnicity. The main purpose of settlement was trading, and wealth became the attracting feature. Despite the multi-traditions and mixed cultural values, the apostle never loses focus but is deeply concerned about his converts in Corinth. He is devoted to them as a father (1 Cor. 4:15) to his "*beloved children*" (4:14). As Martin claims in his article '*The Setting of 2 Corinthians*.' "*Paul's court of appeal in Corinth is more personal*"²⁶. He treated them as his own children that he never asked of them for anything in his need (2 Cor.11:7-10). However, for the needs of the saints in Jerusalem he encouraged them to make the collection as in chapters 8 and 9.

²⁴Ralph P Martin, "The Setting of 2 Corinthians," *Tyndale Bulletin* 37(1986).

²⁵R Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word, 2 Corinthians; Power in Weakness* (Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006). 13.

²⁶Ralph P Martin, "The Setting of 2 Corinthians," *Tyndale Bulletin* 37(1986). 8.

The structure of 2 Corinthians used in this thesis

The structure of ‘2 Corinthians’ has several variations due to the debate concerning its unity. Some scholars argue that chapters 8 and 9 are either fragments or separate letters in their own contexts. I have mentioned earlier that this thesis exploits the socio-rhetorical strategies by Robbins. However for this study I will follow the structure by Ben Witherington not because it favours either the unity or the disunity of the letter, but considers the use of “ancient rhetorical conventions” by Paul²⁷. I am aware of the different approaches to the socio-rhetorical criticism by the two however my interest is in the rhetorical inclusiveness of chapter 9 to the entire letter as shown in Witherington’s structure. This is especially crucial in relating 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 as part of the *probatio*²⁸(arguments) to the *propositio*²⁹ (main proposition) in 2 Cor. 2:17.

“For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many;¹ but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence”.

Ben Witherington’s rhetorical structure of 2 Corinthians³⁰

1. The epistolary prescript (1:1-2)
2. The epistolary thanksgiving and *exordium*³¹(1:3-7)
3. The *narratio*³²(1:8-2:14), which explains some of the facts that occasioned the letter and climaxes with a further thanksgiving and transition (2:15f).
4. The *propositio*(2:17), which states the basic fact under dispute.

²⁷Ben Witherington III., *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 327-33.

²⁸“The probation brings in arguments to support the speaker’s case. [The] *refutatio*...is...the opponent’s arguments are disproved or weakened.” Ibid., 44.

²⁹The “*propositio* which follows the *narratio* ...is where the essential proposition(s) of the speaker and perhaps also of the opponent are laid out.” Ibid., 44.

³⁰Ibid., 335-36.

³¹ “The *exordium* is the beginning part and is aimed at making the audience open and indeed well-disposed toward what follows.” Ibid., 44.

³² “The *narratio*...explains the nature of disputed matter.” Ibid.

5. The *probation* and *refutation* (3:1-13:4), which includes:
 - a. Paul's characterization of his ministry and of his anti-Sophistic rhetorical approach (3:1-6:13),
 - b. a deliberative digression (6:14-7:1), in which Paul puts his audience on the defensive, urging them to stop attending temple feasts with pagan friends.
 - c. Paul's defence of the severe letter (7:2-16)
 - d. a largely deliberative argument concerning the collection (chs. 8 and 9), and
 - e. a rhetorical *synkrisis*³³(comparison) of Paul and his competitors in Corinth, the false *apostoloi*, with a strong emotional appeal.
6. The *preroratio*³⁴(13:5-10).
7. The closing epistolary greetings and remarks (13:11-13)

The rhetorical structure by Witherington relates the message of 9:6-15 as the will of God through Paul. Witherington perceives a forensic³⁵ language in 2 Corinthians which speaks about events in the past like the *propositio* in (2:17). Other parts of the letter including 9:6-15 are contributing arguments in support of the past. Hence 9:6-15 is linked to chapter 8 and to the whole letter '2 Corinthians'.

Inner-Texture Analysis

The literary features of the text shows that 2 Cor.9:6-15 belongs to the section of the letter that starts from chapter 8 and concluding here. As a rhetorical unit, 9:6-15 will be analysed on how Paul fits this particular passage into this section of his letter – 2 Corinthians chapters 8-9. It will aim at the primary expectations of both Paul and the Christians in Corinth towards offerings. It is Paul's teaching about the grace of giving

³³George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 23.

³⁴Ben Witherington III., *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 44.

³⁵Ibid 333; "...forensic language is either accusing or apologetic..."

for the needy. He starts by encouraging them about their generous Collection for the Christians at Jerusalem (8:1-15), which he has already informed them about in his first letter (1 Cor.16:1).

He continues to acknowledge his recommendation of Titus to be sent with his companions over to Corinth (8:16 – 9:5). This is an assurance which implies the strong desire by Paul for the church in Corinth to work this out before the due time. Then the final part which is about the practicality of the Corinthians' generous giving that is described in (9:6-15).

Opening-middle-closing³⁶ texture

As a rhetorical unit, chapters 8-9 will be analysed based on the following threefold structure:

Beginning (Ch 8:1- 15): Encouragement for Generosity

Middle (Ch 8:16- Ch 9:5): Recommendation of Titus and his companions to send to Corinth.

End (Ch 9:6-15): Results of generous giving.

The unit begins with Paul's impressions about the grace of God (8:1) χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δεδομένην over the Christians in the Macedonian region. The apostle at his very introductory remark (*exordium*)³⁷ reveals his emotions and feelings (state of mood) τὴν δεδομένην. about the grace. The 'grace' (χάριν) of God is subjected to a broad range of interpretations. Paul at this time specifically shows his intention by; τὴν δεδομένην, the grace was given by God; which means grace was a gift, as argued by Betz³⁸.

³⁶Vernon K Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 50. Also see George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 33.

³⁷ H D Betz, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9*, Fortress: Philadelphia, 41.

³⁸Ibid., 42.

In mentioning the ἐκκλησίαις churches in the whole of the Macedonian region, Paul is implicitly encouraging the Corinthians that God's grace can also materialize in them. His reference to the grace of God (8:1) that the Macedonians have, he uses the language - "severe ordeal of affliction" (2 Cor. 8:2) as a 'loud reading message'³⁹ in order to draw the attention of Corinth to his true meaning. Paul is trying to make a point here, which will be discussed later in the analysis of the End of the unit (9:6-15) as a sub rhetoric unit itself.

The entire unit is enclosed within an *inclusio* feature by its ending (9:15) with the grace of God Χάρις τῷ θεῷ. It is an implication of a spiritual nature of faith withheld inside a person. He visualizes the generous giving by the Macedonians as a proof of grace that they receive from God. His joyful words show he is impressed by the love the Macedonians reveals by their cheerful giving.

In fact they generously showed it by their patience through hardships (8:2) πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως that grace must be offered and shared amongst the saints in Jerusalem. They have demonstrated their generosity by sharing and offering as much as they could have attained, and as best as they could have afforded. As an encouragement to the Corinthians, Paul wanted them to do the same. Thus he continues to recommend Titus to be sent over so that they (Corinthians) shall start on doing some *work* with their collection; (8:16-9:5)

The end of the unit at 9:6-15 unveils Paul's curiosity in giving and offerings as a human reciprocity⁴⁰ in goodwill towards others through the performance of good works.

³⁹Vernon K Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse; Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996), 19.

⁴⁰Stephan Joubert. "Religious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ." *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 33. No 1(1999): 79-90.

Without reluctance he appeals to the Corinthians, that to be generous by sharing the blessing of God with others is one way to glorify God.

Paul ends with an encouraging message, re-emphasizing that by sharing the grace of God (9:14) *χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ* they do charity works. It forms an *inclusio* structure framing the abundant grace of God to which man must respond by providing good works for the people who are in need. He now closes his entire message about faithful giving by restating the grace (9:15), which can only become a reality if they perform the works to complete it as he encourages (9:6-14).

Traditionally, when reading Paul's teachings and messages we tend to almost always carry the presupposition that Paul's theological view that 'justification is by faith alone'. This most certainly means that he does not believe that doing works for others or for the church is necessary at all for one's justification. Such mindset although silent in the text, seems to dominate our interpretations thus a tendency to conclude that faith is at the central point of Paul's message and not works. However we are not Paul, and when we read about his writings we at the same time shall be able to understand his person as well. We do not think the way he thinks but we can think about what he does and what he says, and thus the importance to examine what he says, what he writes and what he does.

The personality of Paul is very important in that he relates to his churches (the Corinthians in particular) in a 'father-children' relationship (1 Cor. 4:15) '*...I became your father through the gospel*'. As a caring father his concern about his children is to do the same with him; '*...be imitators of me*' (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1). This strong encouragement just comes after Paul discloses the purpose of being servants of Christ and stewards of God, by doing good works for others (4:12). Paul hardly speaks directly to his '*beloved children*' (1Cor.4:14) if he needs work to be done.

As it is in the beginning of the rhetorical unit, he implies to discuss good works (2 Cor. 8:2) ἐπερίσσευσεν εἰς τὸ πλοῦτος τῆς ἀπλότητος – they increase (in) the wealth of their generosity, while talking about the free giving grace of God. His opening remark draws the attention of his *beloved children* to think about the grace of God χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ. He does not want his *children* to feel the burden by telling them off to do work (this time the collection). Instead he soothes things up by first reminding them of the χάριν given to the churches in Macedonia, which they (Corinthians) have also received freely from God. Then straight after that he then explains the response of the churches in Macedonia to that grace by ordeal πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεως and severe affliction where they give away to the poor all they can and even challenge themselves to work beyond their capabilities for the same purpose. The χάριν is an expression of kindness, but an activity to manifest mercy. The whole point is to do good works and do it with ones best effort. Although Paul does not make direct instructions that he wants the Corinthians to do work, he implies by asking them to prove their true love in front of the churches (8:24). He wants them to be ‘*imitators*’ of himself and *himself* as a subject of true love is a show of ultimate painful tribulation giving up for others. This is evidently the teaching behind Paul’s intention, he does not talk about human action perhaps he actually persuades people to submit themselves to work hard and work for the sake of other people.

Narrative of Good Works in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15⁴¹

2 Cor.9:6-15 forms the conclusion of Paul's appeal that generous giving for the needy is a show of good works revealing humans exploitation of God's grace. He employs the language of bountiful sowing in this particular time to shift the state of grace to hard work initialising giving and thanksgiving. As a rhetorical unit, the main text will be analysed based on the following threefold structure:

Beginning	(9:6-10): Hard Work encouraged
Middle	(9:11-14): Generosity Work rewarded
End	(9:15): Thanksgivings

(9:6-10) Hard Work encouraged - (Toiling of God's grace)

The narrative of 9:6-10 emphasizes the point Paul was trying to make from chapter 8. When declaring "the point" (9:6) the Greek Τοῦτο δέ, - may be translated: *But now, this is what it (8:1-9:5) means*; the narrator here turns around the entire picture of the grace of God to the imagery of the labouring work of sowing. The coordinating conjunction δε joins 9:6-15 to the whole unit 8:1-9:5, but as a contrary negative manner. Not in a contrasting mood in this end section to the entire passage, but illustrating the whole point of the passage in a more realistic situation; while still in the hearts of his *beloved children* that they imitate their *father's* ways, they have to be exact on this

⁴¹ "6The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷ Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. ⁹ As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰ He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹ You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; ¹² for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. ¹³ Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, ¹⁴ while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. ¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

ultimate point σπείρων ἐπ' εὐλογίαις (while sowing in bountiful...), the use of *working* terms σπείρων (while sowing) εὐζλογία (in bountiful) signifies Paul's experience in doing hard works. It leads back to the (8:2) ἐν πολλῇ δοκιμῇ θλίψεω (in many severe ordeals of sufferings), which revealed the apostle's real life understanding of giving from a heart which had undergone hardships through a striving life. The reconciling mood which is the purpose⁴² of 2 Corinthians of 'father-children' (and vice versa) relationship is at that time motivates the Corinthians. The longing heart of the apostle while living away from his beloved children is accepted with eagerness in the church. Thus the trust is sealed and people are keen with excitement to support Paul in any way. There is a message of *praising* while working; (sowing is specific to the type of work in this metaphor) in the use of the εὐζλογία which is in line with Witherington's⁴³ and Joubert's⁴⁴ views. Paul is careful as a father but selective in the rhetoric of his speech so that his message is easily accepted.

The setting in the beginning of this final part characterizes the farming tradition of ancient Israel. Speaking of farming while discussing the 'grace of God as a gift' is a real test of the soul whether humans respond with words or with works. Can a faithful soul really be justified by richness of its words or by the activeness of help shown through good works? How is it possible to relate receipt of grace disproportionate of works to sharing of grace through good hard works? However he is confident in his own people, his beloved children which is his interest in the previous chapter (7:4-16) that they will provide evidence of their love in his work. Evident that their love is not ἀνάγκης (9:7;

⁴²Ben Witherington III. *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*(Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 339.

⁴³Ibid., 428.

⁴⁴ Stephen Joubert. "Religious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the χάριτος θεου." *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 33. No. 1 (1999), 87.

under distress or under constraint) but believe in the blessings of God and believe in free giving of that blessing.

Paul as a Jewish Pharisee understands the Laws of Moses and that the real life practice of human living has already been ordered since the beginning from Adam; (Gen 3:17b) ‘...*in toil (hard work) you shall eat of it all the days of your life*’. Although that human was originally created out of God’s grace, every human since Adam and Eve was ordered by God to exploit the earth out of hard works. The same practice is revealed here by Paul that earning more out of life is to put more into it; σπείρων ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις καὶ θερίσει. (*while sowing in bountiful, in bountiful he/she will harvest*). He has already talked of this in 1 Cor. 4:11. It does not mean that faith is measured this way, but to live life in the Will of God, and within the mercifulness of His blessings, humans have been given a role of hard work. That was really what Paul was doing, not as a burden to overcome. Otherwise one would have been boasting about overcoming the burden, instead as an act of love in the grace of God; that love must be shared amongst everyone whatever its cost.

Knowing one’s role as shown through generous works is recognition of human perfection of his relation to God, and to other people. It is through the orderly mannered proceedings that reveal good thinking and joyful soul. Paul relates this self-anxiety of humanity shown by cheerful offerings to the love shown by God in his grace. (v7) ἱλαρόν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. (*for God loves a cheerful giver*). Although God’s abundant grace is independent of human actions, Paul believes that God has mercy on human reactions to Him by good works of the mind, and unrestricted offerings of the soul. It does not intend to mean that it was because of the works and deeds of humans that inspired the grace of God, but He appreciates it when humans feel responsible for his/her own sake. Paul’s knowledge of the Corinthians’ background in their Graeco-

Roman⁴⁵ history world that they believe in sacrificial offerings to their gods is shown here. As Joubert explains that in the Graeco Roman world, humans continue to believe that they are required to reciprocate their gods for whatever benefits they had received from them⁴⁶ even though that the gods donot desire them. Paul's real desire for his beloved children to be reactive and responsible for their own betterment is alluded to in his encouragement to be active in gaining the blessings in abundance by works.

It is not humans that cause the stipulation of grace but it is the provision in excess by God for the whole world of human beings, (v8)δυναται δε ο θεος πασαν χαριαν περισσευοσαι (but God is able (*to provide*) every kind of grace to be abundant). God himself initiates the good work through grace, regardless of whether humans are convinced of it or not. This is similar to Paul's message for the Christians in Ephesus (Eph 2:8-10). Although grace is proclaimed as the Love of God, the actual happening out of which grace was produced was good work. It is not just good work but the only kind of work every human can offer in life. Indeed, human should recognize exploitation of God's grace by working it out amongst each other παν ἔρ γονἀγαθόν (for every good work). Witherington comments about this as the power of God to make smaller gifts to be plentiful⁴⁷ but the reality of humanity puts humans to work with the praising soul in order to be blessed abundantly. In fact, the love of God can never be recompensed by any means of human act, however Paul urges excelling not only in faith, speech, knowledge but by works (2 Cor 8:7). This time, Paul puts the real test for the Corinthians to excel the genuineness of their love, while at the same time he inversely states genuine love is not excelled only in faith, words, and mind, but work on

⁴⁵Ibid., 81.

⁴⁶Ibid., 80.

⁴⁷Ben Witherington III. 1995. *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A socio-rhetorical commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 427.

the sincerity for others. To him, the show of proof (8:24) of love in the Corinthians is through the sharing and giving, but to have enough to share is to work hard, and work happily ἡλαρὸν γὰρ δότην.

(9:11-14)⁴⁸Generosity Work rewarded

Like sowing that requires an enriched fertile soil, grace of God must be received and multiplied through generous distribution. (9:11) ἐν παντὶ πλουτιζόμενοι εἰς πᾶσαν ἀπλότητα (in all, you have been enriched with all generosity). Enrichment with excessive blessings is human responsibility. Humans sow grace by spreading it around to the soils which thirst for it. In this way grace is enriched, and both the sower and the receiver get abundant blessings. In return they both get satisfaction in the soul that they recognize thanksgiving is to be given to God. Not everyone comes to identify this as a service to God, except when a person is faithful and thankful not by words but by performing good works. This as part of the missionary works must be expanded and encouraged amongst each and everyone involved. In practice, the cheerful giver (who gives in a goodwill the products of his/her work) is enriched with a blessed heart and thus loves to give, and loves to produce more and more to give. The actual enrichment of the soul with generosity comes from having enough of the blessings of the heart; the heart that believes in work to get abundant blessings, and grace in the form that can be given away to people in need. The apostle in verse 13 addresses this that in any situations, the reality of serving God is shown by working for others. Της δοκιμῆς της

⁴⁸You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you.

διακονίας ταυτης δοξαζοντες τον θεον(the evidence of the service (is) when having glorified God). It is a matter of showing proof of obedience by submission and commitment to contribute through sharing and giving. This reflects an enclosed trust within the giver and the receiver. There is a fellowship with the Spirit that inspires not just the one showing proofs but inter-changing of prayers and heart felt feelings with the beneficiary. Now Paul is leading the giving and sharing to the concept of offerings as practice in the act of worship to God. I agree with Witherington by stating that there is a notion of public worship, but that was after all the ordeal of producing the charity to give and share. Verse 14 clarifies Paul's experience about being motivated by fruitfulness of good harvest; *επι ποθουν των υμας δια την υπερ βαλλουσαν χαριν του θεου* (longing for you because of the surpassing grace of God). The giver; not under compulsion and distress does not bother having something in return, but believes in his bountiful sowing of the blessings of God. The more he sows the more God blesses him, and the more he/she has to give away. The reality of the giving-receiving process is that if the giver is filled with joyful inspiration the receiver responds with joyful thanksgivings. Paul in this case is creating a good rapport in the Christians in Corinth and the brethren in Jerusalem; others in the regions of Asia Minor are included in the network.

(9:15) Thanksgivings

After all that we have done, we give credit to God as is normally done to the first fruits of the field as thanksgiving offerings. *Χαρις τω θεω* (Grace be to God) is why humans come to forget all about the hard laboring and hard works on the field when everything is subdued into the thanksgiving heart and faithful soul *τη ανεκδιη γη τω αυτου δωρεα* (of His (God's) indescribable gift). The apostle speaks here about the purity of the faithful soul that does not count works, no matter how much when it comes

to think that everything is owed to God. So to Paul, the nature of utilizing God's grace involves commitment to doing generous works. To some extent χάρις may be described beyond grace as a favorable attitude showing goodwill. Whatever the cause is, Paul has ended up the phrase at where it started; τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ (8:1). It denotes an act of human worship with thanksgiving soul, which is freed to working out proof of his/her love to God by giving for others. (Human response to God's Grace)

Repetitive-progression texture;

The repetitive-progression texture is present in verse 6;

‘...the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,

...the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully’.

The repetitive-progression feature of the statement represents a pattern in the following basic ways: (i) the two antithetical verbs ‘sow’ and ‘reap’ repeat in a sequence in both lines; (ii) the two contrary adverbs ‘sparingly’ and ‘bountifully’ repeat sequentially twice in each line to describe ‘sow and reap’ respectively; (iii) the repetitive pattern reveals the progression of argument from a lesser quantity (*sparingly*) in line one to more (*bountifully*) in line two. This pattern presupposes an imagination about Paul being pessimistic about the sower who sows and reaps sparingly. It brings to light therefore the optimistic side of the sequence about the sower who sows and reaps bountifully. In the repetitive sequence, both lines present σπείρω – (sow) in participle present; (*while sowing*), while both lines present θερίσει – (reap) in the future; (*will reap*). The emphatic mood is pointing to the future outcome, whether the sower chooses to reap less or more. In the situation with such obligation, Paul has confidence over his beloved children that they would deliver his appeal to gain blessings. Thus they will attempt to sow as much as they can in order to gain more blessings. The underlying emphasis in the repetitive-progression is ‘*what’s next*’ for the sower which is the present

time – the sowing, which reaps blessings. That is everybody will be eager to reap more than less.

Inter-Texture Analysis

This section focuses on the cross-referencing of other texts which were written in totally different contexts and time. It will attempt to identify the different worlds of the recited text as well as the author and the intended readers. The different encoded worlds are subjective to their respective traditions and routinely livings. In this passage 2 Cor. 9:6-15, there is a concept of intertextuality⁴⁹ involved; a recitation from the Old Testament, that Paul speaks the metaphor of the harvest; ‘sowing and reaping’ with the quote from Psalm 112:9; which also appears to be mentioned in Proverbs 11:24-25. There is the tradition that unveils the original context of God’s relation to his people the Israelites. God is righteous, and his righteousness endures forever; the Israelites fear this. This will be detailed later in the Exegesis section.

Recitation of Psalms 112:9

Ps 112:9; They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever;

2Cor 9:9, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

This recites the Psalmist’s suggestions about a rich but righteous person who gives for the poor. Freely distributing conveys an unrestricted but frequent giving. Indeed giving is an indication of a good relation between a person and God that by doing good work, a person renders a service to God. (Leviticus 25:36). This traditional ritual of the Old Testament signifies the compassionate sharing amongst the people with

⁴⁹Vernon K Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse; Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 30.

respect to their obedience and service to God. But Paul is aware of the rhetorical background of the Corinthians with respect to the Graeco-Roman (*Hellenistic*) world. Waltke and Houston state in their book; *The Psalms as Christian Worship*, the present form of the Psalms we now have is an organized collections of psalms from the pre-exilic and exilic period which were put together after the exile⁵⁰. Speaking of the post-exilic period is the time when the Greek; under the rule of Alexander the Great conquered the world and took over the Persians. The Greek language and culture was famous during that time and was adopted rapidly throughout the entire empire. Thus it is possible that the Corinthians related to the social settings and historical background of the Psalms. They knew the liberal feeling of both the psalms and the Jews in the midst of their return from exile. But despite the situation, they never lost heart in retaining their traditions and cultures of worshipping and making offerings to their God - the Righteous one who endures forever.

For the Corinthians to partake in that righteousness of God, they had to conceptually buy-into this ancient tradition of the Israelites. As the Psalm states; both God and people who fear him; their righteousness endure forever. Paul recites the same notion in a stepwise description; in verse 9; ἡ δικαιοσύνη—the righteousness, v10; τῆς δικαιοσύνης ὑμῶν—the righteousness of you. It follows on the good heart that gives joyfully, which is now referred to as the ‘righteousness’ of the heart. The social setting of ancient Israel in their relation to God is perceived here, thus if the Corinthians are keen to give and offer, they engage themselves to the righteousness of God’s people. This imagery puts humans in the same position with God, as the highest honour humans could ever obtain. Generally speaking from the Christians view that no one is righteous

⁵⁰Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston, *The Psalms as Christian Worship: A historical commentary*. (Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010), 22.

except God, however, Paul has proof from the scripture that humans indeed can be righteous; given that his love is like the love of God. Thus the social relation in the community where human has succeeded the highest honour is portrayed in this recitation.

The recitation therefore reinforces this mutual relationship not only of the person and God, but a person to another person. Through this communal relationship, both persons pay tribute to God, and Paul emphasizes that both persons recognize the ‘giving’ proceeding as thanksgiving for the grace. The tradition of the ancient Mediterranean⁵¹ is reinforced here by Paul, while bringing up the agrarian tradition of the Israelites whereby the landowner gives offerings to the Lord and at certain time; the sabbatical year (Lev 25:4), the excess products of the field is left for the people in need.

The practicality of the sharing in grace is to benefit the needy, as in the tradition of the sabbatical year. Thus the Corinthians in their very different context donot see a field of grains or wheat, so that somebody in need might come to get a share in due time. Instead they have been given another typical situation of the poor brethren who are in need at the church in Jerusalem. Thus they need a righteous heart, so they would give in goodwill, and that by any means they will imitate the life of their apostolic father, Paul.

Recitation of Proverbs 11:25

Pro 11:25; A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water.

2Cor 9:11, You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us;

⁵¹Stephen Joubert. “Religious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ.” *Neotestamentica*, Vol. 33. No. 1 (1999): 79.

It is quoted in (9:11) that *'you will be enriched in every way for your generosity...'* which is stated in Proverbs. In the text (Proverb), the writer proclaims that Wisdom's good works gain satisfaction. Here we look at the 'work-in equals to work-out' natural actions of things in nature. Freely giving of generous gift as an act of love in heart certainly enriches the heart in return with more good feelings. This is wisdom gaining more strength and more wisdom, leaving the least chance or nothing at all for the unwise discriminations of the heart.

Paul recites this powerful belief within the wisdom writings about giving away to regain and to refresh with newest power of mind and feelings. With his understanding about the high knowledge of Corinthians about philosophy, he also influences the mind of the philosopher. He brings in the wisdom saying of the proverbs to attract the philosophical beliefs so that they cooperate and put a trust on one another. Thus Paul implies the rhetoric here that although he is letting the Corinthians think about the recitation, he is also sharing with them the words from the wisdom writings that whoever does not listen is not wise.

Social and Cultural Texture Analysis

The background settings of both the author and the intended readers of any text plays an important role in shaping a text. Paul's understanding of the social and cultural values of Corinth in first-century Mediterranean world is also vital when he wrote his second letter as they all influenced his writings. At this point, the rhetorical style that Paul exploits to code the social and culture values in 2 Cor. 9:6-15 will be analysed such as, honour and shame and patron-client.

Honour and Shame

It appears in the passage that Paul uses the rhetoric of ‘honour and shame’ to enforce his message like he is targeting everybody to consider being honoured in their society. It’s a language of persuasiveness but an orientation of people to take up values in their social and cultural background. Indeed the focus of this thesis is to make meanings of the rhetoric with regards to Paul’s intention to be honoured out of doing good works. The obvious illustration of honour and shame is in verses 2 – 5. The threats of being shamed “...if some Macedonians... find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated...” This according to Malina, Paul boasts to the Macedonians about the Corinthians that they have long been ready with their collection for a year.⁵² Thus Paul sends some brothers ahead of him to confirm that they are ready, otherwise he would be shamed. In saying this, he (Paul) is defending his honour.⁵³ Thus, Social and Culture texture will be explored to portray that gaining honour can be acquired or ascribed through doing hard but good works.

The Corinthians’ community during Paul’s times was dominated by their crucial position in the Graeco-Roman world as the third most important city⁵⁴. It means these Corinthians’ social and cultural values in the Graeco-Roman world influenced the letters of Paul; (1 and 2 Corinthians) and thus are reflected inside the text. For this thesis, I will focus only on the essential values of ‘honour and shame’ within the social and cultural texture.

⁵² Bruce J. Malina and John Pilch, *Social-science commentary on the Letters of Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 185.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ R Kent Hughes, *Preaching the Word. 2 Corinthians; Power in Weakness*. (Illinois: Crossway Books, 2006), 13.

I think that the use of the dialectic discourse throughout the text upholds the concepts of honour and shame behind Paul's message about giving for the saints in Jerusalem. As in verse 6:

*The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,
and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

The metaphorical imagery here presents two people; first is the one who sows sparingly and thus reaps so; and the second one is the one who sows bountifully and ends up also reaping bountifully. If this is the case in the community, their social relation is determined by their earnings thus the one with more earnings is honoured while the other one is shamed. It seems in this opening verse of the concluding section that the point has been revealed and finalised. Although the following verses contain more 'honour and shame' imageries, they are supportive illustrations to the major point above:

*Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly
or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. (v.7)*

The subject is clear that 'each of the Corinthians' *must* do (freewill giving) *not* because of the outside push to do it. There is not much determination of a pointer whether to be shame or to be honour, unless the marker at the ending; 'for God loves a cheerfully giver' which identifies the honour, whom are cheerful giver because they are in God's delight. It means that inside the church community, the rest, whom are not cheerful givers, would be shame.

Patron-Client

Social scientific studies have asserted that the Patron-Client system existed as one of the most dominant relationships in which people in Ancient Mediterranean cultures

interacted especially the elite and the non-elite.⁵⁵ Carl Lande offers the following definition which highlights the key features of this system in this socio-cultural model:

A patron-client relationship is a vertical dyadic alliance i.e. an alliance between two persons of unequal status, power or resources each of whom finds it useful to have as an ally someone superior or inferior to himself (Landé 1977, 20).⁵⁶

The patron is at the top of the vertical alliance (the one holding the power and leverage) with the social, economic, political or religious means which a client needs. The client is at the bottom of the vertical alliance, who offers loyalty in service upholding the honour of the patron. In other patron-client dealings, a mediator known as the broker, acts as the middle-man and mediates between the two.

Does Paul show a clear understanding of patronage in his letter, which can also support the idea of an analogy with divine patronage, or are the webs of patron-client relationships more negative, exploitative and fragile?

The patronage relationship system in Paul's ministry is of great importance to Paul's problems dealing with the Corinthians. As a sub-system of Honour and Shame, it is evident from the text that Paul's role may be better understood through the use of the term "broker". "Each of you must give as you have made up our mindfor God loves a cheerful giver" (v.7). It is not Paul's instructions but God who favours such a cheerful service. The basis is that in bringing the Corinthians into the favour of God – Paul's own Patron - he has been forced into becoming a patron to the Corinthians, and therefore must be accorded the honour and respect he deserves for taking on the role. In v.8 Paul informs the Corinthians on behalf of God that He is able to provide abundant blessings which they will continue to be blessed with if they continue to share with

⁵⁵ David A Bidnell, "A Cultural-Literary Reading of Luke's Parables." (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2011), 181.

⁵⁶ Carl H Lande, "The Dyadic Basis of Clientelism." 13-37. In *Friends, Followers and Factions: A Reader in Political Clientelism*, edited by S. W. Schmidt. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1977.

others abundantly in their service to God. In the Greco-Roman context, the respect and honour accorded to such service comes not just from being God's agent but also God's "broker" (or mediator)-one whose benefaction is access to a great patron. "He who supplies seed to the sower...will multiply your seed for sowing...and increase the harvest of..." (v.10) and more. "you will be enriched in every way" (v.11).

To glorify God is to give honour and may be considered as the reward from the clients' work or service to Him. The patron's needs are fulfilled in that "the needs of the saints have been supplied, and "thanksgiving" and "glorify God by your obedience" "while they long for you and pray for you because of the Grace of God he has given you" (v.14).

Chapter 3: Reflection - The Text and the Samoan Context

This chapter is the hermeneutical reflection of 2 Corinthians 9: 6-15. The intention here is to juxtapose the analysis of the text with my response using my hermeneutic the '*Tautua*' in the CCCS context. How does my context as a Samoan shape my understanding of the text in light of *Tautua*? Does the cultural concept of *Tautua* engage and enlighten the Samoan reader concerning Paul's argument as discerned from the exegetical analysis of Chapter 2? The hope of this chapter is that the outcome of this exercise will inform my context as an interpreter to be able to draw some conclusions for the issues dealt within this thesis.

The Issue with Cross-Cultural Interpretation

The ultimate goal of this study as indicated at the beginning of this thesis, is to interpret Paul's discourse in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 in its original contexts: the worlds 'encoded-in-the text' and the events outside of the text from the New Testament. The purpose is to bring to light the meaning(s) of the text in first-century Mediterranean culture and context, which could perhaps bridge the gaps between the text and the context of the Samoan interpreter.

To be able to make a connection between these contexts, I as an interpreter am weary of another issue in that differences exist between the cultural backgrounds of the two contexts – the text and the interpreter.

The innertexture analysis allowed the exegesis to explore how the text used relationships among word-phrase and narrational patterns that produced argumentative and aesthetic patterns in texts- such as word structures, devices, contraries, and modes

of text.⁵⁷ In exploring the innertexture, a progressive texture was revealed in 2 Cor. 9:6-15 in Paul's use of repetitive words in *sow sparingly* and *reap sparingly*; *sows bountifully* and *reap bountifully* built up Paul's rhetoric and culminated in a decisive ultimatum, '*God loves a cheerful giver*' which revealed giving as a voluntary/inspired offering according to Paul's teachings.⁵⁸ The working imageries described the means by which these donations were to be achieved – one must work and give bountifully.

In response to the questions asked in the intertexture analysis, it was found that the use of scriptural recitation indicated Paul's awareness of the Jew-Gentile issues about justification whether in faith or the law as in the book of Romans 3 and 1 Corinthians. The issues regarding circumcision and food offered to idols and Sabbath, and the Jews view that gentiles must observe the Jewish laws to be justified. Using the Wisdom writings which explained the logic and rewards of giving through hard and generous work, a gentile can identify with these Jewish traditions (agrarian imagery) and giving water as a precious element in the life of any human, will certainly appeal to all persons. Especially when the rewards identified involve being blessed with the righteousness of God. For the Corinth Christians, this is the affirmation of the grace of their newly found God.

In the social and cultural texture analysis, the honour and shame being the dominant values in first century Mediterranean societies (including Jewish and Greco-Roman) placed honour as the greatest and noblest thing to give to the gods. The Greek philosopher Aristotle states honour as the "greatest," "noblest" thing that man can give to the gods:

⁵⁷Vernon K Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse; Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 7.

⁵⁸ "Progressive texture resides in sequences (progressions) of words and phrases throughout the unit." See Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 9.

Now the greatest external good we should assume to be the thing which we offer as a tribute to the gods, and which is most coveted by men of high station, and is the prize awarded for the noblest deeds; and such a thing is honour, for honour is clearly the greatest of external goods. Therefore the great-souled man is he who has the right disposition in relation to honours and disgraces[...]since it is honour above all else that great men claim and deserve⁵⁹

Paul's use of honour and shame shows his consciousness of these social and cultural values which influenced how people behaved and related to others in first century Mediterranean communities and Corinth was no exception. Boasting about the Corinthians to the Macedonians and then telling the Corinthians about it provoked competition for honour. No one wants to fail in the eyes of their society and their God. Paul himself in this process ensured his own honour was upheld in the eyes of those who have trusted him when the church in Corinth was divided amongst Paul and the other preachers as in 1 Corinthians. The Corinthians "glorify" God which according to Malina and Pilch, was giving honour to God by doing something visible or work or activity.⁶⁰ They were aware that by serving the Christians in Jerusalem, they too were giving honour to God.

In addition, Paul was also seen as the broker in the patron-client relationship between God and the early church (in this case the Corinthians and Macedonians). Through instigating the donations he enticed people in the church to provide (work) for this as God has given them through his grace. In prompting the "others" to pray for the donors Paul acted on behalf of the Corinthians and the Macedonians in obtaining that reward for them.

⁵⁹ Jerome H Neyrey, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew*. (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 5.

⁶⁰ Bruce J. Malina and John Pilch, *Social-science commentary on the Letters of Paul*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 176.

My understanding of the *tautua* concept in Samoa and its application to my church context is analysed here, to make relevant meaning in my context. First I will explain the different features of *tautua* used in this application then juxtapose them with the 2 Cor. 9: 6-15 analysis for meaningful application.

‘*Tautua*’ as the hermeneutical lens

The word *Tautua* (as a noun) may be simply defined as service, and the *person* who is doing the service; who is the heir to the master (*matai*) is also called the *Tautua*. However it is more extensive when *tautua* as the concept is to be specified to its various conceptual categories depending on time and location. The concept of *Tautua* is to be definitely distinguished from that of the servant that *it* is an act of dignity, portrayed with fullness of offerings to the *Matai* by the *suli* (heir), whom is always the son (blood related). Hence the *tautua* (service) is considered dignified in particular for the *suli* in order to serve for both the *Matai*’s family and village needs. Vaitusi Nofoaiga highlights *tautua*⁶¹ as part of the identity of not just the household, but the Samoan culture as well. It signifies a mutual faithfulness of the relationship both from the *Tautua-to-Matai* and vice versa.

The *tautua* (service) is not only the ordinary obligations on a daily basis, but a submission of the *suli*’s whole being in order to serve the *matai* with wholeness of body, spirit and life. The *matai*’s livelihood is almost entirely dependent upon the trustworthiness of the *Tautua*. In this sense, not everyone is deemed trustworthy for the roles of the *Tautua*, but the heirs to the *matai*’s sons and the household (*auaiga*). The *tautua* is to be carried out with total commitment of heart so that it is done to its utmost act. In its extremity, the *tautua* is categorised into the following;

⁶¹Vaitusi Nofoaiga, “Towards a Samoan postcolonial reading of discipleship in the Matthean gospel” (PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2014), 37.

The *tautuatuavae* discerns its roles as ‘*limamavae*’, meaning the Tautua- (the heir), is but the ‘hands and legs’ for the Matai. Whenever the matai needs something, nothing but the action of *lima* (hands) and *vae* (legs) from the *Tautua*. The *Tautua* knows this by heart⁶², and the *matai* understands it from experience; he himself was once a trustworthy *Tautua*, the reason why he gained such bestowal of the title; hence the Samoan saying, “*Ole Ala ile Pule ole Tautua*” – ‘the pathway to become a master is first become a servant’. Anytime, anywhere, regardless of condition and time, the primary concern of the *Tautua* is to serve the matai.

The *tautua matavela* means in a literal sense; *mata* - eyes, *vela* - heated up and in some context it means cooked (in terms of food). It intends the hardship of the service, as well as the commitment of the *Tautua*. However it implies the concern in the *Tautua* about providing the best of the feast for the *matai*, no matter what, even facing the hotness of the food processing. This speaks about the Samoan context of *umu* making (Samoan oven) which is not at all simple, but it acquires experience. It denotes full submission but reveal love of the person, despite the *Tautua*, but he is the real son, the heir to the father, the *matai*.

Tautuatoto (blood) signifies another extreme of the service that it prevents the *matai* from rivalry even to the point of blood shedding and death. It means the entire life of the *matai* is in the hands of the *Tautua*. It may be referred to as the wholeness offering including the whole life, but not as a means of a suicidal act. In this case it reveals the messianic saving mission of Jesus Christ to the world.

As an heir to the *matai*, the *tautua* is provided by the *suli* with fullness of honesty and love, while the *matai* on the other hand appreciates the service with fullness of trust and faithfulness. At this point, the *matai* is satisfied and admitted saying ‘*ole ala ile*

⁶²Ibid.,39.

pule ole tautua’; It denotes the fact that; the hard work is embraced and that the same imagery of ‘sowing in bountiful and harvest in bountiful’ 2Cor 9:6 is implied.

***Tautua* as Offerings for the church**

From the traditional Samoan context to the church, Samoans continue to carry the same understanding with them in order to serve God; the utmost *matai* (Lord) of human kinds. While they still *tautua* (serve) their family *matai*, they in fact submit themselves also to *tautua* Christ since they are heirs (Romans 8:17) through Him. The submission of the Christians as heirs of Christ to actively perform the *tautua* can be categorised but not limited to the following;

***Tautua* as an intrinsic inspiration**

This category as a hermeneutical lens focuses on why a person commits his life to fully provide the *tautua* for the church, while leaving other vows for later times. Through this, questions based on the text will point to the *Tautua* concept and their good works. How do features in the narrative of the text reveal the ‘world encoded in the text’ with respect to the commitment sense of service providence in the *Tautua* concept? Who are the characters in the text, and how do they interact through works in the church community? How does this interaction as a strong tie strengthen faith while building up the church as a community?

This inspiration is comprehended out of verse 6; ‘σπείρων ἐπ’ εὐλογίαις— sow bountifully. The imagery of sowing plentiful seeds on the field is one feature of an inspired worker to plant more than he needs so that at harvest, there is an excess for more people. This is typical to social exchange of gifts or services in the ancient

Graeco-Roman interaction world according to Joubert⁶³. It is an inner feeling of a faithful soul but it has to be worked out so that the inspiration becomes a reality. Joubert discusses that the givers in the exchange interaction are not concerned about what they receive but they desire to acquire more receivers of their services. The concept of *tautua* is revealed in both this reciprocity system as well as Paul's words; *sow bountifully* for the sake of having more than sufficient. Sufficiency is assurance by the heir (service provider) of providing the best of the service and on the other hand the trust in the sight of the Matai for being adequately served.

Thus the inspiring mood builds in-between the heir and the *Matai*. I put Joubert's⁶⁴ comments on this passage in line with the *tautua* in the community. According to Joubert, the contributions of the Corinthians should correspond with their inner commitment⁶⁵. It should not be under fear of Paul's pursuit but from the 'right inner orientation' that inspires the Corinth Christians to relate themselves to the brothers in Jerusalem. The *tautua* concept within the church expands this role by doing countless offerings to support people who are in need; not in order to receive something in return, but a show of a confident heart by having sufficient to give away. The first and foremost example is when the village church minister through the *Osi ga Feagaiga* system⁶⁶ is respectfully welcomed into the village congregation and would depend (for every and for all of life needs) on the church members; through their *tautua* in the church. He is a person in need, which places him (and everybody else in his household) in the position

⁶³Stephan Joubert. "Religious reciprocity in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15: Generosity and gratitude as legitimate responses to the χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ." *Neotestamentica* Vol. 33, No. 1 (1999): 79.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁶The village church select by ballot vote for their church minister then they arrange for a certain day to commence by agreement (*Osi leFeagaiga*). The minister then becomes the *Faafeagaiga* by mutual highly respected agreement that the church (congregation) and the *Faafeagaiga* will both abide set principles.

of the *matai* (served party) in the *Tautua* concept. This extension in scope of the *tautua* concept in the church qualifies anyone else whether family member, or church member, or whoever is in need to share in the service (*tautua*) offered by the church *tautua*. It is through this act of unrestricted provisions for the *foreigner* (but at the highest rank in the Samoan Community- the *Faafeagaiga*) whereby members of the church prioritise God in their *tautua*. The *Faafeagaiga* represents the will of God in the church and in the village communities, and since each member becomes heir to God through Christ, the ultimate *Matai* therefore is the Lord, God.

In this sense there is neither a conversion nor depreciation in the concept of traditional *tautua*, the extremities in its spatial relationship between the *Matai*-to-heir and vice versa, is still at its utmost trustworthiness. However the scenario shifts the proceedings toward the *Faafeagaiga* (the church minister) to support all his ministerial and living needs. The perspective respects non-ethnocentric in an understanding that Paul and Corinth did not have any idea about the *tautua* concept. However they interacted in a need for provisions to be fulfilled for the *saints*, -the term Paul uses in this letter to call the needy in Jerusalem. In the core of the *tautua* concept, these provisions inversely verify the stability of the ministry; from the view that eagerness intensifies while providing for the *Faafeagaiga* to become well equipped with the right requirements of the ministry. Thus viewing from either level the eagerness igniting inspiration comes from the internal rightful choice that is apprehensive of mission success rather than mission progress. The real time practice in this experience lay in the hands of the members of the church to decide whether the needs for the ministry are satisfied and not how much they have given up to do it. The motivation though intrinsic, it is an inherited behaviour through observation and practice from generation to generation. The reality is, the heir (*tautua*) does not seek to gain any rewards from the

matai, except for the verbal ‘blessings’ given out frequently after every service. Not until the *matai* reaches old age and passes away, then the heir is bestowed with the *matai* title, where he will be appointed a *tautua* for himself; (whom he is his son(s)) to provide for him the same *tautua*. It is because of this cyclic nature of the concept that inspires the *tautua* to consider putting into his/her service their ultimate best, so that at the time he/she takes over the position of *matai*, that the *tautua* will be just as trustworthy and hardworking as he/she was to his/her father (*matai*) as well.

It is shown in verse 7 προήρηται τῇ καρδίᾳ he/she himself/herself decides... not by force or under pressure, but believing in doing good works for others... ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην α ‘cheerful giver’. Paul shifts the mood from an inspiring provider of service to consider a spatial relation between the different traditions of the Corinthians and the Jews. The apostle is clear that the human mind is affected by traditions, thus experience in doing good works, regardless of space and culture could connect the disconnection. In the sight of the heir whether or not, the served party acknowledges the giver, the service is not restricted by any means. The heir is faithful to what he/she does, and believes in oneself that the work done is the real time practice of an inner being. It is the inner being that God sees δοῦτην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός, which is revealed by the cheerfully done good works. Although Paul does not praise the cheerful giver for the work done, he intends an allusion to a message that work done is not the subject, otherwise the giver boasts about what has been done.

My experience both as a *tautua* (service provider) and as an observant of the *tautua* concept, this desire in Paul is realized. Both faith and cheerfulness come from the inner being but faith by Paul does not count works. However with the *tautua* concept, there is a buildup of trust and faith in the exchange of service and blessings between the *tautua* and the *matai*. This is developed from the *tautua*’s understanding

that his father (*matai*) has been through the hardship of the process and all its maneuvers. For this ideological inference of the *tautua* process, we learn from Paul's intent that boasting is irrelevant anywhere in the *tautua* concept. It is a person's turn on 'the wheel of chance' where the wheel turns only once for each person. At everyone's turn, the heir is either inspired from inside to retain good repetition of the wheel, or an observation of a good act of *tautua* in a different person to his *matai*. There is merely no boasting in the heir, because there is absolutely no praising from the *matai*. Perhaps there is an internal affinity that attracts the two hearts and the two souls (*matai* and heir) in their relationship in the *tautua* concept. Such a desirable force binds together the relationship in a very stable manner that despite the hardship of the *tautua* at its extremities, the heir admits himself to be incomparable to his father's (previous) turn. Paul does not encourage any Christian to praise oneself for any work done. More or less, human work could never at any point be comparable to the ultimate work of God through our Savior on the Cross. This is the hope in all Christians' lives; not the work which was done by Christ in his moral life until He got to the Cross, but the service He has offered to His Father that saves us – the Salvation. With Paul then, humans embrace this grace by giving and sharing in free will. Human free will would be joyful not for how they give and share but indeed if the will of the *Matai* is fulfilled with their service through serving others.

In viewing the allusion in 2 Cor. 9:9-10 to Psalms 112:9 and Proverbs 22:9 Paul is reciting two of the main features of ancient Israel to the Corinthians context; *righteousness* and *poor*. Israel lived under covenantal belief of their God as sovereign and righteous, that his righteousness is 'equality' to every person, rich or poor. Constantly in the early lives of Israel, God showed righteousness for the poor and proclaimed concerns for them in order to be treated fairly (Lev 23:22). Psalms 112

expands that whoever fears the Lord is righteous, which is reconstructed in the Proverbs that fearing God is to be generous (as God to the poor) by sharing with the poor. Thus the psalmist encourages us to be as righteous as God (allusively) by loving the poor so that the *righteous* (both God and the person) endures forever. More interestingly in the Proverbs is the restructuring of the idea that '*the generous are blessed*'. All characteristics are attributes of God, righteousness and generous. The attributes manifest the working God that He is generous and righteous in his action to human kind, especially to the poor who are in need of life and other obligations. The Intertextual significance of this recitation plays a vital relevancy in the different contexts of Corinth and the CCCS Magiagi *tautua*. As simple as possible Paul combines the psalm and the wisdom writing as a pursuit for other human beings (non-Israelites) that they too have a chance to become righteous, and thus to endure for eternity. That is to be generous, and share with the poor, so that they not only endure forever, but also that they have been blessings.

The generous sharing is traditional to the CCCS good works made in the church through its various charitable donations; such as *Taulaga* (offerings), *Atinae* (donations for church development), *Alofa* (donation in support of the church minister) and much more including outside of the church. There are charities for the needy; tsunami victims, flooding and all disasters sufferers, SVSG (Samoa Victim Support Group), Mapuifagalele (elder communities), Ola-toe-Fuataina, Oloamanu, the list goes on. All these good works are of equal values to those which Paul was encouraging the Corinthians to do. It is not a matter of justifying the Christians, but an act of sharing God's unrestricted grace.

For Paul's mission to include the gentiles under God's joy about habitual giving, the Corinthians are encouraged to follow this typical living principle. Not because we

need to repay any reward, but Paul illuminates his belief as he shared to other Christians; (Eph 2:10) that we are God's workmanships through the new creation by Christ. There is already an abundance of grace, and that the Corinthians need to be generous and work their way to share it with the poor. In verse 8; *πάντα χάριν περισσεύσαι* - there would always be more than enough (of God's grace), is an indication of the blessed generous person (righteous) *περισσεύτης εἰς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν*- you may have more than enough as result of all good work; it denotes that to be generous, and to be righteous, sharing is an act of good will doing good works, which would result in more and more blessings. Paul really does not abandon work nor does he undervalue any struggle with a desire to accomplish a good work. However he does not expressly make it a subject of any discussion. In the relationship of the *matai* and heir, the *tautua* is silent, (*tautua-le-leoa* service without a voice), but the work is muted therein. Not because the *tautua* is ignored or insufficient, but the blessing is bestowed unspoken in the link of the two affinitive souls. Moreover, so are the prayers of the *Faafegaiga* to bless the church members for the good works, and their free-will offerings are accepted by God. The willingness of the soul initiates generous works, which is most favourable in the sight of God. In the context of Corinth, the kindness of the heart closes the gap between the Corinthians and the Jews. The same experience occurs within the relationship in the *tautua* concept. This inter-relationship amongst the generous sharing in Christians is shown in verse 11; *δι' ἡμῶν εὐχαριστίαν τῷ θεῷ* - thanksgiving to God through us. Paul is careful not to create some segregational thinking with the Corinthians from the Jews thus he speaks inclusively *δι' ἡμῶν* – (through us); to soothe any discouragement.

My reading of Paul's message to the Corinthians from the perspective of the *Tautua* concept is that he speaks of himself as heir in Christ, leading the *Tautua* of his

household. That is his message regarding offerings suits appropriately if it were given to the CCCS readers; people who work and serve the church. Agriculture is not new to the Samoan communities, but it is one of the features attributed to the *Good Tautua*⁶⁷. An *aiga* (family) with good agricultural situation is an indication of an *aiga* having a good *Tautua*. While the *Tautua* mainly concerns the provision of needs and wants to fulfil the *matai*'s requirements, he also at the same time steadily incurs self-confidence within him/herself. There is no point in saying that 'I will serve you master', when there are no deeds performed to serve the master. It is pointless to declare one's stimulating heart if one cannot offer the most necessary service to the need of the master.

Tautua is a liable offering

This next category as a hermeneutical lens is about a notion in the church where a *Tautua* feels responsible of him/herself. This concept where church members see the work as the practice which they are liable for, otherwise no one else is and no one either would be shown to have a good will in the sight of God. The *Tautua* lives by Christ's Will (through Salvation) and not his own, thus he offers back sacrifice; as fruits from good works of that sacrifice God has done. Works is not done as a matter of gaining a reward, but the right practice of service and proper acting of the sacrifice the *tautua* has to offer to a master.

Works as obligations are determinants of the degree of spiritual submission of the *Tautua*. It is the reality that challenges the working lives of the CCCS Magiagi members. The reality being, especially with the elderly, once visited by the *Asiasiga a le Faafeagaiga* (weekly visitation of the *Faafeagaiga* normally on the Saturdays) they

⁶⁷ This is referred to in the *Tautua* concept as the one being fully equipped with all relevant skills required to perform all phases of the *tautua*. Having being skilful means there is an abundance of agricultural yields, fishing produce, and more.

spare *all* (monies) they could get as a *meaalofa* (gift) for the *Faafeagaiga*. ‘*All they could get*’ meaning they don’t bother having anything for themselves or whether the family is in need. However, while they are not able to work, they are still liable as Christ’s servants to offer a sacrifice.

So the guiding questions are; ‘How are people in the text showing themselves to be servants of God through faith? What manifestations are there for people to sacrifice themselves with? Paul’s message turns around in v.11 so that all humans turn out to be receivers of God’s grace. At the end of all the generous works and all charitable acts demonstrated by the righteous hearts of humans, they turn out to be rich people by the generous act (2Cor 8:9) of Christ. Thus no matter what we have shared and given away, we lack nothing, hence no one owes us anything but we have relieved and added joy into another person’s soul. It is a matter of grounding ourselves to the same level (by rendering through good works) to come as one in unity and with thankful hearts to the ultimate *Matai* (God). In the context of the CCCS Magiagi *tautua* concept, it is now at the point where all, would gather in the church to give offerings to the Lord. The inspiration is still high, the *Faafeagaiga* whom is in need of one type of offering; *Alofa* (donation in support of the church minister) is inspired by the good works and blesses the church members. For the other offerings such as the *Taulaga*, the entire parish of normally eight to ten village churches get together with the same thanksgiving heart in the praise of the Lord, the ultimate *Matai*. The esteem of the *tautua* as an offering reaches its threshold of building up the church at the larger scale, which is the proof of overflow of thanksgivings to God for his abundant supplies by grace. Speaking humbly from experience, being righteous in the sight of God is incomparable to the righteousness the church member internally feels at the Might of God that empowered the work, not us. However that inner righteousness of God is not felt by others who

critique from outside, but blame the generous righteousness endorsed by God in a person for spiritual inspiration, as earthly works. The fact is, those brothers do not share the thanksgiving offerings, and do not bother to share with others in God's blessings.

This according to David A. deSilva in his book '*Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity*' is not pleasing to the inner person of the one who ignores being inspirational.⁶⁸ That means the person does not bother to take any position amongst others in the society, and thus live life the *simplest* possible way in the view of the society. Therefore they are not honouring their being members of the community with some expectations where they are liable for. This upholds the context of honour and shame when the member of the society chooses to be shamed and not honoured. It is a failure in the concept of *Tautua* and shame not just on the serving members, but the *matai* in his relation to others. Such disgrace in the family of the dishonoured *Tautua* causes desolation and leads to refraining themselves from the rest of the society. However it all starts from the fact that the family lacks the requirements they should have in time. This is, according to Paul, they have fallen to the pessimistic terminal of the scale since they were reluctant to sow more. They have sown less, so they reaped little and resulted in short supply of seeds. Thus they could not be able to harvest righteousness in their hearts which might have produced them with great generosity. In this case, Paul's message about producing thanksgiving to God is not fulfilled.

Such situation like this is the extreme of everyday practice of the *tautua* context. It's normal that the *Tautua* (persons) especially in the villages share between each other. Especially when one of them is quick to prepare and get all possible food ready, that person not only satisfies his respective *matai*, but would cater for his slower neighbour.

⁶⁸David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2000).

In this case, it becomes an honour and shame context because the one that provides for both *matais* at this time will be honoured with the blessings, while the slower one feels ashamed of himself.

Conclusion

This thesis set out from the beginning to use the socio-rhetorical methodology with focus on the inner-texture, inter-texture and social and cultural texture categories to carry out an analysis of '2 Corinthians 9:6-15' in order to obtain an appropriate background for reading and understanding the text and, ultimately, to form an interpretation based on the *Tautua* hermeneutic from a Samoan perspective.

This thesis has argued that Paul intended for the Christians in Corinth to understand that the Grace of God is only realized in how the person responds to God's will. In interpreting Paul's discourse from its original context using its inner-textures and inter-textures, and the social and cultural textures, it raises questions which contribute to the meaning of the text for the intended audience.

In analysing inter-texture it allows the cultural contexts to be in dialogue with the literary text, the cultural contexts enable the interpreter to be aware of anachronistic⁶⁹ and ethnocentric⁷⁰ treatments of the text. The use of the literary text serves as a means to assess the background used as a starting point for both the exegetical and hermeneutical reflection.

Paul's message in 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 has traditionally been interpreted as an encouragement to give to the poor. The emphasis has been on giving as an obligation perhaps due to the dominance of theologizing and the need to send a message for the

⁶⁹'a person or a thing that is chronologically out of place; *especially* : one from a former age that is incongruous in the present' (Taken from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/anachronism>) (Accessed on July 07, 2016 at 12.44 pm).

⁷⁰'characterized by or based on the attitude that one's own group is superior' (Taken from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ethnocentric>) (Accessed on July 07, 2016 at 12.48pm).

unity of the Christians – Gentiles and Jews in Asia Minor and Jerusalem - by its early interpreters. The shift in interpretation came with the change in methodological advances such as the social sciences which utilized the original social and cultural contexts of the worlds encoded within the texts. As evident in the innertexture analyses, Paul's message for both Macedonia to give (collection) for the saints in Jerusalem, is a call for action – to work, to give and give abundantly, with thanksgiving. To give more means to work more, as more blessings have been given them through the Grace of God. The comparison of the honour and shame, the patronage relations and the use of traditions to entice a message of action, affirms the point Paul was making that in order for the collection to come to fruition, the members must work and give freely for it is what God wills.

The insights from socio-rhetorical and social sciences has shed light as demonstrated through the socio-rhetorical approach, on this text's interpretation relates the values that were dominant and important to the thought forms of the societies and cultures (Jewish and Greco-Roman) within the biblical text.

In this regard, the values and norms of the *Tautua* in the CCCS Magiagi can be recognised. It has been identified by the socio-rhetorical reading that adoption of the Samoan culture of giving; (donations, gifting to the bereaved during funerals and at weddings etc) into the CCCS places the *Tautua* (church members) as clients to God through Christ. For them as heirs through Christ their submission to the *Tautua* concept means never relinquishing their *tautua* as clients as through their work (*tautua*), the *Matai* (God) is glorified.

The thought-forms obtained from the biblical text and those of the Samoan *Tautua* have some similarities and also differences. To do justice to both the text and the

Samoaan hermeneutic, would require further research of more time and space to realize more relevant features of socio-rhetorical criticism and perhaps other methodologies.

Appendix

Glossary

Aiga	<i>family</i>
Alofa	<i>literally means love; but it is used here as the concept of donations and weekly offerings (monetary) for the church minister</i>
Asiasiga a le Faafeagaiga	<i>asiasi means visit; asiasiga is the noun form which means visitation (a le) of/by the (Faafeagaiga) the church minister.</i>
Atinae	<i>another form of donations and weekly offerings for the general matters and developments of the church</i>
Faafeagaiga	<i>the church minister/the pastor</i>
Mapuifagalele	<i>the place where the Catholic Church has offered as the home for the elderly</i>
Matai	<i>chiefly title holder of the family</i>
Meaalofa	<i>gifts: in monetary form, materials and food, etc</i>
Ola-toe-Fuataina	<i>name of the Samoa national prison;</i>
Ole Alaile Pule ole Tautua	<i>A Samoan saying: the pathway to rule is through service</i>
Oloamanu	<i>name of the Samoa juvenile prison</i>
Osiga-feagaiga	<i>a service to seal a covenant between the church parish with their newly appointed minister/pastor</i>
Suli	<i>an heir / heiress</i>
Taulaga	<i>monetary weekly to annual donations which the church (CCCS) collect for funding of all its costs</i>

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