

**“RE-VISITING PAUL AND THE LAW IN THE EPISTLE
TO THE GALATIANS IN LIGHT OF LAW IN SOCIETY”**

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of Malua Theological College
Apia, Samoa

In Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Bachelor of Divinity
with
Honours**

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2019

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ABSTRACT

The law has great significance in today's society as it serves many purposes and functions including serving as a guide to assist citizens on how they should conduct themselves within society, as well as providing knowledge as to what is acceptable behaviour, and what is not. Paul, an expert of the law recognised the importance of religious laws as well as laws which governed society in his time. The dilemma in which Paul found himself facing in light of his letter to the Galatians was finding a way to convince the people of Galatia that salvation came through having faith in Christ, not through their deeds. This involved Paul having to explain the function and faults of the law versus salvation by faith which came through the promise made to Abraham. The idea of this thesis is to re-visit Paul and his interpretation of the law in light of law in today's society. The focus of the thesis is on whether Paul's interpretation of the law can help provide an answer to issues of law which exist in today's society, such as the Samoa Christian society.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to my younger brothers, La'auli Anson Kiwi Seiuli, and Musika Glenn

Manutai. Rest in Love!

and

*also to my uncle Mulipola Faiaoga and aunties Malie Lam and Temukisa Fa'afua who
were called home by God during my time here in Malua.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give thanks and praise to God, who has blessed me with the guidance, strength, and patience to complete this thesis. I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude and thanks to my supervisor Reverend Dr. Vaitusi Nofoaiga, whose ideas, patience, and words of advice led to the development and completion of this thesis. I would also like to acknowledge the love and support of Reverend Elder Anatu Reupena and wife Mataina, as well as my Congregational family in Hamilton, New Zealand. Thank you also to Reverend Savelio Ah Colt and wife Taramati, as well as Reverend Eroni Sitanilei and wife Litia, together with the Congregational Christian Church in Malie. Thank you to my uncle, the retired Reverend Elder Kerisiano Soti and aunty Laumata for your prayers and support during my time here in Malua. Thank you also to my brother Pastor Dr. Byron Seiuli for taking the time to proofread and provide feedback on this thesis. I would also like to convey my sincere thank you to Reverend Dr. Alesana Pala'amo and wife Lemau, my spiritual parents here in Malua, as well as my au-aiga, for their support and encouragement. I would like to thank the principal of Malua Theological College, Reverend Ma'afala Limā, as well as the teaching staff for their words of advice and encouragement which has helped shape this thesis paper. Thank you also to my fellow students as well as my aiga nofotoatasi (single student's family) for their support and advice.

Last but not least, I owe the greatest gratitude to my parents, Seiuli Leiatuaalesā Mulipola Taulapapa Tu'ilaepa Alualu II and Sifusi Soti Seiuli, as well as my wife Velia Seiuli, and also my brothers and sisters and extended family. Thank you for your love, prayers, advice, and support throughout my four years of studying in Malua which has helped me in both the good and challenging times. FA'AFETAI.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis stirred several key thoughts that have caused me to revisit my previous training in law to examine its application within religious societies like Samoa. The first thought is: “How might my understanding of Biblical Law such as the 10 Commandments and Mosaic Law reconcile or bridge the divide between Samoan churches (i.e., Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) and the State (i.e., Samoa government).¹ Secondly, is there space for an understanding to help recognise shared roles that support those who hold a Christian worldview?” While these questions may appear ambitious, especially when the power to make statutory laws is government driven, it must be noted that the Church (wider religious representations), especially in Samoa, plays a significant role in the nations spiritual and moral compass, as well as its mental and physical wellbeing, evident in the history of Samoa.² I believe the recent events between the Church and State on taxation of ministers has caused separation between the two parties. Therefore, I believe that the important recognition of the Church’s role must be given due attention. At present, it appears that the State or government, such as the Samoan government, sets laws that impacts and affects the Church and its members, with little ability or mandated process for the Church to either resist or renegotiate the State’s somewhat overpowering influence. The example that I

¹ The difference between the Ten Commandments, also called Decalogue (Greek, “ten words”) was that the 10 commandments were divine laws revealed to Moses by God on Mt. Sinai where the Mosaic laws or the Torah which include the first 5 books of the Hebrew bible were believed to have been instructions written by Moses for the people of Israel. See Isaac Leiser, *The Jews and the Mosaic Law* (Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 2009),

² Looking at the History of Samoa beginning from the arrival of John Williams and the establishment of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S) in Samoa, the Church has played a major role in the development of Samoa whether it was through education or spiritual teaching; as well as economically through trades. The LMS also had a major influence on the establishment of previous governments. See Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

examine in later parts of this thesis is the concept of taxation on the *alofa* (love offering) received by the parish minister from the congregation.

This difference between State and Church could be seen in the current situation between the Samoan government and the Congregational Christian Church Samoa consideration of the recently imposed *alofa* (love offering) tax in Samoa.³ That is the government's implementation of taxation law requiring *faiifeau* (Church ministers) to pay income tax on its *alofa* donations which has been rejected by the CCCS. According to CCCS, the new taxation laws contradict the CCCS's practicing of giving money as '*alofa*' or money offering to the *faiifeau*.⁴ A key focus of this thesis is to answer the following questions: Firstly, does the Church (CCCS) have a legal right to uphold its own constitution as law in accordance to Gal 3? And secondly, if so, what are ways in which this right could be practiced and upheld in civil law such as in the case of the *alofa* taxation in Samoa?

There are three ways, or spaces, where the Church may offer its biblical perspective, or in other ways, spaces in which civil governments may be influenced by religious values. We can begin by looking at the Samoan Constitution which provides the first place where a bridge between the State and the Church could find a place of

³ Ilia L. Likou, "Govt. moves to collect taxes from Church Ministers," Samoan Observer, 17 September 2017., <https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/14898>. (09 July 2019).

⁴ This claim asserts that money given for *faiifeau* by Church members is not considered an income earned by *faiifeau* under an employment contract between an employer and an employee. Instead, it is an offering provided by members of the congregations, as part of Church members' role of looking after the *faiifeau* as a *faafeagaiga*. A *faafeagaiga* is a Samoan word used to call a Church minister of a congregation in the CCCS. The title *faafeagaiga* embraces the Christian, Samoan cultural and Congregational understanding of who the *faiifeau* is. The title designates the *faiifeau* as a *taulaga soifua* – a person offered as a sacrifice to do God's will by becoming Church ministers. And it is the responsibility of members of the congregations to look after the *faiifeau*. This understanding is based on the biblical understanding of offering sacrifices to God as not a practice to seek rewards or return of favor from God but as actions of thankfulness to God for God's unconditional love. It is life of serving God (in and through looking after and taking care *faiifeau* as servants of God) to be lived by members of CCCS and it is why the CCCS's stand for its *faiifeau* not to pay tax.

negotiation. Since the Constitution is the supreme law of the land which allows freedom of religion, matters pertaining to Christian values should be discussed between the State and Church before any laws or decisions are made. Samoa as a Christian nation believes in the authority of the Bible as its founding source, therefore providing an important document for its constitutional guidance.⁵ The religious beliefs and values of the founding fathers (those who wrote the Samoan Constitution) would have had a major influence on the way the Constitution was formed.⁶ Second, it could also be done through the public consultation process⁷ in Samoa. For example, the Samoan government claimed that public consultation took place to discuss the amendment of the Samoa Constitution where Samoa was to be considered a Christian nation.⁸ The government also stated that a similar process was carried out when drafting the law on

⁵ Daniel Dreisbach, *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 47. Dreisbach in this book explores the possibility that the Bible was one of the source from which the Founding Fathers who wrote the US Constitution drew from, among many other documents of the enlightenment.

⁶ In reviewing historical material on the Constitution of Samoa 1960, the drafting process was determined by a select committee which included the joint-chairman of the Convention who were the *Fautua*, Malietoa Tanumafili II and Tupua Tamasese Mea'ole, as well as 170 other members. The majority of this committee would have been members of various Christian denominations therefore Christian ideals and morals would have been in mind when drafting the constitution along with Samoan cultural values. Two of the key personnel of the Constitution were Etene Saaga and Aorae Petaia, both of the Congregational Church, who were requested by the Samoan government as interpreters and translators of the Samoan Constitution. Petaia and Saaga were both trained in Malua but had worked extensively in government roles. Mataafa Faumuina Fiaame Mulinu'u II, the first official Prime Minister of Samoa who was part of the committee was also an Elder deacon of the Congregational Church. Penelope Schoeffel Meleisea, *Lalaga: A Short History of Western Samoa: Chapter 9 Preparation for Independence 1945-1961*. (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 2003), 153-154. See also Vavae Toma to H Levestam, 5 February 1960. (from Congregational Christian Church of Samoa Archives henceforth known as CCCSA).

⁷ In this process, before rules and regulations become law, the administering agency has to seek public hearing soliciting public comments and feedbacks on a proposed policy before it becomes effective. Rulemaking notices are sent to the public alerting the public more than three months in advance, and also there is a three months-time allocated for public comments, but time of course can be extended on further request. The Church can submit a viewpoint via these public consultations offering a biblical perspective on proposed policy. Whether the Church's view is adopted or integrated into the final policy is totally the prerogative of the agency and the leaders of government. But while this may be the case, there is another value for submitting comments during the consultation process. Records from these public processes can be used as evidence establishing the precedence for any dis-satisfied commenter to seek a reprieve from the courts. And this is the third alternative

⁸ There is no official evidence to suggest a referendum was carried out which sought public consultation on whether Samoa should become a Christian state. The Prime Minister Tuilaepa Aiono Sailele Malielegaoi had introduced the bill before the Samoan Parliament in which 43 out of the 49 representatives voted in favor of the bill. Joyetter Feagaimaali'i Luamanu, "Freedom of religion not threatened:A.G," *SamoaObserver*, 09 June 2017., <https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/33848>. (10 July 2019).

taxation of church ministers.⁹ While this appears to be a good process to follow, it is only effective if there is transparency and consistency. Third, we often try to avoid litigation, courts and it is understandably so, especially because of its adversarial nature. But the courts also provide another space to bridge Church - State relations. For instance, by way of the third party, courts, the view of the Church could be brought to bear on the unanticipated consequences of State laws, policies. That is, the Church may ask the Courts to provide an opinion on how the Church's view of the law could be reconciled with that of the civil law. This is why court opinions are very critical and are made accessible to the public. Especially in the current impasse with the government re: *alofa* taxation, it would be vital for the Courts to provide an interpretation of the Constitution, especially in the event that a State law directly upends a Church principle, as the result of such law could further undermine the capacity of the Church to express its religious values and beliefs. I present in this thesis a way forward or a solution where the State and the Church could find a common ground for action. That is, through the interpretation of Galatians 3:19-29 in the hope of providing an answer to reducing the barriers between State and Church in the hope that both sides may unite for the betterment of the country of Samoa and her people.

Paul's interpretation of law as Mosaic Law in his ministry to the Gentiles in the 1st Century was during the time of the Romans' practicing of their imperial laws as civil laws. My aim is to explore further Paul's perspective of the law and whether Paul's stance on the law holds any value in solving any issues that we encounter in today's society such as the taxation law. The scope of this thesis allows me to focus only on

⁹ Although the government had consulted the different Church denominations, there was no official referendum which sought public opinion on the taxation of *faifeau*. Joyetter Feagaimaali'i Luamanu, "Church reps meet with P.M. to discuss tax policy," *Samoa Observer*, 23 February 2019., <https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/14898>. (09 July 2019).

exploring Paul's understanding and interpretation of law in Paul's letter to the Galatians 3:19-29.

Overall, in this thesis, I will attempt to answer the following questions. First: Is there space for the Church and State to work together in the realm of forming laws that benefit its people (e.g. through collaborative consultation with elders, leaders, govt officials, etc to bring about shared laws – eg. The *alofa* taxation, how could that have been worked through better?) Second: Focusing on Galatians 3:19-29 and Paul's interpretation of the Mosaic Law, how might we look at the Samoan example from a biblical view? What could we learn and how might we apply those lessons in today's society?

METHODOLOGY

The analysis of Paul's interpretation of law in Galatians 3:19-29 will be made by using the reading approach of "Reader Response Criticism." The use of this methodological approach also takes into account my training and understanding as a New Zealand Samoan Lawyer to respond to an interpretation of Galatians 3:19-29 made in this thesis in regards to law in society from both a New Zealand and Samoan perspective. There are various ways of using the reader response approach in reading a text. This study utilises an understanding and experience of law practice in society as a hermeneutic to analyse and evaluate an interpretation of the selected text (Gal 3:19-29). Paul's letter to the Galatians is chosen because it is Paul's first letter to a specific community which provides a fresh or new interpretation of the law according to Paul's own training and revelations.

The research of this thesis will be based mainly on scholarly writings including journal articles as well as books on Biblical Law and New Testament commentary. My focus will be on the work of theological scholars of the past and the present. I will also be referring to relevant law and newspaper articles which may be relevant to this study. All translations of the Bible used in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Bible.

DIVISION OF THE THESIS

This thesis will be divided into four Chapters. Chapter one will provide a brief overview of what law is in society, and in the New Testament in relation to Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul. Chapter Two shows the reading methodology used in this thesis – the reader response approach. Chapter Three will be an interpretation of Galatians 3:19-29 using literary criticism. Chapter Four is my response to the interpretation made in Chapter Three through the hermeneutical lens of practicing law in society based on the method of IRAC which stands for Issue, Rule/Relevant law, Application, and Conclusion. Chapter Five gives an application of the Study to the CCCS Church today as well as law in society followed by a conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF LAW IN SOCIETY AND LAW IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Before exploring Paul's interpretation of the law in accordance to Galatians 3 (chosen text), I will first describe the basic definition of what law is in order to understand its role in the Bible and within society. The definition of what law represents according to Hermann Kantorowicz's is useful to help understand the link between how law is practiced in the Church and in governmental sphere despite the different emphases of law making and practice in these two sectors. According to Kantorowicz; law is *"the system of rules which a particular country or community recognises as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties."*¹

For the Church in general, law making and practice is theologically and ethically-based. An important part of its role is towards making ethically-based rules or laws that guide and regulate actions of the clergy and its members. Thus, Church laws and practice are not only to do with the eschatological events such as how one enters into blessings or cursing in the after-life. Yet, there are existing Church laws that govern the ministry. For example, based on the CCCS constitution body of laws, the relationship between a *faifeau* (Church minister) and parish is not to be based on work/employer contracts, but rather the *feagaiga* concept. This is the basis of the CCCS argument that the State law has put undue pressure on the CCCS constitution. On the

¹ Hermann Kantorowicz, *The Definition of Law* (Cambridge: University Press, 2014), 18.

other hand, in the State, laws are made and implemented with imposition of penalties to be carried out in this world. This law practice emphasises physical penalties as punishments for breaking the law. Thus, how the Church and State can work together in a society that is considered a Christian nation such as in law-making is a very challenging task.

Laws which govern society can relate to different branches and can be understood within different terms such as rules and regulations, constitution, and legislation. In society there are those who make the laws such as governing bodies, those who enforce the law such as police officers, and those who interpret the law such as judges and lawyers. This Chapter is divided into two sections. Section one deals with a brief description of a general understanding of law in general society. Section two gives a brief summary of law in the New Testament in relation to Jesus and the Apostle Paul. Emphasis is given to Paul in terms of his legal background and dealing with his understanding of law.

1.1 Types of Law in Society

Laws are made to help nations live in peace as well as provide order for governing local and national affairs. Various laws exist such as criminal law, civil law, common law, natural law, and customary law all with the purpose of helping bring about good for citizens. For instance, criminal law focuses on punishing offenders who commit crimes or disorder such as theft, murder, and so forth. Civil law is a body of rules that defines and protects the private rights of citizens, offers legal remedies that may be sought in a dispute, and covers areas of law such as contracts, torts, property and family law. Much of our societal laws derive from rules drafted and litigated into

constitutions, statutes, or other authoritative texts that the courts must interpret but not reformulate. In contrast, Common law is part of the law that is within the province of the courts themselves to establish.² In other words, it is a body of legal rules that have been made by judges as they issue rulings on cases. Natural law is more concerned with morality and ethics basing the law on what is correct. Natural law is adopted through the use of reason and negotiating between what is right and what is wrong rather than relying on an authoritative figure such as judges.³ Customary law is simply understood as unofficial law. Customary law is based on long established customs of a place or community. For example, in Samoa, each village has village councils who have their own set of rules and customs different from the laws of the government. These village laws only apply to those people in that particular village, which differ from one village to the next.

1.2 Brief overview of Law in New Testament in relation to Jesus and the Apostle Paul

1.2.1 Law as Torah and νόμος

The Torah or five books of Jewish written law were the laws given to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Septuagint rendered the Hebrew Torah by the Greek word νόμος ("law").⁴ While there seems to be some discrepancies between the use of Torah in the Greek and Hebrew language according to some scholars, even with Pauls views of Jewish legalism, it appears that when Paul uses the Greek word νόμος or ο νόμος, that

² Melvin. A. Eisenberg, *The Nature of the Common Law* (Harvard: University Press, 1988), 1.

³ Francisco J. Contreras, *The Threads of Natural Law: Unravelling a Philosophical Tradition* (New York: Springer, 2013), 37-45.

⁴ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

he was referring to the same thing – the Torah.⁵ It is therefore safe to assume here that what Paul is referring to is the laws according to Moses when writing to the Galatians in his address.⁶ When Paul spoke of *νόμος* and *ο νόμος* he was thinking of the Torah.

Paul uses *νόμος* approximately 74 times in Romans and 32 times in Galatians—more than all the rest of his letters combined (14 times). It sometimes occurs with the definite article (11 times) and at other times without it (21 times).⁷ Some scholars have tried to establish a difference in meaning between *ο νόμος* and *νόμος* with Lightfoot suggesting that *ο νόμος* refers to the Mosaic Law, while the use of *νόμος* means law in general.⁸ However it has been often pointed out that the two forms, *ο νόμος* and *νόμος* are used interchangeably without any distinction in meaning.⁹ In Galatians, as in other Pauline letters, *νόμος* is predominantly used for the Law of Moses given to Israel. This was the law that was added four hundred and thirty years after the promise was given. The promise refers to the promise given to Abraham. The law given four hundred and thirty years later refers to Law given at Sinai.¹⁰ Paul does not refer to any specific law in his letter to the Galatians nor does he indicate whether he is specifically talking about law in general, the Ten Commandments, one or more of the 613 laws as given by Moses to the Israelites including the Decalogue or Sinaiatic Code, Oral law including Rabbinic teachings (Hebrew Talmud), or the Pentateuch which include rules of religious observance given in the first five books of the Old

⁵ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

⁶ James D.G Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2006), 132-133.

⁷ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

⁸ In-Gyu Hong, "The Law in Galatians," *JSNT* 81 (1993): 122-124.

⁹ Hong, "The Law in Galatians," 122-124.

¹⁰ Hong, "The Law in Galatians," 122-124.

Testament. It appears that Paul's understanding and interpretation of the law occurs at three different levels: (1) the law as an obligation of the Sinai covenant; (2) the law as an enslaving power; and (3) the law as an expression of love.¹¹

1.2.2 Jesus and the Law

Before looking into Paul and the law I believe it is necessary to first visit Jesus' interpretation of the importance of the law in order to establish the importance of abiding by the laws and commandments while also giving insight into Paul's arguments on the law. Jesus says in Matthew 5:17 *Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish, but to fulfil.*¹² Many Matthean scholars see this verse as one of the important verses in Matthew for it reveals the theological purpose of the Gospel of Matthew – the important link between fulfilling the law (Mosaic) in relation to righteousness. Thus, this verse shows the importance of law to Jesus as guidance to how people should live life in both the Jewish and Gentile communities.¹³ Another example where Jesus considers the law as important is mentioned in Matthew 19:16-19 which talks about the conversation between Jesus and a rich young man who asks Jesus “*what must I do to have eternal life*”. Jesus answers by saying to the rich young man “*keep the commandments.*” Jesus goes as far as to highlight which commandments the young man should abide by such as (a) not to murder; (b) not to commit adultery; (c) do not steal; (d) do not bear false witness; (e) honour thy father and mother; and (f) love your neighbour as thyself. In this passage, Jesus explains that in order for a person to achieve eternal life, they must abide by the commandments or Mosaic laws. Jesus mentions 6 of the 10 commandments in this

¹¹ Hong, “The Law in Galatians,” 122-124.

¹² New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

¹³ As examples see; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2005), 217-219; Douglas. R. A Hare, *Matthew Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 46-47.

passage which in my view does not just highlight the importance of abiding by the laws, but also emphasises the role the law plays in all believers' lives.

1.3 Paul and the Law

1.3.1 Paul's Legal Background

Paul's early background can be found in his earlier letters to the Churches and also in the Book of Acts. The Book of Acts indicates that Paul (formerly known as Saul) was a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28). Paul was from a devoted Jewish family in Tarsus, a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin, and a devoted Pharisee like his father before him. Pharisees were legal experts or interpreters of the law. Pharisees have been portrayed as the more progressive sect who accepted the whole corpus of traditional law with the "Oral Torah" that had developed around the written Torah.¹⁴ The Pharisees had developed a complicated system of oral tradition to keep them from breaking the Mosaic Law. Pharisees followed the laws of which God approves and they were considered the most accurate interpreters of the laws. The Pharisees passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the Laws of Moses. The Pharisees had also developed their own body of interpretations, expansions, and applications of the law that they came to regard as of divine origin.¹⁵ This was to assist in understanding and keeping the law. Overall, Pharisees were no different from lawyers of today in the sense that their duty is to interpret, explain and apply the law.

¹⁴ Gregory R. Knight, "The Pharisees and the Sadducees: Rethinking their Respective Outlooks on Jewish Law," *BYU Law Review, Issue 3*, (1993), <https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/lawreview/vol1993/iss3/8> (2 April 2019).

¹⁵ Knight, "The Pharisees and the Sadducees".

When Paul was young, he was sent to Jerusalem to receive education at the School of Gamaliel.¹⁶ Gamaliel the Rabbi was a leading authority of the Sanhedrin in the early first century (CE) and a teacher of the law who was highly regarded by the people.¹⁷ Gamaliel was the grandson of one of the greatest Pharisees, Hillel the Elder, who was the founder of the House of Hillel school for Tannaïm (Sages of the Mishnah).¹⁸ This school was associated with the development of the *Mishnah* (the first major written collection of the Jewish oral traditions known as the "Oral Torah") and the *Talmud* (the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and theology).¹⁹ Paul's knowledge of the law played a big part in his ministry. Paul utilised this knowledge to convince his Jewish countrymen of the unity of Old Testament prophecy and covenants and their fulfillment in Jesus Christ the Messiah. As a devout student of the Jewish law, Paul provided a first-hand account of someone who had lived under the law as he had lived and obeyed the law from childhood up to the point of becoming a Pharisee. Paul was able to provide proof of his previously devout life when he argued against his accusers after he was called by Christ Jesus to follow Him. Thereafter, he was determined to spread the good news of the Gospel especially to the Gentiles.

1.3.2 Paul's Interpretation of the Law

By looking through Paul's various teachings on the law it appears that in some instances, Paul condemns the law, and then in another instance he emphasises the importance of the law. For example, in Galatians 3:6-14 Paul condemns those who rely on doing "*the works of the law*" stating that they are "*under a curse.*" Paul makes it

¹⁶ The Acts of the Apostles 23:3.

¹⁷ The Acts of the Apostles 5:34.

¹⁸ Margret S. King, *Unveiling the Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Indianapolis: Xlibris, 1992), 149-151.

¹⁹ King, *Unveiling the Messiah*, 149-151.

clear in verse 11 that “*no one is justified before God by the law, because the righteous one will live by faith.*” Again, in his letter to the Romans, Paul labels the law as “*weak*”²⁰ stating that the law is the reason sin exists.²¹ Furthermore, Paul stated that the law cannot be fulfilled and it is impossible for a person to fulfil all the requirements of the law in order to obtain salvation. However, God had sent his Son Jesus Christ who is the only one who could fulfil the law, for Christ is the end of the law, and all those who believe are deemed righteous.²² Although Paul wrote much about condemning the law, he also appeared to support the law. For example, in his letter to the Romans; he asks whether we should then nullify the law through faith. He then replies by saying “*Absolutely not! Instead we should uphold the law.*”²³ In Romans chapter 7:12, he says that “*the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good.*”

Now when Paul talks of the Law, most of his references appear to be talking about νόμος, the Mosaic Law or Law of Moses. Paul also uses words such as γράμμα meaning written code or letter of the law, ἐντολή which means commandment, as well as γράφω meaning “it is written” as indicators to show that he is referring mainly to the Mosaic Law.²⁴

1.4 Conclusion

I have laid out a foundation of this thesis by giving a basic understanding of the types of law in today’s society compared to the law found within the New Testament particularly *torah* and νόμος. Providing a background of Paul and his interpretation of

²⁰ Romans 8:3-4.

²¹ Romans 5:12-19.

²² Romans 10:4. Paul’s comment in this verse contradicts Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:17-20 where He says that he did not come to end the law but to fulfil it.

²³ Romans 3:31.

²⁴ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0). Windows. Virginia: Bible Works LLC, 2006.

the law gives an understanding of how Paul interprets the law within his letter to the Galatians along with the guidance of scholarly views. This chapter will help in the progression of the following chapters. It will also assist to understand how this perspective applies to exegeting Galatians 3:19-29.

CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW OF GALATIANS 3:19-29, AND READING METHODOLOGY

This Chapter is twofold – the literature review of the selected text and the reading methodology. The literature on the interpretation of Galatians 3:19-29 is huge therefore I will give a brief literature review on this passage putting emphasis on some of the influential thinkers of the Church such as Martin Luther, Augustine of Hippo, and John Calvin. I have chosen these particular scholars because I feel that the work they have done on Galatians is very important and also they set the theological foundation for what law means according to Paul's teachings. These interpretations were very influential especially in the period of the Church reformation. Reference to modern day scholars also gives balance to the ideas and thoughts of past scholarly work. I have also chosen to refer to well recognised scholars of today including gender equality based scholars who have a particular interest in Galatians 3:28-29.

2.1 Brief Literature Review of Galatians 3:19-29.

The focus of this section is to review interpretations of 'law according to Paul' in his letter to the Galatians. According to Johnson,¹ early Church Fathers who were highly regarded teachers, such as, Martin Luther, Ignatius the Bishop of Antioch, Hippolytus, Justin Martyr, and Clement of Alexandria, all dealt with

¹ S.L. Johnson, "Role Distinctions in the Church: Galatians 3:28," in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem; Illinois: Crossway Books, 1991), 51-69.

Galatians 3:19-29 in the context of salvation. Therefore, the historic Christian orthodox understanding of this passage can be understood or explained in terms of justification by faith in Christ, apart from works of the law.

2.1.1 Early Biblical Scholars

Martin Luther had a strong belief that man was justified by faith in Christ not by the works of the law as found in Galatians 2:16. Luther opposed legalism and demanded that justification was solely by faith opposing any notion that justification can occur through works of the law or in combination with faith.² Luther who studied and lectured regularly on Galatians provides interesting commentary on Galatians 3:19-29 where he explains the purpose of the law in comparison to justification by having faith in Jesus Christ. Luther asks the question in regards to Chapter 3:19 “if the law was not given for righteousness or salvation, why was it given?” Why did God give the law in the first place if it cannot justify a person? The Jews believed if they kept the law they would be saved however, Paul preached that Christ had come to save the sinners not the righteous therefore all who believed in Him could be saved.³

Luther explains that the purpose of the law is twofold. One purpose is civil. God has ordained civil laws to punish crime. Laws were also introduced in order to restrain people from committing sin. The second purpose of the law is spiritual and divine. Paul describes this spiritual purpose of the law in the words, "Because of transgressions," as found in verse 19. Meaning another purpose of the

² S. Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 88-97.

³ J.P Fallowes, *Commentary on Galatians: Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids: Kregal Classics, 1987), 231-238.

law was to reveal to a person his or her sinful state. Luther's interpretation suggests that the law is not only spiritual and divine, but it also can be transferred to civil law to help with forming appropriate punishment for crime.

St. Augustine of Hippo in his commentary on Galatians shares the same ideas as Paul saying that God had given a just law to unjust men in order to show them their sin.⁴ Augustine believed that sin could only be taken away by the gift of faith through love rather than through the observance of the law.

John Calvin acknowledged the difficulty of defining works of the law recognising two competing views which on the one hand suggested that works of the law concerned only ceremonial law while on the other hand; works of the law was in relation to the whole law.⁵ However, Calvin believes that Paul was referring to the whole law not just Mosaic law. That is, Calvin argued that works of the law do not justify because humanity is unable to fulfil the law perfectly. When commenting on Galatians 3:19 and the purpose of the law, Calvin said that "when we are told that the law has no influence in obtaining justification; various suggestions immediately arise, that it must be either useless, or opposed to God's covenant."⁶ However, Calvin suggests that we should steer away from the thought that the law has no purpose for the law has manifold uses such as "restraining evil doers" and "making known transgressions."⁷

Like Calvin, Luther insists the law is not limited to the ceremonial law, but instead extends to other areas of societal governance as well. Both Calvin and

⁴ Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 231-238.

⁵ Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 231-238.

⁶ Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 239-240.

⁷ Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 239-240.

Luther also oppose legalism and agree that justification is solely by faith rather than through works of the law, or a combination of both. However, the specific reasons why the law cannot justify is more nuanced in Luther than Calvin.⁸

2.1.2 Recent Scholarly Work

More recent scholars, tended to share the same ideas as the early theologians. For instance, Stefan Nordgaard proposes that Paul thought about the genesis and passing of the law in much the same way as his older Jewish contemporary, Philo of Alexander.⁹ Nordgaard argues that although Galatians identifies God as the source and donor of the law, and the angels the intermediaries; there is the idea that God was not involved in the passing of the law and that Moses had in fact been acting on behalf of the angels. Other scholars mentioned by Nordgaard even suggest that God had nothing to do with the writing and transmission of the law.¹⁰ Another important point Nordgaard makes which is agreed by some scholars is Paul's inconsistency when interpreting the law stating that:

Paul , at heart, believed in the divine origin of the law, but that in Gal 3,15-20, in the heat of the argument, he lost his temper and overreacted, and allowed himself to be drawn to make assertions which on calmer reflection he could hardly have maintained seriously.¹¹

Nordgaard's overall thinking is that while God was behind the law, however, He was neither attached to nor responsible for it.¹² Hunn identifies the

⁸ Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 231-238.

⁹ Stefan Nordgaard, "Paul and the Province of the Law," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105 (2014): 64-79, 10.1515/znw.2014-0004 (July 22 2019).

¹⁰ Norgaard, "Paul and the Province of the Law," 70.

¹¹ Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 73.

¹² Fallows, *Commentary on Galatians*, 79.

difficulties of trying to understand the relationship of the law to the promise in Gal 3:22 after Paul made a point to separate them in vv.1-18 which has proven difficult that some scholars have abandoned the search for a connection.¹³ Debbie Hunn identifies similarly with other scholars when talking of the function of the law which was meant to drive men and women to flee from condemnation and seek refuge in the promise through faith. Another interesting point Hunn makes is that it was Jews not Gentiles who took on the yolk of the law so the Jewish were condemned by the law but the Gentiles by their innate knowledge of the law.¹⁴ In this regard, the Gentiles would perish without the law, while Jews would be judged by the law, because all of humanity has sinned.¹⁵ Hunn claims that although vv.19-20 glance back to the role of the law as eschatological condemnation, Paul does not declare condemnation to be its purpose because sin condemns individuals whether or not they were under the Law of Moses.¹⁶

Frank Thielman when commenting on the importance of the law says that the help of God's grace, supplied by the Holy Spirit, was absent during the period when the Law of Moses was in effect. Although the Old law was good, it was unable to lead people to the goal of eternal life for which God had created them.¹⁷ However, Thielman explains that the law was given through angels rather than directly from the hand of God hence the restorative task was complete. Now, the

¹³ Debbie Hunn, "Does the Law Condemn the World? Law, Sin, and Faith in Galatians 3, 22-23," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 106 (2015): 245-261, <https://doi.org/10.1515/znw-2015-0015> (July 22 2019).

¹⁴ Hunn, "Does the Law Condemn the World?" 245-246.

¹⁵ Hunn, "Does the Law Condemn the World?" 246.

¹⁶ Hunn, "Does the Law Condemn the World?" 260.

¹⁷ Frank Thielman, *Paul & the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Illinois: IVP Academic, 1995), 16-17.

new law, accompanied by the grace of the Holy Spirit, rescues people from sin and transfers them into an uncorrupted state.¹⁸

In Galatians 3:19, Paul's question naturally arises from what he has been arguing. Some would mistake Paul's argumentation as him speaking against the law. He was, in fact, accused at times of speaking against the law. He knew of the objections that would arise from what he proclaimed so he poses the questions in order to answer the objections

New Testament Writer, James Dunn, also identifies in his writings that Paul came to understand that justification involved the whole of life and, therefore, that it was not possible to "live in Christ" and "in accordance with the law."¹⁹ E. P. Sanders, another prominent New Testament scholar looks at Paul and Palestinian Judaism which gives the picture of Judaism that draws from Paul's writings of a religion based on achieving salvation by fulfilling the works of the law which is deemed untrue.²⁰ The Judaism of Paul's time was covenantal nomism. Obedience to the law did not bring one into the covenant but only kept one in. Sanders belief was that Paul's religion was simply different from Judaism.²¹

N.T Wright who stands along Dunn and Sanders as one of the pioneers of the New Perspectives on Paul also provides valuable insight into Paul's

¹⁸ Thielman, *Paul & the Law*, 16-17.

¹⁹ James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990).

²⁰ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1977).

²¹ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*.

interpretation of the law with one of his writings emphasising justification through faith while also explaining that Paul was not against the law and that any ideas of Paul being anti-Judaism should be dismissed.²²

Overall, the above interpretations of Paul's words in Galatians 3:19-29 can be looked at as different understandings of what the Mosaic Law is in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And these different understandings became traditional beliefs that were and are considered as foundational theological doctrines and instructions by some denominations such as the Congregational Churches like CCCS. These beliefs became core parts of the lives of many people, nations, and cultures, and for that reason, their partaking in law making attempts that run any society cannot be ignored. This is reflected in the interpretation of Gal 3:28 from the perspective of equality in social and cultural contexts discussed in the section below.

2.1.3 Galatians 3:28 in light of Gender Equality

Another important part of Galatians 3:19-29 is the interpretation of verses 28 and 29 from the perspective of gender equality and unity amongst people within society.²³ D. Francis Tolmie believes that v.28 receives the most attention

²² N.T Wright, *Pauline Perspectives: Essay on Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013).

²³ When touching on gender equality, I feel it is important to also highlight current issues which give rise to gender inequality. Evidently, Gender inequality is not a new issue but an issue which can be traced back to biblical times. The term 'gender equality' is a contemporary term which needs nuancing. There are many different interpretations of what gender inequality can mean. According to one scholar, gender can refer to the biological condition of being male or female. Gender also refers to the different roles that society assigns to women and men. A number of issues can contribute to gender inequality such as social disadvantage within society, the work place, within religious sphere, and also within the family setting. See Tabitha W. Kiriti Nganga, *Institutions and Gender Inequality: A case Study of the Constituency Development Fund in Kenya* (Ethiopia: Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2011), 13-16. Although the subject of gender inequality is a major discussion topic in itself, for the purpose of this paper, it is useful to understand the issue in light of Galatians 3:28 as well as being aware of 'anti-Judaism thinking which can creep into Christian interpretations of Paul and the Law.

from scholars.²⁴ Tolmie asks whether v.28 means that gender differences were abolished with some scholars even regarding v. 28 as the ‘Magna Carta’²⁵ of gender equality, as it is often assumed to be. However, it is stated that the verse rather focuses on salvation in Christ, and not on gender relationships.²⁶

A problem which arises when interpreting this verse is the possible contradictions between Gal 3:28 and other Pauline texts which often seems oppressive against women.²⁷ From John J. Davis’ point of view, he says that the proper roles of men and women in marriage and family, in the Church, and in the wider society are the subject of an ongoing debate, with Gal v.28 being a pivotal New Testament text in much of the discussion of changing role identities.²⁸ Davis claims that the rule of husband over wife in Genesis 3:16b is part of the curse inflicted on the women which has sprouted the argument of equality until this present time.²⁹

Francis Machingura who reads verse 28 in the context of women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe ask the question on whether women were inferior, equal or superior to their male counterparts stating that the Church’s doctrine on the roles, responsibilities of women sound wanting.³⁰ Socialization forces women to be voiceless and submissive to men while men are also easily ordained as

²⁴ D Francis. Tolmie, “Tendencies in the Interpretation of Galatians 3:28 since 1990,” *Acta Theologica* 32, <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/actat/article/view/104883> (July 2014), 105.

²⁵ Magna Carta is a charter of rights agreed to by King John of England at Runnymede, near Windsor, on 15 June 1215.

²⁶ Tolmie, *Tendencies in the Interpretation of Galatians 3:28*, 109.

²⁷ Tolmie, *Tendencies in the Interpretation of Galatians 3:28*, 119.

²⁸ John. J. Davis, “Some Reflections on Galatians 3:28, Sexual Roles, and Biblical Hermeneutics,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 19.3 (1976): 201-215.

²⁹ Davis, “Some Reflections on Galatians 3:28,” 203.

³⁰ Francis Machingura, ‘Sexism: A Hermetical interrogation of Galatians 3:28 and Women in the Church of Christ in Zimbabwe,’ *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 8.2 (2015): 92-111.

pastors compared to women. Although the author tries to use v.28 as a means to find an answer to equality, he states that the truth is that the context of Gal 3:28 is viewed purely as salvation orientated and as having nothing to do with roles and functions in Church leadership. Machingura warns of the dangers of promoting v.28 out of context to promote the teaching that women are just as qualified as men to serve as elders or pastors.³¹ However Machingura claims that modern feminist interpretations of Gal 3:28 help us understand the pain of exclusion felt by women on leadership positions.³² The verse can also be interpreted as a declaration of the social emancipation of women where there is the metaphysical removal of the biological sex distinctions as the result of ones experience in Christ.³³

Lionel Windsor looks at v.28 through the eyes of egalitarians³⁴ and complementarians³⁵ where egalitarians use the text to prove that the New Testament abolishes all gender-based distinctions by treating it as a ‘control text’ for interpreting other texts while the complementarians argue that Gal.3:28 states that race, status and gender do not provide any barriers to salvation.³⁶ However Windsor says that the verse is to do more with unity rather than equality. He sums up his paper by saying that v.28 does not mean that racial, social and sexual distinction have been obliterated....when we say that Christ has abolished these

³¹ Machingura, ‘Sexism: A Hermetical interrogation of Galatians 3:28,’ 101.

³² Machingura, ‘Sexism: A Hermetical interrogation of Galatians 3:28,’ 105.

³³ Machingura, ‘Sexism: A Hermetical interrogation of Galatians 3:28,’ 107.

³⁴ A person who advocates or supports the principle of equality for all people.

³⁵ Complementarianism is a theological view in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, religious leadership, and elsewhere.

³⁶ Lionel Windsor, “A History of Interpretation of Galatians 3:28,
http://www.lionelwindsor.net/bibleresources/bible/new/Philp_Gal3'28_History_of_Interpretation.pdf
 (accessed 21 July 2019), 1-21.

distinctions, we mean not that they do not exist, but that they do not matter.³⁷

They are still there, but they no longer create any barriers to fellowship.

It is apparent that the above-mentioned interpretations of Gal 3:28 asserts the point of gender equality as the emphasis of these words of Paul. The only issue which could challenge this interpretation is that Paul as mentioned in his other letters seem to undermine this gender equality. However, for me, Sheila Briggs' interpretation of Gal 3:28 in the Feminist Commentary called 'Searching the Scriptures' sums up well the equality sense of Gal 3:28.³⁸ According to Briggs, there is no doubt that Paul as a Christian who promoted the Gospel's egalitarian values was on the side of women. In other words, Paul in his preaching the Gospel was on the side of women against restrictions of Jewish teaching and practicing of the law which had been oppressing the status of women and the Gentiles in early Christianity.³⁹ As such, Briggs therefore claims that Paul's letter to the "Galatians was written for a very specific purpose: to oppose the introduction of the Jewish law into the Galatian community."⁴⁰ Briggs understanding of these words of Paul suggests that Paul is challenging the Jews' ethnocentric claim of the law as belonging to Jews only with the sense that the only way for any non-Jew to become part of that Jewish community is to abide by how Jews practice the Mosaic Law. In other words, the apostle Paul was challenging law making and its restrictions which I do not recognize others or consider the needs of others who were contributing to the life of the Jewish community at the time – the Christian believers. Briggs observed that Paul was

³⁷ Windsor, "A History of Interpretation of Galatians 3:28," 18.

³⁸ Sheila Briggs, "Galatians," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; New York: Crossroad, 1994), 218-236.

³⁹ Briggs, "Galatians," 220.

⁴⁰ Briggs, "Galatians," 220.

doing this by telling the Jews the Christian understanding of the consideration of Christians as the descendants of Abraham and of the significances of the Christian ethics of living by the spirit. In other words, Briggs interpretation reflects the importance of recognizing others social, cultural, and religious beliefs in the making of laws, any type of law, that run a community.

Overall, I believe that the literature review of Galatians 3:19-29 provides valuable insight into the different ways in which Galatians 3:19-29 is interpreted by various scholars which I believe will contribute to the overall paper while also acting as a guide to my own thoughts and ideas which I look to develop as I continue on with this paper.

2.2 Reading Methodology – Literary Criticism and Reader Response

Approach

The reading framework begins with the use of Literary criticism as an interpretational tool to exegete Galatians 3:19-29 followed by my response as the reader to this exegesis using my experience of practicing law in New Zealand and Samoan society.

2.2.1 Literary Criticism – Rhetorical criticism

This thesis will utilise literary criticism with special attention to the use of ‘rhetorical criticism’ to explore Paul’s teachings on law in Galatians 3:19-29. Law making emphasizes the use of rhetorical language – language that persuades the attention of readers and listeners. It is one of the reasons why I have chosen to use rhetorical criticism to analyse the text. According to Hayes and Holladay “literary

criticism covers all questions which arise relating to the text itself, including authorship, historical settings, and various aspects of the language and content of the text...”⁴¹ In this regard, this study’s exploration of the text will focus not only on the world in the text but also the world of the text.

Attention will be given to:

how [the] text is arranged; techniques of the language usage; what writing achieves either as an expression of the author’s intent or as a function of the text itself; emotions associated with, or created by, a writing; how various elements are deployed within a single genre to achieve a certain purpose; the world reflected in a text (or the author’s mind) and the world a text creates in the reader’s mind.⁴²

Hayes and Holladay also suggest that rhetorical criticism is closely related to literary criticism therefore I believe it is also necessary to look at the rhetorical aspects of the text such as the rhetorical situation of the text. A rhetorical situation involves an audience, a speaker or writer, a topic, or issue of mutual concern and an occasion for communication.⁴³ In a rhetorical situation, the speaker/writer promotes a position and seeks to convince or persuade the audience or reader to accept some particular interpretation or course of action.⁴⁴ I believe the rhetorical situation can require a specific/common response although I would think that a response is not obligated.

2.2.2 Reader Response Approach

Reader response is a reading approach that regards important how a reader perceives or sees a text in relation to the reader’s situation or location. It is a humanistic

⁴¹ John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A beginner’s Handbook*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster: John Knox Press, 2007), 90. For rhetorical criticism see also, George Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). Rhetorical criticism is also practiced by well-known New Testament Scholars such as Ben Witherington, Vernon Robbins, and Jeff Reed.

⁴² Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 91.

⁴³ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 91; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 35.

⁴⁴ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 91; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 35.

approach to reading a text that brings into the process of reading a humanistic view of the world. For me this means reading and responding to the text from my own person point of view drawing on my personal experiences while also keeping other influences, thinking, and ideas at bay. Although the reader response approach is currently discussed by scholars such as Stanley Fish⁴⁵ and Wolfgang Iser⁴⁶ as if it is a new reading approach, for me, reader response criticism (as well as rhetorical criticism) is not new.

The humanistic approach of reading the Bible has been one of the influential and effective approaches to reading the Bible in the history of the interpretation of the Scripture and it has been used by famous interpreters of the Bible in the history of the Church. For example, Desiderius Erasmus, a pivotal figure in the emergence of the Christian Humanism in the late 1400s and early 1500s believed that the Bible is a revealed Word of God and it is our role as readers of the Bible to find the meaning of the Bible that is related to us.⁴⁷ David Jasper wrote about Erasmus' use of the humanistic approach, "[F]or Erasmus, a kind of exchange between the text and the reader, which brings about transformation in the reader as its mysteries are revealed in the process of reading." Jasper described this thinking by Erasmus as "a revolutionary change in the understanding of Scripture."⁴⁸ It is considered a revolutionary change because the emphasis of interpretation is shifting from Scripture as the main text upon which Christian theology and traditions are based, to the consideration of the importance of the moment of exchange of the reader and text which is the reading itself. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) a famous German theologian is another example

⁴⁵ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretative Communities* (Harvard: University Press, 1980), 272.

⁴⁶ Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1978), 23.

⁴⁷ David Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 52.

⁴⁸ Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 52.

of a Christian famous thinker who considers important the bringing into the process of reading the human creativity in the reader's interaction with the text. As Japser wrote, "[Schleiermacher] insisted that reading is an *art* and that the reader of a text must be as much an artist as its author. In a sense, reading is as creative as the act of writing itself."⁴⁹

This sense of creativity in the moment of interaction between the reader and the text continues to be an ongoing wider interest in the current world of biblical interpretation. This was discussed more with the addition of the 'reception theory' by a German scholar named Hans Robert Jauss. Jauss' theory emphasises the reader as the one making the meaning of the text.⁵⁰ For Jauss, there are problems or issues in the text and it is the role of a reader to respond to those problems and issues. In other words, in the text, there are instructions for the reader to develop from an exploration of finding what the text means. However I believe that one must proceed with caution when responding to the problems and issues of a text especially interpreting the text incorrectly or reshaping the text which may contribute to changing the text from its intended meaning.

It shows that the text relies on the reader to find its meanings. As one of the proponents of the reader response approach named Stanley Fish said that a text by itself is nothing without a reader.⁵¹ What Fish means is that the reader's part in finding the meaning of a text is very important. Thus, the reader response approach is a reading

⁴⁹ Jasper, *A Short Introduction to Hermeneutics*, 84.

⁵⁰ Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, translated by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

⁵¹ Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class*, 272

that aims to find a meaning of a text in accordance with how the reader sees the text. Therefore with implied readers, we also have implied meanings.

Wolfgang Iser, another scholar of the reader response approach called the reader of a text the ‘Implied reader’. According to Iser, our time now as readers of the text compared to the time of author is far distant. We are not the actual readers of the text as intended by the author, but the implied readers and our role as readers now is as meaning-makers according to instructions reflected in the text⁵² - instructions in the sense of how the text raised questions that will make the reader explore answers in the text. What Iser said makes sense in relation to the Bible. The story of the Bible is the story of what happened 2000 years ago. We do not have any connections or links to the authors of that story. The only connection is how we see that story from our experience of how that story brings about meaning relevant to our time now.⁵³

2.2.3 My Experience of practicing law as the hermeneutical lens

The common type of methodology used by law students to provide a legal analysis of various legal issues for the purpose of identifying each argument clearly from two or more sides in a court case is known as the IRAC method.⁵⁴ I will use this method as a hermeneutical lens to respond to the exegesis of Gal 3:19-29 made herein. IRAC is an acronym which stands for:

⁵² Iser, *The Implied Reader*, 23.

⁵³ Although Iser says that the reader response approach provides a connection on how we see the story from our experience which brings about meaning relevant to our time now, I believe that our response must still be grounded on the historical context of the text.

⁵⁴ William H. Putman, *Legal Research, Analysis and Writing* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2013), 31-39.

Issue: What are the issues that are raised/or discussed? Identify the problem; see what areas of law may govern the solution?

Rule/Relevant law: Set out the legal principles that will be used to address the problem or what laws apply to the issue?

Application: determine how the rule of law applies to the issue/s at hand.

Conclusion: Choose the argument that I think is the strongest, and articulating (express thoughts and feelings easily and clearly) what I believe to be the appropriate answer to the issue.

Since Paul in Galatians talks about issues concerning the law, I believe that the IRAC method is a helpful tool to use in the legal analysis and reasoning process.⁵⁵

Currier and Eimermann also explain that:

In any legal analysis, using IRAC can provide structure for your argument. These four elements are the fundamental building blocks for legal analysis. Whenever you are analyzing more than one case, you are engaging in synthesis, the process of integrating the concepts you find in the cases so that the reader can appreciate the principles of law that arise from seeing the series of cases as a unit.⁵⁶

2.3 Conclusion

This Chapter gives a brief literature review of Galatians 3:19-29 followed by the reading method used to explore the text which is the reader response approach. Reader response together with literary criticism forms the reading framework. The text will be explored using literary criticism and the understanding of law in society shown in

⁵⁵ Roger L Miller and Gaylord A Jentz, *Cengage Advantage Books: Fundamentals of Business Law: Excerpted Cases* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2010), 710.

⁵⁶ Katherine A Currier and Thomas E Eimermann, *Introduction to Law for Paralegals: A Critical Thinking Approach* (New York: Wolters Kluwer, 2019), 261.

Chapter one will analyse that exploration in Chapter Four. Coming next is the interpretation of the text.

CHAPTER 3

INTERPRETATION OF GALATIANS 3:19-29

This Chapter is the interpretation of the passage, Galatians 3:19-29, using literary criticism as laid out in Chapter Two. The Chapter begins with an analysis of the text followed by an overall look at that analysis or interpretation of that analysis. The following questions guide the analysis. What is the historical setting of the letter to Galatians? What was the occasion of the letter? How did law become part of Paul's purpose of the letter? What is the significance of the placement of 3:19-29 as a text about law in the progress of the letter? How does the language of the text show that law is important in the purpose of the letter? Who are the rhetorical characters and implied/actual narrators or readers in the text? What is the rhetorical situation in the text? How does this situation relate to law in the text? Is there a rhetorical problem in the text? Does that problem relate to law in the text? Is there a connection between law and social and cultural values embedded in the language of the text?

3.1 Historical and literary background of the letter to Galatians

3.1.1 Historical setting of the letter to Galatians

Paul's epistle to the Galatians is described as the least disputed of any of Paul's authentic letters.¹ The Apostle Paul wrote this epistle to the Churches of Galatia (1:2), and he called its recipients "Galatians" (3:1), however scholars agree that identifying who these people were and where they lived is one of the problems concerning the

¹ Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians: Word Biblical Commentary series* (Dallas: World Books, 1990), 122.

history of this text. It is held that the recipients lived in the geographical district known as "Galatia," located in the northern part of the Roman province, also called "Galatia," in Asia Minor.² It is held that Paul founded these Churches during his second missionary journey therefore he could have written this epistle during his third journey either from Ephesus about A.D. 54, or from Corinth about A.D. 57.³

The main reason why Paul had written this letter to the Galatians was to stop the tide of Jewish Christians heresy which is apparent throughout the epistle.⁴ As found in the Book of Acts 13:51 – 14:23, Paul travelled with Barnabas to the region of Galatia on the continent of Asia Minor to witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The pair preached to God fearing Gentiles and Jews in the Southern part of the province of Galatia. The Churches throughout this province were mostly made up of Gentiles. However, after Paul and Barnabas left the area, some Jewish Christians seemingly came into the area and taught that those who supported the Christian salvation must also submit to Jewish law.⁵ Historically, most scholars believed that Paul's opponents were Judaizers, while others believe Paul's opponents to be Jewish Christians.⁶

3.2 Occasion of the letter to the Galatians

Many commentators have different viewpoints about the precise circumstances which led to Paul writing his letter to the Galatians; however all agree that the Apostle

² John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians* (Minneapolis: James and Klock Christian Publishing Co, 1977), 190.

³ J. B. Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 143.

⁴ Philip Hale, *A Doctrinal Exposition of Galatians: A Sermonic Commentary for Laymen* (Poland: Mercinator Press, 2018), 119.

⁵ D.A. Carson, L. and D.J. Moo. *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992), 456.

⁶ Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 456.

wrote to the Galatians in response to a severe crisis.⁷ In chapter one after Paul affirms his apostleship and rebukes the Galatians for abandoning the one who called them, it is clear that Paul is responding to a situation which threatens “the truth of the Gospel.”⁸ Paul, who was a passionate writer, expresses strong emotion in this letter unlike any other of his letters apart from 2 Corinthians. The apostle in chapter 1:6-9 rebukes his audience for abandoning the Gospel. Paul shows his anger because of the intrusion of others who have perverted the Gospel of Christ claiming that those who attempt to preach a Gospel different to the one that Paul had already taught should be condemned to hell. Paul’s tone is emotional and passionate because the crisis at Galatia threatens the very foundation of the Torah-free Gospel which Paul preaches.⁹ The identity of those who had been proclaiming different teachings from what Paul had taught are not identified. However commentators believe that these people were either Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians who were from Galatia, or Gnostics.¹⁰

3.3 How did law become part of Paul’s purpose of the letter?

A gospel where salvation came by faith not by works of the law was the reason law had become a part of Paul’s letter. The general understanding amongst commentators is that Paul was responding to a group of teachers or missionaries who were urging the Galatians to be circumcised in accordance with Jewish Law.¹¹ These “teachers” had insisted that the Law of Moses was still binding and was necessary for justification. The law spoken of throughout the letter to the Galatians is the law of

⁷ Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, Sacra Pagina Series (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 1.

⁸ Galatians 1:6.

⁹ Matera, *Galatians*, 1.

¹⁰ Matera, *Galatians*, 2. Gnostics also believed that the created, material world (matter) is evil, and therefore in opposition to the world of the spirit, and that only the spirit is good.

¹¹ Matera, *Galatians*, 2.

Moses/Mosaic Law and the Book of Law as well as law in general according to the interpretation of the language within the text. Paul in Chapter 2 had to instruct the Galatians again that they are not saved by “keeping the Law of Moses” and in Chapter 3 Paul presses the Galatians and warns them that their actions of trying to observe everything written in the “Book of the Law” would place them back under the curse of the law.¹²

3.4 What is the significance of the placement of 3:19 - 29 as a text about law in the progress of the letter?

Before looking at the placement of Chapter 3 verses 19-29, it is ideal to look at the overall structure of the letter to Galatians. Although there are many structures for Galatians, I have chosen De Boer’s structure as I believe it best suits this thesis writing.

De Boer¹³ divides the letter into 6 sections:

Section 1: Letter Opening (1:1 – 10)

Section 2: The Origin and the Truth of the Gospel (1:11 – 2:21)

Section 3: The Spirit and the True Heirs of the Promise Made to Abraham (3:1 – 4:7)

Section 4: The Grave Dangers Confronting the Galatians (4:8 – 5:12)

Section 5: Life at the Juncture of the Ages (5: 13 – 6:10)

Section 6: Epistolary Closing (6:11 – 18).

De Boer also divides chapter 3 into 4 parts:

3:1-5 The Reception of the Sprit in Galatia

3:6-14 The Blessing of Abraham and the Curse of the Law

3:15-22 The Promise to Abraham and the Law of Moses

3:23-29 The True Offspring of Abraham.¹⁴

¹² Matera, *Galatians*, 2.

¹³ Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2011), 14.

¹⁴ de Boer, *Galatians*, 14.

Chapter 3 verses 19-29 has been called “a new and extraordinary section in Paul’s argument” and “the crux interpretum for Paul’s response to the problems in Galatia.”¹⁵ Structurally this passage divides into three parts. The first two sections are each introduced by a leading question: “What, then, was the purpose of the law?” (vv. 19-20), and “is the law, therefore, opposed to the promise of God?” (vv. 21-22). The concluding paragraph (vv. 23-25) continues the thought of the second paragraph, summing up the function of the law in terms of a new metaphor, that of the *παιδαγωγός* or guardian.¹⁶ These verses bring together a conclusion of Paul’s long parenthesis (vv. 10-25) on the nature and function of the law in the history of salvation.¹⁷

3.5 How does the language of the text show that law is important in the purpose of the letter?

In the first segment of Chapter 3 (verses 19-20), Paul begins with a rhetorical question *τι οὐν ο νόμος;* (translated in English as "Why, then, the law?"), focusing the attention of the audience on the purpose of the law. Paul uses a series of concise statements to answer this question. In this passage Paul begins to explain the function of the law. He apparently realises that what he said so far about the law (for example the law as a curse) would make the Galatians wonder why God gave the law if it does not seem to have a positive function. Realising that his audience may have this question on their minds, Paul adopts a very cunning rhetorical strategy in this instance. He indicates that he intends to address the purpose of the law, although he proceeds to explain its purpose in such a way that it emphasises its inferiority to the promises of God/faith throughout.

¹⁵ Timothy George, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture/Galatians* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 250.

¹⁶ George, *The New American Commentary*, 250.

¹⁷ George, *The New American Commentary*, 250.

3.6 Rhetorical Criticism of the text

3.6.1 Who are the rhetorical characters and implied/actual narrators or readers in the text?

The rhetorical characters in the text consist of Paul and his audience which are the Galatians. Paul also refers to Abraham when talking about the promise made as well as referring to Jesus Christ, the offspring of that promise. God is mentioned as the instigator of that promise, with the Angels as the agents who gave the Law to Moses who was the Mediator who distributed the law to the people of Israel.

3.6.2 What is the rhetorical situation in the text and how does this situation relate to law in the text?

As described by Hayes and Holladay, a rhetorical situation involves an audience, a speaker or writer, a topic or issue of mutual concern, and an occasion for communication.¹⁸ In a rhetorical situation, the communicator (speaker/writer) seeks to convince or persuade the audience to accept some particular interpretation or course of action.¹⁹ In this particular passage of Galatians 3:19-29, Paul who is the writer tries to address his audience which are the People of Galatia, concerning the argument around the functions of the law and its inferiority to the promise of salvation through faith in Christ. In this section, Paul does not provide any new arguments but uses this section to explain the function of the law. Paul may have realised that what he had said so far about the law such as the notion of law being a curse, would make the Galatians question the law and think why God would give the law if it had no positive functions. Realising that his audience may have this question on their minds, Paul uses a well

¹⁸ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 74.

¹⁹ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 74.

thought out rhetorical strategy in order to address this issue.²⁰ Paul indicates that he intends to address the purpose of the law, although he proceeds to explain its purpose in a way which still holds the law as inferior to the promise of God through faith. The rhetorical situation relates to the law in the text as the law is the subject of Paul's argument that faith in Jesus Christ is more significant compared to the law.

3.6.3 Is there a rhetorical problem in the text and does that problem relate to Law in the text?

According to Betz, the rhetorical problem of Galatians that functions as an organising principle is twofold.²¹ Paul was responding to the problems of identity and behavior created by his Judaizing opponents. This understanding means that the traditional view of the problem of Galatians as being mainly one of justification by faith versus justification by works should be reviewed. While emphasising justification by faith, Paul was speaking of the broader issues regarding Gentile integration into the Church and how the behavior or ethics of these Gentile converts was to be controlled. Briefly stated, the rhetorical problem of Galatians caused by the rhetorical situation of the Judaizing opponents' teaching is the newfound confusion among the Galatian Churches and their identity.²² The people of Galatia have been put in a position where they must make a decision on whether they should adopt Jewish practices of circumcision and Torah observance to become a part of the true people of God while also changing their pattern of behavior whether they should take up the yoke of the Torah to pattern and constrain their behavior?²³

²⁰ H.D Betz, *Galatians. A Commentary on Paul's letter to the Churches in Galatia* (Philadelphia, Fortress, 1985), 163.

²¹ Betz, *Galatians*, 86-90.

²² John M. G. Barclay, *Obeying the Truth: A Study of Paul's Ethics in Galatians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988), 73.

²³ Barclay, *Obeying the Truth*, 73.

Paul replies to this rhetorical problem with a specific rhetorical purpose for the Epistle to the Galatians by persuading the Galatians to reject the Judaizers' non-gospel and to continue in the true gospel which he had preached to them because it alone was justifiably confirmed, placing them among the true people of God through faith in Christ, delivering them from sin through accepting the Holy Spirit.²⁴

3.6.4 Is there a connection between law and social and cultural values embedded in the language of the text?

In Galatians 3:19-29, Paul uses cultural intertexture-reference by referencing the story of Abraham's faith to further his argument for a new identity in Christ. To begin, in Galatians 3:2, Paul asked the audience from where the Spirit comes, faith or works? For the reference to work, Paul needed his audience to understand the "functional superiority" of faith.²⁵ From this point, Paul argued that Abraham's favor with God came through faith and not adherence to the law in Galatians 3:7. As such, the covenant promised to Abraham comes through faith rather than the law. This line of argument was significant since Jewish followers of Christ put emphasis on division through ethnic lines, particularly related to their descent from Abraham. This descent from Abraham served to give the Jewish people a particular identity and status. Paul took the cultural intertexture reference and reversed it to create an "alternative symbolic universe" where faith identity usurps ethnic identity.²⁶

Social texture evidence shows that Paul's argument in addressing the conflict in Galatia was from addressing the law, referencing the Abrahamic covenant, and arguing

²⁴ T. David Gordon, "The Problem at Galatia," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, 41 (1987): 40-61.

²⁵ S. Liubinskas, "Identification by Spirit Alone: Community-identity construction in Galatians 3:19-4:7," *The Asbury Journal*, 67:1 (2012): 27-55.

²⁶ Liubinskas, "Identification by Spirit Alone, 32.

for religious community through baptism. All three of these areas pointed to conflict stemming from threatened identities and identity transformation.²⁷ Ethnic identity dominated ancient people's worldviews, both Jewish and Gentile. While these ethnic identities differed between Jews and Gentiles, both groups would have been aware of the boundaries and laws by which these identities were formed and sustained. From the dominant model position, both Jews and Gentiles possessed a single dominant ethnic identity.²⁸ This single dominant ethnic identity created boundary and identity issues between two traditional opposing ethnic groups. In Galatians, Paul's arguments directly addressed the expression of the dominant model with both Jews and Greeks by turning the predominant social norms related to purity codes, issues of familial descent and covenant, and changing boundaries of religious community upside down.²⁹

3.7 Interpretation of Galatians 3:19-29.

As stated earlier, Paul may have realised that what he said so far about the law (for example the law as a curse) would make the Galatians wonder why God gave the law if it does not seem to have a positive function. Realising that his audience may have this question on their minds, Paul adopts a very cunning rhetorical strategy in this instance. He indicates that he intends to address the purpose of the law, although he proceeds to explain its purpose in such a way that it emphasises its inferiority to the promises of God/faith throughout. Verses 19-25 focuses on the purpose and function of the law (Mosaic) particularly the law as a *παιδαγωγός* in the supervision of one's life of faith.

²⁷ Vernon. K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts: A guide to the socio-rhetorical interpretation* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1996), 122.

²⁸ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts*, 122.

²⁹ David A. DeSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), 54-58.

Verse 19-20

In the first segment of Chapter 3 (verses 19-20), Paul begins with a rhetorical question focusing the attention of the audience on the purpose of the law. Paul uses a series of concise statements to answer this question. Paul begins by asking "Why, then, the law?" The Greek phrase reads *τί οὖν ὁ νόμος* which can also be translated as "what is the law?"³⁰ The context indicates that Paul is referring to the function of the law. If the inherence comes through the promise, then what is the function of the law? If the law cannot confer the Spirit, bring rectification and makes empty promises of life, and cannot add anything valid to the Abrahamic covenant, then what possible purpose does the law serve? The use of the Greek word *ὁ νόμος* refers to the Mosaic Law with the article specifying the law which has repeatedly been referred to in the immediate context and earlier.³¹ For example, "the law that appeared 430 years" after the Abrahamic covenant (3:17); the law whose curse "Christ redeemed us from" (3:13); and the law which was the focus of the Judaizers' message (1:16).

Paul's answer to the question "Why the law?" is expressed in terms of five emphases: (1) "it was added"; (2) "because of transgressions"; (3) "until the offspring to whom the promise was given would come"; (4) it was ordained through angels"; and (5) "by the hand of a mediator."³² The first emphasis on the words "it was added" introduces an important temporal point: the Mosaic Law was brought into effect by God subsequent to his covenant of promise.³³ The word *προστέθη* which has a range of meanings including to "add" to something already present suggests that the law was not

³⁰ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

³¹ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

³² Longenecker, *Galatians*, 138.

³³ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 138.

of the essence of God's redemptive activity with human kind.³⁴ Paul's translation of the word "added" in Paul's letter to the Romans literally means "came in by a side road." If the main road is the covenant of promise, then the law has the character of something additional, a side road intended to carry extra traffic or excess. In other words the "side road" is designed not to lead to a separate destination but to point travellers back to the main road.³⁵ There is however two issues which may raise problems when interpreting verse 19 such as the word *χάριν* (cause of) and the *προσέτεθη*.³⁶ The word *χάριν* can mean either "because of" or "for the purpose of" therefore giving rise to different interpretations of how Paul views the purpose of the law.³⁷ Was the purpose of the law to identify, reduce, or deal with sin or to provoke or produce sin? Lightfoot believes that Paul was thinking of the law as provoking/producing sin.³⁸

The second emphasis in Paul's answer "because of transgressions" holds various meanings when looking at the Greek translation. The prepositional use of *χαριν* which usually appears after the word it governs, may be understood as either cognitive in function which brings about "a knowledge of" or "points out transgression" or it can be causative in function meaning "to cause" or "increase" transgressions.³⁹ Therefore the phrase "because of transgression" can either mean that the law was given to bring about knowledge of sin by identifying it as a transgression before God, or that the law was given to increase and multiply sin. Cranfield adds that the law 'increases sin in the sense that it makes men sin more', especially because it tempts sinful men.⁴⁰ Overall, the

³⁴ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 138.

³⁵ Robert H. Mounce, *The New American Commentary, An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture: Galatians* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 253.

³⁶ Longenecker, *Galatians*, 139.

³⁷ Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 143.

³⁸ Lightfoot, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians*, 143.

³⁹ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

⁴⁰ C. E.B. Cranfield, *Romans: A Shorter Commentary* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1985), 66.

presence of the law, with its specific commandments, makes people aware that they are committing sin by transgressing God's Law. Therefore I believe that the law was not given as a remedy for sin, but a means of making Israel aware of sin.

The third emphasis of Paul's answer states that the law was added "until the offspring to whom the promise was given would come." Paul meant that the law only had a function "until" the offspring (or Christ) would come. The Greek word *ἄχρις* (until) indicates that the purpose of the law ends with the coming of the Christ.⁴¹ Since Christ had come, the law no longer had a function. Paul indicates that the law had a beginning (430 years after the promise) and an end (the coming of the promised offspring). The offspring is Christ who is identified as Abraham's descendant (v.16). The perfect tense of the deponent verb *ἐπαγγέλομαι* (promise) signals a past action with present results, therefore suggesting that the promise is still in effect.⁴² Paul's view here however differs widely from that of Judaism for they speak of the "imperishable light of the law" and also speak of a changelessness of the law for as long as sun, moon, heavens, and the earth continue to exist.⁴³ Some even suggested that if the Torah still retained its validity, it was proclaimed thereby that the Messiah had not yet arrived.⁴⁴ The Judaizers of Galatia would have argued along these lines.

Paul's fourth emphasis is that the law was "ordained by angels." According to Exodus 31:18, Moses received the law from God however there is no mention of angels. Later tradition, however spoke of angels present at the giving of the law or as the ones

⁴¹ Galatians 3:19 (NRSV) Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made.

⁴² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 526-527.

⁴³ Matera, *Galatians*, 133.

⁴⁴ Matera, *Galatians*, 133.

through whom the law was given (Deut. 33:2). In this statement “ordained by angels” there are two closely related issues which are interpreted differently by scholars, namely the meaning of *διά* in this context and the nature of the angels. With respect to the meaning of *διά*, it has a range of meanings which indicate either instrument or origin.⁴⁵ If it is used to indicate instrument, Paul would be stating that God used the angels as agents to give the law. If it is used to indicate origin, Paul would be stating that the angels themselves gave the law.⁴⁶ Overall, this statement should be interpreted in a straightforward way, namely that Paul is stating that God used angels to give the law.

Paul’s last emphasis on the law is that it was “ordained through angels by a mediator.” Paul refers to the fact that the law was given by a mediator which is interpreted as referring to Moses, through whom God gave the law. A mediator is not one, but God is one (vv19c-20). Moses mediated the Mosaic Law in the presence of angels. Paul contrasts the fact that a mediator was needed to bring the law to Israel which, in itself, is proof that the Mosaic covenant was in no way a fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant as the Abrahamic covenant had neither angel to witness it or man to administer it because it depended on God and God alone. In this verse, Paul highlights the oneness of God. The people of Israel needed Moses to mediate for them because they were many, however there was no need for a mediator between God and Abraham as the communication was direct.

After analysing verses 19-20, we ask whether Paul has answered his question on the function of the law. In regards to everything mentioned by Paul in these two verses about the function of the law, only his first statement refers to the function of the law

⁴⁵ A. Azuogu, *Paul and the Law in the Arguments of Galatians* (Weinheim: Beltz, 1996), 161.

⁴⁶ J.L. Martyn, *A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 356.

(added because of transgressions). This is seen as a deliberate rhetorical strategy by Paul as he would be aware of the fact that his audience may be questioning why the law was given, therefore he asks a question highlighting the issue. Paul gives the impression that he will answer the question and will provide a description of the function of the law. However, instead of explaining the function of the law, what he says about the law focuses on its inferiority. This rhetorical technique could be called rerouting the attention of the audience.⁴⁷

At this point, Paul may have realised that the Galatians may be thinking that the law is against the promise of God. However in verses 21-22, Paul begins again with a rhetorical question focusing the attention of the Galatians on the issue, asking whether the law opposed the promise of God? Paul's answer to himself is twofold; a description of what would happen if the law could give life; and a description of the actual situation of humanity. Paul answers his own question with a vigorous reply "absolutely not."⁴⁸ Again, instead of giving an explanation to his question, Paul continues to show that the law is inferior to the promise. Paul meant that if the law was capable of giving life, then righteousness would come from the law. The Greek word ζῳοποιῆσαι (to give life) means more than to transmit physical life as it gives the image of resurrected life.⁴⁹ However verse 22 states that due to humanity's real situation, everyone is under the power of sin because the scripture has imprisoned everything and everyone. Scholars believe that the reason why Paul uses "scripture" instead of "law" was because "law" would impute a much too positive function to the law, namely that it imprisoned humankind under sin "so that" that the promise would be given to those who believe in

⁴⁷ Francois Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians: A Text-Centered Rhetorical Analysis of a Pauline Letter* (Hemsbach: Druckpartner Rubelmann, 2005), 136.

⁴⁸ Matera, *Galatians*, 138.

⁴⁹ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

Christ.⁵⁰ Paul may therefore have intended not to discuss the function of the law in a positive manner in this particular verse as he was trying to contrast between the law which did not give life compared with faith through which the promise is given to those who believe in Christ as stated at the end of verse 22.

Verses 21-22 concludes that the law is not a rival to the promise. As a result, the promise comes from the faith of Jesus Christ in whom the Galatians believe. The question is, if the law does not give life giving righteousness, and if it is not opposed to the promise, then what is the role of the law? Again Paul is yet to give a definite answer on the function of the law.

In verses 23-25 Paul continues to emphasise that the law is inferior to the promise made. Paul continues the use of persuasive techniques utilising the use of metaphorical language when describing the situation “before faith came.”⁵¹ The definite article before the word *πίστιν* suggests that Paul was not talking about faith in general but the faith of Jesus Christ.⁵² Again Paul uses the metaphor of imprisonment along with another metaphor *ὑπὸ νόμον ἐφρουρούμεθα* which means “we were guarded/confined under the law”⁵³ to push his argument that the law is inferior to the promise while also depicting the situation under the law metaphorically as being in prison or in custody. Again the law only had a temporary function until “the faith came” however before, the law had the function of imprisoning mankind. If we look at the Greek translation of the word *παιδαγωγός*, it can be translated as tutor, teacher, or

⁵⁰ Matera, *Galatians*, 138-139.

⁵¹ Tolmie, *Persuading the Galatians*, 137.

⁵² *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

⁵³ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

disciplinary.⁵⁴ Paul uses the word as a metaphor for the law. The word *paidagōgos* in ancient Greece and Rome referred to a trustworthy slave who was charged with the rearing and discipline of children.⁵⁵ As the child grows, the pedagogue imposed necessary restraint upon the child, while also teaching and guiding the child. But once the child reached the age of maturity and accountability, the pedagogue's duties were over.⁵⁶ Referring back to verse 25, since faith has come (Jesus Christ), we are no longer under the watch of the pedagogue. The period of the law (from Moses to Christ) was a time of confinement and restraint, a period of minority that limited the freedom of those under it.⁵⁷ But when God sent His Son, the period of minority ended, and the God-given role of the law was concluded. The underlying argument in these verses is that the time of the law had passed therefore returning to a life under the law which the Galatians considered doing would be like returning from freedom to captivity.

In these last verses 26-29, Paul reminds the Galatians that through baptism, they had all become children of God by faith. No further action of circumcision or religious observance was required to secure this status. Gentile Galatians were now also called “sons of God” which was a name that was reserved only for the Jewish people alone. In verse 26, Paul uses this statement to focus the audience's attention on another issue which is the link between the sonship of God and faith. Paul switches from the word “we” which he uses multiple times in verses 23-25 to the word “you” in verse 26 in an attempt to draw the attention of the audience and to reiterate the link between sonship and faith for Paul says, “you are all sons of God through faith.” The Greek word *υἱός* refers to believers as the legitimate offspring of God with reference to origin and nature,

⁵⁴ Matera, *Galatians*, 138.

⁵⁵ George, *The New American Commentary*, 265.

⁵⁶ George, *The New American Commentary*, 265.

⁵⁷ Matera, *Galatians*, 140.

including that of relationship to the Father.⁵⁸ The expression includes women as well as men as v.28 shows but Paul uses sons as a metaphor of inheritance that has the male offspring in view.

In verse 27, Paul has now mentioned baptism for the first time in the text. It is presumed that Paul would have baptised all the members of the Galatian Churches since all were converted from paganism.⁵⁹ Paul interprets baptism as signifying union with Christ which involves death to one's old life and entry into a new world. Paul views baptism as an act of being clothed in Christ. Paul could be referring to "being clothed" as being clothed with righteousness and salvation. Or it could be symbolic of early Christian liturgies where the person being baptised removed their garments, were baptised naked, and then put on a new white garment, signifying the new life they were entering.⁶⁰ Overall, Paul reminds the Galatians of their baptism which proves the importance of faith through which they became sons of God. In verse 28, Paul mentions the effects of being baptised into Christ which wipes away all the old spiritual and physical indifferences. In Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek" because all are equal. In the ancient times, the law protected the religious and culture separateness of the Jewish people, set them apart from all other people.⁶¹ However in Christ, the separateness is abolished because Jews and Gentiles are constituted together as one new people of God. There are also no longer any social differences or gender differences as

⁵⁸ *Bible Works: Software for Biblical Exegesis & Research* (version 7.0), 2006.

⁵⁹ J.P. Sampley, *The New Interpreter's Bible: Second Corinthians – Philemon*, Vol. 11 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 271.

⁶⁰ Laurie guy also supports this statement saying that Baptism candidates were baptised naked. However he says that it is clear that neither the Greek nor Latin terms for "nakedness" (*gymnos* and *nudus*) necessarily carried the connotation of total nakedness simply meaning that the person who was *gymnos* might simply not be wearing attire suitable for making a decent appearance in public. See L. Guy, "Naked" Baptism in the early Church: The Rhetoric and the Reality," *The Journal of Religious History*, 27 (2003): 133-139.

⁶¹ J. E. Stambaugh & D. L. Balch, *The New Testament in its Social Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 59-60.

all are set free from the law but are now slaves under Christ. Paul also says that there are no longer any gender inequalities, male or female, for all are one under Christ.

In verse 29, Paul sums up his entire argument from verses 6-29. In verse 16, Paul had said that only Christ was the seed/offspring/heir to the promise made to Abraham. However the offspring had now arrived to whom the promise had been made and since the baptised had entered into union with Christ, they were now one new person in Him and with Him therefore they all participate equally in the same privileged status as joint heirs according to the promise. The inherence given to the Gentile believers comes through God's free, gracious promise to Abraham, not through the law.

3.8 Conclusion

Paul's main rhetorical strategy in chapter 3:19-29 is the use of an argument based on the experience of the Galatians in which he reminds them of their baptism, using a Christian baptismal tradition/liturgy. The purpose of this idea is to express the idea that their baptism serves as proof that the Galatians have become sons of God and the seed of Abraham through faith in Christ. In terms of shedding some light on the function of the law, Paul again does not give a precise answer. The only certain answer Paul gives is that the law was given because of our transgressions. It is also unclear as to whether the law no longer exists because Christ has returned or if the law is still in effect because the Messiah or seed of the promise has yet to arrive which was the belief of the Jews who rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah. It is clear from this chapter that Paul was trying to prove that the law (Mosaic) is inferior to the promise of faith and that righteousness can only be achieved through having faith in Christ.

What I was attempting to examine in this chapter was whether Paul in Chapter 3:19-29 gives any indication on whether the Law still holds any significance in today's context and does Paul's interpretation of the law provide any remedies for the issues that we face in today's society? It is my belief that Paul continues to avoid giving a proper explanation as to the importance of the Law as discussed in v.19 with his focus more on the "promise" and "Faith." However as I move onto Chapter Four where I will be responding to the interpretation made in this chapter, I hope to provide some answers to these questions that I have raised. In chapter 4, I will be using my understanding and experience in order to respond.

CHAPTER 4

READER RESPONSE THROUGH THE HERMENUTICAL LENS OF IRAC METHOD.

In this chapter I examine the Galatians 3:19-29 text through my perspective of practicing law by applying the IRAC method as a hermeneutical lens to analyse the above exegesis of Gal 3:19-29. I will do this with the purpose of answering these two questions: 1) what is the function of the law? And (2) does the law provide any remedies for issues that we face in today's society?

4.1 Applying IRAC method as a lens to respond to the exegesis of Gal 3:19-29

In applying my hermeneutical lens to analyse the above interpretation of Galatians 3:19-29, I have discovered a new horizon to re-read the text from a legal perspective. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the court is one of the spaces to be used to discuss how a biblical understanding could help in law-making. When reading the Galatians account, I see this situation as a court dispute between two parties presenting their respective cases or perspectives in front of a Judge and Jury within a court setting. Both parties argue their cases with the hope of influencing the Jury and Judge in order to reach a favourable verdict or outcome. It is helpful to explain the different roles within the court setting in order to help connect those roles to the main characters of the letter to the Galatians.

First we have the “plaintiff.” A plaintiff is simply explained as one who brings a case against another in the Court of Law.¹ The plaintiff is represented by the “Judaizers” or Jewish Christians who had been identified as Paul’s main opponents in Galatia. Their case against Paul is that they discredit his authority and his teachings. They believe in the necessity of circumcision and keeping the entire Jewish Torah. Secondly, we have a defendant. Paul is the defendant or respondent in this case. The defendant or respondent are terms used in Civil and Criminal cases in which a person is accused of committing a crime, or a person against whom some type of civil relief is being sought in a civil case.² In arbitration³, the defendant is called a respondent because he/she is responding to the claims of the claimant.⁴ Paul as a respondent is more fitted for this scenario as the plaintiff has brought claims against Paul in whom he has the opportunity to defend himself. Paul’s main argument is that salvation is not acquired through “works of the Law” but by faith in Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, we have the jury, which is the audience of Paul’s letter or the people of Galatia. A jury is a sworn body of people convened to render an impartial verdict (a finding of fact on a question) officially submitted to them by a court. The jury therefor becomes the decision maker as to factual issues.⁵ The people of Galatia therefore would have been in a position where they would have had to listen to both arguments from both parties, listening to the facts while weighing up the positives and negatives of each sides arguments then coming to a decision on whom they would agree with. The final

¹ J.A. Ballentine, *A Law Dictionary of Words, Terms, Abbreviations, and Phrases which are Peculiar to the Law and of those which have a peculiar meaning in the law* (New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange Ltd, 2005), 331.

² Ballentine, *A Law Dictionary*, 119.

³ Arbitration is a form of alternative dispute resolution which resolves disputes outside the courts through either a mediation or negotiation process. The dispute will be decided by one or more persons (the "arbitrators", "arbiters" or "arbitral tribunal"), which renders the "arbitration award".

⁴ Ballentine, *A Law Dictionary*, 24.

⁵ Ballentine, *A Law Dictionary*, 502.

and most important person is the judge. The judge is the presiding official in any civil or criminal trial. The role of the judge in a jury trial is to be the decision maker as to legal issues.⁶ I have tentatively placed myself in the position of the judge in order to examine the evidence presented so that a judgement could be reached— not an easy task by any means. The case is called **‘Paul vs Judaizers’**

4.2 The Judaizers Argument

The first *Issue* that the Judaizers would likely present for their argument would be the issue on Paul’s authority to preach to the people of Galatia on a law-free gospel. The second Issue that the Judaizers might present as their key argument relate to the validity of Paul’s comments that a person is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ.⁷ The Judaizers were Jewish Christians who taught that it was necessary to adopt Jewish customs and practices, with their main belief being the observance of the Jewish Torah, as well as being circumcised.

The *relevant laws* that the Judaizers may cite are the Mosaic Law as well as the Jewish law on circumcision. Circumcision was a token of the covenant between God and Abraham, as well as his descendants. By *applying* the law to the issue at hand, the Judaizers strongly believe that all those who profess a faith in their traditions, including new believers, should be circumcised in accordance with the Law of Moses in order to be God’s people and to be saved.⁸ The Judaizers are therefore likely to *conclude* that by

⁶ Ballentine, *A Law Dictionary*, 225.

⁷ Galatians 2:16.

⁸ According to the Torah, the commandment to circumcise is given in Genesis 17: 9-14 where Abraham was commanded by God to circumcise himself, all male members of his household, his descendants and slaves in an everlasting covenant. In Leviticus 12:3 the Lord spoke to Moses saying in the eighth day the flesh of his (the child) foreskin shall be circumcised. Under Jewish law, failure to follow the commandment given to Abraham incurs the penalty of karet (being cut off from the rest of the community of God). The Torah (Genesis 16:14) also says: "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant." Of all of the Torah's

abiding in the Laws of Moses and following Jewish customs and practices, the people of Galatia would be saved while also keeping the terms of the covenant intact. To discard the law and rely on faith in Jesus Christ alone would put ones salvation in jeopardy.

In terms of addressing the issue on Paul's authority to preach, the Judaizers were aware of Paul's past as a persecutor of Christians, therefore they had the right to be suspicious about whether what Paul was preaching was true, or a trick to trap more Christian followers. Paul even admits in his letter that he "persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it."⁹ There was also the question of limited evidence to prove that Paul was in fact called by Christ to preach his gospel with Ananias of Damascus the only likely witness that would be able to testify about Paul's conversion. The Judaizers presented a strong case to the people of Galatia that would have many second guessing and questioning what Paul had taught them about Christ.

4.3 Paul's Argument

The plaintiff made strong claims against Paul in which Paul would have had to counter. Paul would have to provide a good argument in order to persuade both Judge and Jury on the merits of his case while also trying to explain the concept of faith so that it is understood by the Christian believer. Paul's aim was to persuade the people of Galatia not to turn away from the truth of Jesus Christ and the message of the Gospel which he had previously taught them. Given that Paul was a trained Pharisee with specialized experience in interpreting the Law, he would have known how to present his case to his audience in a way which would persuade them to listen to what he had to say.

613 commandments, the "brit milah" (literally, Covenant of Circumcision) is probably the one most universally observed.

⁹ Galatians 1:13.

We see Paul's passion come through in the beginning of Chapter 3 where he calls the Galatians "fools." This was because he had already taught the people that salvation through works of the law was unachievable. Paul had provided an easier alternative which was through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul would really have to push this point while also providing a strong argument on the role of the law now that Christ was in the picture. Paul interprets the law as a means of helping bring others into the promise, not to exclude by virtue of the law. Paul's argument against the Judaizers then is that they are using the law to exclude others, such as Gentiles. In doing so, they were harming relationships within society that the law is supposed to protect and sustain. It is not the law, but the application of the law that is the fault here.

Moving back to the case, the main *issues* that Paul needed to respond to related to the question about his authority to preach a law-free salvation to the people of Galatia. The second issue related to proving that a person was justified through faith in Jesus Christ not through the works of the law. Paul would also be arguing the positives and negatives of salvation through works of the law versus salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

The *relevant law* in which Paul would be referring to would also be the Mosaic Law as well as Jewish Law. Paul's aim would be to use and *apply* these laws to the issue being examined in order to point out their weaknesses while also countering the Judaizers claim that salvation comes through keeping the laws such as circumcision. For example, if Paul were to answer the issues concerning circumcision, then he would argue along the lines of Gal 5:2-6 in which he says:

Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who

lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace...For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.¹⁰

Paul's thoughts on circumcision can also be explained in depth in his second letter after Galatians which he sent to the Romans where he points out the weakness of law around physical circumcision stating that:

Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.¹¹

By referring to the law, Paul showed its faults, giving the idea that there is no point in trying to follow the laws if you cannot keep them all. Elaborating on this point, what Paul seems to be emphasising is that it does not matter if one lived by the laws or not, the only thing that counts is having faith in Christ. In order to counter the issue on authority, Paul provides evidence in Gal 1 that he was called not by man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father in whom he had received the Gospel. Paul admits his previous life as a persecutor of Christians would have many questioning whether what he was saying was authentic or a trap. However Paul says that he had been set apart and given the authority to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles. The men traveling with Paul on Damascus Road as well as Ananias could possibly provide evidence on Paul's behalf supporting his claim that he was indeed called by Christ.

¹⁰ Galatians 5:2-6 (NRSV).

¹¹ Romans 2:25-29 (NRSV).

In *concluding* Paul's argument, I have listed below the main points that he makes throughout Gal 3:19-29 which supports his counter argument against the Judaizers claims on pursuing the works of the law. These points support Paul's claim that salvation comes through faith in Christ not the law. These would be the points that Paul would use in his closing statement. For example:

- Paul says that the righteous shall live by faith for all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse;
- The people of Galatia received the Spirit through faith not works of the law;
- Christ redeemed all from the curse of the law through his death. To Paul, no one but Jesus Christ is able to fulfil all laws;
- Paul uses Abraham as an example to prove his point by saying that Abraham was deemed righteous because of his faith not his works. Therefore the promise made to Abraham came through faith not the observance of the law.
- Paul had questioned what use the law was in chapter 3:19, saying that the law was added because of our transgressions. However the power of the law was limited until the offspring of the promise would come which is Jesus Christ. Paul explains that the law was only a guide, a teacher, to make people aware that they were committing sin. In Paul's eyes, Jesus had returned therefore bringing an end to the law.
- Paul says if the law was capable of giving life, then righteousness would come from the Law.
- Paul's final argument is that all who have faith in Christ did not have to rely on laws such as circumcision to become children of God because having faith made

believers “sons of God” automatically. That means that they became heirs to the promise made to Abraham.

- It is said that Paul baptised the people of Galatia into Christ therefore there was no more Jews or Greeks, male or female, because all had become one new people under Christ.

4.4 Verdict – A decision on the Issues of Fact in the Case

From the position of judge, Paul presents a strong case to the Jury or the people of Galatia by being able to counter claim the arguments made against him by the Judaizers. In regard to the issue on Paul’s authority to preach the gospel, both sides provide strong evidence to support their claims. It would come down to statements from witnesses who could verify that Paul was either a prosecutor for the Jews or a servant called by the resurrected Christ to spread the good news.

In regard to the second issue on whether salvation comes through faith in Christ or works of the law, I believe that Paul has provided sufficient facts which favor his argument. However Paul’s argument on the function of the law and its role now that Christ is in the picture is found wanting. In other words, we are left unsure of what exactly the purpose the law is if Christ has fulfilled the law? Paul also in Gal 3:19 has not provided a clear answer on the function of the law other than that it was “added because of our transgression” and that it was only a temporary guide until Christ came which begs the question, does the law still hold any significant value within religious circles or within society? Therefore as a judge, it leaves me to speculate further on the matter by looking at Paul’s writing within the text in order to gain a better understanding.

The verdict or final decision to the first issue on the authority to preach would be in favor of Paul because there were people who either witnessed his conversion or had knowledge of the event such as Ananias of Damascus.¹² Also the work that Paul had done in the name of Christ provides evidence of someone who was called to spread the gospel.

Regarding the second issue on salvation through works of the law versus faith in Christ, the evidence provided would also lead me to also rule in favor of Paul as he has provided numerous points on the merits of having faith in Christ which outweigh the points made in regards to salvation through works of the law. The only weakness that I find in Paul's cases is his failure to properly state the function of the law and its purpose especially now that Christ has come into the frame. In my view Paul has merely touched on the law focusing more on the benefits of having faith in Christ yet there is the feeling that Paul still believed that there was still a purpose for the law.

As a judge of this case, I would recommend both parties come together within a mediation setting in order to find a mutual agreement which would benefit both parties, especially for the betterment of all people within society whether it is within the Church setting or the community. What is important is that there is peace which will enable both sides to come together. In this regard, what I find from Paul's interpretation of the law is that the law is still relevant even though Paul acts as if it is not. The law is important because it protects the vulnerable as well as the weak therefore the question is, could there be a compromise where the law alongside Christ co-exists within society? I believe it can as Paul sums up the importance of unity in Gal 3: 28 where he

¹² Acts 9:1-19.

says that there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, no male and female, because all are one in Christ Jesus.

4.5 Conclusion

The law is seen as an atonement before God and was established to demonstrate our short comings, thus, the laws highlighted our flaws and errors. Therefore it is because of the law that we knew or know sin, however Jesus' death and resurrection is the ultimate atonement achieved through faith that allows us to be justified before God. Thus we are no longer under the law when it comes to being recognised by God. This is in the spiritual or religious realm, however, in society, it refers to social governance of people under the State or Empire.

CHAPTER 5

APPLICATION AND CONCLUSION OF THIS STUDY

Since beginning this thesis, the focus has been finding out the importance of law as well as finding a solution to the issues faced around the law especially in today's society. In this thesis, I have attempted to look at Paul and his letter to the Galatians particularly Chapter 3:19-29 in order to find an answer to the questions which I have raised. In this chapter I will attempt to apply my findings to today's context particularly in context with the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa and in New Zealand (CCCS) and the Church's stance on law within society while looking at both religious law and laws which govern the society we live in. The questions which will guide my answers include the importance of the law within the CCCS and within today's society.

5.1 Importance of the law

The law has great significance in today's society and the law serves many purposes and has many functions. The law is important for a society for it serves as a median of conduct for citizens. The law was also made to provide for proper guidelines as to what is accepted in society and to provide order upon the behavior for all citizens while keeping the society running. Without the law there would be chaos and conflict between social groups and communities therefore it is important that we abide by them. Laws which govern societies differ from laws which are observed by different cultures and religions however the two are closely connected. Most laws in society as well as international law allows for religious and cultural law and practices to be observed so long as it is done so in a reasonable manner which does not affect or pose any threat to

the community or people within society.¹ The historical roots of the many laws which we find in today's society have been drawn from ancient laws such as the 10 commandments for example from the Christian bible where some commandments say that "you shall not murder, steal, or bear false witness."² These are some of the most important laws which govern society which also allows society to function and communities to live peacefully. Breaking those laws incurs punishment just as we find written throughout the Bible. Religious and cultural laws therefore still hold value within society and also play a part in governing society.

5.2 Law from a New Zealand born Samoan Perspective

From a New Zealand born Samoan perspective I agree with this concept that the law plays an important role within society. All who live within the community are under the law therefore all must abide by the law including the CCCS and its members. I have found no significant issues where the CCCS has had problems with the law within New Zealand.

5.3 Perspective of Law from a New Zealand born Samoan living in Samoa

From my experience as a New Zealand born Samoan who has been living in Samoa the past 3 years, I have noticed the difference between the observance of law within New Zealand and here in Samoa. Samoa which is said to be founded on God has also been recognized as a Christian State. However an amendment to the Samoan Constitution which previously claimed that the country was "founded on God" in

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

² The Crimes Act 2013 in Samoa contains laws which prohibit murder or culpable homicide as well as laws and punishment on theft or stealing which is similar to most laws in every country.

Article 1 now addresses a specifically Christian conception of God, declaring Samoa as a "Christian nation founded of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."³ There are many unwritten laws which are followed by the people of Samoa as well as separate laws which exist within different villages which are enforced by village councils which differ from government law but have been recognized by government legislation.⁴

5.3.1 Laws which divide Church and State

The Church as well as its ministers have always been respected amongst the people as well as by governing authorities. However recently, one of the main issues around the law which has affected the CCCS is the law on tax which declares that all ministers of religion must pay tax.⁵ Without going into detail on the issues between the Church and government on taxation, the main point that I take from this issue is the Church's decision to not abide by this law by refusing to pay tax. The government had previously taxed ministers in the early 1970s under the Tariffs Act 1976⁶ however the law was changed and ministers were exempt from paying tax. In 2018, the law to tax ministers was re-introduced and in response, the members of CCCS decided at the general assembly held at Malua (Fono Tele) in 2018 to withhold ministers paying tax; a decision which cannot be overturned or discussed until the next general assembly in 2020.⁷

³ Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa Amendment Act 2016: Article One.

⁴ Village Fono Act 1990: An Act to validate and empower the exercise of power and authority by Village Fono in accordance with the custom and usage of their villages and to confirm or grant certain powers and to provide for incidental matters.

⁵ Income Tax Amendment Act 2017.

⁶ Joyetter Feagaimaali'i, "Senior C.C.C.S. Minister tells: Why I'm paying my taxes," Samoan Observer, 01 April 2009. <https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/39649>. (11 June 2019).

⁷ Lanuola Tusani Tupufia, "Church stands firm on its position on tax," Samoan Observer, 13 April 2019. <https://www.samoaoobserver.ws/category/samoa/40371>. (12 June 2019).

The conflict between State and Church has raised various issues particularly around whether the CCCS and its decision making as well as the constitution of the Church outweigh the laws which govern the nation which requires all citizens to abide by them. By looking at Paul's interpretation of the law in Galatians in order to find an answer to these issues, I believe that it is difficult to draw comparison between Paul's time and today's context as Paul focuses more on religious laws such as Mosaic and Jewish law whereas the situation between the government and the CCCS involves law in general not religious laws.

What we can draw comparison on is Paul's stance on the law and the CCCS stance on the law. Paul as we have found does not give a definite answer on how important the law is nor does he elaborate on the function of the law. Paul's main focus is on the importance of having faith in Christ and not relying on the works of the law. Could we then say that the CCCS has also put their faith in Christ and his ministry putting first the constitution of the Church and its beliefs while disregarding any laws which may clash with the beliefs of the Church? It is a difficult subject which is still being debated today with ministers being charged in the court of law for not paying tax.

5.3.2 Law student Perspective

From the perspective of someone that practiced law, I believe that all citizens are subject under the law. As the old saying goes "no one is above the law" therefore all citizens should abide by the laws of their society. If the CCCS are to set an example for its members and the community then we should be looking to abide by the rules and laws of the governing bodies within Samoa just as the CCCS in the outer nations are doing (e.g. all abide by laws of their governing bodies including paying tax). By not

abiding by the law, the CCCS sends a message to its members that it is ok to not abide by the laws which govern the nation. Most Christians during Paul's time would have been under Roman rule. They would have still had to abide by the laws of the empire. However, this is different from law making. It is important to abide by laws that are being made and consulted by all important parts of society such as the Church community.

I would agree with Paul's stance on the law particularly in the letter to the Galatians as well as his latter writings which focus on the idea that people no longer have to try and fulfil the requirements of the Mosaic and Jewish law in order to gain salvation therefore Paul was most likely focusing on religious laws rather than the laws which governed the society he and his followers had lived in. I believe Paul still would have abided by the laws of society in order to avoid persecution while also using the law to exercise his rights as a Roman citizen in order to get from one place to another without hassle while also enjoying the other benefits which came with being a Roman citizen. Paul understood the importance of submitting to governing authorities and abiding by the laws which govern society as he had written in his letter to the Romans that "every person should submit to the governing authorities"⁸ with Romans 13:6-7 highlighting the importance of paying taxes.

5.3.3 Malua Student Perspective

From my perspective as a member of the CCCS and a student studying at Malua Theological College, I see the taxation law has the ultimate effect of harming the "alofa" relationship established according to the CCCS doctrines while also disregarding the rights of the Church under the Samoan Constitution which protects the

⁸ Romans 13:1-2.

rights of religious entities to freely express themselves.⁹ I believe that Paul would see this stately law as an abomination as the State taxation law forcefully reframes the covenantal relationship between the faifeau and congregation under CCCS Constitution, in effect undermining the capacity of CCCS to perform its religious responsibilities. Under the CCCS Constitution section 8, it outlines the relationship between the Church and the Government stating that:

The proper attitude of the Church in its relations with those Governments which are responsible for each country should be as follows: The Church should have its place in the activities of the State by reason of its Church members being trustworthy citizens, yet without needless interference in the political activities of the State. This is to say, the position of the Church in relation to the State is that it should advise the State on those matters which concern the Christian life.¹⁰

The Constitution continues by saying that:

...[i]t must be clear that the manner of the government of the Church is very different from the government of the State...The Church should seriously consider equipping its members to stand firm and unmoved by the changeable nature of modern day thinking. God is One and His Church is one; and all governments should be united in Him... This means that it is the special duty of the Church in relation to Governments to enhance the Christian life of all their people, affirming the truth that God is watching us with His True Judgement through Christ Jesus, because He is forever the God of both the Church and all Governments.¹¹

My interpretation of this section of the CCCS Constitution is that the Church leaves matters pertaining to the governing of the nation to the Government while the Church advises the Government on any situations which relate to the Church or 'Christian life.' Also under this Constitution, the Church and its members are urged to stand firm and unmoved by the 'changeable nature of modern day thinking' which in this case is the idea of the Government to tax Church ministers from their *alofa*.

⁹ Constitution of the Independent State of Samoa 1960, Section 11: Freedom of religion.

¹⁰ The Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa 2016, 16-17.

¹¹ The Constitution of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa 2016, 16-17.

Overall, I believe the Church is right to challenge laws which may go against what they believe in as written in the CCCS Constitution.

5.3.4 Recommendations

In order for Church and State to come together, common ground must be found between both parties where peace and unity is achieved for the betterment of the country and its people. As evident in the past, the CCCS has a major role to play in the development of Samoa, therefore it is essential for the State to acknowledge the Church by involving them in the law making process through consultation, particular in regards to laws which would threaten Christian doctrine, or laws which would affect the Church and its members. If there are situations where issues do arise, then arbitration allows both parties to come together in the hope of finding a peaceful solution. I find that the problem is not the law itself (paying taxes), but the process in which the taxation law was brought about, that is without proper consultation between State and Church in the law making process. The taxation law in my opinion was forced on the Churches. In my view the Church would be more than happy to pay taxes as the Church contributes significantly to the government and the people of Samoa whether it is spiritually or financially. Therefore, the government in good spirit should give the opportunity to the Church, to have an adequate say in matters relating to religious issues.

Paul brings down the barriers which categorise people within society with his comments in Gal 3:28 which aim to unite all people under Christ no matter what background you come from or status you hold within society. I believe that Paul's teachings tell us that the observance of religious law is important but faith in Jesus Christ is paramount.

5.4 Conclusion

As I have mentioned earlier in this paper, Paul says the arrival of Christ has brought an end to the law however I would have to disagree with Paul siding with the Jewish interpretation which says that the law will continue to exist until the sun, moon, and stars are no more. In other words the law will continue to exist until the end of days when Christ returns to judge the world. Therefore law still has a role to play within today's society with its purpose being to keep order and to guide people within society. What must be understood is that Paul in Galatians was talking about the Mosaic law not law in general therefore I interpret Paul's words in verses 19-29 as Paul talking about the end of the Mosaic law which the people of Israel had observed for centuries, up until the time of Paul where the Jewish People continued that tradition of observing the law. So much emphasis was put on salvation through works of the law, however in Paul's eyes it was a feat that was unachievable because no one but Christ could fulfil all the laws. Christ had provided an easier way to obtain salvation and that was through having faith in Him. This is what Paul meant when he said that the law was added because of our transgressions until the offspring of the promise came.

In my view, Paul in his letter to the Galatians did not provide an adequate explanation as to the function of the law. This may be because it was his first letter meaning new under-developed thoughts and ideas which would be logical, as his understanding of the law becomes more well developed in his later writing such as his letter to the Romans. Paul also did not make it clear to his audience which laws he was referring to whether it was religious law or law in general. Although most scholars agree that Paul was referring to the Mosaic Law, Paul should have clearly stated that he was referring to the Mosaic Law in his letter. For a Pharisee, the interpretation of the

law is straightforward however for a Christian or follower of Christ this may not be the case. Yet faith provides an equal or greater substitute of the law as the concept of faith is simple compared to trying to interpret or live by the law.

As I mentioned earlier, Paul would have known the importance of abiding by the laws of the Roman Empire and as a Pharisee who was an expert of the law, Paul would have known the importance of laws within society and the role the law played in maintaining peace and order. Paul in my opinion knew that the law was still good; however it was the way that the Judaizers were interpreting the law that was the problem. The Judaizers who held the power within their society had twisted the law in a way which excluded non Jewish people. This is similar to the issue between the State and Church; the law is not the problem, but it is the way that the law was passed and the process followed by the government which angered the Church. The government failed to consult the Church adequately in relation to the drafting of the taxation law of ministers.

Overall, from what I have learnt from studying Paul's letter to the Galatians particularly chapter 3:19-29 is that the law in which Paul talks about has limited connection to the law in today's society because of the differences in context. In this day and age, I believe that the laws in which Paul speaks about cannot relate to all people within society whether it is here in Samoa or abroad because of the diversity of cultures and beliefs which exist today. What we can draw from Paul and the law in light of law in today's society is that some of the laws that Paul refers to has influenced the laws which govern today's society while other laws arguably have little relevance.

My view is that the laws which govern today's society should be upheld as a guide for all so that peace within the community is maintained between the people, State, and all Church denominations. The law should be used to protect the vulnerable and weak from the dominant figures of society, while also considering the rights of the fortunate and less fortunate. I believe that from Paul's interpretation, the law is still good and still serves a purpose. Law plays a major part in solving issues which we are faced with today, whether it is religious or civil law. The law should stand until it is no longer required, which I would say the end of days when Christ returns. I feel that all the answers to the ongoing issues between Church and State lie in v. 28 of Galatians which encourages all people and groups of society to come together in unity while reducing the barriers which categorise and divide us. It is all about moving forward peacefully; together as one.

GLOSSARY

<i>Alofa</i>	Love Offering
<i>Faifeau</i>	Church Minister
<i>Fa'afeagaiga</i>	Church Minister of a Congregation in the CCCS (Congregational Christian Church of Samoa)
<i>Taulaga Soifua</i>	Person offered as a sacrifice to do God's will
<i>Fautua</i>	Advisors

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