

EXPLORING 2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-15 FROM AN *AITAUMALELE* PERSPECTIVE

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by

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ABSTRACT

Paul's missionary work laid the groundwork for establishing many of the first-century churches. However, this was not without its complications. In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul defends his apostleship because of issues arising within the church, and in Chapters 8 and 9 he addresses the issue of offering. In this paper, I would like to employ the perspective of *aitaumalele* as a hermeneutical lens, to engage dialogue of my selected text: 2 Corinthians 9:1-15. The overall purpose, is to gain an alternative understanding from a Samoan viewpoint, addressing what it can mean for clergy and laypeople of the Congregational Christian Church in Samoa (CCCS) and their service in the diaspora.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Anno Domini
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church in Samoa
Chs.	Chapters
1-2 Cor.	1-2 Corinthians
EFKS	Ekalesia Fa'apotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NT	New Testament
Pss.	Psalms

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear parents, *Faalafitele Fonomaali'i Sene* and *Tauatia Fonomaali'i Sene*.

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INTRODUCTION

Upon commencement of my studies here in Malua, there has always been an unspoken of cultural divide between the local students and students from outside of Samoa. Although the socio-political and socio-economic factors are not as apparent within the student body, I have found that among my time with family and my village it is easily identifiable in that context. With this in mind, I sought this as an opportunity to pursue both my understanding as a Christian in the diaspora and appreciation of the New Testament, to discuss and raise awareness about the theological viewpoints that the Apostle Paul raises regarding this relationship, and also its impacts on our Christian existence. Contextually, Christian existence referred to here is defined as understanding the way of life of an early Christian believer, to then understand our way of life as a Christian believer.

Another reason I wanted to engage this topic is because it plays fairly close to the heart. As a product of the diaspora, to now being a student here at Malua, I have come to realise the shift in my Christian existence. Living in Australia, I lack the level familiarity with the Samoan culture someone raised in the homeland. It has also become apparent from my time here that there is a socio-political divide between those of the diaspora and those from the motherland. The hope, then, is to break down the barriers of the divide and to provide an alternative understanding. This gap presents an opportunity to initiate an academic theological discussion about these current issues, whilst bringing it from the viewpoint of first-century Christians. Methodologically speaking, I would like to explore the importance of giving or offering from the perspective of *aitaumalele* (serving your family in Samoa from abroad or overseas). I have witnessed my father doing this from Australia. It is showing that despite living abroad it does not stop you from serving your family in Samoa.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul raises many issues such as giving money and gifts to the church.¹ In addition, Paul as the person responsible for the managing of the money and gifts that the Corinthian church gives for the saints in Jerusalem reminds me of our church administration and their role in managing the money contributed by church members every year. Thus, I see 2 Corinthians 9:1-15, as a passage about giving and managing as a relevant text for me to explore. I will use in this study the hermeneutic of *aitaumalele* as the lens with literary (narrative and rhetorical) criticism to read the text. This is different from other use of the hermeneutic as a lens to analyse an exegesis of a text or the so-called reader response approach. The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter One shows the reading used in this study – the hermeneutical approach. Chapter Two is the historical background of 2 Corinthians. Chapter Three is the exegesis followed by the conclusion in Chapter Four.

¹ According to Lim, there has been a widely accepted view that Paul's consideration of the poor is not one of the apostle's emphases in his letter. However, Lim argues that it is and 2 Corinthians 8-9 shows that. This is a very important point for this study because it shows the poor people as other people that Paul wrote to. See, Kar Yong Lim, "Generosity from Pauline Perspective: Insights from Paul's Letters to the Corinthians," *ERT* 37, no. 1 (2013): 20-33.

CHAPTER 1

READING APPROACH – HERMENEUTIC AND LITERARY CRITICISM

1. Introduction

In this thesis, I use *aitaumalele* as a framework for reading. Methodologically, I will utilise literary criticism to explore the text. The discussion therefore begins with an explanation of *aitaumalele* as a foundation for my hermeneutical inquiry, followed by a definition of literary criticism as a way of considering the rhetorical and narrative aspects of the text.

2. An explanation of *Tautua Aitaumalele*

There is a common proverbial saying in Samoa, “*o le ala i le pule o le tautua*” (“the way to authority is through servitude”). The saying is commonly associated with the selection of *matais* or chiefs within a family or village. It suggests that the way to become a *matai* one must perform good *tautua* (service). The Samoan word *tautua* can be defined as “serve, service, server and servant.”¹ According to ‘Aumua Simanu, in ancient Samoan tradition, *tautua* was carried out by untitled men² and their wives; with the purpose that they would eventually succeed the *matai* that they were serving.³ Therefore, *tautua* is a key concept in Samoan tradition or *fa’aSamoa* (the Samoan way), as it manifests the way of life for a Samoan.

¹ Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), 33-40.

² Known in Samoan as *taule’ale’a*

³ ‘Aumua Mata’itusi Simanu, *‘O Si Manu a Ali’i: A Text for the Advanced Study of Samoan Language and Culture* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 108.

There are many variants of *tautua* that depict different aspects of Samoan life (e.g., *tautua: matavela, tuāvae, toto, matalilo, ‘upu, aitaumalele, etc.*). For the purpose of this paper, I shall solely focus on *tautua ‘aitaumalele*, by defining it and explaining its purposes, as well as its implications. *Aitaumalele* refers to someone whom *tautua* from afar, particularly in the diaspora. It is quite common within Samoan families that a member would be selected to move to another country in search of a better life, not just for themselves, but also (and mainly) for the family. Parents would encourage their children to migrate overseas for education and/or work purposes, so that they could support the family from afar, the extended family and village.

Many of the types of *tautua* articulate service within close encounters of the *matai* or the family. So, how would one *tautua* one’s *matai* or family from afar? *Tautua aitaumalele* henceforth suggests a different type of *tautua*, one that is financial. According to Simanu, for those living abroad, this type of support is required by the family and the *matai* during *fa’alavelave* (family occasion).⁴ She goes on to say, that if a Samoan is aware of a *fa’alavelave* in Samoa, then they need not wait to be notified by the *matai*, but to act out of their own initiative.⁵ Money sent should also not be limited to one’s parents or immediate family, but to the *matai* that one serves. According to traditional Samoan belief, an ideal *tautua mamao* that looks after their family and *matai* would also reap the benefits in the homeland.

Tautua aitaumalele evidently resonates with Samoans in the diaspora, as I have seen my father *tautua* from afar, by regularly sending money from Australia to Samoa. My father hails from the villages of Foailalo and Faletagaloa (Safune) in the island of

⁴ Pratt defines *fa’alavelave* as: a hinderance, an impediment. See Rev. George Pratt and Re. JE Newell, *Pratt’s Grammar & Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (Apia, Western Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 1911). In Samoan tradition it refers to events that hinder normal everyday life. It generally constitutes special occasions, such as, weddings, funerals, etc.

⁵ Simanu, ‘*O Si Manu a Ali*’, 110.

Savaii. While residing in Foailalo he was chosen by the *matais* of the family to move over to New Zealand so that he could work and send money back for the family. He is still doing this role and is called *aitaumalele*. Intriguingly, my father's *tautua* was not solely *fa'alavelave* purposes but to support the livelihood of our relatives.

3. Literary Criticism – Narrative and Rhetorical

The methodological framework for this thesis will utilise the principles of literary criticism with special attention to the use of 'narrative and rhetorical criticism' in order to analyse 2 Cor. 9:1-15. This is important because due to the rhetorical nature of Paul's teachings. Indeed, this is critical in analysing Paul's language to persuade and attract the attention of readers and listeners. 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..."⁶ 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 in terms of its language, with emphasis on word patterns and the progressive textures of how the letter is told and shown. This allows us to examine how various elements of the rhetorical unit are put together in order to achieve a particular purpose.⁷

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 situation of the text. A rhetorical situation involves an audience, a speaker or writer, a topic, or

⁶ 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.

⁷ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 91.

issue of mutual concern and an occasion for communication.⁸ 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.⁹ I believe the rhetorical situation can require a specific/common response although I would think that a response is not obligated.

Narrative criticism¹⁰ as part of Literary criticism explores what the text tells and shows looking at the overall plot of the story, as well as the sequence of events that the story relates. Through narrative criticism, questions are asked about different categories such as characters, setting, tone, style, point of view, imagery, and themes. For this study, narrative criticism will be used to explore the setting, characters, their movements and conversations in the selected passages. Rhetorical criticism will be used to explore how the language of the selected text tells and shows the narration of the story, the movements of the characters, their conversations and relationship to each other.

⁸ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 91; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 35.

⁹ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, 91; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 35.

¹⁰ Mark Allan Powell, *What is Narrative Criticism?*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 239. See also, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, "Narrative Criticism: How Does the Story Mean," in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, eds. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 23-49.

4. Conclusion

As outlined above, I will utilise *aitaumalele* as a hermeneutic for re-reading the text. This will be grounded within the parameters of Narrative and Rhetorical criticism as parts of literary criticism, to explore certain questions regarding Paul's attitude towards giving. The following questions will guide the exploration: Is there *tautua* in the text? Is there *aitaumalele* in the text? What is offering in the text from the perspective of *aitaumalele*? Is there reward in doing *aitaumalele*?

CHAPTER 2

2 CORINTHIANS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

This Chapter will describe the historical background of the second letter to the Corinthians looking at the author's time and place in relation to the church in Corinth. It is followed by a brief look at traditional interpretation of 2 Corinthians 9:1-15.

2. Historical Background of 2 Corinthians

Corinth was the connecting link between Rome, the capital of the world, and the East. The city occupied a strategic location for north-south trade routes.¹ It grew rich from the commerce passing through, and the city was a popular destination for many sailors because of its good harbours and female companions. At Corinth the apostle established a flourishing church, made up of a cross section of the worldly-minded people who had flocked to Corinth to participate in the gambling, legalized temple prostitution, business adventures, and amusements available in a first century town (1 Cor. 6:9-11).²

In various ways 2 Corinthians reflects Paul's dealings with the church in Corinth during the period from the founding of the church in about AD 50 until the writing of this letter in AD 55 or 56.³ The various episodes in the interactions between Paul and the Corinthians can be summarized as follows. They show that the founding visit to Corinth lasted about eighteen months (Acts 18). Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from

¹ Raymond F. Collins, *Second Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 3. See also, Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 2.

² Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 48-62. See also, Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians, Volume 40* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1986), 61-65.

³ Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 67.

Macedonia, while on his way to Corinth again, in AD 55 or 56. Paul's final visit to Corinth (Acts 20) was probably when he wrote Romans, just before returning to Jerusalem. The painful visit, which Acts does not record, and the severe letter provide immediate background for the writing of 2 Corinthians.⁴ We do not possess the severe letter although some scholars have suggested that 2 Corinthians 10-13 may have been part of that epistle. There is no manuscript evidence to support this view, however.

The occasion and purpose of the letter is Paul's continuous attempt to resolve many issues going on at the church in Corinth. One of the problems occurring in the church is people questioning Paul's use of the gifts and money collected from the church members. Paul hurriedly travelled to Corinth from Ephesus in an attempt to meet this situation. Although this visit is not mentioned in Acts, it is implied in 2 Corinthians 12:14. Paul failed to achieve his desired objective (2:1; 12:14, 21; 13:1-2), and experienced open hostility from the leader of the opposition (2:5-8; 7:12). Paul then returned to Ephesus, where he wrote a severe letter to the Corinthians putting into it the full weight of his apostolic authority. He sent the letter by Titus, and then made his way to Macedonia, where Titus met him with an encouraging report (2:12-13; 7:6-16). The majority had been won back to Paul and had taken disciplinary action against the offenders (2:5-11). However, there was still a rebellious minority. He also gave instructions concerning the offering he was collecting for the impoverished church in Jerusalem. Hence, Paul wrote the letter now called the second letter to the Corinthians.

Second Corinthians is the most autobiographical of Paul's letters, containing numerous references to the hardships he endured in the course of his ministry (see

⁴ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 470. See also, Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 2-3.

11:23-33).⁵ Paul mentioned these to establish the legitimacy of his ministry and to illustrate the nature of true spirituality. In defending his ministry Paul opens his heart, showing his deep emotion. He reveals his strong love for the Corinthians, his ardent zeal for the glory of God, his uncompromising loyalty to the truth of the gospel, and his stern indignation in confronting those who disrupt the fellowship of the church. His life was bound up in the life of his converts, and he was not coldly professional in his ministry (see 1:6; 5:13; 7:3-7; 11:2; 12:14-15).

The context of second Corinthians consists of three main parts.⁶ The first seven chapters contain Paul's defence of his conduct and his ministry. He explains the change in his plans to visit Corinth and responds to a charge of fickleness. In discussing the Christian ministry, he expounds on its nature, its problems, its motivating principles, and its responsibilities. The second unit, chapters 8 and 9, deals with the offering being raised by Paul for the poor saints in Judea. Paul urged the Corinthians to be liberal and cheerful in giving so that God might bless them in every way. Chapters 10 through 13 form the third segment of the letter and contain a message of rebuke to the remaining detractors in the church. Paul responds to the jibes and slanders of his critics and fully vindicates his authority as an apostle.

Second Corinthians is a valuable guide in examining our own motives for serving the Lord, whether as lay people or as ordained pastors and evangelists.⁷ As an instrument of the Holy Spirit, this letter can refine our motives until we reflect the kind of selfless giving best exemplified in Christ, but also in His servant Paul. The instructions concerning the collection for Jerusalem (Chs. 8 and 9) emphasize

⁵ Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 1-2.

⁶ Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 7-10.

⁷ Craig S. Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

generosity in the area of financial resources, just as Paul emphasized generosity in self-giving throughout the letter.

3. Review of Three Traditional Interpretations of 2 Corinthians 9:1-

15

This review focuses on the following three traditional interpretations of the pericope 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 as a text about money and gift collection. The scope of this study enables me to focus only on the following four scholars' interpretations. The three traditional interpretations are: first, is the question of where the money of gifts were taken to or used for. Second, is the consideration of the questions about a way of raising the important issue of helping the poor. Third, is the consideration of Paul's talk about giving and offering as an apologetic letter. While the general consensus among biblical academics is that chapters 8 and 9 can be taken in the same light (as is often the case) I will attempt to focus on my Chapter 9 accordingly. However, where I will not be able to disregard the prior Chapter, so as not to compromise the findings of these scholars, I shall also include it where necessary, but also not to take away from the purpose of this study as well. The main objective here is to show three traditional interpretations of 2 Corinthians 9 and whether they could reflect the importance of discipleship in diaspora.

First is the question of what offering is in relation to the use of the money and gifts that were collected. Ben Witherington's interpretation reflects this question. For Witherington, 2 Corinthians 9 as part of showing what offering is and is shown and revealed in the rhetorical structure of the letter. In Ben Witherington's analysis of 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9, he addresses the conflict between the apostle Paul and the church in Corinth. According to Witherington, the basis of this conflict was due to

Paul's "unwillingness to accept patronage in Corinth, all the while appealing for a collection."⁸ Which in turn, led to various suspicions about his handling of money matters and what it showed about his credibility. Therefore, Witherington, attributes chapters 8 and 9 as "deliberative arguments," with Chapter 9 emphasizing all the points made in Chapter 8. What is meant by "deliberative arguments," is that these are carefully constructed and thought-out reasons supporting Paul's ideas and theories. In the larger spectrum, they also look to justify his credibility and innocence.

Witherington poses that 2 Corinthians is one of the most difficult of Paul's letters for the interpreter because of the critical problems in regard to the letter's integrity and because some of the issues raised in the letter are so explosive.⁹ The notion that the letter as a whole is comprised of a number of separate letters has commonly become accepted. There is also an argument proposed about Paul's opposition, who were Jewish Christians (probably from Jerusalem) that were going around to various missionary posts of Pauls trying to sabotage his work. This feud between Paul and his opponents is critical in providing the basis for Witherington's attribution of the rhetorical nature of 2 Corinthians.

For Witherington, he attributes the rhetoric of 2 Corinthians as an example of forensic or judicial rhetoric. This type of rhetoric is characteristic of focusing on things done or said in the past, things which one could be taken to trial, and for which the audience will be the judge.¹⁰ The focus on the past in 2 Corinthians is therefore found in two places, in the first real statement of the basic proposition of the letter (2:17), and also in the narrative account of what has happened leading up to it. Thus, highlighting

⁸ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 412.

⁹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 327.

¹⁰ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 333.

the narrative statement in 1:12 which in turn discusses how Paul and the Corinthians have behaved in the past.

Essentially, Witherington discusses the features of forensic rhetoric and shows how they correlate with the structure of the letter. The *peroratio* refers to the concluding part of a discourse, and is addressed to explain why the letter focuses so much on the past saving acts of God in Christ and so little on what may be called future eschatology. For the focus of this pericope, the author emphasizes how in the *probatio* Paul necessarily resorts to a major deliberative digression in 6:14 – 7:1, which acts the same as 2 Corinthians 8-9 in renewing the discussion of the collection from 1 Corinthians 16, “they had committed themselves to the project but had not carried through with it.”¹¹

In Witherington’s specific analysis of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, he addresses the conflict between the apostle Paul and the church in Corinth. According to Witherington, the basis of this conflict was due to Paul’s “unwillingness to accept patronage in Corinth, all the while appealing for a collection.”¹² Which in turn, led to various suspicions about his handling of money and the questioning of his credibility. And so, the use of Paul’s arguments, as in, how he makes his points, and why he uses such specific examples, have been largely be attributed as “deliberative.” What is meant by “deliberative,” in the sense that it is used here, is that these are carefully constructed and thought-out reasons supporting Paul’s ideas and theories. It serves as a feature of the larger forensic rhetoric of the whole letter.

Taking Quintilian’s definition of the concept, the author shows how the language in this Chapter can be marked as a “deliberative argument.” Quintilian says, “what

¹¹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 336.

¹² Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 412.

really carries greatest weight in deliberative speeches is the authority of the speaker.”¹³ And so, is the point of Witherington about the Corinthians’ readiness to accept Paul’s authority, stating that the rhetorical move by Paul here was risky but not inappropriate. For Paul, the strategy was to put the Corinthians on the defensive regarding their collections, which they had committed to, but did not yet fully complete. However, while doing this he must also show that his own behaviour in regard to the collection is above reproach, otherwise he would be labelled a peddler of God’s word.

Likewise, David Short’s reflection on 2 Corinthians 8-9 that stems from a Chapter written on the topic of dealing with money, in Jim Packer’s book, *Weakness is the Way*.¹⁴ His article serves as an extended footnote complementing Packer’s Chapter. Short discusses the function of money from a biblical perspective, regarding it as a matter of worship.¹⁵ He expands on its spiritual power of being able to displace God from the centre of certain concepts of Christianity. In that, money is not strictly good or evil, but it is also not neutral in its effects on people. We experience these in everyday life, evermore in today’s world, with how much humanity relies on money. From the spiritual view, in which Short addresses, it has the power to claim our worship, promising happiness and blessing, justification, salvation, and redemption.¹⁶ In other words, it is connecting the use of money to offering to God.

Moving into the discussion of the subject within the New Testament, Short claims that chapters 8 and 9 of 2 Corinthians is probably the most significant treatments of money in the NT. The issue relating to the church in Corinth and their financial gift for

¹³ Witherington, *Conflict and Community*, 411.

¹⁴ David Short, “Grace and Generosity: An Expositional Reflection on 2 Corinthians 8-9,” *CRUX: Spring* 52, no. 1 (2016), 36.

¹⁵ Short, “Grace and Generosity,” 36.

¹⁶ Short, “Grace and Generosity,” 36.

the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, coupled with the opposition of new teachings, seem to be regarded as the heart of the apostle's response. Which according to the author, is not to manipulate the Corinthians with threats of destruction and poverty, or even setting a target amount. Rather, Paul points them to the freeness of God's grace. Not to disregard the paper in its entirety, I shall only look into the section which is applicable to my use of the author's work.

Short claims that 2 Corinthians 9 is dedicated to the transforming effects of grace in giving.¹⁷ In essence, he poses that the apostle explains how grace reverses the alchemy of money through the metaphor of farming. What is meant by "the alchemy of money," is the transforming power it has in its value. In other words, the ability money has to be able to substitute valuables that had once been bartered for. For the author, then, it is in the giving of the grace of God that reverses the power of money by multiplying and filling our actions with His blessing. In effect, the chain reaction from giving to God leads to Him bringing blessings. Short refers to how Paul describes the effects of grace-giving on three parties.

The first which the author addresses is the effect that grace-giving has by being a blessing brought to others, the recipients of the gifts.¹⁸ Short uses the literal translation for *eulogia*, which Paul describes the financial gift of the Corinthians, as to reiterate his argument of "blessings." For Short, this emphasizes the use of the echo of creation, so that the financial support from the Corinthians were not just to adhere to the request; but to be a part of God's activity of blessing. The second, is the effect that it has on ourselves.¹⁹ In continuance of the creation analogy, the author moves to farming to explain this concept. In essence, it speaks to the way how one gives (or sows). Short's

¹⁷ Short, "Grace and Generosity," 42.

¹⁸ Short, "Grace and Generosity," 42.

¹⁹ Short, "Grace and Generosity," 42.

claim is that, our giving is like planting a seed in the ground, it is given life by the provision of God's creation (increased and multiplied) so it bears fruit. The overall emphasis is that by what you sow, through God, it is ensured that it is ongoing. So, it does not only have a benefit for those that receive the gift, but there is also a blessing for the sower. The third effect is of our giving on God himself, here the author approaches with great caution. Short, shows how (through the words of Paul) giving directly involves God. I tend not to agree with the authors statement that, "God desires to prove his sufficiency to us...", because it would seem that God then would have an obligation towards His people.²⁰ Though where he acknowledges that God loves a cheerful giver, we should rather think, that it is just because His grace acts in such a way that we would see it this way. What should be taken away from this, is how Short sums up such financial offerings, in that it increase the glory of God.

The second interpretation is about offering in relation to the poor. Ruth Oke's article serves to view the pericope from a contemporary point of view, from the lens of poverty.²¹ This acts as to provide a perspective from the view point of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. She begins by addressing the issue of poverty within the modern world, saying that the most extreme form of poverty is, "a lack of basic human needs."²² Oke, endeavours to show how the "poor" are treated within modern society, and to what the contemporary church is doing to help these people. In which, she discusses some of the issues raised in her paper.

Through the reasons and effects of poverty, Oke looks to explore what the role of the church is among the afflicted. She turns to the teachings of the bible, beginning with

²⁰ Short, "Grace and Generosity," 42.

²¹ Ruth O. Oke, "The Contemporary Church and the Poor in the Light of 2 Corinthians 9," *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology* XIV (2009)

²² Oke, "The Contemporary Church and the Poor in the Light of 2 Corinthians 9," 191.

the Old Testament, in God's instruction to the Israelites to leave a portion of their farm for the poor, widowed and the orphans.²³ For Oke, this shows that God is concerned with the welfare of the poor and the needy. From here, she turns to her exegesis of 2 Corinthians 9, looking to draw on Paul's teachings about the matter.

Oke, lacks the in-depth view of the background which most commentaries offer. In that, the conflict between Paul and the Corinthians is not addressed. Though as mentioned, the highlight in the beginning of her exegesis views the importance of the Jewish Christians in Judea. So, from her exegesis, she connotes that God "wants the household of faith to be compassionate and care for the poor."²⁴ The author highlights three key ways as to the manner in which the apostle would have the Corinthians give. First, it should be *bountifully offered*, in that it should be given earnestly. The second, it should be done *deliberately*, "every man should give accordingly as he purposes in his heart."²⁵ And third, it should be given *freely*, where it is offered cheerfully, and not grudgingly.

While Oke's research is conducted within a vastly different worldview from that of my own, there are a few key points in which I have found quite helpful. The view point of that of the Jewish Christians, shows that it is also important to consider the stance of those which stem the support sought out by Paul. This is particularly critical in explaining my hermeneutic of *aitaumalele*, so that I might also consider the role of the home body. There is a common Samoan saying, "*e lē sili le ta'i i le tapua'i*." In essence, it means that the one who is conducting an activity (whatever it may be) is not greater than those supporting.

²³ Oke, "The Contemporary Church and the Poor in the Light of 2 Corinthians 9," 196.

²⁴ Oke, "The Contemporary Church and the Poor in the Light of 2 Corinthians 9," 201.

²⁵ Oke, "The Contemporary Church and the Poor in the Light of 2 Corinthians 9," 198.

The third interpretation considers 2 Corinthians as an apologetic letter. Craig S. Keener's view though is somewhat distorted, in that, it does not fit the precise contours laid out for such letters in later handbooks.²⁶ Thus, Keener results in bringing forth other views of some, which see it as a parody of apologetic. Therefore, to some degree, I must disagree with Keener's characterising of Paul's letter as an apologetic. While the characteristics may seem to be there, the evidence in which Witherington presents his case of forensic rhetoric far outweigh that of this author's view. He seems to even contradict himself at times through the discussion of later topics, which shall be pointed out. Though while the purpose is not to discredit such work, the focus will be to draw what is applicable to myself.

The general background on Corinth and its churches, can be applicable to both letters to the church. However, according to Keener, the specific situation has evolved since that mentioned in the first letter to the Corinthians.²⁷ The situation, therefore, is the conflict between Paul and the laypeople of Corinth. Arising from the introduction of so-called Christians enticing members of the church through providing a "competing model for apostleship."²⁸ Essentially, creating a major power struggle. Here is where I believe Keener, to be somewhat contradicting. He states that Paul's defence is clearly more than mere apologetic convention. Which seems, to call for a further study into the description of Paul's rhetoric. Though, majority of what he says thereafter generally correlates with the views of other scholars. The actions of Paul's opposition threaten to jeopardize the collection.²⁹

²⁶ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 143.

²⁷ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 143.

²⁸ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 144.

²⁹ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 144-146.

For Keener, the apostle uses the language of benefaction and honour throughout the Chapter.³⁰ Specific words referred to priestly ministries, though it also regarded duties of benefaction volunteered for by or imposed on the well-to-do. Essentially, the act of gifting should be voluntary, according to Paul, but they also generated honour. Therefore, it served as an image reflecting faithfulness or loyalty to the message of Christ. Here we see that, through Keener's interpretation, giving gave an obligation for the Corinthians in that they would promote their faith to God, but also reap the benefits of a well provided financial aid.

These interpretations are some of the traditional views of 2 Corinthians 9 which emphasize what is offering in relation to the giver and the receiver. The interpretations made here will follow the same direction but will add to it my Samoan perspective of giving and offering from afar or *aitaumalele*.

4. Conclusion

This Chapter is twofold. One is to give a description of the historical background of 2 Corinthians to set a platform of what the letter is about in relation to the issues raised in the letter. It is followed by a brief literature review of the traditional interpretations of 2 Corinthians 9 which will be the same direction followed by the interpretation that will be made in the next chapter. The only addition to it is a Samoan flavour of giving and offering from afar.

³⁰ Keener, *1-2 Corinthians*, 214.

CHAPTER 3

EXEGESIS OF 2 CORINTHIANS 9:1-15

1. Introduction

This Chapter will render an attempt at an interpretation of 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 by means of narrative and rhetorical criticism. It will also explore the resulted interpretation through the perspective of *aitaumalele*.

2. Finding the Narrative of 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

At first glance, the pericope would not generally prompt an analysis via narrative criticism. However, it is imperative, in order to really understand the text, that one must also be aware of the context in which it was written. Paul's opening remarks (vv. 1-5) suggest that the reader is aware of the situation that serves the purpose of the text.¹ So, if we are to view the text and regard the context synonymously to gain an interpretation, the question arises of *how*? According to Bruce Longenecker, interest in narrative features of Paul's thought began to emerge in the last two decades of the twentieth century.² With the emergence of such contemporary narrative approach towards Paul's theology, there have been misgivings as to the legitimacy of such an approach. The main goal though, as Richard Hays puts it, is to "show that there can be a continuity between the language of story and discursive language, that the relationship between the two can be, in at least some cases, organic rather than artificial."³

¹ R. H. Strachan, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1935), 141.

² Bruce W. Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 3.

³ Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), 21.

3. Placement of 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

There is a hesitation then to engage such an approach, since, James Dunn expresses his reservations about the use of such contemporary approaches, particularly with the use of Greimas' structural diagram.⁴ I hold a similar reservation, in that, this approach may force an unjustifiable interpretation. Therefore, with reference to the historical background provided in Chapter Two, I shall maintain a traditional narrative approach in order to find the interrelation between the narrative and the discourse, which Hays calls "narrative substructure."⁵ In correlation with rhetorical criticism, I will firstly look to locate Chapter 9 within the letter as a whole, finding the significance of its placement. From which, I will move to analysing the narrative structure of the pericope.

As mentioned in the first Chapter, there are many arguments against the literary unity of 2 Corinthians. Traditional interpretations suppose that, the apostle's letter is composed of various separate letters that have been put together to construct the finished product that we now have today. In the arguments for partition which Frances Young and David Ford address, they suggest they are not conclusive since there is not textual evidence for partition.⁶ In Young and Ford's rhetorical analysis of 2 Corinthians, the basis for their case of unity is by determining its genre, structure, and purpose. They characterise the letter as an apologetic also, though Witherington reiterates it as forensic or judicial rhetoric.⁷

⁴ Longenecker, ed., *Narrative Dynamics in Paul*, 220-222.

⁵ Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 21.

⁶ Frances Young and David F. Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1987), 36.

⁷ Young and Ford, *Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians*, 40. See also Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 333. Kennedy adopts a theory formulated by Aristotle, defining the three *species* of rhetoric: *judicial*, *deliberative*, and *epideictic*, as, "[T]he species is judicial when the author is seeking to persuade the audience to make a judgment about events occurring in the past; it is

Therefore, we shall maintain Witherington's view, and adopt his summarized structure of the letter, to explore the significance of the placement of the text.⁸

1. The epistolary prescript (1:1-2).
2. The epistolary thanksgiving and exordium (1:3-7).
3. The narratio (1:8-2:14), which explains some of the facts that occasioned the letter and climaxes with a further thanksgiving and transition (2:15f.).
4. The propositio (2:17), which states the basic fact under dispute.
5. The probatio and refutatio (3:1-13:4), which includes:
 - a. Paul's characterization of his ministry and of his anti-Sophistic rhetorical approach (3:1-6:13),
 - b. A deliberative digression (6:14-7:1), in which Paul puts his audience << on the defensive, urging them to stop attending temple feast with pagan friends,
 - c. Paul's defense of the severe letter (7:2-16),
 - d. A largely deliberative argument concerning the collection (chs. 8 and 9), and
 - e. A rhetorical synkrisis (comparison) of Paul and his competitors in Corinth, the false apostoloi, with a strong emotional appeal.
6. The peroratio (13:5-10).
7. The closing epistolary greetings and remarks (13:11-13).

As shown in the structure above, chapters 8 and 9 are part of the larger rhetorical section called the *probatio*.⁹ According to Witherington, "in order to undertake a deliberative argument one must assume that one has established one's *ethos* or character with the audience."¹⁰ Paul takes to defend his reputation, as is addressed in the *propositio* (2:17).¹¹ The κατηλεύειν ἡν λόγον ἡοῦ θεοῦ¹² in the *propositio* referred to

deliberative when he seeks to persuade them to take some action in the future; it is epideictic when he seeks to persuade them to hold or reaffirm some point of view in the present, as when he celebrates or denounces some person or some quality." See Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 19.

⁸ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 335-336.

⁹ "The *probatio* brings in arguments to support the speaker's case." Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 44.

¹⁰ "*Ethos* in forensic rhetoric has to do with the establishment of moral character by showing oneself in the best possible light and one's opponents in the worst." Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 344.

¹¹ "The *propositio*, which follows the *narratio* or is included in it, is where the essential proposition(s) of the speaker and perhaps also of the opponent are laid out." Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 44.

¹² "peddlers of God's word" (NRSV)

the accusations against Paul regarding his apostleship. Scholars have defined *καπηλεύειν* as someone who sought to profit from preaching.¹³

Chapters 8 and 9 have been amongst the most referenced of NT passages when discussing monetary topics within the Church. Here, Paul is enlightening the Corinthians on what is meant by the concept of giving. In other words, if these chapters serve the overall forensic purpose of 2 Corinthians, defending what is proposed in 2 Cor. 2:17, we can say that Paul is informing them on a “theology of giving” (or offering).¹⁴

4. 2 Cor. 9:1-15 as a Narrative and Rhetorical unit

As we can briefly see, from looking at the above structure of 2 Corinthians, the narrative substructure cannot be inadmissible when viewing the text. In an extensive sketch to place 2 Corinthians in Paul’s life as a missionary and church leader, Ralph Martin agrees with this sense, in that, “the contents and chief emphasis of 2 Corinthians are best appreciated by setting the letter in a historical and theological *Sitz im Leben* in Paul’s missionary career.”¹⁵ From a rhetorical breakdown of the pericope, the interpretation herein will view the text in this respect.

Kennedy, determines a rhetorical unit as having “a beginning, a middle, and an end.”¹⁶ Chapter then, can be divided as follows:

1. Beginning (vv. 1-5) – Exhortation to complete the offering
2. Middle (vv. 6-12) – Offering and Reciprocity

¹³ According to Collins, “[I]t was used to disparage pseudo-philosophers, especially Sophists, who delivered shallow lectures for monetary gain.” Raymond F. Collins, *Second Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing House, 1985), 69. See also, Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 372-373.

¹⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 172.

¹⁵ Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians, Volume 40* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), 99.

¹⁶ Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, 33.

3. End (vv. 13-15) – Elaborate of reciprocity

4.1 Beginning – Exhortation to complete the offering

According to James Resseguie, the setting of a narrative is the background of which it takes place.¹⁷ Paul mentions several locations in the “beginning” of the passage, making it difficult to decipher an exact setting for the opening section, and in turn the rest of the passage. Even more so, with Paul’s use of the initial preterition.¹⁸ Though it is not to say, that they do not serve a purpose to the development of the narrative. The location of the “saints” in verse 1, can be determined as Jerusalem. Witherington, notes various point in the Corinthian letters where Paul tries to convey to the audience their indebtedness to the Jerusalem and Jewish Christians.¹⁹ Thus, one of the purposes for the collection of gifts is to help develop the church where the saints are which is Jerusalem – the so-called centre of the church. However, the interpretation herein sees the saints as church members in Achaia who are living as good Christians. The following interpretation will elaborate on this claim using the above-mentioned rhetorical unit.

The word *Now* in verse 1 indicates a literary and rhetorical shift of the emphasis of Paul’s words from Chapter 8 to Chapter 9. Paul in Chapter 8 as mentioned talks about the importance of being generous which its theological basis is the grace (*καρις*) of God. For Paul, this is what offering to God is about. It is being generous in and

¹⁷ James L. Resseguie, *Narrative Criticism of the New Testament: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005), 87.

¹⁸ The preterition, *περιζζόν μοί ἔζην ἡὸ γράθειν ὑμῖν* serves as a rhetorical tool to draw attention the topic at hand. See Collins, *Second Corinthians*, 181. As mentioned, the author assumes that the audience is well aware of the situation in which serves the purpose of the text, and uses the preterition to invite the readdress of the topic. See also, Hans Bets, *2 Corinthians 8 and 9: A Commentary on Two Administrative Letters of the Apostle Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 90-91.

¹⁹ Witherington, *Conflict and Community in Corinth*, 577.

through the offering of gifts with the whole person as revealed in Paul's description of the brother without a name mentioned in 8:18-19. There is a debate on what could be the name of this un-named brother. From the *aitaumalele* perspective mentioning the name is not the important part but who he is in his actions. According to the apostle Paul, the un-named person is a well-known person for the good works he has done. He is known for his giving and offering of his life utterly to serve God.

The beginning of Chapter 9 as the transition from Chapter 8 is an elaboration of what Paul speaks about in Chapter 8. It is to describe why Paul thinks that it is necessary to send the brothers to Achaia despite the good news from there about the church members' continuous serving of God in Achaia. It is shown in the following verses:

“it is not necessary for me to write to you about the ministry to the saint (v. 1) ...I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you” (v.5).

For Paul, the church members in Achaia need to complete the collection of gifts and now is the time to do that before Paul comes with the Macedonians to Achaia. Paul begins by praising the church in Achaia for the good work they did in the past. But something is concerning him as indicated in the use of the conjunction δὲ (but). Paul's concern is that the Christians in Achaia may not complete the collection of gifts. Paul talks about being humiliated if they come with the Macedonians to Achaia and find that the collection of gifts they hoped for is not happening. From the *aitaumalele* perspective, this is why serving your family from afar is very important. It is to make sure that your family is able to meet what they must give and offer in order to fulfil their role of serving the village and the church. Not doing so will put shame upon them. The beginning of the unit finishes with Paul showing why it is necessary to encourage the brothers to go to Achaia continuing the forensic mood of the letter shown in the

previous chapters. Paul continues defending apologetically their stand as servants of the word of God and in this time is in relation to the collection of gifts.

Paul's praising Achaia's character of giving gifts in the beginning of the unit shows the apostle's way of persuading and convincing the church members in Achaia to trust his service as an apostle or as a servant of God. From the lens of *aitaumalele* I see this language of praise as Paul's encouragement of church members in Achaia to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in and through their actions. He is telling them that the offering of gifts and his administering of them is putting into action the grace of God in this world.

Shown here is one of Paul's rhetorical ways of delivering a message. Paul often begins by getting first the attention of the specific community he is delivering the message to, followed by mentioning the issues or problems that they face. This is indicated in the use of the conjunction δὲ in verse 3. Δὲ as a conjunction has multiple functions in a sentence such as transition, continuity, and contrast.²⁰ Δὲ as a transition marks the shift of what Paul says is not necessary, to what he thinks is important to focus upon in this time of the letter. Δὲ as indication of contrast indicates the contrast between his not talking about the saints in Jerusalem and speaking about the sending of the brothers to Achaia. Δὲ as marker of continuity points to Paul's sending of the brothers as a continuation of his willingness for the Christians in Achaia to complete their collecting of gifts for the saints – any Christian who becomes a follower of Christ.

The sending of the brothers is considered the rhetorical situation of 2 Cor 9:1-15 as a rhetorical unit. A rhetorical situation is a situation where a person is expected to make a response to a question or an issue raised by another person or a group of

²⁰ See Stephanie Black, *Sentence Conjunctions in the Gospel of Matthew: καὶ, δὲ, τότε, γάρ, οὖν, and Asyndeton in Narrative Discourse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), 142-78.

people.²¹ So Paul's sending of his brothers in the ministry in the beginning of the unit is part of the apostle's response to the issue of voluntary giving. It is part of Paul's defence as ministers of the word of God. Verse 3 to verse 5 shows the beginning of the reason why the apostle sends his co-workers which he elaborates upon in the middle part of the unit (vv. 6-12).

For Paul, the reason is:

"...in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated – to say nothing of you – in this undertaking." (9:3-4)

Interestingly, the rhetorical situation evokes the rhetorical problem in this part of the unit which is the main reason as to why Paul sends the brothers is not explicitly mentioned. It is not clear whether Paul sends his brothers for the sake of their reputation or to protect the good reputation of the church in Achaia or for the sake of the Gospel. However, the end of verse 5 gives us a hint of why Paul sent the brothers. It is to make sure that the gift the church members in Achaia have promised is made as a voluntary gift not obtaining money through force or threats. These words of Paul imply that the people in Achaia do have a problem with making offering of gifts. The problem is not the quantity of the offering they give but how they give these gifts in accordance to their Christian belief and understanding. For Paul, they are to learn and to know that true offering to God is based on the grace of God. Paul is pressing the importance of knowing the significance of giving in relation to their faith in Jesus Christ. This giving is elaborated in the next part of the unit – the middle part (9:6-12).

²¹ Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 35.

4.2 Middle – Offering and Reciprocity

The middle part of the unit speaks about ‘voluntary giving as bountiful gift.’ The middle part begins with the words, *the point is* – delivered in deliberative language.²² Paul’s use of deliberative language or the language talking about what will happen in the future reveals that there is reward of voluntary gift giving. That reward is shown in the use of an enthymeme²³ in the middle part of the unit.

An ‘enthymeme’ begins with a main premise and is followed by minor premise and ends with a conclusion. A main premise of an enthymeme indicates the main idea of the enthymeme. Verse 6 is interpreted the major premise of the enthymeme in the middle part of the unit, —The point is, [he says], the one who sows sparingly will also reap bountifully, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” These words as the major premise show that there is reward for doing voluntary giving. Receiving that reward relies on how the gift is offered, which is revealed in the minor premise of the enthymeme. This is shown in the beginning of the next verse – verse 7. “*Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion.*” This minor premise speaks of giving as offering made from when you decided to do so. It is carried out from how you feel about giving from your heart. It is offering of gifts based on what you have. The conclusion of the enthymeme is shown in the last part of verse 7 which is —for God loves a cheerful giver”. The conclusion part states clearly the point that Paul talks about in the beginning of the enthymeme, which is the giver that God loves is a ‘cheerful giver.’

²² Deliberative language is when the writer persuades the reader to take some action in the future. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation*, 19.

²³ An ‘enthymeme’ is a rhetorical syllogism that is deduced from general and special truths. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric*, xxxvi-xxxvii. Paul Holloway, —The Enthymeme as an Element of Style in Paul,” *JBL* 120 (2001): 329-339.

The amplification of that enthymeme is verses 8 to 12 which is part of the middle unit which stresses the blessing or reward the cheerful giver receives from God. This blessing is made clearer by Paul's recitation of Psalm 112:9 in verse 9, and Isaiah 55:10 and Hosea 10:12 in verse 10.

Psalm 112 is part of the group of songs named Egyptian Hallel (Psalm 111-118).²⁴ Hallel is a song of praise sung in the homes of the Jewish people Jewish during the celebration of the Passover meal to remember the mighty acts of God in the protection and guidance of Israel. The Egyptian Hallel series is part of Book Five, the final book of the Psalms – Pss. 107-150. This book is made up of liturgies and is also considered by some scholars as songs organized around the time of Ezra, after the return of Israel from exile in Babylon.

Psalm 112:9 (NRSV)

They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever; their horn is exalted in honor.

2 Cor. 9:9

As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

According to Georgi, Paul's use of this Psalm shows the apostle's familiarity with Hellenistic Jewish Wisdom.²⁵ Betz speaks of the whole argument of 9:6-15 in which Psalm 112 is used, as ancient folk-wisdom that is agriculturally-based.²⁶ From my *aitaumalele* hermeneutic, Paul's use of this Psalm and other Old Testament references is to bring a historical and theological affirmation of God's relationship to Israel into Paul's explanation of voluntary giving as a blessing. In other words, it is to show the

²⁴ Jack W. Hayford, ed., *Hayford's Bible Handbook: The Complete Companion for the Spirit-Filled Bible Study* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 139.

²⁵ Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (rev. ed.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 95.

²⁶ Betz, *2 Corinthians*, 98.

connection of Paul's teaching about giving and offering to how the people of Israel should live their lives as offering to God in the history of God's chosen nation.

The words, *As it is written*, attracts the attention of the readers to this reference from Psalm. It is to help them understand voluntary giving as blessing in light of God's relationship to Israel mentioned in the Holy Scripture. According to the Psalm, the person/s who gives freely to the poor considered to have endured righteousness forever is the one who fears the Lord. In other words, the one who listens and does God's will. Thus, Paul's recitation of Psalm 112:9 portrays the kind of person who does voluntary giving as one who fears the Lord. Hence, voluntary giving is not just a blessing but more blessing bestowed upon the giver and the people in need.

Overall, the reference to Psalm shows the Israel's relationship to God as the main subject. Despite Israel disobeying God, God continues to have mercy on them. So Paul's teaching is about delivering the message of bringing hope to something that is hopeless. More importantly it reveals that God after all is in control. God who provides for the people of Israel will supply and multiply blessings for the church members in Achaia. What this means according to Paul is explained in verses 11 and 12:

You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us for the rendering of this ministry not supplies the needs of the saints but also overflow with many thanksgivings to God.

This is the blessing Paul talks about in this rhetorical unit. It is the thanksgiving given to God by the recipients of gifts because of the good work of the donors. The blessing or the reward is that the cheerful giver is considered a righteous person, and as such it is an endless achievement. The rest of the middle unit from verses 10 to 12 dwell on this blessing or reward, mainly emphasizing the word of giving as a ministry that is done for those who need help, such as the saints in Jerusalem. More importantly, the recipient's worship and give thanks to God for the good work done by the donors.

4.3 End – Elaborating of Reciprocity

In the ending of the unit (vv. 13-15), Paul then says that this ministry of giving is a test of one's life as a Christian. By doing it, is glorification of God. Paul in this part of the unit brings home the understanding that the person is perceived as a cheerful giver. He/she is considered an obedient follower of Christ – the one who accepts “*the confession of the gospel of Christ*” (9:13). Verse 15 (“*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!*”) as the last verse of the unit sums up the unit. This verse reveals that it is God-given gift, God's grace, that makes a Christian donates gifts for others – the so-called voluntary or generous giving.

5. Conclusion

The exegesis shows that Chapter 9 is the continuation of what offering and giving is that Paul teaches in Chapter 8. The role of Chapter 9 is to elaborate on that teaching as shown in and through the enthymeme in the beginning of the unit followed by its amplification in the middle part. The middle part is where the reference to the recitations from the Old Testament such as Psalm 11:9 that brings in the importance of remembering God's relationship to Israel. It is bringing in the importance of knowing God within the midst of voluntary giving. That knowing evokes joy in one's heart for giving cheerfully to God. That is the reward that Paul talks about. It is the message that ends the narrative and rhetorical unit. The following Chapter will further analyse the exegesis from the point of view of the *aitaumalele* hermeneutic with a conclusion to the thesis.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

1. Introduction

Within the discussion of the methodology and the text in Chapter Three, we have established that there are key points that we can correlate with the lens *aitaumalele*. The aim of this Chapter is to elaborate on these points exploring what is to gain from this newer understanding of Paul's views in 2 Corinthians 9:1-15. And to also revisit the questions posed which guided this research, viewing what the implications are for Samoans in the diaspora, particularly CCCS members.

2. A Further Dialogue Between 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 and *aitaumalele*

The hermeneutic of *aitaumalele*, as discussed in Chapter One, is the Samoan view of the undertakings of one's service from afar. Critical to this *tautua* is the obligation to that of the home body, though more importantly how one performs this service. What does this mean in light of the interpretation discussed in Chapter Three? This section will look to further the dialogue between the interpretation and the lens of *aitaumalele* in the previous Chapter.

We have seen that the emphasis of the apostle Paul rests on the *how* as opposed to *what* the Corinthians were offering. How the Corinthians were to execute their offering, is also prominent with how a Samoan performs *tautua aitaumalele*. A good *tautua aitaumalele* is therefore, not measured through sum of his/her remittances. Rather, it is through their commitment in seeing the family able to also meet their needs, in life and within the village and church. This is also the way Paul wants the Corinthians to conduct their offering. As is highlighted by the rhetorical situation discussed, Paul does

not want to extort money from the Corinthians, but to encourage them to complete the task that they were so eagerly to begin with the same frame of mind.

3. Summary of Previous Chapters

Chapter One addressed the reading approach of the text, to appropriate the exegesis. The selected method was literary criticism, incorporating Samoan hermeneutic *aitaumalele* to further explore the selected text. The hermeneutic is *aitaumalele* – a Samoan concept to call someone serving his/her family from afar, such as from New Zealand or Australia. Additionally, Narrative and Rhetorical criticism was used as parts of literary criticism explores how the language of the text reveals what the text says.

Chapter Two was broken down into two sections; first, to give a description of the historical background of 2 Corinthians to set a platform of what the letter is about. This provided a glimpse into the ‘world behind the text’ to get a feel before dwelling into the text. Second, a brief literature review of the text was conducted, to gain an insight of the scholarly world. The review allowed me to establish a direction of the interpretation. In addition, a Samoan perspective was incorporated which reflected the act of giving and offering from afar as revealed in the text.

Chapter Three was the exegesis; by taking a step back and looking into Chapter 8 to where Paul begins his teaching. The role of Chapter 9 is to elaborate on that teaching as shown in Chapter 8. A literary feature was discovered through the enthymeme which had an influence in amplification in the middle part. Paul uses the enthymeme to refer to the recitations from the Old Testament such which revealed God’s relationship to Israel. The core of the message here was to reinforce the importance of knowing God within the midst of voluntary giving. True joy is captivated in one’s heart for giving cheerfully to God. Paul expresses that joy is the reward which is reflected in voluntary giving. The *aitaumalele* hermeneutic established an exploration of the text, in the context of an

Australian Samoan. I have witness first hand families sending monetary gifts back to the families in Samoa, as a means of *tautua*. As Paul recaps joy is also found in the unity of the church at Corinthians, despite their backgrounds and where they come from. Features of *aitaumalele* is reflected here as *tautua* can be done despite background and location of residence. If unity is established in churches and families, there is no distance too far to serve and give back. My experience of my parents giving back to our families in Samoa is now embedded in me where ever I go. This thesis has allowed me to see this aspect from a Biblical view, to understand the joy in giving voluntarily when done for Christ.

4. Service from afar in the CCCS/EFKS

To those who are serving and carrying out the *tautua* of families and churches from afar, I propose through this thesis to continue with the good deeds you are currently doing. There is joy in what you are doing, no matter the amount but your act of voluntary offering is not gone unnoticed in Christ's view.

To the EFKS, I do not undermine the good deeds and the many voluntary gifts shared with many families, churches and organisations. Such deeds and offerings make me a humble and proud EFKS member. What I do propose through this study, is for EFKS members to have the awareness on what the true meaning of offering is. It is evident in parishes that offering is no longer voluntary but a competition of who gives the most. I am not one to call out or cause a rant towards our beloved EFKS that I pride on. All I am proposing is to revisit the true reasoning of why we *tautua* and serve Christ's ministry through offering, near or afar.

GLOSSARY

<i>aitaumalele</i>	service from afar
<i>ala</i>	way, road
<i>fa'alavelave</i>	family occasion
<i>fa'aSamoa</i>	the Samoan way
<i>mamao</i>	far, afar
<i>matai</i>	chief
<i>pule</i>	authority
<i>tautua</i>	serve, service, server and servant

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