

**RE-READING THE LETTER OF PAUL TO
THE GALATIANS 3:23–29 FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF A NEW ZEALAND-BORN
SAMOAN**

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis re-reads Galatians 3:23–29 using the *gafa-tasi* hermeneutical lens. Blended with certain elements of Sociorhetorical Interpretation (SRI), it explores parallels between the biblical text in Gal 3:23–29 and Samoans born in New Zealand with emphasis on the issue of identity and finding a sense of belonging. In essence, this thesis argues that it is the *fāiā* or relationship that forms the basis of *gafa-tasi*. A person's *gafa* or lineage is no longer the subject matter. Instead, there is now a feeling of *fāiā* or relationship amongst individuals. *Gafa-tasi* underscores a sense of belongingness, acceptance, inclusion, and freedom, in a manner of being connected with one another. Paul, therefore, argues for a re-configuration of the mindset that transcends ethnicity and races, and emphasises *fāiā* or relationships in the community established in and through faith in Christ.

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, Fuimaono-Tutagalevao Tuiloma Fa'atitipa Elise Alolua, who was called home to our Lord during my time in Malua. Your salutation of the *gafatasi* allowed me to work through this thesis. *Moe malolo i a'ao a le Ali'i!*

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“‘Aua, ‘aua lava ne’i ia te i matou, le Atua e. ‘Ae ia ia te oe pea le vi’iga e fa’avavau lava.”¹

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¹ A verse of doxology from one of Malua Theological College’s anthems, “Not to us O God. But to you be the glory forevermore.”

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FA'AFETAI!

List of Abbreviations

NRSV	New Revised Stand Version
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano i Samoa
CCCS	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
FT	Faife'au Toeaina (elder minister)
FS	Faife'au Samoa (ordained minister)
AM	A'oa'o Malua (Malua student)

Introduction

The letter to Galatians is one of Paul's first letters he composed for the Christian communities during his ministry. The letter deals with the first real problems faced by the Christian communities in its early days. It engages with the social boundaries and the application of the law of Moses to the Gentiles.¹ Paul, therefore, aims for a re-configuration of the mindset that transcends ethnicity and races, and emphasises relationships in the community established in and through faith in Christ. Believers who accept and believe in Jesus Christ are "free" from the bondage of the law.² In this re-reading of Gal 3:23–29 I argue that as a Samoan born in the diaspora, identity can fluctuate between the two different worldviews. Known as hybrid identity, where in the case of this thesis, a person has dual identities from the worldview they are born into and the worldview of their cultural and ethnic origins. Using Gal 3:23–29, I bring Paul's encouragement to the Galatians as a means of offering a sense of *fāiā* and belongingness for those from the diaspora with a hybrid identity. I will use a salutation from the village of Salani, Falealili,³ the *gafatasi*, a term used to formally address the paramount chief title, Fuimaono, as a hermeneutic to read my chosen passage.

This study is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter one gives a literature review of Gal 3:23–29. Chapter two describes my social location and positionality, and subsequently, introduces my *gafa-tasi* hermeneutic. Chapter three gives an exegetical analysis of Gal 3:23–29 using my *gafa-tasi* mode of reading. Chapter four discusses the findings of *gafa-*

¹ Philip J. Long, *Galatians: Freedom Through God's Grace* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 10.

² Long, *Galatians: Freedom Through God's Grace*, 10.

³ A village situated on the south-eastern coast of the island of Upolu, Samoa.

tasi and implications of the thesis. Lastly, the final chapter and conclusion summarises the thesis and my overall argument.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is a re-reading of Galatians 3:23–29 using my *gafa-tasi* hermeneutic. I begin by reviewing the literature on Galatians. The aim is to better situate my thesis with the extant scholarship. First, I review some of the background information on Galatians. Second, I review the literature on Gal 3:23–29. Lastly, I engage studies regarding the nature of identity and the role it plays in Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

1.2 Overview of Galatians

1.2.1 Author

Paul is identified as the author in Gal 1:1 and 5:2. Many of the scholars, like James Montgomery Boice,⁵ affirm that Galatians was written by the apostle Paul.

1.2.2 Date and Location

According to historical records, the Council of Jerusalem described in Acts 15 took place in CE 48.⁶ The letter to the Galatians could have been written immediately before then. Given the discussion that took place there, Paul would have undoubtedly cited the council’s judgment as a key justification for his defence in the letter.⁷ Paul most likely would have written the letter at Antioch if this were the case (cf. Acts 14:26–28).

⁵ J. M. Boice and A. S. Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1995), 120.

⁶ G. Ogg, *Chronology of the Life of Paul* (London, England: Epworth, 1968), 200.

⁷ D. A. Carson, L. Morris, and D. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1992), 294.

1.2.3 Audience

Paul writes to the believers whom he had established a profoundly personal bond (Gal 4:12–15).⁸ It is consistent with his inclination to use the language of parenting or nursing when referring to his relationship to those whom he has personally brought to faith in Christ (Gal 4:19; see also 1 Cor 4:14–15 and 1 Thess 2:7–8, 11–12). He calls them his children which aligns with his tendency to use the terminology of parenting or nursing.⁹ Other interpretations of Gal 4:19 are possible. However, if Paul's remark of amazement is to be interpreted as signifying the little period of time that has elapsed since their first invitation into the favour of God (1:6), then these may be relatively new converts. There is no question that a significant number of the audience members are Gentiles who have converted.¹⁰ It is for such people that the question of whether or not to accept circumcision would have been a question, and as a result, the bulk of Paul's argumentation is most obviously directed to the gentile Christians among the congregations as he tries to persuade them that their attraction to the rite reveals a misalignment of their theology and trust in God as revealed in the Scriptures. However, it shouldn't be assumed that Jewish converts weren't a member of the congregations Paul spoke to because of how rapidly we came to that conclusion.¹¹

In light of this, it is unclear whether Paul's audience was located in the original Galatian region (North Galatia) or Phrygian and Lycaonian Galatia (South Galatia). No writer significantly contested the notion that Paul's letter was addressed to Christians in northern Galatia. The churches that Paul and Barnabas established in the Phrygian cities

⁸ David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 254.

⁹ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 254.

¹⁰ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 254.

¹¹ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 254.

of Pisidian Antioch and Iconium as well as in the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13:14–14:26) are likely the receivers if they were residing in northern Galatia.¹² On the other hand, there is no evidence that Paul ever visited the northern Galatian region, even though he seems to be well acquainted with his target audience. Since the letter implies that the churches in Galatia were all established about the same time, Paul could not have addressed both regions at the same time. This is also implausible given Paul's missionary travels.¹³ Although the evidence is not clear-cut, it largely supports the South Galatian viewpoint.

1.2.4 Occasion and Purpose

According to reports, Paul was informed that many church members were upsetting others by demanding that Gentile converts fully adhere to Jewish laws and customs, including circumcision and the celebration of special days (4:10, 5:2–3). Paul calls this doctrine a distortion of the gospel and condemns it (1:7, 5:2–6). Paul was likely the target of the Judaizers' attempts to win sympathy by defaming him, which led to their animosity.¹⁴

The understanding of Galatians depends on who Paul's adversaries were.¹⁵ Most conservative academics have historically assumed that Paul's opponents were Judaizers.¹⁶ This perspective does not, however, account for texts like 5:13. In the past 70 years, a

¹² Boice and Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 121.

¹³ Boice and Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 121.

¹⁴ Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982), 19.

¹⁵ Walter B. Russell III, "Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 147, no. 587 (1990): 350.

¹⁶ Paul gives numerous signs that these believers or "Judaizers" are members of a different Christian mission conducted by Jewish Christians who present Torah observance as a prerequisite for responding to God's favour extended in Jesus Christ. See David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 211; and Philip E. Esler, *Galatians* (London, England: Routledge, 1998), 135–137.

variety of opposing viewpoints have developed in response to this.¹⁷ Some claim that Paul was opposed by both Judaizers and Antinomians.¹⁸ Some believe the opponents are syncretic or gnostic Jewish Christians.¹⁹ Walter B. Russell III, however, has concluded that the conventional viewpoint is the right one.²⁰ It appears that the circumstances in Galatia are extremely similar to those described in Acts 15:1. The Judaizers may have been driven by religious fervour in one sense, but they may also have wanted to avoid persecution (cf. 6:12).²¹

Paul's theory was incorrect, according to conservative Jewish instructors who were legalisers who had just arrived from Jerusalem and claimed to be from James, the brother of the Lord. They argued for Gentiles to be saved, they had to submit to Moses' law. Christ alone was not sufficient for them; they also needed Moses. Circumcision must be added to grace.²² Some of his adversaries even claimed that he was not an apostle and that God had not revealed the message he preached (1:10). But, if these individuals got their way, God's grace and the cross of Jesus Christ would be worthless (5:2–4).

Questions about a Christian's relationship to the law of Moses and to Judaism as a system emerged as the apostles reached out to predominantly Gentile areas and the gospel started to take root there.²³ Paul, however, had already preached that following laws and

¹⁷ Russell III, "Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?" 329.

¹⁸ Carson, Morris, and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 456.

¹⁹ Russell III, "Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?" 330.

²⁰ Russell III, "Who Were Paul's Opponents in Galatia?" 350.

²¹ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians, New International Greek Testament Commentary*, 31.

²² Boice and Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 122.

²³ Boice and Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 122.

regulations, even those that God had established, cannot bring about redemption.²⁴ Paul created this letter to denounce legalism and win back the Galatian churches.²⁵

In response, Paul argues that (1) his teaching is independent of other human authorities—this is what qualifies him as an apostle—because an apostle’s teaching must originate from God directly, (2) the other apostles had always acknowledged his authority whenever they had interacted with him, and (3) he had demonstrated his credibility by remaining steadfast at Antioch when others, including Peter and Barnabas, had faltered. Paul continues by saying that becoming a new creation and having faith in Christ (2:16, 20; 3:8–26) are what matters, and that circumcision is meaningless (6:14–15).

1.2.5 Outline of Galatians and the Placement of 3:23–29

The introduction (1:1–10) fulfils many of the traditional functions of a speech’s exordium.²⁶ The following is not particularly an outcome of Paul’s choice of this section to serve as the conclusion of Galatians as an address, nor is it a sign that those listening to this letter being read aloud should expect it to continue to devolve in the form of a speech.²⁷ It is the result of Paul’s careful attention to matters that are strategically attended to when commencing a communicative act, especially in a contested situation. Paul quickly identifies the primary issue he will address (the Galatians are convinced to take a new course of action in order to obtain God’s promises; 1:6), challenges the motives and reliability of the rival teachers they have been listening to (1:7), and affirms his own reliability as a representative of the divine purpose, with supporting arguments and

²⁴ Boice and Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 122.

²⁵ Boice and Wood, *Galatians - Ephesians, Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 122.

²⁶ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 431.

²⁷ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 431.

demonstrative acts (1:8–10).²⁸ Of course, the formal epistolary prescript (1:1–5)—with Paul’s common departures from (or, rather, embellishments upon) that form—also serves to highlight the matter of (and affirm) Paul’s accuracy (1:1–2a), offer an initial certainty of good will among the people being addressed in the form of the wish for grace and peace (1:3), and to foreground a topic that will figure prominently in his case against the rival teachers’ message and recommendations (1:4).²⁹

The opening passages continues with an extensive persuasive narrative (1:11–2:14) that is pertinent to the situation at hand.³⁰ It is not, strictly speaking, a narration in the sense of a portion of a discourse devoted to establishing the facts of the (legal) case, which are then addressed in the subsequent proofs. Rather, it develops the call to ethos as seen in 1:1–10, demonstrating Paul’s divine commission, the divine communication of his comprehension of the gospel, and independence from the Jerusalem church’s authorities.³¹ If one insisted on using rhetorical categories, it would be best categorised as an extended exordium.³² Paul crafts this narration, however, to progress through and beyond issues pertinent to his own credibility (or the lack of credibility of his rivals), concluding at a point where the narrative has direct relevance to the situation in Galatia.³³ Indirectly, he asks the rival instructors the same question he asks Peter: “how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (2:14). This question enables Paul to introduce a series of propositions with some supporting rationales (2:15–21) that are pertinent to the overarching purpose of the dialogue, namely to convince the Galatian Christians not to

²⁸ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 432.

²⁹ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 432.

³⁰ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 432.

³¹ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 432.

³² DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 433.

³³ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 433.

turn to Torah observance as an avenue of advancing in their new relationship with God, here by providing a rebuttal to the rival teachers' position.³⁴ The subsequent argumentation of 3:1–4:7 provides justifications in support of Paul's position and in opposition to the position of his rivals. However, it would be problematic to refer to Gal 2:15–21 as the letter's proposition, as if the overall purpose of the letter were to gain agreement with these statements through the argumentation that follows.³⁵ David A. DeSilva, a New Testament and Greek scholar, speaks about whether there is a genuine "proposition" in Galatians to the extent of an argument towards which the whole letter was directed, it would be observed unannounced more towards the end of the address: "For freedom Christ set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (5:1).³⁶ Obviously, this proposition was implicitly stated as early as 1:6: "I am astonished that you are quickly dissenting" can be understood as do not abandon the path you've been following or the one who called you to follow that path.

The body of Galatians is can be seen vocal indicators (3:1–4:11) in support of Paul's position that righteousness, or being made right with God, does not come through Torah observance but through the way Christ's death opened for those who have faith (2:16, 21).³⁷ DeSilva notes that pondering on a line between the proof and the call to action in Galatians is difficult and possibly completely arbitrary.³⁸ Paul alternates between the two from 4:12 to 6:10, interweaving appeals to respond and additional arguments in favour of the preferred response as stressed by deSilva.³⁹ In 4:12–20, deSilva highlights a personal

³⁴ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 433.

³⁵ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 433.

³⁶ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 434.

³⁷ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 434.

³⁸ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 434.

³⁹ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 434.

appeal is followed by a second argument in favour of breaking with the rival teachers, this one based on an allegorical interpretation of a series of Sarah–Hagar story episodes (4:21–31).⁴⁰ This allegory lays the groundwork for the dissuasive appeal in 5:1, which is supported by admittedly emotional argumentation in 5:2–6.⁴¹ Paul then returns to more personal remarks about his competitors and their impact on the addressees and himself in 5:7–12 to bolster his primary apotroptic argument.⁴² This material could be interpreted as a peroration, in which appeals to ethos are expected again, but Paul has not yet concluded his argument.

In 5:13, Paul begins a new segment, returning on purpose to the topic and, to some extent, the syntax and rhythms of 5:1.⁴³ The first passages (5:1–12) establish that the gift of freedom must be preserved by not adopting the course of action advocated by Paul’s opponents; the second subsection (5:13–6:10) establishes that it must not be misused against the Giver’s purposes for it, but rather used in full accordance with the author’s intentions that can be discerned by the leading of the Spirit.⁴⁴ Such walking in accordance with the Spirit that God has imparted arises, then, as the viable alternative course of action, the course of action that Paul would have the addressees continue to pursue, perhaps with a greater depth of understanding and confidence.⁴⁵

Finally, deSilva makes note of Galatians final passages with Paul touch on an array of observations that appear to achieve several of the typical objectives of perorations.⁴⁶ Again, this correlation is likely a sign of Paul’s savvy as he considers the final impression

⁴⁰ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴¹ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴² DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴³ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴⁴ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴⁵ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴⁶ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

he wishes to leave on the Christians, rather than a conscious effort to create a conclusion.⁴⁷ Here, Galatians is seen with splitting shots at opposing advisers, casting doubt on their validity and reasons (6:12–13), parting affirmations of reliability (6:14, 17) and emotional investment or goodwill (6:11, 18) on the part of the one addressing the audience, and ending reaffirmations of the major studies fostering the purpose of the discourse.⁴⁸

1.3 Review of Literature on Chapter 3:23–29

1.3.1 Children of God Through Faith

According to D. Stuart Briscoe, faith alone is the main idea emphasised by Paul in his writings.⁴⁹ The law that once bounded the people of Israel no longer applies to the Christians but are now bound by their faith in Christ. Paul was a devout Jew, a Roman citizen, but had his faith founded in Christ. Paul had a full understanding of the law, yet in this passage, he assures his readers that the law does not make us children of God.⁵⁰ Instead, it is by faith alone that we are made to be children of God. As the Rev. Professor G. G. Findlay notes in *The Expositor's Bible: The Epistle to the Galatians*, “Faith is the true emancipator of the human mind.”⁵¹ This principle of faith alone emulates the idea we no longer need to excel for God’s favour through the law, instead, it is through our faith in God alone. This was the problem during the early years of the Church where many believers were stuck between keeping the law or following the teachings of Christ. Daniel L. Akin and Tony Merida emphasise on this further by stressing that from Gal 1–3, Paul

⁴⁷ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴⁸ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 435.

⁴⁹ D. Stuart Briscoe, *Commentary on Galatians Modern-English Edition: Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 2001), 228.

⁵⁰ Briscoe, *Commentary on Galatians Modern-English Edition: Martin Luther*, 228.

⁵¹ G. G. Findlay, *The Expositor's Bible: The Epistle to the Galatians* (London, England: Hazell, Watson, and Viney Ltd, 2013), 228.1

speaks about justification through the grace of God.⁵² We are justified before God through our faith in Christ. Christ has already paid for our righteousness; we no longer need to do it ourselves because our righteousness is in him. Our righteousness in heaven and our place before God is not based on the daily righteousness, we can produce but on the righteousness of the One who resides at the right hand of God. This principle of faith alone is Paul's emphasis that believers are no longer bound under the custodianship of the law, instead, are all made sons of God through faith.⁵³

Derrick McCarson notes that Paul offers a new perspective for believers, that all who believe in Christ, their identities have changed radically.⁵⁴ We were once bound by sin, but through the grace of God, we have been welcomed into His family; given new identities through Christ. McCarson expands on this idea further by stressing at the beginning of verse 26 "for in Christ..." He argues against the idea that people tend to say, we are all children of God.⁵⁵ Instead, he makes the statement that we are all God's creation, however, without faith in Christ, we are not welcomed into the family of God. Furthermore, the emphasis on the "all" by Paul stresses that we have all been admitted to a new spiritual status, making all of us equal in Christ.⁵⁶

⁵² Daniel L. Akin and Tony Merida, *Christ Centred Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Galatians* (Nashville, Tennessee: BH Publishing Group, 2014), 105.

⁵³ Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 439.

⁵⁴ Derrick McCarson, *Free at Last: The Message of Galatians* (Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publications, 2015), 116.

⁵⁵ McCarson, *Free at Last: The Message of Galatians*, 116.

⁵⁶ Timothy George, *Christian Standard Commentary: Galatians* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), 406.

1.3.2 Baptised into Christ

Baptism, a sacrament practised within Christianity,⁵⁷ is as Matthew Henry puts it “the solemn right of our admission into the Christian church, as circumcision was into that of the Jews.”⁵⁸ It takes the attention back to Paul’s focus on faith alone in Christ and no longer bound by any other practice or belief. Baptism was a unique symbol for the early Christians. It is one of the two commissions instructed by Christ (Luke 22:19; Matt 28:19–20) and it was their practise to welcome any who believed in Christ.⁵⁹ This is what affirmed their new identity and become one family and not just a community of believers. Henry stresses that Paul does not disregard the law, for he too kept the law. He states that because the gospel baptism takes place in the tradition of circumcision and because those who are baptised as followers of Christ while sincerely holding onto him are effectively admitted to the privileges of the Christian state in the same way that Jews were by circumcision admitted to those of the legal, there was no justification for continuing to use that practise.⁶⁰ Moreover, through this baptism, we profess that through his death and resurrection, we are granted everlasting life with Christ. Herein, Paul makes it clear that this is the privilege of being children of God, through baptism, we all enjoy this common principle as Christians.

In the last part of verse 27, Paul uses the imagery of changing clothes when he says “...clothed yourselves with Christ.” The Christian has now put off the dirty garments of sin and is covered with the righteousness of Christ. It is like getting a new wardrobe when you come to Christ. You trade in your former life’s frayed rags for the glorious robes of

⁵⁷ In the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, baptism is one of the only two sacraments practised by the Church, with communion being the other. See, *The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (LMS)* (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 1957).

⁵⁸ Matthew Henry, *Bible Commentary: Galatians* (Santa Catarina, Brazil: Editora Oxigênio, 2020), 48.

⁵⁹ Henry, *Bible Commentary: Galatians*, 49.

⁶⁰ Henry, *Bible Commentary: Galatians*, 49.

Christ's character with your new family. During Paul's time, the concept of changing garments had an important meaning.⁶¹ A child would grow up and discard his childhood clothes in favour of the toga of an adult citizen—the believer has adult status before God, thus there is no need to return to the childhood garments that previously bound you. James Dunn, identifies in his writings that Paul came to recognise that justification entailed the entirety of life and that it was therefore impractical to “live in Christ” and “in accordance with the law.”⁶²

1.3.3 Removing Social Boundaries

The law was one of the many topics of discussion for Paul in his letter to the Galatians. Paul knew that there would be conflicts between the Jews and the Gentiles within the Church in Galatia regarding the law of Moses. According to Yung Suk Kim, the Christians were confused about Paul's ministry.⁶³ Gentiles were uncertain whether to keep the law because Paul taught that circumcision was no longer needed to receive the grace of God and reassures the Galatians that it is only through faith in Christ alone. Paul makes mention of peoples' statuses no longer matter because all have been baptised and clothed in Christ. Mark J. Keown considers verse 27 as a means that social barriers are subsumed in unity in Christ.⁶⁴

Keown notes that Paul lays out the ecclesiological implications of their status as those baptised into Christ and clothed in him.⁶⁵ He goes on to posit that in this verse,

⁶¹ McCarson, *Free at Last: The Message of Galatians*, 117.

⁶² See James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990).

⁶³ Yung Suk Kim, *Reading Galatians from the Perspective of Paul's Gospel: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2019), 151.

⁶⁴ Mark J. Keown, *Galatians: A Commentary for Students* (Auckland, New Zealand: Morphe Publishers, 2020), 544.

⁶⁵ Keown, *Galatians: A Commentary for Students*, 544.

three couplets are stressed by Paul to illustrate a picture of the unified people of God where social barriers and power structures essential to the first-century world are broken down into ethnicity (Jews and Gentiles), social status (free and slave), and gender (male and female).⁶⁶ This verse is a vital passage in understanding the social and political implications of the Gospel. According to Keown, in the context of Paul's letter, the Romans saw a commonality with the Greeks, differentiating their world from others who they considered Barbarians.⁶⁷ This was Rome's principle that they saw themselves superior to others deeming other ethnic groups as inferior. In the case of the Jews, they too saw themselves as different from other nations, considering any non-Jew a Gentile. It was their sense of self-identity based on their covenant with God and their adherence to the law.⁶⁸

Herein, Paul removes any social boundaries that were set in his world and emphasised the gospel that in hope will unite the Christians together during this era. Paul goes on to tackle the second couplet, perhaps the most important social distinction in the ancient world, that being the relation between a free person and slave.⁶⁹ During the early days of the Church, free peoples and slaves would worship together because, in the eyes of Rome, both sets of groups were deemed a threat to the empire. Therefore, Paul emphasises that their social distinction would matter no more because all are saved through the grace of God.⁷⁰ The final couplet speaks on the basis of gender in Christian communities. Phillip J. Long makes note that women would have to marry a man who

⁶⁶ Keown, *Galatians: A Commentary for Students*, 546.

⁶⁷ Keown, *Galatians: A Commentary for Students*, 546.

⁶⁸ Keown, *Galatians: A Commentary for Students*, 546.

⁶⁹ Phillip J. Long, *Galatians: Freedom Through God's Grace* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 119.

⁷⁰ Long, *Galatians: Freedom Through God's Grace*, 120.

kept the law to be considered in the eyes of God.⁷¹ Women were seen as less spiritually advanced than men, which was an obvious segregation as seen in Jewish synagogues where men and women would worship separately. However, in Paul's letter to the Galatians, he offers light to both men and women where they can worship God together because all have been baptised in Christ.⁷² Martin Luther in his commentary on the letter to the Galatians calls this the "death blow to the law."⁷³ Nothing else matters before God, whether a person is a devout Jew or a noble Gentile, circumstances, character, personal worth, and so forth, count for nothing—it is our faith in Christ alone that matters.⁷⁴ In other words, verse 28 stresses on a fundamental principle in Christianity, and that is the oneness of all believers in Christ. As puts it, it focuses on a "soteriological equality between the sets of people."⁷⁵

1.3.4 Heirs According to the Promise

Frederick W. Weidmann's view on verse 29 "...heirs according to the promise." calling it radicalness.⁷⁶ He argues that in this verse, Paul has challenged the principles and beliefs that were practised during his era. Weidmann argues that all members of the three couplets stressed in verse 28 are considered heirs.⁷⁷ It sets the idea that even Gentiles are welcomed in the community of Christ without keeping the law, those who are marginalised can worship together with others in a higher class, and men and women are

⁷¹ Long, *Galatians: Freedom Through God's Grace*, 120.

⁷² Long, *Galatians: Freedom Through God's Grace*, 120.

⁷³ Theodore Graebner, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians by Martin Luther* (Crownhill, Milton Keynes: Authentic Media Limited, 2012), 167.

⁷⁴ Graebner, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians by Martin Luther*, 167.

⁷⁵ Peter Oakes, *Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament: Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2015), 249.

⁷⁶ Frederick W. Weidmann, *Galatians* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 146.

⁷⁷ Weidmann, *Galatians*, 146.

equal before God.⁷⁸ Furthermore, it sets into motion the idea that anyone can be an heir of Abraham and not only those who keep and observe the law.

Ian Christopher Levy notes that verse 29 stresses “we also are the seed of Abraham, heirs but according to the promise, meaning the promises of blessing, and not according to the law.”⁷⁹ This illustrates the picture of all who believe in Christ shall receive such an honour—becoming heirs according to the promise, that being the blessings from God. N. T. Wright expands on verse 29 further by emphasising on the oneness of all who believe in Christ, especially the Gentile believers, are now members of Abraham’s family, belonging to the *ekklēsia* where Torah requirements are no longer required.⁸⁰ This was the issue that the believers were facing in the early days of the Church. The promise mentioned in this passage refers to the promise God had given Abraham, the reverse of the curse, the restoration of humanity’s downfall, the new beginning for creation after the flood.⁸¹ Todd Wilson explains heir as “one who can claim a legal right to an inheritance.”⁸² It is by our faith in Christ, we have received this inheritance—the grace of God. The law’s curse once bounded the people of Israel however, it came with conditions. If Israel sinned against God, then they would be cursed or be ravaged by other nations. If they obeyed God, then God’s favour would be upon them.⁸³ Nevertheless, by becoming one in Christ, we have taken on a new identity. We are offered the gift to share the inheritance of God’s promise to humanity alongside Christ. Through our faith and our baptism in Christ, we have put away our ownership of ourselves by giving ourselves to

⁷⁸ Weidmann, *Galatians*, 147.

⁷⁹ Ian Christopher Levy, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 384.

⁸⁰ N. T. Wright, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 398.

⁸¹ Todd Wilson, *Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013), 168.

⁸² Wilson, *Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living*, 167.

⁸³ Wilson, *Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living*, 170.

the ownership of Christ alone.⁸⁴ As Wilson puts it, “there is nothing more relevant or more practical than this new identity, new community, new inheritance.”⁸⁵ In other words, Paul’s purpose in writing this letter was to make the believers aware of the law’s downfall that made the obvious distinction between Jew and Gentile, clean and unclean, circumcised and uncircumcised. However, Paul makes it clear that since we are baptised and have faith in Christ, we no longer need to worry about any distinctions that could prevent us from receiving the grace of God.

1.3.5 Paul and the Law

Mariota Johnathan Seiuli stresses in his study that the earlier letters that Paul wrote to the churches as well as the book of Acts both contain information on Paul’s early life and ministry.⁸⁶ Acts 22:28 reveals that Paul, formerly known as Saul, was a Roman citizen as described throughout the Book of Acts. Paul was born in Tarsus to a devout Jewish family, was a descendant of the tribe of Benjamin, and was a devout Pharisee just like his father and grandfather were before him.⁸⁷ Pharisees were recognised authorities on the law and its interpretation. The Pharisees have been depicted as the more forward-thinking faction since they accepted the entire body of customary law together with the “Oral Torah” that had grown around the written Torah. To prevent themselves from violating the Mosaic law, the Pharisees had constructed a sophisticated system of oral tradition. Pharisees adhered to the laws that God upholds, and their interpretation of those laws was regarded as the most correct. Certain restrictions that had been handed down from

⁸⁴ Wilson, *Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living*, 174.

⁸⁵ Wilson, *Galatians: Gospel-Rooted Living*, 174.

⁸⁶ See Martin Jonathan Seiuli, “Re-Visiting Paul and the Law in the Epistle to the Galatians in Light of Law in Society.” (Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, Malua Theological College, 2019).

⁸⁷ Seiuli, “Re-Visiting Paul and the Law in the Epistle to the Galatians in Light of Law in Society,” 13.

previous generations but were not included in the laws of Moses were communicated to the public by the Pharisees. Pharisees had also produced their own body of interpretations, expansions, and applications of the law, which they eventually came to believe as having originated from divine sources.

As a young child his parents decided to send him to Jerusalem to receive his education at the Gamaliel School.⁸⁸ Gamaliel the Rabbi was an influential member of the Sanhedrin in the early first century CE.⁸⁹ He was also a teacher of the law who was held in very high respect by the general populace. Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel the Elder, who was the founder of the House of Hillel School for Tannaim (Sages of the Mishnah).⁹⁰ Hillel was one of the most influential Pharisees of all time.⁹¹ This school was involved with the production of the Mishnah (“Oral Torah”) and the Talmud which is the fundamental text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of Jewish religious law and theology.⁹² Paul’s familiarity with the legal system was an asset to his ministry in many ways. Paul used this information to persuade his Jewish countrymen of the unity of the prophecies and covenants found in the Old Testament, as well as their fulfilment in Jesus Christ, who is known as the Messiah.⁹³ Paul, a diligent student of Jewish law, offered a first-hand description of someone who had lived under the law as he had lived and observed the law from the time he was a boy all the way up until the time he became a Pharisee.⁹⁴ In this account, he described how he had lived his life. When Paul was arguing against his accusers after he was called by Christ Jesus to join Him, he was able to present

⁸⁸ Acts 23:3.

⁸⁹ Seiuli, “Re-Visiting Paul and the Law in the Epistle to the Galatians in Light of Law in Society,” 13.

⁹⁰ Margaret S. King, *Unveiling the Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Indianapolis: Xlibris, 1992), 149–151.

⁹¹ King, *Unveiling the Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 149–151.

⁹² King, *Unveiling the Messiah in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 149–151.

⁹³ Seiuli, “Re-Visiting Paul and the Law in the Epistle to the Galatians in Light of Law in Society,” 13.

⁹⁴ Seiuli, “Re-Visiting Paul and the Law in the Epistle to the Galatians in Light of Law in Society,” 13.

proof of his earlier pious life as a way to disprove their claims. After that, he was resolved to share the good news of the Gospel, particularly to those who were not of the Jewish faith.⁹⁵

1.4 Summary

To summarise this chapter, the placement of Gal 3:26–29 emphasises on the oneness of all believers in Christ, that through their faith they are made children of God, heirs to the blessings that await us. Paul knew that there were differences between the Jews and the Gentiles, with the Jews holding fast to the law whereas the Gentiles no longer keeping the law but instead follow the teachings of Paul about Christ’s love for all. Understanding the context of my passage and its placement in the letter to the Galatians, will help explore the identity dilemma I face as a Samoan from in the diaspora who now resides in Samoa. Thus, the next chapter will touch on my social location and the reading approach I will be using, which is the *gafa-tasi* that will be used as a hermeneutic and “Sociorhetorical Interpretation” coined by Vernon Robbins.

⁹⁵ Seiuli, “Re-Visiting Paul and the Law in the Epistle to the Galatians in Light of Law in Society,” 13.

Chapter 2

My Social Location, Positionality, and Reading Approach

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explains my reading approach in which I use the formative *gafa-tasi* hermeneutic to help make sense of the biblical text. The *gafa-tasi* mode of reading is based on my social location. That is, as someone who is situated in between worlds—the country of birth and the country of my heritage. This sense of “in-betweenness” contributes to my reading of Galatians 3:23–29.

2.2 Social Location and Positionality

I was born and raised in Tāmaki Makaurau-Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. Tāmaki Makaurau is home to over 300,000 Pacific Islanders and has been noted as the Polynesian capital of the world.⁹⁶ Like some Pacific Islander living in New Zealand, I was constantly moving around growing up. My early childhood years I grew up with my maternal grandparents in Avondale while my parents lived in Sunnyvale. During my tertiary years, I lived with my maternal uncle in Kelston, a few years with my paternal aunty in Ranui, and a couple of years in Swanson with my eldest sister. As time went on, I moved back with my parents who now resided in Te Atatu Peninsula. These respective suburbs shaped the way I am today. It is also worth noting that these suburbs are in Auckland city have a significant Pacific Islanders population.⁹⁷ Despite moving around, I was raised in the Samoan way to the best of what my family members could offer.

⁹⁶ “Pasifika New Zealand: Our Pacific Community,” New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2023, accessed April 28, 2023, <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/trade/free-trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements-in-force/pacer-plus/pasifika-new-zealand/>.

⁹⁷ “Pasifika New Zealand: Our Pacific Community,” New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2023.

My parents worked as cleaners since their marriage in 1994, with my father working as a cleaner up until his passing in 2022, while my mother continues as a cleaner to this day. These were the jobs many Pacific Islanders worked since their arrival in New Zealand in the 1960s to the 1970s—they were factory workers, cleaners, rubbish collectors, and other laborious professions.⁹⁸ They were also zealous deacons within the Church, with them being *Tiakono Toeaina* (Deacon Elder) for the *Matagaluega Aukilani* (Auckland district) from 2011–2016. They were both loving parents. My father was a respected chief within his family and community, bearing the titles of Fuimaono from the village of Salani, Falealili, and Tuiloma from the village of Sapunaoa, Falealili. My mother was proud, caring, and strong woman from the villages of Malie, Sagaga-le-usoga, and Salelesi, Anoama’a.

I was raised within the EFKS/ CCCS, at the Te Atatu parish since I was born. Under the guidance of the Retired Reverend Elder Lucky Slade FT and his good lady Terri and now the Reverend Filemoni Crawley FS and his good lady Alofa. I was taught like any other EFKS children within the *Aoga o le Faife’au* (minister’s school), how to *tusi lima* (handwriting), *fa’aroma* (Roman numerals), how to read the Bible in the *Gagana Samoa* (Samoan language) and learning the *Fa’asamoa* (the Samoan culture). This upbringing has made me a proud EFKS member.

While my upbringing was founded heavily on Samoan principles and teachings, I also attended English-speaking schools, from Sunnyvale Kindergarten, Sunnyvale

⁹⁸ See Melani Anae, *The Platform: The Radical Legacy of the Polynesian Panthers* (Wellington, New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books, 2020); Melani Anae, Lautofa Iuli and Leilani Tamu, *Polynesian Panthers: Pacific Protest and Affirmative Action in Aotearoa New Zealand 1971–1981* (Wellington, New Zealand: Huia Publishers, 2015); Sean Mallon, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, and Damon Salesa, *Tangata o le Moana: New Zealand and the People of the Pacific* (Wellington, New Zealand: Te Papa Press, 2012).

Primary School, Avondale Intermediate, Avondale College, and The University of Auckland.

These four contributing factors: my upbringing, my parents' profession and roles, my church, and my education shaped my world growing up as a Samoan who was born in New Zealand. Alas, I am now living in Samoa, undergoing studies at Malua Theological College.⁹⁹ I am now a New Zealand-born Samoan, living in Samoa, the home of my heritage.

However, with all this being said, the Reverend Dr. Brian Fiu Kolia highlights on the “opportunities and challenges” that Samoans living in the diaspora faced, however, from all that, there seemed to be a shared issue amongst them: identity.¹⁰⁰ It is the idea that because those in the diaspora are born into two worldviews, they grapple with the struggle to maintain both worldviews at once. Melani Anae in her study about New Zealand-born Samoan identities, makes note of stereotypes and stigmas surrounding identity in New Zealand.¹⁰¹ Anae's study is more ruthless than Kolia's study on identity, by stressing that the problem is due to racism and the early “Dawn Raid” period in New

⁹⁹ Malua Theological College was founded in 1844 by Rev George Turner and Rev Charles Hardie of the London Missionary Society. It is the second longest theological institute established in the Pacific, with Takamoa Theological College in the Cook Islands founded in 1839. It is the first theological institute founded in Samoa making up the three main theological institutes in Samoa, with Piula Theological College (Methodist Church of Samoa) in 1868 and Moamoa Theological College (Catholic Church in Samoa) in 1877. It is the centre for the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa where their members are trained for the ministry. See Manfred Ernest and Anna Anisi, “The Historical Development of Christianity in Oceania,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to World Christianity*, ed. Lamin Sanneh and Michael J. McClymond (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2016), 588–604; David Wetherell, “Teachers All: Samoan, Fijian, and Queensland Melanesian Missionaries in Papua, 1884–1914,” *The Journal of Religious History* 26, no. 1 (2002): 78–96; David Wetherell, “Pioneers and Patriarchs: Samoans in Nonconformist Mission District in Papua, 1890–1917,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 15, no. 3 (1980): 130–154; Tony Swain and Garry W. Trompf, *The Religions of Oceania* (London, England/ New York, New York: Routledge, 1995); Oka Fau'olo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea'i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa* (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2005); “History,” Malua Theological College, 2023, accessed November 20, 2023, <https://malua.edu.ws/about-us/#history>.

¹⁰⁰ Brian Fiu Kolia, “Hybridized Surviving: The Diaspora Narratives of Joseph, Esther, and Daniel,” *Religion* 13, no. 371 (2022): 3.

¹⁰¹ Melani Anae, “Towards a NZ-born Samoan identity: some reflections on “labels,”” *Pacific Health Dialog* 4, no. 2 (1997): 128.

Zealand's history thus causing the identity issue amongst Samoans in the diaspora.¹⁰² However, my study leans more towards a sense of “unity” or “oneness” in Christ, bringing Gal 3:26–29 to configure the New Zealand-born Samoan living with two worldviews.

2.3 *Gafa-tasi* Hermeneutic

The *gafatasi* is a salutation given to the paramount chief title Fuimaono from the village of Salani, Falealili. It is worthy to note of the villages of A'oloau and Fagale'a in Tutuila, and Lefagaoali'i in Savai'i all have the Fuimaono and *gafatasi* within their villages and their *fa'alupega* (village salutations). However, according to their oral history and written accounts, their Fuimaono traces its history back to Salani, Falealili, where their titles come from.¹⁰³

According to Salani's oral history, the first Fuimaono was named Fuimaono Lēo'o who had six sons: Ta'ala, Vo'a, Na'oia, Tutagalevao, Tuimafuiva, and Atanoa. These six sons were all bestowed the Fuimaono title from their father, thus making up the six *fuoifale* (clans)¹⁰⁴ that govern the Fuimaono title, who are generally known as “*alo tutusa*” (equal sons)—no clan is superior to the other.¹⁰⁵

‘Aumua Mata'itusi Simanu, a Samoan matriarch in her studies of the Samoan culture, defines *gafatasi* as “*gafa e alu to'atasi, o le fa'alupega o le Fuimaono*”¹⁰⁶ which simply means “one genealogy, the salutation of the Fuimaono.” Fuimaono Lēo'o had

¹⁰² Anae, “Towards a NZ-born Samoan identity: some reflections on “labels,”” 129.

¹⁰³ Augustin Krämer, *The Samoan Islands* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 444 and 452.

¹⁰⁴ It is believed that from the six *fuoifale*, several Fuimaono in the past intermarried with women from other villages; with the villages of A'oloau and Fagale'a tracing their roots to the Fuimaono-Atanoa *fuoifale* and the village of Lefagaoali'i tracing theirs to the Fuimaono-Ta'ala *fuoifale*.

¹⁰⁵ My late father, Fuimaono-Tutagalevao Fa'atitipa, is a descendant of the Tutatagalevao *fuoifale*, whose name and salutation are where the hermeneutic of this study is inspired.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Aumua Mata'itusi Simanu, *O Si Manu a Alii: A Text for the Advanced Study of the Samoan Language and Culture* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 270.

another son named Fuiavailiili, who later became the first title holder of *Tupua*.¹⁰⁷ It is through his story where the *gafatasi* derives from. When the *Tafa'ifā*¹⁰⁸ holder Muagututia was without a *suli*, an heir, he sought out through his wife Fenunuivao's sister, Oilau, the wife of Fuimaono Lēo'o, for an heir.¹⁰⁹ When Muagututia's emissaries arrived in Salani in search for Fuimaono Lēo'o and his wife Oilau, the village of Salani were bowing to a stone idol, known as *o le tupua a Fuimaono* (Fuimaono's idol).¹¹⁰ From that, Fuiavailiili was given the name *Tupua*, in remembrance of his father's idol. When Tupua Fuiavailiili was brought back to Muagututia, *Tumua*¹¹¹ questioned the boy's right to the *Tafa'ifā* title. When they traced his lineage, they found out that the boy had a genealogy stretching back to Salamasina.¹¹² The following recitation below refers to the many *'aiga* (families) paying homage through their *lafo* (gifts) by different *matai* (chiefs) to Tupua Fuiavailiili, that coined the Samoan saying "*o le saesaega laufa'i a Tumua*"¹¹³ that goes:

E tua Mulinu'u i Falenu'utupu tatala le lafo o Manuo. E tua
Falenu'utupu i Vainiu tatala le lafo o Molio'o. E tua Vainiu i Vaie'e

¹⁰⁷ Rev George Pratt, "The Genealogy of the Kings and Princes of Samoa," *Report of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science* 2 (1890): 662; Rev Samuel Ella, "The Ancient Government of Samoa," *Proceedings of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science* 6 (1895): 600.

¹⁰⁸ The *Tafa'ifā* is the title given to the person who holds the four most paramount titles of Samoa: Tui Atua, Tui A'ana, Vaetamasoali'i, and Gatoaitale.

¹⁰⁹ Bradd Shore, "Adoption, Alliance, and Political Mobility in Samoa," in *Transition in Kingship: Adoption and Fosterage in Oceania*, ed. Ivan Brady (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2019), 195.

¹¹⁰ This stone idol remains to this day standing in Salani, Falealili.

¹¹¹ The political parties of Upolu consisting of Leulumoega, A'ana, and Lufilufi, Atua.

¹¹² Morgan A. Tuimaleali'ifano, *O Tama a 'Aiga: The Politics of Succession to Sāmoa's Paramount Titles* (Suva, Fiji: IPS Publications, 2006), 19; Penelope Schoeffel and Gavan Daws, "Rank, Gender and Politics in Ancient Samoa: The Genealogy of Salamasina the Tafaiā," *The Journal of Pacific History* 22, no. 4 (1987): 183.

¹¹³ "*O le saesaega laufa'i a Tumua*" can be roughly translated as "the tearing of banana leaves by Tumua." The phrase itself refers to the act of counting in Samoan tradition, where in ancient times, Samoans would use leaves as a method of counting, by tearing leaves to indicate the certain amount of numbering needed. Therefore, regarding the story, Tumua were "tearing" leaves whilst counting the many families that had connections with Tupua. See Andrea Bender and Sieghard Beller, "Numeral Classifiers and Counting Systems in Polynesian and Micronesian Languages: Common Roots and Cultural Adaptions," *Oceanic Linguistics* 45, no. 2 (2006): 380–403.

tatala le lafo o Iuli. E tua Vaie'e i Vai'ili'ili tatala le lafo o Moeono. E tua Vai'ili'ili i Salani ma Alofisula tatala le lafo o Tofua'eofoa. E tua Salani ma Alofisula i Falefasa tatala le lafo o Talolema'agao. E tua Falefasa i Faletoi tatala le lafo o Faautagia.¹¹⁴

Upon realising that Tupua had many family connections, *Tumua* decided that the boy was a *Tama a 'Aiga*, “the boy of many families”, and that “*ua toe tasi ai le gafa a Salamasina*” (Salamasina’s lineage has been reconnected),¹¹⁵ thus inspiring the name *gafatasi* given to the Fuimaono.

The Reverend Dr. Vaitusi Nofoaiga in one of his studies uses the hermeneutic “*tautuaileva*” as a formative term to explore egalitarianism in the Bible.¹¹⁶ Nofoaiga uses *tautuaileva* as a hermeneutic that takes into consideration his location of hybridity (a post-colonial approach), where he situates himself as a Samoan reader of the Bible.¹¹⁷ Nofoaiga expands more on this hermeneutic in his book *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, stressing that identity is something that determines how he is alike and different from other Samoans.¹¹⁸ Nofoaiga stresses he is identified according to both his individual characteristics and the characteristics of the group to which he belongs.

¹¹⁴ A rough translation of this recitation can be, “Mulinu’u is abutted by Falenu’utupu, so Manuo presents his gift; Falenu’utupu is abutted by Vainiu, so Molio’o presents his gift; Vainiu is abutted by Vaie’e, so Iuli presents his gift; Vaie’e is abutted by Vai’ili’ili, so Moeono presents his gift; Vai’ili’ili is abutted by Salani and Alofisula, so Tofua’eofoa presents his gift; Salani and Alofisula is abutted by Falefasa, so Talolema’agao presents his gift; Falefasa is abutted by Faletoi, so Faautagia presents his gift.” The names abutted by each other are villages and the different lands connected to Tupua.

¹¹⁵ Tuimaleali’ifano, *O Tama a 'Aiga: The Politics of Succession to Sāmoa’s Paramount Titles*, 19; Schoeffel and Daws, “Rank, Gender and Politics in Ancient Samoa: The Genealogy of Salamasina the Tafaiā,” 183. Salamasina’s son Tapumanaia was taken to Salani by Talolema’agao and Tofua’eofoa, who would become the ancestor of Fuimaono Lēo’o. Whereas Salamasina’s daughter Fofoaivaoese is the ancestor of Muagututia. Thus, through Tupua’s biological father and adopted father, Salamasina’s lineage became one again.

¹¹⁶ See Vaitusi Nofoaiga, “Tautuaileva: A Samoan Hermeneutic to Explore Egalitarianism in the Bible,” *Journal of Samoan Studies* 10 (2020): 60–69.

¹¹⁷ Nofoaiga, “Tautuaileva: A Samoan Hermeneutic to Explore Egalitarianism in the Bible,” 61.

¹¹⁸ See Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2017).

Through *tautuaveva*, Nofoaiga emphasises on his social and cultural identity as a Samoan, recognising that Samoa is a distinct place with its own cultures, values, spaces, and people.¹¹⁹ Nofoaiga notes Samoan social and cultural environment provides the lens through which in his perspectives, experiences, and daily life. Nofoaiga introduces what identity means to him as a Samoan, by addressing the characteristics of a servant-figure from the culture of service (*tautua*) in Samoa.¹²⁰ The *tautua* hears, sees, and feels the needs of his or her family and village, and despite obstacles, acts to fulfil them.¹²¹ Nofoaiga goes on to explain that not only does a person's identity depend on the culture to which he or she adheres, but also on how that culture is manifested.¹²² Identity is a process that is continuously shaped by one's interactions with the world(s) in which he or she exists. Because of this, Nofoaiga states his sense of identity as a *tautua* is dynamic.¹²³ We cannot fully fathom one's identity without considering one's place or location. As Nofoaiga puts it:

Place is not just a location. It is also a space identified by various situations emergent from interactions among people with their values. In this regard, place is a location lived and controlled by people. It is where I learn how to live and relate to other people. It is also the environment where I experience (un)familiar situations based on the human values accepted by people who inhabit that place. In this way, understanding the particular place to which I belong in a society determines how I see and experience other places. More importantly, it shapes how I see other people in other places. Thus, a sense of place is important in defining who I am as a Samoan.¹²⁴

Thus, location is vital in understanding a person's worldview and perception of the world around them. Their upbringings, social location, and beliefs all contribute to a

¹¹⁹ Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 33.

¹²⁰ Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 33.

¹²¹ Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 33.

¹²² Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 34.

¹²³ Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 34.

¹²⁴ Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew*, 34.

person's way of thinking. In doing so, Nofoaiga coins the hermeneutic of *tautuaileva* as a means of engaging the Bible from his respective worldviews.

In a similar manner, I use *gafa-tasi* to also guide my interpretation of Gal 3:23–29. The *gafa-tasi* used in this thesis will be from my own perspective of the term in light of my experience and social location. To help me read the text using *gafa-tasi* hermeneutical optics, Vernon K. Robbins provides a useful scheme of analytics which includes, among other aspects, exploring the 'Inner Texture', 'Inter Texture', and 'Social and Cultural Texture' of the text.¹²⁵ This is similar to the approach taken by other Malua Theological College students in the past.¹²⁶ The appeal for me though is the programmatic and clearly defined steps for the interpreter to engage and provide an analytical exposition on the various aspects of the text. More importantly, by breaking down the text into various textures, I am also able to deconstruct and reconstruct the text, all the while making sense of it from my *gafa-tasi* perspective.'

2.4 Integrating *Gafa-tasi* with Aspects of Sociorhetorical Interpretation

This section breaks down the hermeneutic *gafa-tasi* considering my social background. As I explained above, *gafatasi* is a salutation given to the Fuimaono title, referring to the family linages that are connected through the title. However, my *gafa-tasi* in my use will be regarding the two words forming a portmanteau or a re-configuration.

¹²⁵ See Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996).

¹²⁶ See Vaitusi Nofoaiga, *A Samoan Reading of Discipleship in Matthew* (Atlanta, Georgia: SBL Press, 2017); Fatilua Fatilua, "Fili i le tai se agavaa (wisdom is revealed at sea): re-situation John 6: 16–21 on the tai-side," *Samoa Journal of Theology* 2, no. 1 (2023): 83–90; Faafetai Korua, "A Comparison of Samoan Proverbs and Sayings of Jesus from the Matthean gospel: A Sociorhetorical Perspective," *Samoa Journal of Theology* 2, no. 1 (2023): 129–139; Hobert Sasa "Exploring Discipleship in Matthew 28: 16-20 using the Open System Interconnection (OSI) Model," *Samoa Journal of Theology* 2, no. 1 (2023): 91–103.

The glossary below gives different definition of the two words that make up the *gafa-tasi* hermeneutic, but also other words that stem from them.

1. Gafa = heritage and lineage;¹²⁷ not necessarily familial but “connected” through Christ’s genealogy. In Samoan disputes over lands and title, families tend to go to the Lands and Titles court to resolve matters. In doing so, families refer to these “gafa” to find out who has the connections through these lineages to have rights over certain lands and titles.¹²⁸

Gafa = Samoan measurement unit or method; fathom.¹²⁹

Gafataulimaina = able, ability.

Gafatia = able.

2. Tasi = unity; it is not conformity but recognition of particularities within the confluence of God’s family (*oikoç/ ‘aiga*)

Tasi = only, just, single, unprecedented, unique, sameness, existence.¹³⁰

Overall, *gafa-tasi* can be seen as a re-configuration of different perspectives. Together these motifs provide the framework to read the biblical text. *Gafa-tasi* can be understood as a means of unity or oneness regardless of social background and different worldviews. *Gafa-tasi*, however, does not equate unity with conformity or sameness. Rather, it recognises and embraces distinctiveness and differences. In essence, it is the *fāiā* or relationship that forms the basis of *gafa-tasi*. A person’s *gafa* or lineage is no longer the subject matter instead, there is now a feeling of *fāiā* or relationship amongst individuals. In retrospective to my social background and upbringing, *gafa-tasi* looks

¹²⁷ Rev George Pratt, *Pratt’s Grammar & Dictionary of the Samoan Language* (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 1911).

¹²⁸ Sharon W. Tiffany, “The Land and Titles Court and the Regulation of Customary Title Succession and Removals in Western Samoa,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 83, no. 1 (1974): 35–57.

¹²⁹ Pratt, *Pratt’s Grammar & Dictionary of the Samoan Language*.

¹³⁰ Pratt, *Pratt’s Grammar & Dictionary of the Samoan Language*.

passed the differences and challenges as a New Zealand-born Samoan. Thus, *gafa-tasi* underscores a sense of *fāiā*, belongingness, acceptance, inclusion, and freedom in a manner of being connected with one another.

2.4.1 Inner Texture

Robbins explains the ‘Inner Texture’ of a text looks towards features of the language, clusters of words, repetition of the same word or the same idea, the use of dialogue.¹³¹ This includes, but is not restricted to, linguistic patterns within a text—progressive and repetitive textures, the basic structure of a text—narrational and opening—middle—closing textures, the particular means whereby a text aims to convince its reader—argumentative texture, and how the language of a text conveys emotions, thoughts, or senses that reside in various areas of the body—sensory-aesthetic texture.¹³² For the sake of the purpose of this thesis, exploring the ‘Inner Texture’ involves assessing whether Paul’s encouragement in a progressive texture analysis displays Paul’s recognition and reward of believers for their belief in the face of opposition, segregation, and adversity brought about by the world.

In light of the *gafa-tasi*, how can it be present in Paul’s message of “one in Christ?” who are the *alo tutusa* in regard to Paul’s emphasis on the social groups? What are the recurring themes or ideas Paul stresses that can be related to *gafa-tasi*?

2.4.2 Inter Texture

As explained by Robbins, ‘Inter Texture’ the interaction of the language in a text with the outside material, physical things, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles,

¹³¹ Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1996), 7.

¹³² Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 7.

institutions, and systems is what constitutes a text's intertexture.¹³³ It necessitates the examination of other texts in order to understand the intrinsic aspects of the text. Inter Texture encompasses oral-scribal intertextuality, historical intertextuality, social intertextuality, and cultural intertextuality.¹³⁴ Robbins notes that the intertextual analysis demonstrates how one interprets operates within the area between the implied author and the text. This means that the interpreter looks at how other events converses through the selected texts and how these events that occur outside the text are reflected in the texts. Robbins explains this as displaying how the interpreter works in the area between the implied author and the text.¹³⁵ I ought to use aspects of Robbins' 'Inter Texture' analysis to approach Gal 3:23–29 and how Paul's re-shapes his views on the law and give more emphasis on faith. Moreover, I will touch on external writings such as Second Temple from 100 BCE–CE 100 that dealt deal with issues of identity during the Hellenistic period, that could have influenced Paul's theology.

This leaves me to ask, how does *gafa-tasi* integrate into Paul's message to the Galatians? Are there implications of *gafa-tasi* present in these external sources that Paul could have used to inspire his work?

2.4.3 Social and Culture Texture

The purpose of this section of the analysis is to investigate the social and cultural ideals that are reflected in the social and cultural components of the language used in the

¹³³ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 40.

¹³⁴ Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology* (London, England: Routledge, 1996), 96.

¹³⁵ Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society and Ideology*, 142.

text.¹³⁶ It will explore Paul's use of rhetorical arrangements and style that were common in the first century and were understood by that audience.

2.5 Summary

This chapter shed light on my social location, positionality, and the reading approach for this study. It is important to understand my social location and positionality in order to see the direction this study sways towards. Furthermore, the reading approach using the *gafa-tasi* is influenced by my social location and positionality. From it, I will be using it to exegete Gal 3:23–29 in the next chapter along side Sociorhetorical Interpretation as a mean to interact with the text.

¹³⁶ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 71.

Chapter 3

“Identifying” *Gafa-tasi* within the Text

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse Galatians 3:23–29 using elements of Vernon Robbins’ Sociorhetorical Interpretation (SRI) integrated with my *gafa-tasi* hermeneutic. Firstly, I will give an inner texture analysis of the text. Secondly, a inter texture analysis of the text and how elements of *gafa-tasi* may be found in external sources that could have influenced Paul’s teachings. Lastly, are there any traces of *gafa-tasi* in the social and cultural dynamics of the text.

3.2 Inner Texture: Finding *Gafa-tasi* within in the Text

As Robbins notes in his writings, there are “six kinds of inner texture analysis in a text: (a) repetitive; (b) progressive; (c) narrational; (d) opening–middle–closing; (e) argumentative; and (f) sensory-aesthetic texture.”¹³⁷ In light of this chapter, I will be focusing solely on opening–middle–closing texture analysis.

3.2.1 Opening–Middle–Closing Texture

In his study, Robbins defines opening–middle–closing texture as self-explanatory.¹³⁸ It looks at repetition, progression, and narration that occurs during a text and how these units build an author’s intention or views. Robbins states that interpreters have their own respective view on where certain passages have an opening, ending, and closing narration.¹³⁹ In other words, these units shine light on the text’s placement in the

¹³⁷ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 7.

¹³⁸ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 19.

¹³⁹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 19.

overall story—why does Paul begin Gal 3:23–29 with introducing the law as a former guardianship? Why is the topic of faith mentioned in the middle of the passage? And lastly, why does he end the passage offering three different couplets of social classes and mentioning being heirs of Abraham? Table 1 below offers an opening–middle–closing layout of Gal 3:23–29.

Table 1: Opening–Middle–Closing texture

Opening	Middle	Closing
<p>23. Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed.</p> <p>24. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.</p> <p>25. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian,</p>	<p>26. for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.</p> <p>27. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.</p>	<p>28. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.</p> <p>29. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.</p>

The opening in Gal 3:23–29 gives a glimpse of Paul’s view on the law as our pedagogue (the NRSV uses the term disciplinarian). Verses 23–24 continue the discussion of legal incarceration by stating that the purpose of this bondage was for we would be set free by faith.¹⁴⁰ Paul stresses on this thought that the law once bounded them until Christ came. There is a sense of negative connotation towards the law with expressions mentioned in these opening verses stating an idea of bondage with the Greek *ἐφρουρούμεθα* (guarded) and *συνκλειόμενοι* (imprisoned). However, in verse 25 Paul introduces a new term to refer to the law. The term pedagogue comes from the Greek word *παιδαγωγός* which means “disciplinarian” or “teacher.” It is used in 1 Cor 4:15 and Gal 3:24 and 25. Its meaning according to the BDAG is as follows: the man, who was

¹⁴⁰ E. P. Sander, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life, Letters, and Thought* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2015), 534.

typically a slave, whose function it was to guide a boy or youth to and from school and to supervise his behaviour generally¹⁴¹; he was not a “disciplinarian” (despite the current meaning of the derivation “pedagogue”). After the boy has reached the appropriate age, the *παιδαγωγός* was no longer required. A person in our world today who is responsible for another individual who requires leadership or guidance is referred to as a guardian, leader, or guide.¹⁴² Thus, to the Jews, the law is a *παιδαγωγός*.¹⁴³ Paul assesses the Mosaic law as a *παιδαγωγός* in Gal 3:24, where the emphasis is placed on the constraining role of the law in contrast to the freedom that is found in the gospel.¹⁴⁴ It is also crucial to remember exactly how this worked. In Roman society, the world in which Paul and the New Testament were written, the *παιδαγωγός* often carried a rod or heavy stick with which to strike the child if he went out of line or required additional “encouragement” to study or get answers correct.¹⁴⁵ This was done in the event that the boy needed additional “disciplinary action” to study or get answers correct. As a result, the impoverished pupil would have had the impression that he was being held captive by this someone, whom he perceived to be acting in the role of an imprisoner; Paul uses the example of the disciplinarian to indicate the restraining and limited nature of the law.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ See Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁴² Walter F. Taylor, *Paul: Apostle to the Nations* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2012), 367.

¹⁴³ In the Samoan Bible (*O Le Tusi Paia*), the term used is *ta'ita'itama* in Galatians 3:24, see *O le Tusi Paia i le Gagana Samoa: Uluai Lomiga Fou Muamua* (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2005). The Samoan translation offers a better understanding of its English counterpart in the NRSV. *Ta'ita'itama* can be broken down into two words, *ta'ita'i*, meaning “to lead”, “guide”, or “leader” while *tama* can be defined as “child” or “boy. Therefore, *ta'ita'itama* can be explained as “someone who guides or leads a child” or as its Greek counterpart defines it, “guardian.”

¹⁴⁴ Norman H. Young, “*Paidagogos*: The Social Setting of a Pauline Metaphor,” *Novum Testamentum* 29 (1987): 171.

¹⁴⁵ See Norman H. Young, “The Figure of the *Paidagōgos* in Art and Literature,” *The Biblical Archaeologist* 53, no. 2 (1990): 80–86.

¹⁴⁶ Taylor, *Paul: Apostle to the Nations*, 367.

Paul progresses forward to verses 26–27 where he makes emphasis on Christ being that catalyst for one’s path to salvation. As Paul made note in his letter, the law once acted as the people’s guardian. However, Paul does not necessarily disregard the law, but insists that the law is not the path to life.¹⁴⁷ Instead, it is the surpassing power of God’s Spirit that gives meaning to one’s life and making them able to do what is right in God’s sight.¹⁴⁸ Paul reaffirms the primacy of faith for the Christian and their new identity in Christ.¹⁴⁹ Christ is now central, no longer the law, even though the law was still important to Paul. Faith leads not just to righteousness but also to a relationship with God’s Son.¹⁵⁰ This was a revolutionary statement in comparison to what the Galatians were taught. Your standing before God was measured in traditional Jewish theology (brought into Christianity by Jewish Christians) by your devotion to the Torah. To be truly near to God—to be regarded a son of God—you had to be a strict observer of the law, just like the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23). However, Paul states here that we can be regarded God’s sons in a completely other way: via faith in Christ Jesus. Paul shows what it means to have faith in Christ through the image of baptism. He says we were baptised into Christ rather than into water. Just like a person is submerged in water during immersion baptism, we too are immersed in Jesus when we deposit our complete faith and obeisance in him.

The closing scene of this passage concludes Paul’s message about law no longer being the pedagogue for all but faith alone. While expounding on the topic of union and equality of all through Christ, Paul concludes, “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.” This is related to 3:16—Abraham

¹⁴⁷ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 923.

¹⁴⁸ DeSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 923.

¹⁴⁹ Daniel J. Scholz, *The Pauline Letters: Introducing the New Testament* (Winona, Minnesota: Anselm Academic, 2010), 148.

¹⁵⁰ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle’s Life, Letters, and Thought*, 535.

had only one heir, Christ, the unique offspring. As a result, those who are in Christ inherit the promises, those that insist on circumcision, on the other hand, do not.¹⁵¹ Paul shines light on the equality of Jew and Gentile through their faith in Christ; there are no distinctions between the two respective groups—*οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή* (Rom 3:22). Believers are all one in Christ Jesus (3:28) and children of God (3:26). This supersedes all natural divisions between humans in our context, such that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. The ramifications of these verses are due in part to a disdain for its spiritual context, which concerns justification before God. However, Paul is not saying that Christ has abolished all racial differences, all class differences, and all gender distinctions. Although the verses have been utilised as though it says, or almost says, this is far from what the verses illustrate. It cannot, for example, be used to rebut claims of intelligence, temperament, and physiological disparities between races, classes, and genders. It is a distinct topic whether these disparities exist; this passage does not affirm or oppose them because it does not discuss them at all. As a result, outside of the context of this passage, these verses cannot be used to criticise racism, classism, or sexism, unless the relevance can be demonstrated by necessary inference from the verses. It cannot even be used as an anti-racism, anti-classism, and anti-sexism appeal to non-Christians, because the lack of differentiation referred to here is founded on the reality that believers are all one in Christ.¹⁵² Unbelievers, on the other hand, are not in Christ, so believers are not one with them. However, a real plea may be made from this text for unbelievers to convert, to become believers, so that they may become one with all believers in Christ, where spiritually speaking, there is this basis to

¹⁵¹ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought*, 535.

¹⁵² A. J. M. Wedderburn, "Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrase 'In Christ' and 'With Christ,'" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 25 (1985): 90.

stop social differences. Verse 29 implies that those who “belong” to Christ are “heirs according to the promise” indicating that Paul is willing to regard “Abraham’s seed” in the plural, as discussed in relation to 3:16. Christ is the “true” heir; in him, God’s promise to Abraham is finally and completely fulfilled. Believers, on the other hand, are correctly referred to as the heirs of the promise, but only in Christ.¹⁵³ To bring the *gafa-tasi* into perspective, it is clear that Paul stresses the one genealogy we have with Abraham, through Christ. We are *suli* our heirs to the promise, just as Tupua Fuiavailiili was heir to the *Tafa’ifā* title. Considering our *gafa-tasi* to Abraham, Christ is the one true heir of Abraham, through our faith in him, we too are made one in Christ, a *gafa-tasi* to Abraham.

It is worthy to note of the repetition of the point of views expressed through Gal 3:23–29. Verses 23–25 we see the uses of “we” and “our.” Paul then shifts the point of view to second person plural in verses 26–27 where he uses “you.” Then in verse 28 he lists three couplets of the social classes—third person plural. Finally, in the last line of verse 28 and verse 29, he uses “you” again. Is Paul referring to himself or others in these verses? Is it possible that Paul is referring to two different “perceptions” of law in Gal 3:23–29 where he uses “we” and “you”?

Table 2: Grammatical person and pronouns

First person plural	<p>23. Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed.</p> <p>24. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.</p> <p>25. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian,</p>
Second person plural	<p>26. for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.</p>

¹⁵³ Vincent Cheung, *Commentary on Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 2007), 194.

Third person plural	28. There is no longer <i>Jew or Greek</i> , there is no longer <i>slave or free</i> , there is no longer <i>male and female</i> ;
First person plural	for all of <i>you</i> are one in Christ Jesus. 29. And if <i>you</i> belong to Christ, then <i>you</i> are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Observing the Table 2 above, it is clear Paul changes the point-of-view when referring to certain peoples. Paul emphasises a new “freedom” that the Gentile Christians now possess through their faith in Christ. They are no longer bound by the law that the Jewish Christians were eager to keep and observe. As Daniel J. Scholz puts it:

Paul begins by speaking of both Jews and Gentiles as being at one time enslaved: the Jew, a slave to the law, and the Gentile, a slave to the “elemental powers of the world.”¹⁵⁴

Scholz's use of the term “elemental powers” refers to the law. Paul explains in Romans that the law applied to everyone, even Gentiles, not just Jews (Rom 3:9, 19). As a result, this aligns with the idea of Gentiles being held under the law before the arrival of Christ, or it could also relate to Gentiles being under the law prior to Paul's writing. E. P. Sanders also stresses on this idea that Gentiles throughout the Old Testament were observing the law and were welcomed into the community of God.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, these “elemental powers” can also refer to James' speech at the Council in Jerusalem as mentioned in Acts 15. James makes it apparent that God wants to bring the Gentiles back to him, incorporating Amos 9:11–12 and quoting Isa 45:2. To begin with, he states that no one should bother the Gentiles who are turning to God. However, they must abstain from idol pollution, fornication, strangled things, and blood. These were the four

¹⁵⁴ Scholz, *The Pauline Letters: Introducing the New Testament*, 148.

¹⁵⁵ Sanders, *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought*, 470.

prohibitions that the Gentiles were to keep, according to the Council at Jerusalem. C. P.

Wagner notes:

They did not have to become Jews to be saved or to live a good Christian life. They could remain Gentiles forever. Keeping the law of Moses was unnecessary either for salvation or for sanctification... The Gentiles were to be careful about the food they ate, abstaining from meat offered to idols and from strangled meat that still contained blood, or from the blood itself. They were also to live lives free from sexual immorality.¹⁵⁶

In other words, salvation was gained through observing the law. However, now that Christ has come, faith in him alone is only way to salvation. Paul has never agreed that there was a given time whence salvation was gained through works of the law.¹⁵⁷ Paul feared that if the Gentiles were to submit to the regulations of the law, they would be enslaved by it falling under the “curse” of the law once again.¹⁵⁸

3.3 Intertexture: Exploring *Gafa-tasi* in Other Second Temple

Literature

Robbins defines intertexture analysis as “reference to, and use of phenomena in the “world” outside the text being interpreted.”¹⁵⁹ In other words, it simply means the considering of other sources that might have influenced the author of the text in their thinking and theology. In most cases, certain texts tend to have elements borrowed from other external sources that help develop an author’s writing. In other words, intertexture provides the opportunity for the interpreter to explore the interconnectedness of the

¹⁵⁶ C. P. Wagner, *The Book of Acts: A Commentary* (Bloomington, Minnesota: Chosen Books, 2008), 479.

¹⁵⁷ Klyne Snodgrass, “Spheres of Influence: A Possible Solution to the Problem of Paul and the Law,” in *The Pauline Letter: A Sheffield Reader*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 155.

¹⁵⁸ Scholz, *The Pauline Letters: Introducing the New Testament*, 148.

¹⁵⁹ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 40.

text.¹⁶⁰ Intertexture analysis coined by Robbins comes in different stages: (a) oral-scribal intertexture; (b) cultural intertexture; (c) social intertexture; and (d) historical intertexture. In this section, I will discuss how Paul’s theology might have been influenced from other Second Temple literature and how *gafa-tasi* can be implied into these sources.

3.3.1 Second Temple Literature

The revolt of the Maccabees in the second century BCE against Antiochus III of the Seleucid Empire underscores a movement to “cleanse” Judaism of all defilements, to preserve Jewish identity and its form of worship from Hellenistic influence. This theme of purity and cleansing was a prominent aspect of Second Temple literature. As someone who was brought up in Jewish teachings and Pharisaic training, it can be argued then that Paul stresses in Galatians 3 to some extent offers a new kind of identity for a community that is becoming ethnically and racially diverse. Paul’s argument however for an integrated community is based on a “double” concept of law. On one hand, he sometimes refers to the Sinaitic Torah (3:24). On the other hand, he appears to be referring to a general universal force in verse 26. From a *gafa-tasi* perspective, Paul is offering unity not so much in the sense of one law, but the idea that people of different races and different ethnicities can live together in a community. This calls for an appreciation of differences rather than focusing on similarities.

The Seleucid conqueror of Judea, Antiochus III, enabled Judea to keep the traditions and governmental structure that it had been accustomed to under Ptolemaic authority.¹⁶¹ This pattern persisted until 188 BCE, when Antiochus III was defeated by

¹⁶⁰ Fatilua Fatilua, “*Fāiā* Analysis of Romans 13:1–7: Integrating a Samoan Perspective with Socio-Rhetorical Criticism,” (Master of Theology Thesis, Pacific Theological College, 2018), 61.

¹⁶¹ L. T. C. Williams and T. Sorrells, *Insurgence in Ancient Times: The Jewish Revolts Against the Seleucids and Roman Empires* (Potomac, Maryland: Pickle Partners Publishing, 2015), 23.

Rome. The Apamean Peace obliged the Seleucids to pay a huge indemnity to the Roman Republic, putting it in dire financial problems. The Seleucid administration increased the tax load on its inhabitants because of the financial hardship, and a source of untapped wealth existed in the kingdom's different temples.¹⁶² Antiochus III was assassinated while attempting to raid an Elamite temple, while his son Seleucus IV failed in his effort to steal money from the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. This caused friction between Jews and Seleucid administrators. As a natural response to a heavily taxed and dissatisfied Jewish population, confrontations between the local populace and Seleucid government representatives increased. Conflict also emerged from Jewish populations outside the official confines of Judea, particularly in Hellenised Samaria and Idumaea, where these Jews tended to become a part of Judea.¹⁶³ It is vital to emphasise that the Jewish opposition's goal at the time was not to re-create the ancient Jewish kingdom, but to protect and establish Jewish autonomy in order to maintain their cultural distinctness against the forces of Hellenization.¹⁶⁴

There is no doubt that the Dead Sea Scrolls shed light on the New Testament in numerous ways, despite the failure of more ambitious attempts to discover an exact prototype of early Christianity within them. The two movements occurred contemporaneously within the same cultural context.¹⁶⁵ They frequently utilised the same scriptures in similar methods. The Scrolls provide a context for debates concerning issues of concern to all Jews at the time, such as divorce and Sabbath observance. Like the

¹⁶² Williams and Sorrells, *Insurgence in Ancient Times: The Jewish Revolts Against the Seleucids and Roman Empires*, 23.

¹⁶³ Williams and Sorrells, *Insurgence in Ancient Times: The Jewish Revolts Against the Seleucids and Roman Empires*, 23.

¹⁶⁴ Williams and Sorrells, *Insurgence in Ancient Times: The Jewish Revolts Against the Seleucids and Roman Empires*, 23.

¹⁶⁵ John J. Collins, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Biography* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 119.

Pauline letters, the Sapiential texts discovered at Qumran contrast the physical and spiritual realms. Another text of wisdom contains a list of Beatitudes that is similar in form to the Sermon on the Mount, although the specifics are quite different. In 4QMMT, the treatise on “some of the works of the law” that outlines the points on which the sect differed from other Jews has been cited as an analogy for what Paul means by “works of the law.”¹⁶⁶ A document describing a heavenly figure named Melchizedek may provide context for cryptic references to Melchizedek in the letter to the Hebrews. There could be numerous instances. Rarely can it be argued that a New Testament author was influenced by a specific text discovered at Qumran. Rather, the point is that both movements drew from the same cultural and religious tradition and frequently interpreted or posed similar concerns about their sacred texts.¹⁶⁷

3.3.2 Restoration from the Curse of the Law

Preston M. Sprinkle in his study makes mention of the struggle of Israel having to uphold the covenant curse and hoping for the restoration.¹⁶⁸ As the Old Testament comes to a closing, Second Temple writers begin to emerge and make note on these ideas and use it as a mean to ponder on how God will restore his people. Sprinkle goes on to stress that “curse and blessing language” is predominant through these Second Temple literature.¹⁶⁹ Referring to the Qumran community, who believed they had escaped the covenant curse while the rest of Israel fell under its burden leaves the question: from

¹⁶⁶ Collins, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Biography*, 119.

¹⁶⁷ Collins, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Biography*, 119.

¹⁶⁸ See Preston M. Sprinkle, *Paul & Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2013).

¹⁶⁹ Sprinkle, *Paul & Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation*, 76.

whence did this thinking come about and how does it relate to Paul's theology mentioned in Galatians?

There are five documents that may answer this question whether Israel were restrained by the covenant curse or did they believe God had removed this curse from them. These documents are mentioned by Sprinkle as so: *The Temple Scroll*, *The Damascus Document*, *The Community Rule*, *Miqat Maaseh ha-Torah*, and *The Words of the Luminaries*. In examining each respective text, it is believed that through repentance and returning to the law had left the Qumran community to make the judgement they have escaped the curse of the law.¹⁷⁰ Thus, regardless of the Qumran believe they escaped the curse of the law, they indeed kept the law.

The Qumran community lived as a whole and practised their beliefs in a way that emit a sense of oneness. It was their idea of keeping the law to "escape" its curse that implies the idea of a *gafa-tasi* community. This tightly knit community perhaps inspired Paul to also stress on a community for a common cause, where in this case: faith.

3.3.3 Paul on the Law

It is important to ponder on these Second Temple literature in order to understand Paul's theology. As a result, Paul contends that it is the human response to what God has done in Christ, rather than the divine response to what Israel has done in the law, that frees us from the curse of the law. This distinction is emphasised in Galatians where Paul emphasises divine intervention in saving Christians from the curse of the law, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Sprinkle, *Paul & Judaism Revisited: A Study of Divine and Human Agency in Salvation*, 90.

¹⁷¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfilment: A Pauline Theology of the Law* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1993), 44.

3.3.4 Paul's Theology Influenced by Jewish Teachings?

The question in this section raised is whether Paul's theology in his letters were influenced by his Jewish background or other Second Temple literature present during his time. Paul was a person with two *gafa*, he was a Roman citizen but also a Jew—a hybrid identity. David B. Bronson in his work says there is a problem with Paul's theology and that it being a Jewish issue.¹⁷² Attempting to understand Paul's theology has tendencies of difficulties for non-Jewish readers who at first glance would not be able to make sense of Paul's message in his letters. Bronson notes that the emphasis of the law, although disregarded, highly influences Paul's theology.¹⁷³

It is no different to one attempting to understand their own *gafa* to make sense of their worldview. This was Paul's *gafa*, the idea that his genealogy was heavily based on the law and his Jewish background. However, as a Roman citizen, he was able to utilise both worldviews enabling others to see the oneness of his theology in his letters. Gesila Nneka Uzukwu in her work notes that in Paul's letter to the Galatians, has traces of Jewish literature in his theology.¹⁷⁴ Her focus on verse 28 and the pairing of opposites by Paul is similar to Jewish principles of the three blessings of gratitude.¹⁷⁵

Paul was equally at home in Jerusalem, where he spent his formative years, as well as in the Diaspora context of his native Tarsus. He was familiar in both Greek and Hebrew. He was in an ideal position to be impacted by Jewish literature that went beyond the canon of the Bible, whether it was published in Hebrew in Judea (like Ben Sira) or in

¹⁷² See David B. Bronson, "Paul, Galatians, and Jerusalem," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 35, no. 2 (1967): 119–128.

¹⁷³ Bronson, "Paul, Galatians, and Jerusalem," 121.

¹⁷⁴ See Gesila Nneka Uzukwu, "Gal 3, 28 and its alleged relationship to rabbinic writings," *Biblica* 91, no. 3 (2010): 370–392.

¹⁷⁵ Uzukwu, "Gal 3, 28 and its alleged relationship to rabbinic writings," 388.

Greek anywhere else in the Roman world.¹⁷⁶ It would suggest that Wisdom of Solomon, a classic of Diaspora Jewish thought, had a significant impact on Paul's way of thinking; at the very least, it is a witness to Hellenistic Jewish traditions that had such an impact.¹⁷⁷

David A. deSilva sheds light on the law as used by Paul in his writings. DeSilva stresses that it is necessary, at the outset, to abandon the fallacious duality between “law” and “grace” in order to comprehend the theology of the Torah as it pertains to Judaism during the time of the Second Temple.¹⁷⁸ It was not a meaningful contrast for the authors of the apocryphal books, despite the fact that it became a vitally important contrast for Paul as he sought to understand the significance of the death of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit to both Jews and Gentiles as a consequence of this act of beneficence. Paul sought to understand the significance of the death of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit to both Jews and Gentiles as a result of this act of beneficence.¹⁷⁹ The very act of God bestowing the Torah upon Israel was the utmost display of “grace”—that is, of kindness and unmerited privilege—that he could have shown towards Israel.¹⁸⁰ The covenant supplied the fundamental framework not only for interpreting history's ups and downs, but also for hope—individual hope for a happy life and national hope for survival and prosperity.¹⁸¹ Several Apocrypha authors are preoccupied with demonstrating how the covenant proves faithful on both levels, as well as addressing the doubts about God and the covenant that invariably arise when horrible things happen to decent people and when those who do evil thrive.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ David A. deSilva, *The Apocrypha* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2012), 188.

¹⁷⁷ DeSilva, *The Apocrypha*, 188.

¹⁷⁸ DeSilva, *The Apocrypha*, 65.

¹⁷⁹ DeSilva, *The Apocrypha*, 65.

¹⁸⁰ DeSilva, *The Apocrypha*, 65.

¹⁸¹ DeSilva, *The Apocrypha*, 87.

¹⁸² DeSilva, *The Apocrypha*, 87.

3.4 Is there *gafa-tasi* in the social and cultural dynamics of the text?

3.4.1 Paul's World

Paul's environment, in which he lived and wrote, was very different from the highly complex and academically focused world culture of the twenty-first century in which we now find ourselves. When compared to the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day, which was dominated by religious superstition and polytheistic idolatry, one could say that modern society is ruled by paganistic scientism, hedonistic materialism, and religious scepticism.¹⁸³ In contrast, the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day was dominated by religious superstition and polytheistic idolatry.

The term "Greece" has to have a meaning of its own, or more accurately, a warning about how little definition there actually is. By the time that Paul lived, the entirety of what is now known as the Middle East, stretching all the way from Greece proper all the way east to the Indus River and south to Egypt, had been profoundly impacted by the Greek language and culture as a result of the extraordinary conquests of Alexander the Great.¹⁸⁴ But as N. T. Wright notes, the word 'Greek' needs to be stressed. Greek culture can be traced back to the much earlier Minoan and Mycenaean civilisations, and even though the lines of derivation are blurry, it is highly likely that some key features of what we now think of as classical Greek culture and religion, particularly that of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, can be traced back that far.¹⁸⁵ In terms of history, Greek culture can be traced back to the Minoan and Mycenaean civilisations. The people who lived on

¹⁸³ John McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 385.

¹⁸⁴ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (London, England: SPCK Publish, 2013), 552. N. T. Wright notes Greek civilisation had also spread westwards, to the islands of Sicily and southern Italy; nevertheless, these regions were not a part of Alexander the Great's kingdom.

¹⁸⁵ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 552.

each side of the Aegean Sea considered themselves to be part of the same civilisation, despite the fact that their traditions were distinct.¹⁸⁶ The mainland of Greece and the Aegean islands formed an essential part of this larger ‘Greece,’ but the Asia Minor seaboard, stretching from the Black Sea in the north all the way down to the coastal area of the south-west, was also ethnically Greek, culturally Greek, and spiritually Greek.¹⁸⁷ In other words, there was a sense of *gafa-tasi* amongst the ancient Greek communities during this era. Today’s Greece and the Aegean islands were part of this larger ‘Greece.’ Paul’s whole life and career, including his arrival in Rome, took place within a civilisation that was founded on and was still moulded by Greek culture.¹⁸⁸ This was true even after Paul moved to Rome.

The study of ‘Greek’ religion and culture in the future should pay attention to this aspect, which is that it was inextricably multifaceted, as shown by its historical origins and geographical dispersal.¹⁸⁹ Even when Athens was at the pinnacle of its dominance in the fifth century BCE and had acquired an empire, the islands and coastlands that came under its authority were spread out in a dispersed manner. Even if someone had tried to standardise their religion and way of life, it was impossible to do so because of their unique cultural traditions. Even while Athens was in control of most of Greece, the country continued to function as a collection of towns and islands with varying degrees of autonomy. Greece had never done so before, in contrast to Rome, which was able to conceptualise in terms of clearly defined cultural and theological borders while being a single city.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 552.

¹⁸⁷ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 552.

¹⁸⁸ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 552.

¹⁸⁹ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 553.

¹⁹⁰ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 553.

Paul lived in a time and place that was already rich in a variety of religious alternatives. By the time he lived, Roman culture and religion had made their way east, while Greek religion, together with the cults of eastern cultures, had made its way west.¹⁹¹ When Paul arrived in Rome in the late 50s of the first century, there was already an annual festival held in memory of the Magna Mater and Attis, and it was held in March of each year.¹⁹² This festival took place in the month of March. The Phrygian goddess had been accepted into the Roman pantheon as early as 204 BCE; Claudius, who reigned as Emperor from CE 41 to 54, granted permission for additional attention to be paid to her cult throughout his reign.¹⁹³ This is all the more astonishing when one considers that attempts made by Egyptian migrants in the first century BCE to introduce the cult of Isis met with a great deal of disfavour in their target communities.¹⁹⁴ These are also images of a different communities that also were present during Paul's world. They had different backgrounds with different beliefs, there was no sense of *gafa-tasi*, everyone was divided into their own "*gafa*" or groups causing Paul to seek out means in bringing a message of oneness to these communities.

3.4.2 Impediments Confronting Unity in Paul's Ministry

Robbins makes note about cultural location being an idea where it concerns the manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people.¹⁹⁵ He stresses there are different kinds of cultures that define a community, in other words, different "*gafa*" that separates certain groups from

¹⁹¹ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 562.

¹⁹² Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 562.

¹⁹³ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 562.

¹⁹⁴ Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, 562.

¹⁹⁵ Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of the Texts: A Guide to Socio-Rhetorical Interpretations*, 86.

one another, thus leading to a segregation of peoples within a community, not achieving a sense of unity.

Many academics are of the opinion that the catastrophes that occurred in the years CE 70 and CE 135 caused the rabbis to turn their backs on the outside world and to isolate themselves from the culture and people of the gentiles. Because of the events of the revolts, the Jews set themselves apart from the outside world. They did not see a sense of “unity” or *gafa-tasi* with the other surrounding inhabitants of Judea and the Roman Empire, seeing them as unclean and inferior.

However, regardless of these different factions within Paul’s world, the Christians are not to blame for any issues, disputes, or even riots; rather, the pagans and Jews are the ones to blame during Paul’s time. The emergence of Christianity and Paul’s ministry caused tension amongst the pagan and Jewish natives. Paul and Christianity were detrimental to the business of pagans.¹⁹⁶ Pliny the Younger, who was serving as the emergency governor of Bithynia-Pontus on the southern shore of the Black Sea at the time, identified it as a socioreligious concern in his report to Emperor Trajan in the year CE 112. In his letters, he explains that he had acted against Christianity because “this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only but has spread through the villages and rural districts.”¹⁹⁷

Therefore, Paul’s strategy was to begin his preaching in a synagogue, and then, when most of its members rejected him, to turn his attention to the Gentiles (Rom 1:16c, “to the Jew first and also to the Greek”). This was Paul’s technique for spreading the gospel. During his first voyage, he made this strategy public at the city of Antioch in

¹⁹⁶ John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan L. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’s Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom* (San Francisco, California: HarperOne, 2005), 49.

¹⁹⁷ Crossan and Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’s Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom*, 49.

Pisidia.¹⁹⁸ There, he addressed the significant number of Jewish people who did not accept his message. He spoke out to them, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we are now turning to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46b).

Paul was at constant unrest dealing with the pagans and Jews. Their disapproval of Paul’s ministry was partially why Paul called for oneness in Christ, whether it be Jew or Greek; slave or free; or male or female. Paul wanted the communities to live in a harmonious way, due to the constant disputes amongst them. He was brought up as a Pharisee while being a Roman citizen. One has to disregard the vicious polemical attacks on the Pharisees that are included in the gospels in order to get a grasp on what the term “Pharisees” means. We must consider their purity regulations as the physical and sacramental indicators of invisible and spiritual sanctity, of being, as the Lukan Paul says, “zealous for God,” is the better way to think about their way of thinking.¹⁹⁹

Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan stress that Luke is most likely elevating Paul’s religio-educational standing rather than merely describing it when he refers to Paul as not only “a Pharisee,” but also a “son of Pharisees,” and when he says that Paul was “brought up in this city [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel.”²⁰⁰ This leads us to believe that Luke is doing more than just reporting Paul’s religious and educational background.

Damascus, not Jerusalem, appears to have been the location where Paul obtained his advanced religious education. This seems extremely likely. In any event, even if Gamaliel were Paul’s instructor in Jerusalem, Paul did not heed his master’s counsel

¹⁹⁸ McRay, *Paul: His Life and Teaching*, 514.

¹⁹⁹ Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church’s Conservative Icon* (New York, New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 74.

²⁰⁰ Borg and Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church’s Conservative Icon*, 74.

regarding how to deal with Jewish Christians who did not follow the Christian faith. Gamaliel suggested to “keep away from these men and let them alone” (Acts 5:38), but Paul continued to persecute them as we will see in the next sections. Second, in terms of Paul’s socioeconomic status, Luke is adamant that Paul was a Roman citizen, even though Paul himself never acknowledges his citizenship and indeed tries to negate the fact that he had one.²⁰¹

3.5 Summary

This chapter sought out the exegetical work of Gal 3:23–29. Paul’s message to the Galatians was thorough in his attempt to guide the Galatians to be at one in Christ putting aside their different beliefs and teachings. Using Vernon Robbins’ Sociorhetorical Interpretation lenses of inner, inter, and social and cultural texture analyses alongside my *gafa-tasi* hermeneutic, I re-read the passage to shed light on Paul’s theology. In doing so, I am able also to bring the biblical text in tangent with the question of identity and my situation as a New Zealand-born Samoan. This is a significant consideration for this thesis which I will explain in the next chapter.

²⁰¹ Borg and Crossan, *The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church’s Conservative Icon*, 75.

Chapter 4

Discussion of Findings and Implications on Identity

4.1 A New *Gafa* in Christ

The idea of identity is important to me. Growing up in New Zealand I was privileged to be raised in a Samoan household. Because of that, I am shaped by a blended worldview. As mentioned earlier, there were times I felt like I did not “belong” to either Samoan or New Zealand worldview. In the New Zealand lifestyle, I was taught English, went to English speaking schools, and grew up in a multi-cultural environment. However, I still felt like I did not belong. I was a Samoan boy living in this environment. It did not have anything to do with racism per se, but it was not feeling like I belonged. I have never dealt with any form of racism, and I will not sway this study towards any discussion surrounding it. However, it was the feeling of being Samoan in New Zealand made me feel like I did not have any sense of identity. To bring perspective into my Samoan side, I also struggled with a sense of belonging. It was a sense of wanting to feel included, to feel like I was “Samoan” enough. There was no ill feeling towards my Samoan side, but a struggle of trying to be Samoan because I was born in New Zealand. Sometimes, my fellow kin would make fun of myself, and others born overseas. It was “*tala ula*” or “jokes” but they would hurt. I believe this was the same issue Paul tried to tackle with the Christians in Galatia. They Jewish Christian were trying their best to enforce Jewish customs on the Gentile Christians, such as abiding to dietary laws and circumcision.²⁰² However, Paul stressed that all who believe in Christ no longer need to abide by any

²⁰² Edwin Walhout, *Paul's Letter to the Galatians: A Pastoral Commentary* (Morrisville, North Carolina: Lulu Press, Inc., 2016), 16.

custom or belief, but their faith in Christ is what makes them all worthy before God.²⁰³ The *gafa* for Christians no longer lie along their cultural and ethnic origins but instead, grounded in Christ. Christ becomes the new *gafa*. Having a relationship with Christ forms the basis of this new *gafa*. It is this new *gafa* that also forms the basis of the relationship with others. In other words, it is the *fāiā* or relationship in and through Christ that provides the basis for the interconnectedness warranted of the emerging community of faithful Jewish and Gentile Christians.²⁰⁴

My *gafa* as a Samoan has made me into what I am now. I hail from renowned villages of Samoa—Salani, Sapunaoa, Malie, and Salelesi. My father bore the titles of Fuimaono and Tuiloma. My mother hails from the *Sā Fa'amausili* family of Malie and *Sā Tamua* of Salelesi—her family in Salelesi are the people called the *salelesi* or the person who walks before high-ranking titles or officials of Samoa and performing the *segi* or “call” at many Samoan ceremonies. These are the *gafa* that I hold dear to me. As the Principal of Malua, the Reverend Dr. Vaitusi Nofoaiga F.S. once told me, “*e te au i le gafa o lou tamā, e te au i le gafa o lou tinā, a o le gafa pito sili ona e au i ai, o le gafa ia Iesu Keriso*” meaning “you have ties to your father and mother’s genealogy but the most important lineage you are tied to is the one in Jesus Christ.” I am proud of being a descendant of prominent families of Samoa, *‘aiga o tupu, ‘aiga o papa*. However, my new *gafa* in Christ matters more. That is what connects all believers in Christ. It brings the highest title bearer to the same platform as an infant. I do not disregard the Samoan culture or its titles and chiefly system, but Christ has united us just like the Christians of Galatia were encouraged to be united. Paul taught them to put aside all their differences

²⁰³ Kevin W. McFadden, *Faith in the Son of God: The Placement of Christ-Oriented Faith within Pauline Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2021), 134.

²⁰⁴ Frank J. Matera, *Sacra Pagina: Galatians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007), 32.

and work together to be a good Christian community.²⁰⁵ This is the *gafa-tasi* that we all ought to work towards. There is no longer an emphasis or focus on each person's individual *gafa* but now, everyone shares that *gafa-tasi* or oneness in Christ.²⁰⁶ Paul did not renounce his Jewish identity; he practised the customs and rituals as any devout Jew, but it is his faith in Christ that he puts first.²⁰⁷ The same I believe can be applied to myself and all Christians. We can still hold onto our cultural lineages and family ties, but we cannot let it come in the way of our path to doing God's will and loving others as Christ loved us.

4.2 *Gafa-tasi* Uniting All Instead of Dividing

Paul's message to the Galatians was to seek out unity amongst the Christians. His letter demonstrates that individuals who have faith in Christ are identified as both "sons of God" and "unified as one."²⁰⁸ The external differentiations based on race, social status, and gender are effectively eliminated.²⁰⁹ In the context of our connection to God, these differences hold no significance. The crucial aspect is in being "one in Christ." That is, our relationship with each other is based on our relationship with Christ. Paul adamantly rejects any form of instruction or behaviour that deviates from this standard.²¹⁰ The individual in question reproaches the Christian Jews for their unwavering commitment to

²⁰⁵ G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians: IVP New Testament Commentary* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 140.

²⁰⁶ Wedderburn, "Some Observations on Paul's Use of the Phrase 'In Christ' and 'With Christ'," 90.

²⁰⁷ Carol Berubee, *A Primer on Pauline Doctrine: Revealing the Mystery of the Body of Christ* (Milwaukie, Oregon: Blue Dromos Books, 2018), 107.

²⁰⁸ A. Chadwick Thornhill, "'Spheres of Influence' in the Epistle to the Galatians," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 36 (2014): 36.

²⁰⁹ John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 288.

²¹⁰ Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 288.

the practise of circumcision.²¹¹ Furthermore, he openly confronts Peter when the latter disassociates himself from sharing meals with Gentile believers who have not undergone circumcision.²¹² This is the essence of Paul's message about identity for the Galatians. Faith alone is what unites us.²¹³ As a Samoan born in the diaspora, my birthplace does not differentiate me from those Samoans born in Samoa. Not only we are united as Samoans, but we are also united as children of God. Our differences whether we hail from prominent families, being from Salani, Sapunaoa, Malie, Salelesi or born and raised in the suburbs of West Auckland, we are now one in Christ. Our *gafa* is grounded in Christ because Christ showed us the grace of God.

Moreover, at Malua Theological College, students come from different backgrounds and were raised with different worldviews but have now put aside all their differences for the ministry of God that awaits them. As one of the college's anthems goes:

E, le nu'u e galo ai mea sa ou masani i ai. Ua pei lava o se ata i lo'u va'ai. E lē o le poto e sili lea i le taumafai. A o le amio ia lelei ma e tumau ai.²¹⁴

Another anthem also goes:

Samoa e, lo'u maluapapa, e afua mai ai i ūaga o mea fa'aleagaga. Le ola fa'atalanoa, tineia uma afi ae la'ei toa, i mataupu silisili ia ola le tagata atoa. Ia tupu o le tino ma le mafaufau, feso'ota'iga ia lelei tumau. Ae afifi mea uma i le ola e fa'avavau.²¹⁵

²¹¹ Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 288.

²¹² Stott, *The Message of Galatians*, 288.

²¹³ Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians, New International Greek Testament Commentary*, 184.

²¹⁴ "Oh, the place where we forget all the things we once knew. It is like moving picture before my eyes. It is not what you know, but it is trying your best that matters more. Conduct yourselves in orderly manner and stay firm in it."

²¹⁵ "Oh, Samoa my foundation, from the rain comes spiritual blessings. The former life shall be cleansed through fire to be clothed as warriors through the teachings and principles so all may succeed. May your mind and body grow and be fasten securely. And wrap everything together for a life everlasting."

The first song speaks about the life we once lived. In Malua, we forget about all the things we once knew, and we now face a life of learning the Word of God. We are no longer “New Zealand-born Samoans” or “Samoa-born Samoans” but are now *A’oa’o Malua*, future ministers for the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. We leave our families, homes, and former lives, to live as a community in Malua. Here, our *gafa* has become one, we are now *gafa-tasi* in the ministry of God. As many Samoans tend to say when people go into the ministry, “*o lou ‘aiga fou lenā*” that is your new family. That is the message Paul wanted the Galatians to understand, they are now a family in Christ, heirs to the promise of God.²¹⁶ We do not disregard our families, identities, and all we hold dear, but we now turn to what is more important, as Paul argued in his letter, that our faith in Christ matters more now.

The second song tells of the life we live in Malua. Living and growing spiritually in the Word of God. The second verse mentioning “*tineia uma afi ae la’ei toa*” is reference to a place called *Tineiafi* at Leulumoega Fou College, where students would be prepared before going into Malua. *Tineiafi* being a compound word or portmanteau, with “*tinei*” meaning “cleanse” and “*afi*” meaning “fire.” It was at *Tineiafi* students experienced a “fiery cleansing” from all worldly attachments before going into Malua.²¹⁷ That is the essence of Malua, where we detach ourselves from the world we once knew and aim towards the ministry of God. Our identity is now in Christ, we no longer hold onto the outside world. We are now *gafa-tasi* in terms of the Gospel we all share and preach.

²¹⁶ Grant R. Osborne, *Galatians: Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, Washington: Lexham Press, 2017), 188.

²¹⁷ Oka Fau’olo, *O Vavega o le Alofa Lavea’i: O le Tala Faasolopito o le Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa* (Apia, Samoa: Malua Printing Press, 2005), 693.

Conclusion

Identity is important to all people. It is what defines who we are, our origins, our worldviews, our beliefs, and how we live. However, there are times when one's identity is at a crossroad, when there is an urge of wanting to feel included or belongingness. Sometimes, one's identity and worldviews tend to cause tension and differences amongst some people. Paul saw this within the community in Galatia. His letter sought out to keep the peace between the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. There were different opinions on what Christians should follow. The Jewish Christians wanted the Gentile Christians to abide by the law and teachings they kept. However, Paul's letter admonishes the Galatians to set aside those differences by putting a focus on one's faith in Christ, that ought to unite them. Through their faith, they will be made children of God. In a way, Paul emphasises the *gafa-tasi* of all believers. Their identity is now in Christ, their lineage and genealogy are now embedded in Christ's. They are no longer set apart because of their ethnic origins or worldviews but are now connected to one another in and through Christ. In other words, the individual's identity is embedded within one's relationship to Christ.

Gafa-tasi, however, does not equate unity with conformity or sameness. Rather, it recognises and embraces distinctiveness and differences. In essence, it is the *fāiā* or relationship that forms the basis of *gafa-tasi*. The same applies with my journey in life so far. I am proud of my nationality as a New Zealander and my ethnicity as a Samoan. Both worlds have made me into who I am. Having faith in Christ has subsumed all that into a *gafa-tasi* with all who believe in Christ.

Glossary

<i>Faiife'au</i>	Minister
<i>A'oa'o</i>	Student or lay minister
<i>Aoga o le Faiife'au</i>	Minister's school
<i>Gagana Samoa</i>	Samoa language
<i>Gafa</i>	Genealogy, lineage, fathom (Samoa measuring unit)
<i>Gafatasi</i>	Salutation for the Fuimaono title from Salani, Falealili
<i>Gafa-tasi</i>	One lineage, one connection
<i>Matai</i>	Chief(s); term to refer to the two classes of the chiefly system of Samoa
<i>Palagi</i>	Caucasian or a person with European descent
<i>Sā</i>	Sacred, clan, family, kindred, faction, people, folk
<i>Fāiā</i>	Relation, connection, bond, kin, link

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