

**“SAME-SEX MARRIAGE” AND THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
SAMOA (CCCS): A CHURCH MINISTRY
PERSPECTIVE**

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By

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of

Taulapapa John and Feliua'i Tapuai CRICHTON

whose dreams and ambitions have

made me the person

I am today.

To my beloved wife, Aiga-e-Fā-o-Faleata and our children –
Tagiane Jaimie, Risale G. Wesley and Moreli Fonotele
Crichton.

ABSTRACT

The existence, the popularity and the acceptance of “same sex marriage” in the world today have raised many issues and concerns, within both the secular and the Christian Societies worldwide. The Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) considers this issue as one, which will cut to the core of its Christian doctrines and practices. This will undoubtedly cause a conflict between Samoa’s staunchly Christian principles and the international legal obligations with regard to the United Nation Bill of Human Rights.

This research, “Same Sex Marriage and CCCS: A Church Ministry Perspective” is therefore an attempt to stop, to re-enforce and to tighten up the pastoral theological stance of the CCCS already in place - that same sex marriage is not in any form be acceptable in the CCCS on a biblical and theological basis according to its resolution *Iugāfono Fono Tele* 2006. In doing so, this paper will further challenge and warn the CCCS of the likely impacts of such sensitive issue when it arrives in Samoa. Therefore, this project supports all the attempts to stop any possible action towards introducing “same sex marriage” phenomenon in the CCCS as well as to implore the Samoan government to prevent it from legalisation.

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP OF THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER

I, PATTI CRICHTON (full name of student- printed)

hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Malua Theological College or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Malua Theological College or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

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INTRODUCTION

The CCCS has been relatively active through its prophetic voice through the Samoa Council of Churches (SCC) in responding to many social issues within our Samoan society. It is my strong belief that the issue of same sex marriage is one of those burning issues in the international and the local spheres of the Christian world with which the CCCS is very much concerned. Thus, it must be part of the corporate consideration of both the Church and the government of Samoa to both take this issue seriously now and the future.

This project also insists that the context of Samoan Christianity is based on the Samoan saying, “*e va’ava’alua le talalelei ma le aganuu*” meaning the church works together hand in hand with the Samoan culture in assisting the people and the government of the day by way of acting as a form of social and religious control. In that sense, I strongly believe that the CCCS should have a strong independent voice, to challenge the government and to advocate for its members regarding such an important issue.

The author believes this project on “same sex marriage” is the first formal research of its kind in Malua Theological College. There are reasons, which motivate the author to write concerning this sensitive issue. First, a current issue that becomes the heart of popular debate and legal discussion worldwide. Secondly, as a theological student trained to become a future church minister, it interests the author to delve into the issue from theological, ecclesiastical, and ministerial perspective.

This research on one hand relies heavily on the current available literature in order to gain information relating to the issue of same sex marriage worldwide. In addition, I also use the “Participant Observation” methodology which the author selects the participants whose expertise, knowledge and experience contribute to the subject of this paper. Therefore, this fieldwork contains a mixture of primary sources gained from interviews as well as questionnaires.

It is prudent to say at the outset that this research had actually encountered difficulties which preclude it from attaining all perfections expected of this kind of investigation. Due to time constraints and the limited resources available at my disposal I was not able to explore other church denominations in Samoa as to what their position on the subject matter was. Some open ended answers from questionnaires and interviews created some difficulties in my analysis of the data gathered. Lastly, the limited word count for this paper has actually restricted my research and report.

This paper therefore, consists of three chapters. In Chapter One, the author begins by first looking at the original form of Christian marriage, from biblical perspective. Moreover, the author also looks at the Samoan view of Christian marriage from a social and cultural perspective. The second chapter defines the concept of “same sex marriage” and looks at its political, social and religious status in the world and in Samoa today. The author also looks at the arguments “for” and “against” same sex marriage merely from the social, theological and ecclesiastical points of view.

The third and final chapter is the analysis of the information gathered through the questionnaires and personal interviews. Finally, the author concludes by identifying the stance of the CCCS relating the issue same sex marriage and offers some relevant recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE?

1.1 Definition of Christian Marriage

As far as the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS) is concerned, Christian marriage is defined as a “covenant made among a man, a woman and God, which is witnessed by the church and which is sealed by the Holy Spirit.”¹ There are conditions associated with Christian marriage as constituted by the CCCS. Clear enough from this is the fact that theologically, there are three parties involved in this marriage understanding. These include a man, a woman and God. God is involved because he is the creator of humanity thus theologically viable for him to sanctify and seal the covenant between newly wedded couple through the power of the Holy Spirit, and to provide all the necessities of life the couple needed for their new family. Crucial to this definition is the undeniable reality that for a Christian marriage to be fully recognised as such, the parties involved must be a man and a woman. In addition to that, there is an implication that the parties to the marriage must be members of the church who have understood Christian marriage.

A number of scholars as well a pastor also have unique views of Christian marriage, similar to that by the CCCS. One of which is Henry Snyder

Gehman², who defines marriage as a “divine institution where the Creator made man male and female, and ordained marriage as the indispensable condition of the continuance of the race.”³ To Henry Snyder, marriage is not a man-made institution but something that was established by God. This idea of marriage as a divine institution, also supported by Samuele Bacchiocchi⁴, who points out that the original human couple are not derived from an evolutionary process, but through divine creation and intervention.⁵ Furthermore, the social intention of Christian marriage is seen and described by Reverend Nu’auasala Siaosi as “God’s wisdom” is shown in the nature of humanity for which God creates opposite sexes - male and female, for the purpose of procreation. This applies also to animals.⁶ Siaosi clearly supports the continuation of the human race through procreation as well as for the animals.

¹ CCCS, *The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (LMS)*, (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 1995), 11.

² Professor Snyder is a senior scholar in the field of British history, specializing in the early eighteenth century. He is the author of more than thirty scholarly articles; co-author of a text on English history, *The English Heritage* (several editions) and *Cataloging of the Hand Press: A Comparative and Analytical Study Of Cataloging Rules and Formats Employed in Europe* (1994); co-editor of *The Scottish World* (1981) and *The English Short-Title Catalogue: Past, Present, Future* (2003); and the editor of *The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence* published by the Clarendon Press in three volumes in 1975. <http://cbsr.ucr.edu/drsnyder.html> (accessed 1st July 2013)

³ Henry Snyder Gehman, *Marriage in the The New Bible Dictionary of the Bible*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster 1970), 590.

⁴ Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi is an Italo-American scholar who has studied and lived in several countries. He was born and brought up in Rome, Italy, a stone-throw from the Vatican wall. He gained his doctorate in 1974, and he was invited to teach in the Religion Department of Andrews University, in Berrien Springs, Michigan. He has served at Andrews for 26 years as Professor of Theology and Church History until his retirement on July 2000. He travels extensively around the world lecturing at universities, theological seminaries, professional meetings, and religious gatherings. <http://www.biblicalperspectives.com/author/> (accessed 20th July 2013)

⁵ Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, (Michigan: Biblical Perspectives 1991), 13. <http://www.dpbmedia.com/realwarrior/documents/marriage1.pdf> (accessed 6th July 2013)

⁶ Nu’auasala Siaosi, Interview with Author was held at his residence at Tamaligi Apia on Friday 14th June 2013. The Church Minister and the Leader of the Protestant Church in Samoa

1.2 Biblical Background of Christian Marriage

It is necessary that we look at Christian marriage in light of the Hebrew view of marriage in the Old Testament. The Old Testament consists of two accounts of creation, which states the original idea for which God established marriage in the first place. In Genesis 1:27 we read: “Therefore, God created human kind in his image, in the image of God, he created them; Male and female he created them.”⁷ This text highlights male and female together to make human kind. It means the two, were both made for each other, and by living together they fulfil the intention of their Creator by living in a covenantal relationship. The second creation account in Genesis 2: 18, 22, we read:

Then the Lord said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man He made into a woman and brought her to the man then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken⁸

It is evident from this second creation story that God repeatedly recognizes the incompleteness of His creation. Man at the time of creation was alone, and then God made a helper fit for him. The helper was of course not another man but a woman made out of a man. Again only through the creation of the woman for the man completed God’s creation. It is obvious, that the purpose of the female therefore, is to

⁷ Genesis 2:18, 22, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

⁸ Genesis 2: 18, 22, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

compliment, and to complete the male according to Gods' intention for creation. One is not whole without the other as Otele Perelini insists,

male and female were created for each other, and by living together they carry out the intention of their Creator. Because they are both parts of one complete whole they are therefore become one flesh.⁹

In the New Testament, Jesus in the accounts of the Synoptic Gospels, Mathew, Mark, and Luke discusses the importance of marriage in his response to the Pharisees doubt about the concession of Moses regarding divorce. In fact, Jesus refers to the institution of marriage and its purpose in Matthew 19: 4-5:

Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning? 'made them male and female,' and said 'for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'¹⁰

This text shows how Jesus saw the creation account in the Old Testament as authoritative in his time, and was still authoritative for Jesus. That is why He had strongly defended the case of marriage before the Pharisees "pointing out when men and women departed from God's design of marriage, it was because of the hardness of their heart".¹¹ This implies that Jesus was in fact supporting the notion of marriage – that is, the covenant between a male and a female. For a male to leave his parents to live together with his female companion implies a permanent relationship to exist, and divorce per se could not invalidate such familial connection.

⁹ Otele Sili Perelini, *Christian Marriage: A critical study of Christian Marriage with Specific Reference to Samoa Society*, Unpublished thesis, PTC: Fiji, 1973), 3.

¹⁰ Mathew 19:4-5, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

¹¹ D. James, Kennedy, *What's Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage?*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2004), 15.

1.3 The Purpose and Theological Meaning of Christian Marriage

It has become clear to the author from the analysis of the relevant Biblical texts and come up with three significant purposes of Christian marriage in light of the CCCS Doctrines and Scholars worldwide. First, one of God's purposes behind the establishment of marriage between a man and his wife is for procreation, "God Blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply [...]"¹² It is quite clear from this text that one of God's purposes for creating a man and a woman in the first place is obviously for them to reproduce and bare children for the continuation of the human race. As a Christian being brought up in the society that values the beauty and the greatness of having a family is a privilege. Every time a child is born in our community we are thrilled and filled with joy, praises and thanksgiving for such a wonderful gift. As a father of three children, it is a blessing having them around us which makes us whole. We adore them and cherish them for the rest of our lives. This is also the basis of the CCCS belief that, "[...] the Christian married state is blessed by God for the continuance of mankind and for the joy of mankind [...]"¹³

Secondly, one of God's purposes for establishing marriage is for a man and a woman to become one. This "oneness" element is also emphasised by the Presbyterian *Book of Common Worship*, which states, "God gave us marriage as a holy mystery in which a man and a woman are joined together, and become one, just

¹² Genesis 1: 28, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

¹³ CCCS, *The Statement of Doctrine of the Samoan Church (LMS)*, (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 1995), 12.

as Christ is one with the church.”¹⁴ Samuele Bacchiochi, also points out this “oneness” by defining the term “human kind” which is a generic term that describes inclusiveness of both male and female. Both male and female were fashioned in the likeness of God. As such, “human kind” in this sense is an inclusive and not exclusive term. This also includes the ability of male and female to experience an oneness of fellowship – in that there is an inseparable bond between these two.¹⁵

Thirdly, another purpose of marriage as Samuele Bacchiochi points out was created as a sexual being, made of male and female counterpart. This means that though men and women are sexually and functionally different, they enjoy equal dignity and importance before God¹⁶

1.4 Samoan Christian Marriage

In the Samoan context, marriage was only heterosexual in practice and nature, a union between man and woman only. Marriage existed in the pre-Christian¹⁷ period in the form of polygamous unions that gave much prestige to the Samoan chiefs. Marriage was used as a social mechanism to enhance a chief’s social and political standing in their respective communities. George Turner wrote, “Marriage

¹⁴ Presbyterian Church (USA), *Book of Common Worship: Pastoral Edition*, (Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 112-113, see also Ephesians 5: 22-23.

¹⁵ Samuele Bacchiochi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, (Michigan: Biblical Perspectives), 13.
<http://www.dpbmedia.com/realwarrior/documents/marriage1.pdf> (accessed 6th July 2013)

¹⁶ Samuele Bacchiochi, *The Marriage Covenant: A Biblical Study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, (Michigan: Biblical Perspectives), 13
<http://www.dpbmedia.com/realwarrior/documents/marriage1.pdf> (accessed 6th July 2013)

was a source of profit to the chief and friends who often urged on another and another. According to this system a chief might have a dozen wives and concubines in a short time.”¹⁸ However, this form of polygamous unions ended when Samoa became a Christian nation. Otele Perelini¹⁹ on the same line of thought with Turner describes the traditional Samoan marriage as a typical social and economic institution. However, such institution establishes several principal functions.

First, it establishes the relationships between two individuals. Secondly, it enlarges a domestic unit namely through the procreation of children who would continue the lineage and thirdly, it establishes the relationships between two different groups represented by the man and wife.²⁰

With regards to the focus of this research, it is clear that Samoan marriage in the pre-Christian period was basically heterosexual. That is, there was no clear evidence of any same sex union or marriage for that matter, occurred in the pre-Christian period. In other words Samoa accepted Christian marriage as heterosexual and nothing else.

There are two institutionalized types of marriages in Samoa at the moment. One is the “state marriage” and secondly the “church marriage.” The “state

¹⁷ Before the year 1830 when the first missionaries arrived in Samoa

¹⁸ George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia: Missionary Life, Travels, and Researches in the Islands of the Pacific*, (Papakura New Zealand: R. McMillian Publisher, 1984), 188.

¹⁹ Otele Sili Perelini, *Christian Marriage: A critical study of Christian Marriage with Specific Reference to Samoa Society*, Unpublished thesis,(PTC: Fiji, 1973), 63.

²⁰ Otele Sili Perelini, *Christian Marriage: A critical study of Christian Marriage with Specific Reference to Samoa Society*, Unpublished thesis,(PTC: Fiji, 1973), 63.

marriage” on one hand is where the couple (i.e. man and woman) appear before a Court Registrar, who officiate the marriage. He or she will also issue the marriage certificate afterwards. On the other hand, the Church marriage is where the bride and the bridegroom are married before the church minister and the congregation. There are also cases where the minister marries the couple without the presence of the congregation, except the required witnesses. This usually applies to couples that have been living together for many years outside wedlock. The minister will then undertake premarital counselling to enable the ‘would be couple’ to be conscious of the importance of Christian marriage and their spiritual obligations as a couple to maintain it all the days of their lives.

CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IS SAME SEX MARRIAGE?

2.1 Defining Same-Sex Marriage

Christian Marriage has gone through a process of re-evaluation and reformation, to include “same sex couples” in its definition. People and Christian societies have come to re-define marriage in order to suit their purposes. This contemporary perspective on marriage will lead us to the discussion in this chapter. It will examine its definition, the people involved and why such issue becomes the major talk recently for some countries worldwide.

First, it is obvious that the term “same sex marriage” is a union between two men or two women which is the opposite of Christian marriage per se. In fact, the people involved in this type of relationship are basically the “gays and lesbians.” Gays and lesbians are labeled under, two recognized legal categories of male and female with the XY and XX chromosomes. However, their sexual orientation has clearly noted that they are attracted or having a sexual attraction to persons of same gender. Another type of person which, “cannot easily fit into these accepted legal categories but may be recognized as a distinct group of people by the

society in which they live”²¹ are *fa’afafine*. They are according to Sue Farran²² a transgendered category of persons (effeminate man or youth) recognizes in the Pacific region especially in countries like Samoa, Tonga, etc.²³ Sue Farran states, “this category of men are not just cross-dressers but often males who have been reared as females and see themselves as females. This may happen when there is a shortage of girls to help a mother or where a boy expresses a wish to undertake traditional female tasks.”²⁴ Phillip Culbertson²⁵ also speaks of *fa’afafine*’s different roles in the Samoan society.

Fa’afafine plays a number of important, but sometimes transgressive, social roles within the gender structure of traditional Samoa. Some wear feminine clothes, some don’t. Some abandoned their *fa’afafine* role fairly soon after adolescence end, and marry and produce children; others do not. Whether or not they abandon the *fa’afafine* role, some are deemed eligible to serve the community as a *matai*, or village chief. Some choose to

²¹ Sue Farran, 2004. *Transsexuals, Fa’afafine, Fakaleiti and Marriage Law in the Pacific: Considerations for the Future*, (University of the South Pacific, Emalus Campus, Vanuatu) http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Volume113/jps_v113_no2_2004/1%20Transsexuals.pdf (accessed on 11th June 2013)

²² Sue Farran is a law professor who started her career in South Africa at the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg), and has included posts at the University of the West of England, the University of the South Pacific (in Fiji and Vanuatu) and the University of Dundee. <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/law/staff/suefarran> (accessed 11 July 2013)

²³ Sue Farran, 2004. *Transsexuals, Fa’afafine, Fakaleiti and Marriage Law in the Pacific: Considerations for the Future*, (University of the South Pacific, Emalus Campus, Vanuatu) http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Volume113/jps_v113_no2_2004/1%20Transsexuals.pdf (accessed on 11th June 2013)

²⁴ Sue Farran, 2004. *Transsexuals, Fa’afafine, Fakaleiti and Marriage Law in the Pacific: Considerations for the Future*, (University of the South Pacific, Emalus Campus, Vanuatu) http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/docs/Volume113/jps_v113_no2_2004/1%20Transsexuals.pdf (accessed on 11th June 2013)

²⁵ Dr. Phillip Culbertson was a Director of Pastoral Studies at St. Johns Theological College and a Faculty member in the School of Theology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand from 1992-2007. He also taught Pastoral care and Counseling at Bachelors, Masters, and Ph.D level. <http://www.ptprof.com/> (accessed 26th July 2013)

take on the traditional masculine Samoan tattoo or *pe'a*²⁶

However, the problem with *fa'afafine* that makes them the same as gays as Junior Posala points out is that they also have sexual preferences for people of the same gender whom in other words men who are not *fa'afafine*.²⁷

Secondly, the author needs to address the question of why this issue now and how it becomes a heavily debated question in today's world. Such a question challenges society to its core, especially the Christian faith although it is not legal here in Samoa. The same question regarding the momentum in the existence of this same sex marriage becomes a serious concern to Richard Albert Mohler Jr.,²⁸ who thinks that there is urgency in regards to this issue,

To answer that question, we need to think about the speed of moral revolution that has pushed this question to the forefront of culture. In less than a generation, homosexuality has gone from being almost universally condemned to being almost fully normalized in the larger society. We are facing a true moral inversion — a system of moral understandings turned upside down. Where homosexuality was even recently condemned by the society, now it is a sin to believe that homosexuality is wrong in any way.²⁹

²⁶ Phillip Culberston, *Bobbittizing God: On the Importance of the Divine Genitals Remaining Unmanageable*, (The Bible and Critical Theory Volume 5, Number 1, 2009) 5.1-5.14. <http://bibleandcriticaltheory.org/index.php/bct/article/viewFile/237/220> (accessed 13th July 2013)

²⁷ Junior Posala, Interview with author was held at Vaimoso, Apia 1st March 2013, *Fa'afafine* and a member of Vaimoso Congregational Christian Church Samoa.

²⁸ Richard Albert Mohler, Jr., is an American theologian and the ninth president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

²⁹ Richard Albert Mohler Jr., "*Four Responses to the Challenge of Same-Sex Unions*", <http://cbmw.org/uncategorized/four-responses-to-the-challenge-of-same-sex-unions/> (accessed on 1st November 2012)

For the author, Mohler's argument is reasonable to some extent because we have experienced and witnessed the progress of moral changes in societies, and the effect it has had upon people's lifestyles. Not only that, but the enforcement of human rights upon nations registered under the United Nation Bill of Human Rights advances people's belief in their rights. In fact, this push for human right has lead individuals to think they can compromise the Holy word of God by thinking that it is their right to marry the person of their choice regardless of their gender.

As the author have anticipated in the very beginning of this project, the issue of same sex marriage will soon arrive in Samoa. This is why the author has insisted to delve into the Biblical perspective about the same sex union.

2.2 Biblical View of Homosexual Acts

Although the Bible does not speak directly about same sex marriage, it does speak about homosexuality and the activities involved. However, what seem to be as common between the homosexual act and same sex marriage are the persons that sit in the middle. These middle persons are the gay or lesbian couples who have entered into a relationship of either civil union or same sex marriage. The author assumes that any same sex couple who have entered in a relationship are not just marrying for the sake of a good companionship but also for love and for sexual intention. In fact, the Bible does not tolerate same sex sexual relationship in these

unions. One lawyer and minister, William Stacy Johnson³⁰ declares that the Biblical view of same-sex relationship is largely negative and non-affirming while he is extremely supportive of same sex marriage for various reasons.³¹ Most of these reasons are to do with the right of gay people and their fair treatment by societies they live.

The first Biblical text the author needs to highlight is the homosexual act of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis Chapter 19. Although the whole chapter tells the whole story of Sodom and Gomorrah, however, I will only emphasise some part of the chapter that links to homosexuality. Therefore in chapter 19: 4–5 says,

But before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, so that we may know them.”³²

The above underlined phrase comes from a Hebrew verb (ve nede’ah) meaning “to have sex” with them. This clearly highlights the intention of the men of Sodom who wanted to have sex with the men of God who visited Lot and his family. Lot instead offered his two daughters who have never slept with a man but the Sodom men

³⁰William Stacy Johnson, practicing lawyer and Anglican minister approaches the issue of same sex marriages in a mixture of both a legalistic, historical, Biblically and Christian based perspectives. For the author this has been an issue that has been on his mind for many years and confronted him professionally as a minister and lawyer as well as a Christian. He sees the issue as one that has been tearing mainstream Christian churches apart. This is due to the internal debate within churches to the clash between what is perceived to be the word of God or biblical proof texting against same sex marriages or unions, with his reasoned and logical thinking based on legal and historical principles.

³¹William Stacy Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law and Politics*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 44.

refused. In fact, they want men not women as mentioned in the story. Therefore, this interpretation and understanding of homosexual act for Sodom and Gomorrah was a normal sexual immorality for them. For one reason, they worship pagan gods and secondly pagan gods encourage immorality. As consequences of their immoral act, their destruction was the manifestation of God's wrath.

Furthermore, another Old Testament reference, which identified homosexual act as an abomination and detestable sin, is in Leviticus 18: 22 & 20:13:

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them³³

The word to emphasise here is “lie” or to “lie with” in the “NRSV” as translated from the Hebrew verb (ti-shekab), meaning a man sleeps with another man as a man sleeps with his wife. In other words, two men having to sleep together committing sexual activities just as a man sleeps with a woman is therefore an act of homosexuality.

This interpretation indicates that such act is unacceptable to God. God will not tolerate this type of act. However, the idea behind these regulations is the promotion of holy living insisted by God through Moses. The Israelites are therefore, reminded that their existence as chosen and holy people of God lies on the fact that their God is Holy, and they should imitate such attribute of God as well.

³²Genesis 19: 4-5, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publisher, 1989.)

³³Leviticus 18:22 & 20:13, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

In the New Testament, Paul whose aim is to Christianise the Gentiles sees such behaviour as shameful and degrading with no basis in Christian life. For instance, Paul in his letter to the Romans 1:26-27, we read:

For this reason, God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, In addition, in the same way the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.³⁴

Moreover, since Paul's teaching dealt mostly with the sin of the flesh of the Gentiles, he declared homosexuality to be shameful, unnatural, lustful, and indecent. He further emphasised the punishment by God for the abandonment of His word and ways and states that they will not inherit the Kingdom of God. "Do you know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites"³⁵

Therefore, to sum up these biblical references, it appears that homosexuality condemned in the Bible imply that homosexuals who were to get married are also to be condemned, regardless whether such marriage is for love or for any other reason. More importantly, this behavioural type is a sin according to the Word of God.

³⁴Romans 1:26-27, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

³⁵1 Corinthians 6:9, *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (Nashville : Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989.)

2.3 What is the status of “Same-Sex Marriage” in the World Today?

As of today, according to the Pew Forum³⁶ research, there are fourteen countries that legalize same sex marriage plus the other three countries that have accepted it lawfully only in some parts of the nations. **Table 1 in Appendix One** lists all the countries that have accepted same sex marriage starting from the latest on the top to the earliest at the bottom.³⁷ According to the table shown, it states that there is an increasing number of government or nations legalising same sex marriage from year 2000 until 2013. This means that within thirteen years there were already fourteen countries legalizing same sex marriage, which is not a small number. Not only that but there is a high possibility that the three countries where same sex marriage is legal in some parts would become wholly legalised.

This information shows the majority of the countries legalising this type of marriage being mostly from Europe and America. Among these countries, we have New Zealand in the Pacific that follows this trend of legalising same sex marriage. These countries according to the report of the Pew Forum, not only had they legalized same sex marriage but also granting gay couples the right to adopt

³⁶The Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It does so by conducting public opinion polling and social science research; analyzing news coverage; and holding forums and briefings. It does not take positions on policy issues. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of the Pew Charitable Trusts. Its work is carried out by a core administrative, publishing and research unit and these seven projects:<http://www.pewresearch.org/about/careers/information-graphics-designer-pew-forum-on-religion-public-life/> (accessed 6th May 2013)

³⁷Pew Research, “Gay marriage around the world,” Pew forum on Religion & Public Life<http://www.pewforum.org/Gay-Marriage-and-Homosexuality/Gay-Marriage-Around-the-World-2013.aspx> (accessed on 6th May 2013)

children.³⁸ However, while the Pew Forum reports the number of nations that legalize same sex marriage worldwide, recent media reports also reveal the cases whereby some of the countries not only prohibits this type of marriage by way of an act but also got to the extreme point where they sought to find the hidden couples that practice it secretly. Moreover, they also ban the adoption of children by these same sex couples. One classic example is what has been happening in Russia lately according to the New York Times report. According to Harvey Fierstein the New York Times reporter,

The Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, has declared war on homosexuals. Mr Putin signed a law banning the adoption of Russia-born children not only to gay couples but also to any couple or single parent living in any country where marriage equality exists in any form.³⁹

Fierstein has further explained how serious this case was for the gay people of Russia as some are planning to escape from Russia. Although the people of Russia as well as the outsiders are not pleased with Putin's action however, as Fiersten points out that the president is self-determining by his action⁴⁰. Putin has "defended his actions by saying that the Russian birth-rate is diminishing and that Russian family as a whole

³⁸Pew Research, "Gay marriage around the world," Pew forum on Religion & Public Life <http://www.pewforum.org/Gay-Marriage-and-Homosexuality/Gay-Marriage-Around-the-World-2013.aspx> (accessed on 6th May 2013)

³⁹ Harvey Fierstein, "Russia's anti-gay crackdown" The New York Times, Published on 21 July 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/22/opinion/russias-anti-gay-crackdown.html?_r=1& (Accessed 5th August 2013).

⁴⁰ Harvey Fierstein, "Russia's anti-gay crackdown" The New York Times, Published on 21 July 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/22/opinion/russias-anti-gay-crackdown.html?_r=1& (Accessed 5th August 2013).

are in danger of decline.”⁴¹ This implies the Russian families must be able to procreate, and this could not be achieved through having same sex marriage families.

2.4 What is the Status of Same-Sex Marriage in Samoa Today?

In Samoa, same sex marriage is illegal. However, in social and cultural spheres, it is unacceptable as mentioned above. For the church, the CCCS in particular, is very clear that it does not accept same sex marriage. The CCCS has already put in place its theological position on this issue as stipulated in its resolution of 2006⁴². Such marriage is outside the ministry of the Christian church. Whether such issue exists or not in the country without the green light from the law, that is another issue. However, Matā-afa Lesā said through an interview that it is an issue that is already in Samoa despite the amount of hidden same sex couples who are secretly living together without being recognized by the law.⁴³ So’oalo Roger Stanley⁴⁴ along the same line of thought said that there are a lot of gay couples living in secrecy in Samoa who could take advantage of getting married in NZ then return here. “I think the government of Samoa should address that aspect of the issue through a clear public statement.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Harvey Fierstein, “Russia’s anti-gay crackdown” The New York Times, Published on 21 July 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/22/opinion/russias-anti-gay-crackdown.html?_r=1 & (Accessed 5th August 2013).

⁴² CCCS, Tusi Iugafono Fono Tele 2006, (Malua: Malua Printing Press, 2006), 26.

⁴³ Matā-afa Keni Lesa, Interview with author was held at Observer Office Vaitete, Apia on 6th May 2013. Editor of Samoa Observer Company

⁴⁴ Soalo Roger Stanley is the president of the Samoa Faafafine Association “SFA”

The people that are capable of pushing this type of marriage to become a law in Samoa are either these hidden homosexual couples mentioned, or a *fa'afafine*, or perhaps even a motivated politician such as Louisa Wall of New Zealand.⁴⁶ However, speaking on behalf of the Samoa *Fā'afāfine* Association (SFA) a year ago, Soalo Roger Stanley pointed out that, “our stance on gay marriage in Samoa is something that is far from appearing in our agenda and it is not forthcoming nor something that we would promote. We do not support it.”⁴⁷

Fā'afāfine are well accepted and approved by the Samoan society, even to the extent that mainline churches in Samoa such as the CCCS support their role and status within the larger society. As Reverend Tauti'aga Senara pointed out in an interview,

We happily accepted *fa'afafine* in our society, and almost every family has one. However, the case of *fa'afafine* is different from the new issue of gay marriage from overseas. There is also no doubt about the significance and the importance of *fa'afafine* within our families. However, we do not want the issue of gay marriage as a chance to give *fa'afafine* a phony name. They are indispensable to us as they serve the church as well as believing in God.⁴⁸

⁴⁵“Samoan transvestite group rejects gay marriage” <http://www.talamua.com/samoan-transvestite-group-reject-gay-marriage/> (accessed on 11th June 2013)

⁴⁶Louisa Wall is a Labour MP of New Zealand parliament who happens to be the main sponsor of the same sex marriage bill to become a law in New Zealand. She succeeded when the bill became legal on the 17th April 2013. Her main intention behind sponsoring this bill is to exercise and to uphold the human rights of gay people to marry anyone of their choice.

⁴⁷Mata'afā Keni Lesa, “gay marriage” Samoa Observer, Friday 31st August 2012, <http://www.samoobserver.ws/editorial/671-as-long-as-i-am-here-gay-marriage-will-never-be-a-part-of-samoan-culture-and-society-i-hope-that-whoever-replaces-me-will-hold-to-that-as-well--pm-tuilaepa-sailele-malielegaoi> (accessed 11th June 2013).

⁴⁸Tautiaga Senara, Interview with author was held at his residence at Vaitele, 20 June, 2013. Vice Chairman of the General Assembly CCCS (*Fono Tele*).

In short, *fa'afafine* are accepted as they are in the Samoan community, but any actions towards getting married as same sex union is totally unacceptable in any form or practice.

2.5 Arguments “For” Same Sex Marriage

The debate as to whether or not to accept same sex marriage or union, especially the refusal to accept the position of gays, lesbians, and their inherent rights in society has forced William Stacy Johnson to take a position. His position to support same sex marriage has led him to ask, “Where do gays and lesbians, find their place within the fellowship of our religious communities, within the structures of our legal system, and the framework of our democratic polity?”⁴⁹ Suppose many societies do ask the same question which is why this part of the paper takes into consideration the two sides of the argument, those “for” and “against” same sex marriage.

The first important reason why gay people want to support same sex marriage concerns their equal rights. In fact, they insist that they have the right not only to choose anyone they wish to marry regardless of their gender, but also a basic human right where gay people feel they deserve to be treated well. Taking New Zealand as an example of exercising these rights, Louisa Wall insists that, the law she aimed for will provide equality and choice for the same sex people to marry.

The law change was an important milestone towards achieving a fairer, more equal New Zealand. Marriage equality is about fairness and choice. This process has

⁴⁹William Stacy Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law and Politics*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 44.

showed that that message has really resonated with New Zealanders and has been echoed overseas with the recent passage of similar legislation in the UK⁵⁰

Along the same line of people's right and equality, President Barack Obama of the United States of America has for the first time responded to a question on national television about marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples. He said,

I've been going through an evolution on this issue. I have always been adamant that gay and lesbian Americans should be treated fairly and equally [...]. I have just concluded that, for me personally, it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married.⁵¹

From Barack Obama's statement, it appears that the main reason why he accepted gay marriage was to legalize their access to benefits and entitlements associated with married heterosexual couples from the government – democratic rights.

The second reason is to do with their social acceptance in the societies they live in. In fact, many societies have discriminated against gay persons within their own families or countries. As Dr. Mark Freeman⁵² pointed out, the sanctions that society wields against individuals practicing homosexual relations include legal, psychological, and social ones [...] there is tremendous overt aggression (in the form of beatings) and implicit violence (such as threats and gossip) directed against

⁵⁰Isaac Davison, "Committee approval for gay marriage bill," NZ Herald, Feb 27 2013
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10868100 (accessed 17th May 2013)

⁵¹Dana Milkbank, "Obama's evolution on same-sex marriage," posted May 10 2012
<http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/transcript-robin-roberts-abc-news-interview-president-obama/story?id=16316043#UbeeaOeOSSo> (accessed 11th June 2013)

⁵²Mark Freeman is an American psychologist who had high achievement in life such as gaining his doctorate and became a lecturer in many universities.

homosexually oriented persons.⁵³ In Samoa, the author is unsure of what would happen when our gay brothers and lesbian sisters do come out into the open about their situations. Would our families or the village councils accept them, or react with aggression according to Freeman. Somehow, the author could sense that our society especially village councils where curfews and traditional rules are too strong would not accepted gay couples. The issue of same sex marriage is challenging our Samoan perceptions on the gay people or lesbians representations in local communities. A lesbian relationship in the author's village twenty years ago sadly took their own lives when the village council had found out about their lesbian relationship. The council reacted aggressively by punishing them, and ordered that their relationship must cease. Suicide and perhaps moving out to another society that accepts their same sex relationship was the only option available for them at the time. As Farran points out that, "they may leave their Pacific Island family and home and move to abroad to more tolerant societies, perhaps severing their links with their own family and country."⁵⁴

The third important reason in support of gay marriage is to do with love - a love between the two persons involved. William Stacey Johnson insisted on this love relationship as he tried to distinguish the relationships as prohibited in the Bible with the relationships he is talking about and supporting – that is the

⁵³ Mark Freeman, *Homosexuality and Psychological Functioning*, (Belmont: Brooks Cole Publishing Company, 1971), 3.

⁵⁴ Sue Farran, *Law and the Family in the South Pacific*, (Vanuatu: The University of the South Pacific, 2011), 210.

monogamous and faithful homosexual relationships.⁵⁵ He differentiated between same sex love and homoerotic rape and sexual violence, which he says is the basis of Biblical texts that are anti-homosexual and lesbian. Those who are in monogamous homosexual relationships are not the targets of biblical proof texting and indeed, it may be that many who use such proof texting do so out of context.⁵⁶ The author has personally interviewed a gay couple who do not want to be identified but both saying that the most important part of their relationship that matters is love and the feeling that they share among each other.

In summary, the most important point of argument for the gay society with regards to the recognition and legalisation of same sex marriage in society is the attempt to venerate the significance of human rights in all fabrics of life. They maintain that their human right to choose whomever they prefer to marry is to be honoured by all spheres of society thus they must be treated with fairness. After all, they are human beings just as the rest of the people of the world hence they must be accepted in the fellowship of God's family.

2.6 Arguments “Against” Same Sex Marriage

There are many arguments against same sex marriage worldwide. However, I shall focus on the likely negative impact of same sex marriage in Samoa

⁵⁵William Stacy Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Gender Relationships in Religion, Law and Politics*, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 44.

⁵⁶Johnson, 2006, *A Time to Embrace*, 44.

specifically with regards to the CCCS. The first argument against same sex marriage in Samoa is based on Christian principles and moral values being stipulated in the Bible. These Christian principles are also upheld in the Constitution of the State of Samoa which says at the 'Preamble', "*Whereas the Leaders of Western Samoa have declared that Western Samoa should be an independent state based on Christian principles and Samoan Custom and tradition*"⁵⁷. Viliamu Mafoe, a Samoan prominent pastor, also pointed out that once Samoa would accept same sex marriage by way of law "these Christian principles by which we are governed, will no longer are useful anymore"⁵⁸. In fact, once same sex marriage is legalized in Samoa, it would imply that the *faiifeau's* preaching and message would become meaningless and redundant to the people. In other words, same sex marriage would definitely be part of the church people's life at their discretion and the *faiifeau's* spiritual role in society no longer have the same authority and value as it did before. Ma'auga Motu⁵⁹ rightly pointed out that when such a situation ever reach that stage, the role of *faiifeau* in villages would certainly be compromised and their spiritual authority over moral and ethical matters would carry no weight at all. Such must never be part of the pastoral obligation of the *faiifeau* at all.

Secondly, same sex marriage would affect Samoa from a social perspective hence it must not be accepted in the social environment of Samoan

⁵⁷ Constitution of the Independent State of Western Samoa 1960, Government of Samoa, (Reprinted March, 2001), 4.

⁵⁸ Viliamu Mafoe, Interviewed by the author, Worship Centre Headquarter at Apia, Friday 14th June 2013. Pastor and Founder of Worship Centre

⁵⁹ Ma'auga Motu Interviewed by the author, Samoa Council of Churches Office, Mulinu'u, Apia, Friday 10th May 2013. A General Secretary of the Samoa Council of Churches and an Ordained Minister of the CCCS.

society. According to Fatilua Fatilua,⁶⁰ the issue will have tremendous impact on the social and the cultural fabrics of our society. Samoan culture is based on the relational network within family, extended family and village community. The introductions of a new form of interpersonal relationship such as same sex couple would alter the traditional and customary relational framework of our culture. Moreover, the Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi also made a very clear public statement that “Gay marriage contradicts everything Samoa stands for.”⁶¹

In Samoa, there is a common saying “*e malu le talalelei i le aganuu ao le talalelei foi e mamalu ai le aganuu*” which literally means the Gospel is protected by the Samoan customs and the Samoan customs is sacralised because of the gospel. From a social perspective within our societies, there are usually two schools of thoughts namely, the liberals and the conservatives. There is a clear tendency that the liberals would dominate the arguments for issues such as that of same sex marriage. For instance, the referendums on whether or not to legalise same sex marriage held by the two recognised Universities in New Zealand - the University of Otago and the University of Victoria found 84 per cent of students in support.⁶² Moreover, Louisa Wall has commented on this outcome saying, “I think for younger New Zealanders, the issue of marriage equality is one where they can't see what the problem is. For them, it is about principles of equality and non-discrimination. They haven't got the

⁶⁰Fatilua Fatilua, Interviewed by the author, Malua Theological College, Apia on 1st March 2013, A theological student of Malua Theological College.

⁶¹Mata'afā Keni Lesa, “gay marriage” Samoa Observer, Friday 31st August 2012, <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/editorial/671-as-long-as-i-am-here-gay-marriage-will-never-be-a-part-of-samoan-culture-and-society-i-hope-that-whoever-replaces-me-will-hold-to-that-as-well--pm-tuilaepa-sailele-malielegaoi> (accessed 11th June 2013).

⁶²Isaac Davison, “*Gay marriage rejectors 'in denial'*,” NZ Herald, 8th Nov 2012, <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?id=1&objectid=10845849> (accessed 15th May 2013)

hang-ups of homosexual law reform that I believe some older members of New Zealand have.”⁶³ However, this causes the conflicts within families as the liberals will ignore the elderly advice of the conservatives specifically the elders, and that is where family system breaks down. Once the family system breaks down in any society, the church will affect as well and law and order in such society would never be the same same.

Thirdly, as far as the Samoan culture is concerned, there is the notion of “*feagaiga*” which literally means “sacred covenant”. This is the *feagaiga* between the brother and sister within Samoan families. The brother calls his sister “his *feagaiga*” or covenant. According to Fa’atauva’a Tapuai, “the word *feagaiga* is originally the expression of the brother-sister covenant relationship in which the sister is entirely entrusted to the care and protection of her brother.”⁶⁴ However, accepting same sex marriage in Samoa legally will affect that very important aspect of the Samoan culture and family relationship just as we value the pastors in villages as the “*feagaiga*”. Kasiano Leaupepe also adds that same sex marriage would imply that “*ole a leai se osiga feagaiga a le tuagane ma lona tuafafine*”⁶⁵ which literally means there will be no more covenantal relationship between the brother and the sister in the

⁶³Isaac Davison, “*Gay marriage rejectors ‘in denial’*,” NZ Herald, 8th Nov 2012. http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10845849 (accessed 15th May 2013)

⁶⁴Fa’atauva’a Tapuai, *A comparative Study of the Samoan and Hebrew Concepts of the Covenant*, Unpublished BD Thesis (Suva PTC, 1972), 61.

⁶⁵Kasiano Leaupepe, Interview with Author was held at the SCC office at Mulinuu, Apia 10th May 2013. Chairman of the Samoa Council of Churches

fa'a-Samoa. Peleti Toa'iloa⁶⁶ also points out “*ole mea uliuli i le mata o le tuagane le feagaiga*” which literary means the sister is the pupil in her brothers eye. This means that just as how vulnerable the nature of the pupil is that anyone can protect especially when the eye is in danger, that is how sensitive a brother seem to be when his sister needed that protection. Furthermore, Toa'iloa insist that, not only the covenant will be challenged but it will also ruin the reputation of the extended family within the village and the whole community⁶⁷

Fourthly, there will be a huge conflict between the Matai System⁶⁸ and the state should same sex marriage become formerly legalized. In fact, most villages will disagree with the state on such gay marriage law when it ever happens. Thus village councils would ban gay people from their villages. When that happens, it is anticipated that gay people would be taking the village councils to court for breaching any Gay Marriage Act.

Lastly, the younger generation and their beliefs in Christian marriage will be challenged. Most probably, the young people of Samoa would think that same sex marriage is the same as the Christian marriage. This ideology will be passed on from generation to generation. According to Reverend Tupu Folasa, “*O le a lē muta le*

⁶⁶ Peleti Toailoa, Interview with author was held at Malua Theological College on Saturday, 3rd August, 2013. Chairman of the Elders Committee of CCCS and also the Chairman of the Malua Board.

⁶⁷ Peleti Toailoa, Interview with author was held at Malua Theological College on Saturday, 3rd August, 2013. Chairman of the Elders Committee of CCCS and also the Chairman of the Malua Board.

⁶⁸ Matai System or chiefly system of Samoa is a traditional form of indigenous form of governance made of Samoan chiefs. This council plays various roles in ensuring the security and the bettermen of the village people. One important role is to set rules in order for every one in the

agasala i le lalolagi pe afai ae faaauau e auga tupulaga lenei agasala. Nei galo o le faaauauina o lea mea, o le fa'aauauina lea o le tete'e ole tagata i le Atua."⁶⁹ This literally means the sin of marrying two men or two women would continue from generation to generation. This continuing process in the future indicates our rebellion against God. Folasas has further stated that the issue of same sex marriage will soon arrive in a form of a new faith or a religion. Anyone could have accepted it and that's a real concern for this Christian nation.⁷⁰

To wrap up the arguments against same sex marriage in Samoa, the issue of same sex marriage would affect Samoa in terms of its Christian, social as well as cultural beliefs.

village to follow. As a result of disobeying these rules will receive punishments by the council.

⁶⁹ Tupu Folasas, Interviewed with author was held at his resident at Tulaele on Friday 21st June, 2013. Former President of the Methodist Church in Samoa.

⁷⁰ Tupu Folasas, Interviewed with author was held at his resident at Tulaele on Friday 21st June, 2013. Former President of the Methodist Church in Samoa.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE FIELD RESEARCH

3.1 Methodology

This chapter lays out the major methodology used in this project, which is the “Participant Observation.” This chapter describes how the information processed in this study was collected. The methods consist of questionnaires given to certain research participants and personal interviews of certain selected participants. These questionnaires and personal interviews are analysed in the enclosed **Appendices II and III**. I have also classified these questionnaires and personal interviews under two categories: “Questionnaire Research,” and “Interview Research”.

3.1.1 Questionnaire Research

Two specific groups of participants were selected from different locations as a sample population for this study. The first group consists of the members of the CCCS. These included a number of Malua Theological students selected for various reasons. There was a wide range of CCCS students from New Zealand, Australia, United States of America and Samoa, therefore constituted a broad scope of CCCS membership. It also reflected the perspectives of future pastors and *faletua* of CCCS. The author also included Malua students from the islands of Tokelau, and Nauru to see their views on this same issue.

The author also randomly selected the second group of participant from outside Malua Theological College who were either a member of the CCCS or members from other church affiliations in Samoa. A certain number of students from the National University of Samoa (NUS) were selected. They were from the age of eighteen to twenty four, which made up a total of forty participants altogether. The author has selected them because not only they represented the views of the young educated age group but also labelled as the “liberals” to social issues such as same sex marriage. For example, the author found out that there were supporters of same sex marriage from this group of participants.

3.1.2 Interview Research

The author has interviewed some of the members of CCCS at the senior level of leadership– e.g. the Chairman of the Elders Committee⁷¹ and the Chairman of the Malua Board. Secondly, was the Chairman of the General Assembly (*Fono Tele*) who is also a member of the Elders Committee; as well as some pastors from the local ministries of the CCCS. Secondly, the author also looked at the perspective of the non-CCCS in Samoa. For this, the author has interviewed the Chairman and the General Secretary of the Samoa Council of Churches (SCC)⁷² and the leaders of other dominant churches here in Samoa. This included the former president of the Methodist Church in Samoa, the pastor and founder of the Worship

⁷¹Elders Committee (*Komitia le au Toeaina*) of the CCCS. This committee includes Reverend Elders (FT-*Faiʻfeau Toeaina*), Elder Deacons (TT-*Tiakono Toeaina*) and Retired Elders (TMM-*Toeaina Malolo Manumalo*) from all the CCCS around the Region. There are 17 districts or *Matagaluega* of the CCCS around the region. Indeed, the author has selected them because they are the most influenced and the most powerful committee in the CCCS. They deal mostly with decision-makings of the church, in association with ethical and moral principles of the church. Most of all they handle matters that influence and affects the spiritual life of the Congregationalist.

Centre and the church minister of the Apia Protestant Church. Thirdly, the author also interviewed the people that are involved in same sex marriage such as gays and *fa'afafine*. Note that the feedbacks from these interviews have been incorporated in chapter two as well as this chapter.

Table 1: Results from the Questionnaires.

		Age Group (18-24)		Age Group (25-34)		Age Group (35-44)		Age Group (45-54)		Age Group (55-64)		TOTAL 40		% 100
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Q1	Yes	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	17.50%
	No	7	1	7	5	5	3	2	2	0	1	21	12	82.50%
Q2	Yes	9	1	7	5	4	3	2	2	0	1	22	12	87.50%
	No		0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	12.50%
Q3	Yes	8	1	8	4	5	3	2	2	0	1	23	11	90%
	No	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	10%

3.2 Data Analysis

The analysis process started with the collection and the translation of questionnaires in English language, as half the forms were in Samoan language. I went through each form and the results were tallied and recorded in the **Table 1** shown above. Following is the analysis of the responses of the selected participants to the three assigned questions.

3.2.1 Question One (1) Analysis:

Do you support or reject the issue of “same sex marriage.” if such issue was to arrive in Samoa in the future?

⁷²“SCC” sometime mistakenly taken by people as the “NCC” which stands for the “National

About eighty two and a half percent (82.50%) of the selected population did not support same sex marriage for various reasons. The first reason related to the Christian beliefs and moral principles. The figure indicated a good indication of a country that maintains and follows its Constitution as stated earlier. The second reason implied that the issue of same sex marriage will not be tolerated by the Samoan culture or to compromise Samoa understanding of the Bible teachings and Christian doctrines. With all the participants I have interviewed all of them reject same sex marriage because of the twofold reasons mentioned above.

However, on the other hand, the participants that answered “yes” in support of same sex marriage constituted only seventeen and a half percentage (17.50%) of the selected population. Although the number turned out small, however it did matter because not only do we have supporters of the issue but also their views and perspectives mentioned in the questionnaires also counted and considered valuable to this research. The main reasons why these people support same sex marriage were to do with human rights; and the right to be treated fairly and equally within the society they live in.

3.2.2 Question Two (2) Analysis

Do you think there should be a prophetic voice of the CCCS on the Government decisions should such a Bill be introduced?

The results shown on Table 1, indicated that eighty seven and a half percent (87.5%) of the selected population did agree to having a prophetic voice of the CCCS in all the

decisions of the government for various reasons. Most of these reasons support the fact that we are a Christian nation founded on God and therefore the government of Samoa should accept the Church's voice as Pastor Mafoe insisted,

Ua tatau nei i Ekalesia ona amata na lauga mea nei, ae le tatau ona faatali sei tulai mai, O le taimi lava lenei ua tatau i Ekalesia on tafaga lokeki i loto ma agaga o tagata ma amata ona talatalanoa i auga tupulaga o nei mo le isi augatupulaga. Tapena le isi augatupulaga mo le isi augatupulaga. Aua e fa'aletonu loa le isi auga tupulaga o nei, aafia loa le isi augā tupulaga lea e agai mai⁷³

However, on the other hand those who said “no” that there is no prophetic voice of the church on government decision-makings constituted twelve and a half percent (12.50%) of the selected population. Their answers to my judgement, is either they do not understand the question or they do not know the involvement of the mainline churches through the SCC. For instance, one participant insists that regardless whether there is a prophetic voice of the EFKS or not on government decision-making process, one thing for sure is that the government's agenda is obviously political. They passed laws that suit their agendas but not what the people wants.

3.2.3 Question Three (3) Analysis

Do you think Samoa in terms of families, its culture and the churches would be affected should the issue of same sex marriage be accepted in Samoa?

⁷³ My translation is, “The Church should start preaching this issue rather than wait for it to happen. They should commence shooting the rocket gospel message to the hearts of the people and have the matter to discuss it with the current generation and the generation to come. Let us prepare the generation of today for the future generation.”

Ninety percent (90%) of the participants answered “yes” that same sex marriage will have a huge impact on families, the Samoan culture, and the churches here in Samoa should the government accept such type of marriage. Ten percent (10%) said that the issue would not affect the Samoan families, culture and churches once it is accepted legally in Samoa. It is obviously clear from these figures that the Samoan people did cherish their family values, their cultural values and their spiritual preferences in life though some tended to lose touch with the significance of these for their children and their families.

3.2.4 Gender Analysis

The above results in Table 1 also shows that seventy percent (70%) of the respondents to questionnaires are male while the other thirty (30%) are female. This distribution of questionnaires among male and female although the methodology does not necessary focus on the split of gender but the quality of feedback from the field study that counts. However, what is more significant and valuable from the participation of the female in this field study is their total rejection of the issue of same sex marriage to become legal here in Samoa. In other words, the thirty percent (30%) of female that I have selected from the total population being selected turns out that hundred percent (100%) of them do not support same sex marriage. Their reasons for rejecting this issue is included in the analysis above.

In summary, it is imperative to recall the facts indicated by this research from the questions already discussed above. First there is a clear indication that Samoa does not need nor accept “same sex marriage” as part of its social, political, cultural,

economic and its spiritual life now and in the future. Secondly it is imperative that the Church ought to have its prophetic voice in the decision making process of the Samoan government at all times in order to sustain harmony and to enhance law and order in Samoa. Finally the research result also maintains that Samoan do not want to compromise its cultural and religious values for the sake of same sex marriage at any time. Family values and the interpersonal relationships within the Samoan society must be maintained at all times.

CONCLUSION

According to the result of this research, it turns out that the majority of the selected participants did not support same sex marriage in Samoa for reasons as stated in the study. It raised the question then whether the result of the overall research hypothesis meets its aim. In fact, it appears to the author that the outcome of this study “supports its aims” as laid in the beginning. The aims were to stop any possible actions towards introducing same sex marriage in Samoa and to re-enforce and to tighten up the CCCS’s position against same sex marriage in Samoa

First, in-order to sum up the analysis of this field study, the first question shows the highly rejection of same sex marriage in Samoa which indicates that the government and the people of Samoa still maintains its constitution and its motto “*E fa’avae i le Atua Samoa.*” It is clearly stated in the result of the questionnaires that this same sex marriage issue will must not be tolerated in any form in Samoa. It is also clear from the views of the majority being interviewed that the Samoan culture and the Christian principles, which Samoa as a nation has been nurtured and led by, are too dear to change for the sake of same sex marriage.

The results from the research also serve as a signal to the government of Samoa that they must first seek the opinion of the whole population of this country before they come to a final decision to legalize it. To do that, it must ensure that such Bill goes through a form of referendum seeking the opinion of the majority of the people of Samoa. Reverend Toailoa also pointed out earlier that the issue must go to

the village councils first for consideration, as this is the power house of the Samoan culture.

Secondly, the results also proved that there is a prophetic voice of churches including the CCCS to government decision making. The existence of the Samoa Council of Churches is concrete evidence that there is recognition of the existence of Christian churches in Samoa and an acknowledgement of their spiritual contributions in the formulation of relevant Bills or Legislations in Samoa. However, there are times where the government overlooked the voice of the church for political reasons. As one interviewee pointed out that, no doubt, there is always the prophetic voice of the church however, the problem is such voice is only there for the sake of the constitution and its motto. One classic example was, when the government went ahead and legalize the Casino without considering the loud and clear prophetic voice of the Church at the time due to economic benefits it would produce for Samoa.

Thirdly, as anticipated in the very beginning of this project that the issue of same sex marriage will soon arrive in Samoa because of the various factors. However, my concern as a Christian is that we now have a voice that supports or in favour of the issue in some spheres of the society at large, according to the study. Although the quantity is relatively small, this insignificant amount will gradually rise and it will have an impact in the near future. For example, the dominant factors that associates with this acceptance of same sex marriage is the recognition of and the influence of human right in the decision making of the people of Samoa. This has reflected on the views of some who have accepted this type of marriage. For them, we

are now living in a democratic society, where each person is free to choose who they want to marry regardless of their gender. They also insisted that the gay movement⁷⁴ has been around for sometimes and it's about time that we should have an open minded mentality about the issue and accepting it openly.

However, as discussed earlier that we should also be mindful of our brothers and sisters that are involved in this gay right movement. As we live in a new era of change we should open our heart on issues that influence us. They are part of us and they are family to us as Farran points out “every has a family, homosexuals and lesbians belong to families, and as human beings deserve the love and support of their families”⁷⁵ We should value the contribution of each person in our community even our church, and we should value each souls in our congregation. As a future pastor, I would not seek to outlaw those marriages that my denomination or I would not solemnize. In a free society, no one's religious perspective should trample on others rights. However, I do also warn our gay brothers and sisters that the risk of getting married is facing the consequences of abandonment by the law and the society they are living in.

⁷⁴ “Gay right movement” is a movement or organized efforts made to protect the homosexuals from discrimination. In other words, such movement served to provide some social equality for the homosexual community around the world especially in the United States. This study is not sure of when this movement began, however according to some reliable source such Gay Rights movement came to public scene in the 1960 in New York City, but it could be started way before then . <http://www.businessinsider.com/gay-rights-marriage-timeline-supreme-court-doma-2013-3?op=1#ixzz2bGGqzD6u> (accessed 12th July 2013)

⁷⁵ Sue Farran, *Law and the Family in the South Pacific*, (Vanuatu: The University of the South Pacific, 2011), 210.

Lastly, the author strongly believes that CCCS should continue to stand firm against same sex marriage and to have a strong independent voice, to challenge, educate and to raise awareness for its members regarding such an important issue as same sex marriage. They should not fear neither be discouraged to challenge the Government during every aspect of our journey to ensure that we maintain our *faavae* as well as to adhere to the word of God that we trust. It is the supreme obligation of the Ministry of the CCCS to make sure that the teachings of the Bible and the theological teachings of the Church be maintained at all times and at all costs. We must also remember that as a nation that is founded on God, we surrender our right but to submit to the will of God we worship. I strongly believe, “*e le o toe iai se aiā tatau a le Samoa ua uma ona faatau i le toto o Keriso manumalo*”, which literary means we have no more right as our right has been bought with the blood of the resurrected Christ.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Table 1. Countries that allow same sex marriages and dates of legalization:

1. France	23 rd April 2013
2. New Zealand	17 th April 2013
3. Uruguay	10 th April 2013
4. Denmark	June 2012
5. Argentina	July 2010
6. Portugal	June 2010
7. Iceland	June 2010
8. Sweden	April 2009
9. Norway	January 2009
10. South Africa	November 2006
11. Canada	2005
12. Spain	2005
13. Belgium	January 2003
14. Netherlands	December 2000

Table. 2 Countries where same sex marriage is legal in some jurisdictions:

1. Brazil	2011
2. Mexico	December 2009
3. United States	2003 (including 10 states as of May 2012)

APPENDIX II

Personal Interview Method

The proposed method of research for this paper will be a mixture of primary sources and the conduct of personal interviews, of both secular and religious figures. Since this paper will focus on the CCCS in particular, I will firstly look at interviewing people at the senior levels of leadership within the CCCS – this will include the Chairman of the General Assembly (*Fono Tele*).

Secondly, I also need to look at the wider picture from outside of the CCCS in Samoa, in which I propose to interview high-ranking personnel such as the Chairman or the Secretary of the Samoa Council of Churches. Not only that, but also looking at interviewing the leaders or pastors from other Church affiliations in Samoa whom are non-CCCS. Thirdly, it is also recommended in this research to interview the people involved in same sex marriage such as gays or *fa'afafine*.

This wide spread of people chosen from not only within CCCS and the outside would of course reflect on the aim to ensure a wide spectrum of views and beliefs for this research. The interviews will be conducted in a formal manner, and participants will be asked three basic questions in English and Samoan as follows.

- (1) What is your opinion on “same sex marriage” and do you think it will become an issue for Samoa in the near future? *O le a sou silafia i le faaiipoipoga fa'aletulafono o le tane ma le isi tane, po o le fafine foi ma le isi fafine .Faamata e oo mai i Samoa, ae po'o le a ni aafiaga o le a oo iai?*

(2) Should the Government agree to legalise same sex marriage in Samoa, what should the leaders of the CCCS do, should there be a prophetic voice in our government decision? Pe afai ae talia aloaia fa'aletulofono e le malo o Samoa le faaipoipoina o ulugalii mai le itupā e tasi pei ona taua muamua, o le a se gaiioiga a le Ekalesia CCCS I lea tulaga? Faamata e tatau ona iai se leo faa-perofeta i faaiuga a le malo?

(3) What do you think the likely impact of same sex marriage would be in Samoa?

O le a sou silafia ini aafiaga o le a oo iai Samoa pē afai ae talia fa'aletulafonoina lenei mataupu i le lumanai o le nonofo o le tane ma le fafine.

APPENDIX III

Questionnaire Method

In this part of the research, I have decided to choose three different groups of people or participants to be the recipients of the questionnaires. In fact, this selected population for this research serves as the sample population. First, the Aoao Malua since they come from different CCCS in the region who represent those local ministries. They will be viewing their opinions not only as theologians but also from a male perspective. The second group are the *faletua* Malua who not only speak from a female perspective but also as *faletua* of the *aoao* of the CCCS. Lastly is the group of students from the National University of Samoa who will not only be representing the view of the young age but I also prefer them as liberals to social issues such as same sex marriage. Following below is the layout of the questionnaires, which commence with a little note introducing the owner of the project and the purpose of the research paper. It follows the category asking for the gender, village, age group etc and lastly are the three basic questions as mentioned below.

Questionnaire

Talofa Lava, my name is Pati Crichton. I am a student at Malua Theological College and in my 4th year. I am working towards a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) and I am conducting a research based on the issue of Same Sex marriage. The intention of this research is to examine the likely impact of same sex marriage upon Samoa, and in

E te talitonu pe manatu foi e tatau ona iai se leo fa'a perofeta a le Ekalesia I faaiuga fai a le malo pe afai ae pasia le tulafono e talia ai le ituaiga faaipoipoga?

Answer Yes/No

Please explain. (*Faamatala mai faamolemole.*)

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.....
.....
.....

3. Do you think Samoa in terms of families, its culture and the churches would be affected should the issue of same sex marriage be acceptable in Samoa.

E te manatu e aafia aiga, le aganuu faa-Samoa ma Ekalesia pe afai ae taliaina le faaipoipoga ale tane ma le isi tane, faapea foi le fafine ma le isi fafine.

Answer Yes/No

Please explain. (*Faamatala mai faamolemole.*)

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.....

Fa'afetai Tele – Faamanuia le Atua (Thank you and God Bless)

APPENDIX IV

Letter of Consent for the Respondent

Date:

Name and Address of the Respondent:

Re: **Consent to be interviewed: For Thesis on “Same-Sex Marriage and the Congregational Christian Church Samoa (CCCS): Ministerial Approach**

It is with great honour that I seek your permission to be interviewed for this research as mentioned above. My name is Pati Crichton. I am a student at Malua Theological College and in my 4th year. I am working towards a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) majoring in Ministry.

As mentioned above, this research is to examine the likely impact of “Same-Sex Marriage” upon the Samoan family, culture and the church specifically in the CCCS. Although the issue of same sex is yet to arrive in Samoa, however, this research is a challenge for the CCCS if such an issue was to arrive in Samoa.

Please be reminded that any of your comments that you wish to remain confidential will not be individually identified. Complete confidentiality and anonymity is assured.

Finally yet importantly, you have been selected because of your knowledge and experience in relation to the subject of my research paper.

Please kindly let me know when will you be available for this interview and should you have any enquiries please contact my supervisor Rev Dr. Fa’alepoTuisugaletaua

of Malua Theological College at telephone 42303. I can also be reached on my cell phone number 7790314

Yours sincerely,

Pati Crichton

(BTh Student of Malua Theological College.)

GLOSSARY

<i>Matai</i>	Samoan Chief or a Title head of a Samoan extended family
<i>Fa'aaloalo</i>	respect
<i>Gafa</i>	genealogy
<i>Suli</i>	blood line
<i>Faa-Samoa</i>	Samoan culture and traditions

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- Mafoe Viliamu, Interview with author was held at Worship Centre main Office, Savalalo. Apia Friday 14th June 2013. Pastor and Founder of Worship Centre Samoa.
- Motu, Maauga. Interview with Author was held at SCC Office, Sogi, Apia. 10th May 2013. Secretary of the Samoa Council of Churches, Ordained Minister of the CCS.
- Posala Junior, Interview with author was held at Vaimoso, Apia 1st March 2013. Fa’afafine and a member of Vaimoso Congregational Christian Church of Samoa.
- Senara Tautiāga, Interview with author was held at resident Vaitele, Apia 18th June 2013. Chairman of the General Assembly, Ordained Minister of the CCCS.

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