



Sanele Faasua Lavatai

The Ifoga Ritual in Samoa in Anthropological and in Biblical Perspectives

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Sanele Faasua Lavatai

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0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1 Background and Motivation

Since independence in 1962, Samoa has been considered as one of the most socially and politically stabilized countries in the Pacific. Fonoti¹ and Vaai² attribute this success to the integration of values of the Indigenous Samoan religion (chiefly system)³ with Christianity. This integration of Christianity with the Samoan cultural chiefly system is evident in the political structure, and social organization of its local governance and the relationship of local to national processes.⁴ Central to this stability was the availability of a coherent *faa*-Samoa or the Samoan culture,⁵ which is centred on the principle of *va-fealoai*,⁶ i.e. mutual respect between people. At its very heart is a complementarity between ‘sacred’ and ‘secular’, which is implicit in every action in Samoa. It is based on *faaloalo*⁷ or appropriate respect and *amiopulea* that is to say politeness and controlled manner.

O Samoa ua uma ona tofi means the God(s)⁸ had already defined social roles and relationships between people. These roles embody participatory

¹ Fonoti Vesi Fatu (Atonement in Samoa) discussed with the author for the purpose of this research on August 17, 2012. Foniti is one of the paramount titles in Samoa.

² Sina Vaai, *Samoa: Faamatai and the Rule of the Law* (Apia: National University of Samoa, 1999), 54.

³ There is no scholarly study done about the Indigenous Religion of Samoa but the author strongly argues here that the Chiefly System in Samoa, which is the *pulega a alii ma faipule* is the indigenous Religion of Samoa. *Pulega alii ma faipule* is not only a Religion; it is the backbone of culture and identity.

⁴ Malama Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa: Traditional Authority and colonial Administration in the History of Western Samoa* (Suva: Institute of the Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1987a), 208-235.

⁵ The *faasamoa* has been explained in many eloquent ways. It is an amalgamation of being Samoan and Samoan culture, and much more. The extent of what the *faasamoa* entails is vast and often unexplainable. This is due to the issue of language and trying to communicate the Samoan terms into English.

⁶ The concept *va-fealoai* is fully explained in chapter three.

⁷ *Faaloalo* literally means *face meeting face*. However, the term means the way one acts according to another in the utmost appropriate and respectful way.

⁸ I intend to use a capital ‘G’ in the word God because the Samoans really belief in them before the arrival of Christianity. Since there are many therefore the ‘s’ is added to it.

decision-making processes; and provide comprehensive dispute resolution procedures.⁹ As noted by Vaai, these elements of the Samoan social organization have been responsible for the management of tension and resolution of conflicts.¹⁰ Indeed, there is no society without violence and conflicts. However, despite cultural rivalries among important families and paramount titles of Samoa like Tui-Atua (king of Atua), Tui-Aana (king of Aana), and Tui-Manua (king of Manua) at the time, the people, through their chiefs and traditional leaders, managed to resolve conflicts and maintain harmony.¹¹

However, like any other nation, Samoa has undergone many changes in its social, cultural, political, economic, and religious life since the arrival of the first missionaries in the early nineteenth century, and again since its independence in 1962.¹² The most important one is the introduction of the cash economy – there does not have to be a sharing of goods and resources by families and villages anymore. This leads automatically to pressure on land, including disputes. Furthermore, it increased individualization over the strength of the *aiga* (extended family) and the *nuu* (village). For example, disputes over land boundaries, rights and *pule* (authority); disputes over chiefly title rights and ownership¹³; disputes over chiefs ranking, status, and order in *faalupega* or village greetings; and dispute over dishonoring and disobeying a decision of the village council. In some cases, individuals appealed against the

⁹ Aiono F. Le Tagaloa, The Samoan Culture and Government in *Culture and Democracy in the South Pacific*, ed. by R.G Crocombe, U. Neemeia, A. Ravuvu, and W. Von Busch (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of the South Pacific, 1992), 117-137.

¹⁰ Vaai, *Samoa: Faamatai and the Rule of Law*, 67.

¹¹ Harmony in the Samoan context refers to having good relations with one another, respecting the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationship among people) and obeying the laws of the community. This leads on to the reducing of conflicts, tensions and violence in the community as people respect one another in their daily activities.

¹² Malama Meleisea, *Change and Adaptations in Samoa* (Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Center for Pacific Studies, 1992), 23-40.

¹³ Some of these tensions were either between brothers and sisters or among family members or *aiga potopoto* (extended family). These conflicts create rivalries between siblings and definitely become enemies as seen in the Psalms.

punishment allocated to them by their village council to the state court as evidenced in the case of one of the villages and its high chief, which will be dealt with later in this study at greater length.¹⁴

An increasing reliance on state laws and legal processes are to the detriment of the customary laws and the chiefly system. Does this mean that the old ways have not adjusted to the new context? Are people using the legal system to escape from the chiefly rulings? Does it mean that people lack faith and trust in the leadership of village council or because people are more influenced by the notion of their individual rights? These are the relevant questions. Nevertheless, in hierarchal societies like the system of chiefly rule, to oppose the decision of the *alii ma faipule* (council of chiefs) not only brings shame to the village council but also shows the lack of respect for the *va-fealoai* (mutual relation).¹⁵ Indeed, some rivalries between village council and a chief or a family who evade the traditional system of conflict management and appeal to the state court result in more violence.

This is of deep concern for the author, who is a Samoan pastor, who was born and raised in the villages where the chiefly system is very strong and respected.¹⁶ The author is the son of a *tulafale*¹⁷ (orator), who is not only a leading figure in initiating these traditional procedures for restoring peace and searching for harmony, but also one who speaks on behalf of the villages during the Samoan atonement ritual called the *ifoga* ritual.

¹⁴The village council banned their high chief from the village and he did not accept it and he took the matter to the state legal court for resolution. However, the ruling of the court was against the decision of the village, which resulted in more violence.

¹⁵ I believe that honor and shame also play a role here in these tensions. Shame is a collective feeling in Samoa and the Samoans are sensitive to being shamed.

¹⁶ M. Tuimalealiifano, "Talofa e Aiga ua ai e Lago le Tofa," in Elise Huffer and A. Soo (eds.), *Governance in Samoa: Pulega i Samoa* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2000), 171-187.

¹⁷ *Tulafale* means orator or the chief who is doing the talking or presenting the *tofa* or opinion of the high chiefs. The chiefly system of Samoa will also be discussed in chapter three.

0.2 Nature and significance of the study

The study intends to analyze the structure and the function of the Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga* by exploring it in its traditional epistemic context. This ritual will be explored from both anthropological and biblical perspectives. The *ifoga* ritual is performed when the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationship) among the people, families, villages and districts is violated or polluted. For instance, the two most severe crimes that violate the social norm in the communities are *faamaligi-toto* (murder or bloodshed) and *solitofaga* (trespassing in the high chief's residential place at night, rape or violence against women). These crimes create a strong sense of solidarity and pride among families and village people involved, and normally result in retaliation from the victim's side leading to more violence and bloodshed. In this context, the *ifoga* ritual functions to restore order, peace and harmony; it assists reconciling families and communities involved by overcoming violence and bloodshed.

The *ifoga* ritual process begins with the performance of the high chief of the perpetrator's family or village, as Turner demonstrates, "by bowing down in abject submission"¹⁸ in front of the victim's house, covering him/herself with the *ietoga* (Samoan treasure, fine mat) in return for acceptance, forgiveness, and restoring good relations with the offended party. Traditionally, it was expected that the victim's family to receive the perpetrator's party, reconcile with their family and village, have a feast together, and present them gifts (fine mats, and food).¹⁹ Once the *ifoga* is accepted, the offender's party changes their status from being an enemy, to that

¹⁸ George Turner, *Samoa: A Hundred years Ago and Long Before* (London: Paternoster Row, 1884), 189.

¹⁹ In cases where the *ifoga* is not accepted, the party returns back home and comes back the next day until the party is welcomed. However, if the victim's family is not convinced, the high chief of the village or district might intervene and plead to the victim's family to accept the perpetrator's party. This illustrates that the acceptance of an *ifoga* is a highly complex issue since covenants and taboos were violated.

of honoured guests. The victim's party also changes their status, from being victims to that of the host, and the host will show their hospitality through serving the guests. One can observe here a reversal of power that enables the victims to re-establish social honour and respect. These symbolic actions not only reveal the religious and social values of the community, but they also initiate the transformation of people's attitudes and behaviour.

In the course of the past hundred years, largely due to the influence of the West, the *ifoga* ritual has undergone transformations. It has been secularized and now serves more as a means of compensation signifying the detriment of its original religious values. For instance, today, it is expected of the perpetrator's party to present money and boxes of tin-fish to the victim's family. Cluny Macpherson and Laavasa Macpherson point out that people begin to avoid the ritual because it is costly.²⁰ This is problematic because limiting the *ifoga* ritual only to this aspect of payment transaction, neglects its social and religious ceremonial values. People today are less aware that *ifoga* is an atonement ritual aimed at restoring peace and stability in communities whose cohesiveness has been threatened by hostilities generated by violence and social misbehaviour. Traditionally, violation of taboos, covenants, and boundaries associated with mutual relationships bring danger and pollution to the *faasinomaga* (home and designation). Since violated cultural values have the potential in a traditional society such as Samoa to pollute the whole community, the *faasinomaga* needs to be purified. Previous studies have reported the changes in the symbolic elements used by the perpetrator's party.²¹ However, they fail to address, how this secularized understanding of

²⁰ Cluny Macpherson and La'avasa Macpherson, "The Ifoga: Establishing the Exchange Value of Social Honor in Contemporary Samoa," *Journal of Pacific Society* 114 /2 (2005), 109-134.

²¹ See Leilani Warren Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga: Samoa's Answer to Dispute Healing* (Hamilton: Te Mātāhauariki Institute, University of Waikato, 2002; Derek Freeman, *The Fateful Hoaxing Of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis of Her Samoan Research* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); William J Stewart, "Ifoga: The Concept of Public Apology, The

the *ifoga* ritual and its consequences can be balanced. For example, the number of *ietoga* (fine mats) for compensation increases, and the additional elements are boxes of tin-fish and the introduction of cash economy. These changes negatively affect the social, political, and economical life of the Samoan people. For instance, boxes of tin-fish are expensive in Samoa and some families cannot afford to buy them, especially those who live on semi-subsistence farming for living. Moreover, many families rely on their relatives overseas to provide some money if they cannot afford the ritual. Furthermore, the offender's family often strive to provide these symbolic elements only because they know that the legal court system takes into consideration the performance of the ritual, which results in a reduction of the punishment given to the offender.

In a context where the whole population is deeply rooted in cultural traditions on the one hand and Christian faith on the other, church and theology may be instrumental in balancing the recent secularizing tendencies with respect to the *ifoga* ritual, by means of redefining it in light of biblical perspectives. This is the reason why this study explores the nature of the *ifoga* ritual from a biblical perspective. The research aims to propose a new understanding of the *ifoga* ritual that can be utilized to actualize its deeply rooted "religious" dimension. The religious dimension of the *ifoga* as an atonement ritual has not been analyzed sufficiently in previous, mostly anthropological studies. Therefore, the study inquires into the cultural, religious or spiritual, and social principles associated with the *ifoga* in traditional as well as in modern Samoan society. As reported, all Samoans belong actively to a church and the spiritual or a "religious" understanding of

family and the Law in American Samoa," *Journal of International Law and Economics* 10 (1973): 183-195.

the world is essential to them.²² The study argues that the *ifoga* ritual in Samoa should be reconstructed as a “religious”²³ and social procedure of atonement that brings about purification, propitiation, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

0.3 The research question and aim of the study

The central concern of this thesis is the critical discussion of *ifoga* as a reconciliation ritual. The study explores the traditional strategies embedded in the *ifoga* in restoring broken mutual relationships and in solving disputes in Samoa. Moreover, it seeks to clarify the connection between the church and the *ifoga* ritual; and argues that it is possible and relevant to redefine this from a theological perspective. In this religious and traditional context, the author’s hypothesis is that tensions and conflicts can be resolved, and violence can be controlled and overcome in Samoa, by a cooperate action, in solidarity among the chiefly system, the church and the government or state legal court system. The study explores the contributions of each of these institutions towards the settlement of a conflict. How could they complement each other? And what would be the particular contribution of the church in bridging the gap between the traditional culture and modernity in order for societal and communal harmony to prevail?

0.4 Scope of the study

The author’s intention in this study is to concentrate on a ‘workable’ scope within the Samoan society itself where the author could draw sufficient relevant data for consideration and analysis. This entails expositions of

²² See Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity 1900-2010* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 206-207. According to this statistic, Samoa has a 98.8% Christian population.

²³ Different from a Western understanding, the whole life in all its aspects including politics and economics, is thought to be spiritually interwoven and relevant in a “religious” sense. In the Samoan language, there exists no single term circumscribing the Western meaning realms of “religion.” In Samoan thinking, spiritual or devotional matters are not compartmentalized as a separate affair of life.

Samoaan traditions, philosophies, and customs, which are significantly defined in the relationship between the gospel and culture.

The study is limited to Samoa and includes American Samoa, which is the territory of the United States of America. Although the two countries have different political structure and governance, they do have the same culture and language. Therefore, the outcome of this study will be of relevant to the families, villages, people, and the churches in both the Independent State of Samoa as well as American Samoa given the similarities in cultural values and beliefs. Findings can also be applied to the Samoans living abroad especially in New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii and America.²⁴ In addition, they may also be relevance for other indigenous communities in the transition stage between community and legal justice forms.

0.5 Methodology

The research is concerned with the Samoan *ifoga* ritual and the research scope is limited to the Samoan context. The research has two main parts: an anthropological and a biblical part. In the first part, the research explores the *ifoga* ritual in its traditional epistemic context. A collection of oral traditions, myths and legends will illuminate the traditional understanding of the structure and function of the ritual. As part of the empirical research, especially, the chiefs will be involved through discussion and dialogue, because the chiefs are the ones believed to have inherited sacred knowledge about the *ifoga* ritual. The questionnaire in Samoan with English translation is attached as appendix. The available literature resources from the libraries, books, journals, online articles, reports, and archives helped in situating the *ifoga* ritual synchronically

²⁴ The *ifoga* ritual has already seen done by Samoans living in New Zealand, U.S.A and Australia.

and diachronically. A considerable number of government records have also been researched thoroughly with permission for the purposes of this inquiry.²⁵

The second part of the research engages exegetically a biblical perspective. The church in Samoa plays a vital role in society. The motto of Samoa, “Samoa is founded on God,” highlights that Christianity has become an essential part of the Samoan way of life and culture. The Bible is held in high esteem at all levels of society. In redefining the *ifoga* ritual at the interface of tradition and modernity, the study will not only draw on the traditional understanding of the *ifoga* ritual, but also draw critically on the Bible. For instance, the author sees significant parallels between the *ifoga* ritual and the atonement ritual described in Leviticus 16, which could inform a transformative understanding of the *ifoga* ritual. Another essential parallel is the Christ-event according to Romans 3,21-31, which Paul interprets in terms of an atonement and as a free gift of God to re-establish relationships between God and humanity and amongst the people. Thus, the meaning of the *ifoga* ritual in its traditional context can also serve as an example of a commonality between Samoan culture and Early Christian traditions.

0.6 Previous research on the *ifoga* Ritual

0.6.1 Research about the *ifoga* Ritual

Leilani Tuala did a study in 2002 entitled, *A Study in Ifoga: Samoa’s answer to dispute healing*.²⁶ She did this study while she was a lawyer and has now she became a judge in Samoa. Her aim was to ascertain whether the *ifoga* is viable to be implemented into the legal system of New Zealand, and if so, how it is to be implemented.²⁷ She concluded that the ritual is unique for the Samoans, as it exists in a system with connections between chiefs, extended

²⁵ Bundesarchiv Berlin R 21001/2871, p. 33-37; R1001/2878, p.10-15; R1001/2884, p. 1-3.

²⁶ Leilani Tuala Warren, *A Study in Ifoga: Samoa’s answer to dispute healing* (Hamilton: Te Mātāhauariki Institute, University of Waikato, 2002).

²⁷ Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 3.

families, and villages. This connection as a whole centered on the complementarity of sacred and secular elements. For instance, a child was killed in a car crash in Auckland a few years ago and the family of the drunken driver performed the *ifoga* ritual. It was the *tofa* (wisdom) of the chiefs that the family must perform the customary ritual because of not only taboos, covenants and relational boundaries being shaken, but also to ask for forgiveness. The study was conducted in cooperation with the legal system of New Zealand. She requested that New Zealand lawyers must be educated and raised awareness within the Justice System before the ritual is implemented.

Cluny Macpherson and Laavasa Macpherson wrote an article on “*Ifoga* as a ceremony which establishes the exchange value of Social Honor in Samoa.”²⁸ For them, *ifoga* is a ritual and a public humiliation in return for forgiveness. In addition, the Macphersons in the following year questioned the potential and usefulness of the ‘traditional’ dispute resolution processes which include the *ifoga* in modern Samoa society.²⁹ They looked at the nature and limitations of traditional approaches to solve disputes in modern Samoa. Thus, according to them, the traditional approaches like the *ifoga* might not be relevant in the modern day world.

Stewart also did some research about *ifoga* and considered it as a rite for Public Apology.³⁰ He maintained that the ritual was done in the public sphere with the whole community involved. He emphasized the importance of the ritual not only for families, but also for the state law in American Samoa. He describes this connection of the ritual with the state legal court in dealing with conflicts and tensions in the territory although it is governed according to

²⁸ Cluny Macpherson and La’avasa Macpherson, “Ifoga,” 109-134.

²⁹ Cluny Macpherson and La’avasa Macpherson, “Nature and Limits of Traditional Dispute Resolution Process in Contemporary Samoa,” *Pacific Studies* 29 (2006): 128-158.

³⁰ William J Stewart, “Ifoga : The Concept of Public Apology, The family and the Law in American Samoa,” *Journal of International law and Economics* 10 (1973): 183 - 195

American legal principles. The motive of the ritual with the legal system is to overcoming more violence in the community.

Kisa Anisi presented another study about *ifoga*.³¹ The Auckland Regional Community Corrections Centre in New Zealand commissioned her to do a research about the *ifoga* in Samoa. Her study was similar to that conducted by Tuala. Her research focused on the question of how the *ifoga* ritual can contribute to the lives of different communities in New Zealand. This showed how valuable and influenced the *ifoga* ritual is in communities in New Zealand.

0.6.2 Approaches and Research about Overcoming Violence

Consequently, we cannot talk about the *ifoga* ritual without any reference to violence, because the ritual exists as a result of violating human dignities and rights.³² Therefore it is appropriate to acknowledge this connection of the *ifoga* ritual to violence. Violence can be defined in many possible ways, depending on who is defining it, from which region and for what purpose. A definition from the West will be different from that from the Pacific like Samoa. The WHO (World Health Organization) defined violence as:

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.³³

The report also presents a typology of violence that, while not uniformly accepted, can be a useful way to understand the contexts in which violence occurs and how different types of violence interact.³⁴ Whether violence occurs

³¹ Anisi, Kisa. *Ifoga: A Research Paper Conducted in Western Samoa*. September-October 1993. Commissioned by the Auckland Regional Community Corrections Centre.

³² The myth about the origin of the *ifoga* ritual will be dealt with in chapter 3.

³³ Etienne Krug ed. et al, *World Report on Violence and Health: Summary* (Geneva: WHO 2002), 13.

³⁴ Krug, *Report on Violence*, 10-23.

in various forms such as physical, sexual, spoken or not, interpersonal or group, they are all viewed as relational violence from a communal Samoan perspective. They affect the entire extended family, village, and the whole community.

Violence as traditionally understood is self-propagating and, if uncontrolled, will overflow and destroy the community. Many approaches to overcoming violence and of peace building are available from different perspectives. For instance, the WCC's "DOV Programm" (Decade to overcome violence);³⁵ the UN Peace-building Commission, and the Ghandiji's doctrine of Ahimsa.³⁶ I would refer to some of the approaches to violence within a variety of contexts ones, which are more related to the indigenous Samoan society and foster collective healing.

Theodor Ahrens in his study "Interrupting Violence in a Postcolonial Society: A case study from Papua New Guinea," discussed how violence had been interrupted in the context of Papua New Guinea.³⁷ He pointed out "the logic of reciprocity," the ideology of give and take; how people proceed to traditional means of organizing themselves and settle their disputes outside of the state legal court. He asserted that this ideology of reciprocity "covers all dimensions of life including relationships with unseen powers."³⁸ He also stated that traditional society, religion and communal living are shaped by the principle of reciprocity. He concluded by proposing that we would never be

³⁵ The World Council of Churches held its International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston Jamaica 2011 where they celebrated ten years of its program "Decade to Overcome Violence." See also Mathews George Chunakara, *Building Peace on Earth: Report of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 2013).

³⁶ Moses Rongsen, "Interpreting Gandhian Ethics for Peacebuilding," *Clark Journal of Theology* 1 (2012): 51-63.

³⁷ Theodor Ahrens, "Interrupting Violence in a Postcolonial Society: A Case Study from Papua New Guinea, in *After Violence. Religion, Trauma and Reconciliation*, ed. Andrea Bieler, Christian Bingel, Hans-Martin Gutmann (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011), 180-197.

³⁸ Ahrens, "Interrupting Violence," 184.

able to overcome violence because it is the human nature. However, he argues that what people can achieve is to interrupt violence and find means to break its cycle.

Hans-Martin Gutmann, in his book *Gewaltunterbrechung* argued that violence can be ‘disrupted.’³⁹ This means that it can be ameliorated, addressed and broke its cycle. He maintained that dialogue and conversations through mutual religious acts of solidarity, communication, and dedicated commitment not only disrupt violence, but also offer possible ways for prevention. For Gutmann, networking plays a vital role in building relationships, connecting individuals and bringing them together. This fellowship encourages people and communities to make good use of resources available in their context that might promote the interruption of violence.⁴⁰ Such social space for individuals might lead to appreciation, assurance, and thankfulness, which then evoke the gifts of grace. Gutmann insisted that violence cannot be stopped but it can be disrupted.

René Girard viewed the connection between violence and the sacred acknowledging “that violence exists in the heart of the sacred;”⁴¹ and “belongs to all men, and thus to none in particular.”⁴² He also maintained that sacrifice is not meant to appease a deity; rather, to restore harmony and protect the community from its own violence.⁴³ Girard mentioned another possibility to control the system of violence and prevent chaos. He introduces the theory of scapegoating. First, the scapegoat is said to have been the cause of all of the

³⁹ Hans-Martin Gutmann, *Gewaltunterbrechung: Warum Religion Gewalt nicht hervorbringt, sondern bindert. Ein Einspruch* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus, 2009).

⁴⁰ Hans-Martin Gutmann, “After Violence: Narratives of Grace in the Midst of Trauma” in *After Violence: Religion, Trauma and Reconciliation*, ed. Hans-Martin Gutmann et al, (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2011), 138-148.

⁴¹ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979), 258.

⁴² Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 257.

⁴³ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 86-87. See also – René Girard, *I see Satan Fall like Lightning*, trans. James G Williams (New York: Orbis Books, 2001).

community's problems. Second, the scapegoat is said to have been godlike in power, and finally, the sacrifice of the scapegoat brought salvation to the community. For Girard, this means that if the community is to free itself from crisis and violence, then it has to search for a scapegoat upon whom to pin the violence. In destroying the scapegoat, the community unanimously rids itself of the present violence and restores order and harmony. He further suggested that Christ, the one and only gift from God, has broken the cycle of violence.

Elizabeth Naurath in her book *Mitgefuehl gegen Gewalt* presented another promising methodology of controlling and preventing violence.⁴⁴ She contended that *Mitgefuehl* is the key for ethical development in both religious education and peace teaching.⁴⁵ Her construct of emotional education gave an impulse for religious teachings for praxis in families, kindergarten, and primary schools. Central to her concern was the increase potentiality among children and young people to violence today. Thus, Naurath saw education as the key for prevention of violence in society.

Donald E. Miller noted the important role play by the churches in Asia in overcoming violence, and what they can contribute to promoting peace.⁴⁶ He valued the importance of developing ongoing cultural practices that encourages people of different traditions and convictions to cooperate with one another in promoting peace.⁴⁷ Miller noted the uniqueness of the Historic Peace churches response to violence in a more historic and cultural setting. Thus, Asian practical peace theology is located in the Asian context and churches must seek ways to discover and establish those practices.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Naurath, *Mitgefuehl gegen Gewalt: Mitgefuehl als Schluessel ethischer Bildung im Religionspadagogik* (Witten: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008).

⁴⁵ Naurath, *Mitgefuehl gegen Gewalt*, 158.

⁴⁶ Donald E. Miller, "An Introduction to Overcoming Violence in Asia: The Role of the Church in Overcoming Violence," in *Overcoming Violence in Asia*, ed. Donald Miller, Gerard Guiton and Paulus Widjaja (Telford: Cascadia Publishing House, 2011), 11-35.

⁴⁷ Miller, "Overcoming Violence," 20.

Both Ahrens and Gutmann use quite similar terms in relation to addressing violence. For Ahrens the continuity of violence can be ‘interrupted’ and Gutmann expressed that the cycle of violence can be ‘disrupted.’ Girard on the other hand maintained that the community has to find a scapegoat as a means freeing and releasing the community from violence, and reduce angst. Miller valued creating the culture of peace among the people and lastly, as Naurath argued, people in different contexts must be educated about the issue of violence and try to prevent it.

0.7 The contribution of the research

It is against this background that this thesis undertakes to explore and address the problems stated above. This study will approach the *ifoga* as a ritual from a theological perspective and its religious connotations. The hope is to develop *ifoga* as a multidimensional paradigm for healing tensions and restoring harmony, one that is firmly rooted in the Samoan cultural context and focuses on the comprehensive well-being of reality and wholeness of life. This thesis describes *ifoga* as the central religious ritual of transforming social and sacred boundaries relevant to the people of Samoa. The thesis clarifies who the just were and how they were justified; and why chiefs bear the guilt and commit themselves to restoring harmony amongst the people, families, villages and groups involved in particular.

The study explores why and how the *ifoga* ritual is considered as “reconciliation” and why restoring harmony in Samoa is the sole responsibility of the high chiefs.⁴⁸ It also addresses the nature and potential of the traditional Samoan *ifoga*, and explains why this ritual should be carried out, especially in relation to difficult situations needed to heal interpersonal and intergroup conflicts. Furthermore, it demonstrates what *ifoga* signifies in terms of

⁴⁸ The divisions and the differences of chiefs as well as their roles and responsibilities will be dealt with in chapter three, but here I argue that the *ifoga* ritual is the sole responsibility of the high chiefs.

religious principles to achieve Christian characteristics of forgiveness, repentance and reconciliation.

The study then relates the traditional healing *ifoga* ritual to the Bible. The Old Testament is about community and building society, which is also at the heart of the Samoan culture. Positive connections can be cited between the Old Testament writings and Samoan culture. For instance, the Book of Leviticus, where the Day of Atonement that is deeply rooted in the Hebrew culture has significant parallels and similarities with the *ifoga* ritual. In addition, the *ifoga* ritual is also related to the Christ event and how it can be seen as an enactment of Christ's suffering as portrayed by Paul in Romans 3. The study concludes by analyzing the theoretical and theological basis; and finds a new synthesis for the church, the traditional culture and the state to form a holistic approach to atonement and reconciliation. The thesis suggests possible solutions in healing tensions that have emerged in Samoan society and propose ways in which the church, the culture and the state in Samoa can contribute and take part in the process. Finally, the study offers a contextual theological contribution to the wider ecumenical debate on reconciliation.

0.8 Limitations of the study

I admit that there are some limitations of the research, which the author has tried to cope with by all possible means.

The first limitation of this research is that a huge amount of traditions and knowledge about the *ifoga* ritual in Samoa was orally transmitted. These traditions can only be accessed through a cultural approach such as *soalaupule* (deliberation, dialogue, consult) in addressing the chiefs, who are the keepers of such wisdom. This process of oral transmission may cause inaccuracy in the material owing to the imperfection of the chief's memories. These oral transmissions are still in practice and are applied as one of the sources for the study about the *ifoga* ritual.

The author has to admit at the outset of this study that there was no intention that findings would eventually be able to solve the problems of secularisation and modernization of the *ifoga* ritual in the Samoan context. Rather the study is only a beginning of an academic form of investigation into how the church can contribute in strengthening the traditional approaches to maintaining peace and harmony in the Samoan setting from a biblical perspective. It is an attempt to explore, understand, and clarify how the religious aspect of the *ifoga* ritual can be strengthened to prevent any form of violence in the present Samoan society.

As with any research based on primary sources, the researcher is faced with the dilemma of ascertaining how many informants are sufficient in order to analyse a concept as accurately as possible. This flexibility can be perceived as a limitation, and at the initial stage of the research, this dilemma caused anxiety. A purely subjective judgment will be made in this case, which may be questioned at a later stage. Another limitation is self-imposed in that the writer has chosen to discuss this issue with the *matai* (chiefs) and some pastors only. The reason is that these are the people (chiefs), who are authoritative figures in Samoan society. The chiefs experience in decision making as to whether an *ifoga* should be carried out or not is vital and have valuable insights into the *ifoga* ritual. Although the majority of chiefs in Samoan societies are predominantly male, the researcher managed to *soalaupule* (deliberate, consult, dialogue) a woman, who is also a paramount chief. In addition, chiefs are the ones (according to oral traditions) whom Tagaloa had commissioned to conduct the *ifoga* ritual when their family members violate taboos that pollute the community

0.9 Structure of the dissertation

The research is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one discusses the empirical research method used in this study and the selection of research

participants. The informants are mainly the chiefs who are believed to have inherited the sacred knowledge about the *ifoga* ritual.

In the second chapter, the author sets the platform of the study by concentrating on the Samoan cosmogony and worldview, which is the foundation of the traditional *ifoga* ritual. Samoa has a unique cultural and religious identity. For a proper comprehension of conflict resolution, it is necessary to consider first the fundamental underlying principles of the Samoan culture as a whole, particularly its concepts of God, its anthropology, and ethics.

The third chapter concentrates on analyzing the origin of the *ifoga* ritual as well as its process, use, and function. The result of the empirical study that the author did in Samoa from July to September 2012 is vital for this chapter to explore its main features, aim, relevance, limitations, and challenges. Based on the empirical research, this chapter demonstrates how the *ifoga* ritual functions as a religious dialogical process that leads towards forgiveness and reconciliation among the families and villages separated as a result of violence.

The fourth chapter is an extension of chapter three and attempts to demonstrate the changing face, content, and form of the *ifoga* ritual. In particular, the chapter focuses on the transformation of *ifoga* over time with special attention paid to the impact of Christianity, to colonial rule, and to modernity upon the ritual. Its significance lies in that it gives a comprehensive view of how the ritual has been transformed to its present form.

The fifth chapter engages with an exegetical analysis of Leviticus 16, and then relates this exegesis to the Samoan ritual *ifoga*. This analysis helps to identify parallel motifs between the *ifoga* ritual and the Yom Kippur prescribed in the text, which could inform a transformative understanding of the *ifoga* ritual.

In chapter six, the study engages with the New Testament with special reference to the Christ-event. Romans 3,21-31, where Paul develops his perspective of reconciliation in relation to the Christ-event, will be in specific focus. In addition, the chapter gives a theological analysis between possible parallels of the traditional Samoan ritual with Christian concepts of atonement, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Chapter seven concentrates on integrating the findings of the anthropological and the biblical parts of the study. The chapter engages first with redefining the *ifoga* ritual from a biblical perspective. Furthermore, it demonstrates why it is necessary and meaningful for the church to redefine the *ifoga* ritual in present day Samoa. This reconstruction will also be applicable for many Samoans now living in other countries, who are faced with competing models of restorative or punitive justice. The church's contribution is to draw out the religious and social aspects of the ritual by drawing on the Bible and Samoan traditions. This will lay the foundation to offer some suggestions for a possible cooperate implementation of the traditional Samoan *ifoga* ritual, taking into account the contribution of church, the chiefly system, and the state legal court. The chapter concludes with some proposals on how the *ifoga* ritual can offer a contextual theological contribution to the wider ecumenical debate on reconciliation, especially in overcoming violence and settling disputes in the multi-cultural context.

Finally, the research concludes with a brief summary of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 1 RESEARCH METHOD

1.1 Introduction

The first part of the study about the atonement ritual in Samoa requires the need of acquiring the knowledge of the people. This is because the study is exploring not only the Samoan cultural heritage, but also its sacred history, which is nurtured and maintained by the specific people in the villages. The chapter explains how the research will be conducted. First, the author will argue that the nature of the research enquiry suggests that the Samoan *Soalaupule*¹ Methodology is appropriate for gathering the wisdom of oral tradition from the chiefs and elders. Second, it will also clarify why this method is the best hermeneutic approach instead of the conducting interviews as it is common in most of the empirical research studies.

1.2 Choosing the method

1.2.1 An Empirical Approach

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the value of Indigenous approaches in qualitative studies.² This is particularly an attempt to respect and appreciate Indigenous perspectives and methodologies. In her famous and influential work *Indigenous methodologies*, Linda T. Smith argues

¹ Papaliitele Moeimanono Fouvaa, (Informant - Manager Research & Development Centre for Samoan Studies at the National University of Samoa), discussion with the author at the National University of Samoa, Papaigalagala, Apia, September 11, 2012.

² There is a huge amount of books and resources by indigenous scholars ranging from the north to the south of the globe that valued and encouraged the need to develop indigenous research methodologies. See Roger Moody (ed.), *Indigenous Voices: Visions and Realities* (Utrecht: International Kooks, 1993); Roxanne Struthers, "Conduction Sacred Research: An In Experience, *WICAZO Review* 16 (2001): 125-133; E. R. Atleo, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); J. Archibald, *Indigenous story work: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); M. Barrett and S. Stauffer, "Narrative Inquiry: From Story to Method," in *Narrative Inquiry in Music Education*, ed. by M. Barrett and S. Stauffer (Netherlands: Springer, 2009), 7-17; M. Battiste and J.Y. Henderson, *Protecting indigenous knowledge and heritage: A global challenge* (Saskatoon: Purich, 2000);

that research that involves indigenous people has to adopt an indigenous research approach.³ In addition, indigenous principles should be inserted into research methodology so that the practise can play a role in the assertion of indigenous rights and sovereignty. This is necessary to address the meaning people from different cultures create to describe their experiences and understand issues. Such an approach helps the researcher to “get the story right and tell the story well”⁴ for the benefit of the people. Moreover, more importantly, Indigenous methodologies consider the integrity of cultural protocols, values, customs, and behaviours of the people involved.

Lester-Irabinna Rigney views the development of indigenous methodologies as a privilege. It is not only as “emancipatory imperatives,” but also to provide a voice to indigenous researchers.⁵ This is because indigenous languages, knowledge, and cultures are silent, sometimes condemned, or misrepresented in various accounts of histories or studies. A case in point is the study conducted by Margaret Mead in Samoa, which provoked a range of feelings and negative comments when it was published.⁶ Her account of female adolescent sexuality in Samoa received negative reactions because it was based on the mischievous joking of the informants.⁷ Such misrepresentation triggers the need by most indigenous people to “re-write and re-right”⁸ their own stories. It is with this intention that this study proceeds to tell a story about

³ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples 2nd ed.* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2012), 12.

⁴ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 226.

⁵ Lester- Irabinna Rigney, Indigenous Research and Aboriginal Australia, in *Indigenous people's wisdom and power: Affirming our knowledge through Narrative*, ed. by I. Gouka, I. Nomalungelo, & J. Kunnie (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 32-50.

⁶ In 1928, Margaret Mead published *Coming of Age in Samoa*, a fascinating study of the lives of adolescent girls that transformed Mead herself into an academic celebrity. In 1983 anthropologist, Derek Freeman published a scathing critique of Mead's Samoan research, badly damaging her reputation.

⁷ See Derek Freeman, *The Fateful Hoaxing Of Margaret Mead: A Historical Analysis Of Her Samoan Research* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). See also Paul Shankman, *The Trashing of Margaret Mead: Anatomy of an Anthropological Controversy (Studies in American Thought and Culture)* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009).

⁸ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 29.

atonement in Samoa from a Samoan point of view. Thus, it will be a Samoan version, in a Samoan way, from an indigenous perspective, written for comprehension by the world of academia and outsiders.

Pacific Island researchers pay special attention in respecting cultural values and norms. For example, Kiwi Tamasese and other Pacific researchers showed much concern for cultural sensitivity towards Samoa and other Pacific indigenous cultures.⁹ It was necessary for them to do so when these communities were “subjected to intensive qualitative research in the past.”¹⁰ Carried out by Tamasese, the use of culturally indigenous research methods avoided the danger of the western interpretation of the meanings being conveyed and enabled instead an authentic indigenous approach. It is within this context that this research has been recorded using a Samoan methodology to convey my ‘emic study’¹¹ as mentioned in the aims above. Thus, this study acknowledges these researchers sensitive approaches and incorporates them into this investigation. At the same time, the author takes into consideration the invaluable contributions to the research from various scholars from western cultures.

1.3 *Soalaupule* Method: A qualitative empirical inquiry

For my research, I have decided to use the *Soalaupule* Method. *Soalaupule* suggests a methodology that seeks to inquire the *tofa or moe*

⁹ Kiwi Tamasese, “O le Taaeo Afua, the new morning: a qualitative investigation into Samoan perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services,” *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 39/4 (2005): 6-25.

¹⁰ Tamasese, “O le Taaeo Afua,” 10.

¹¹ Kenneth Pike coined Emic and Ethic studies. See Kenneth Pike, *Phonetics, a Critical Analysis of Phonetic Theory and a Technique for the Practical Description of Sounds* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1943). Emic as in phonemic refers to an insider’s perspective and ethic as in phonetics refers to an outsider’s perspective. In this sense, I consider myself as an insider not an outsider. See Robert K. Merton, “Insiders and Outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge,” in *American Journal of Society* 78 (1972): 9-47.

(wisdom) and *faautaga* (important knowledge) from the chiefs and elders. It is a manner of coming together, to meet, and to resolve a particular issue. It is a quest to find out how a request, a need, or a possible solution must be implemented, put into action, done, or fulfilled. Within this *fefaasagaiga* (encounter), the chiefs will *saili le tofa (tofa saili)* (searching for true wisdom) through dialogue, discussion and critical thinking.

Literally, the *soalaupule* concept is formed up of three words: *soa*, *lau* and *pule*. *Soa* as a noun means a partner or companion. As a verb, it means to share something, to enquire or to seek knowledge and wisdom. The term *soa* also signifies that something is happening that needs to be shared, and seek the *tofa*, *moe*, *faautaga* or wisdom and knowledge of others.¹² Certain people are summoned and prayed for such information to be shared, heard and to take possible action. For example, *soalaupule* can take place in families between parents and the children, the chief and his extended family, among church members or the village council. This *soalaupule* process and quest for wisdom needs commitment, attention, reflection, and determination to conduct it.¹³ However, this will never happen until the members present are willing to deliberate or *soalaupule*.

The word *lau* as it appears in the term *soalaupule* refers to the possessive determiner pronoun ‘your.’ The term also means a leaf, a roofing material made up of special palm, coconut leaves to cover the top of traditional Samoan houses, and it refers to pros and cons of an opinion, wisdom, point, or something. The possessive adjective ‘your’ expresses how valuable the participant or the people with whom the information is shared. Furthermore,

¹² See Papaliitele Dr Moeimanono Fouvaa, *Ua e pale, ua e ula, ua e titi i lou Faasinomaga, ae faapefea ona mata'itu ne'i lofi'ai i peau laga o le taifana'e?* Pepa Fonotaga-Measina 6 Iunivesite Aoao o Samoa, Le Papaigalagala (paper presented at the Fonotaga-Measina for the Nationa University of Samoa), Apia, September 1-3, 2012.

¹³ Papaliitele Dr M. Fouvaa, *Ua e pale, ua e ula, ua e titi i lou Faasinomaga*.

lau (your) signifies the variety of perspectives and wisdom which may be raised by different participants based on their own contexts.

The term *pule* refers to authority, wisdom, opinion or sacred knowledge. The term *pule* is also referred to a seashell. This *pule* (seashell) has two sides (*lau*), both are exactly the same, facing each other (*faafesagai*).¹⁴ Therefore, *soalaupule* is a holistic phenomenon that manoeuvres the *faafesagaiga* (face-to-face encounter) and *fefaasoiga* (sharing)¹⁵ because it is anticipated that participants have the same standard, expectation, and conviction. This *fefaasoaiga* (sharing) is culturally and firmly rooted in *avafatafata* (mutual respect),¹⁶ *vafealoaloi* (mutual relation),¹⁷ *faaloalo* (polite, respect)¹⁸ and *amanaia* (reciprocity, honor).¹⁹ Thus, *soalaupule* is a method of enquiry employed for gathering the *tofa* or wisdom, knowledge, stories, histories and ideas about a particular issue or matter that need to be solved.

Soalaupule is not an easy process. It is difficult as different ideas, wisdom and sacred knowledge are critically analysed, assessed and woven together by participants in the effort to derive a consensus. For instance, the participants will recall the myths, beliefs, histories, genealogies, ancestors, divinities, and the present events related to an issue being discussed.²⁰ Such an enormous wealth of knowledge makes it difficult to reach a consensus unless the participants have agreed on a particular point.

¹⁴ Oianatai Matale (informant), discussion with the researcher 21 August, 2012.

¹⁵ *Fefaasoiga* comes from the verb *fefaasoai* meaning to share, to exchange, to discuss together.

¹⁶ *Avafatafata* is formed up of two words: *Ava* meaning respect and honor; and *fatafata* means chest. The term implies that the gathering is not of different people, families, or parties but as that of one family, body, one mind, and one soul in one spirit.

¹⁷ *Vafealoaloi* means mutual respect among the participants present during the *soalaupule* process.

¹⁸ *Faaloalo* here involves respecting the social boundaries, relational boundaries, the taboos, and the sacredness of the event.

¹⁹ *Manaia* is honoring the positions and the opinions of others.

²⁰ Papaliitele Dr Moeimanono Fouvaa, (informant), discussion with the author at the National University of Samoa, Papaigalagala, Apia, September 11, 2012.

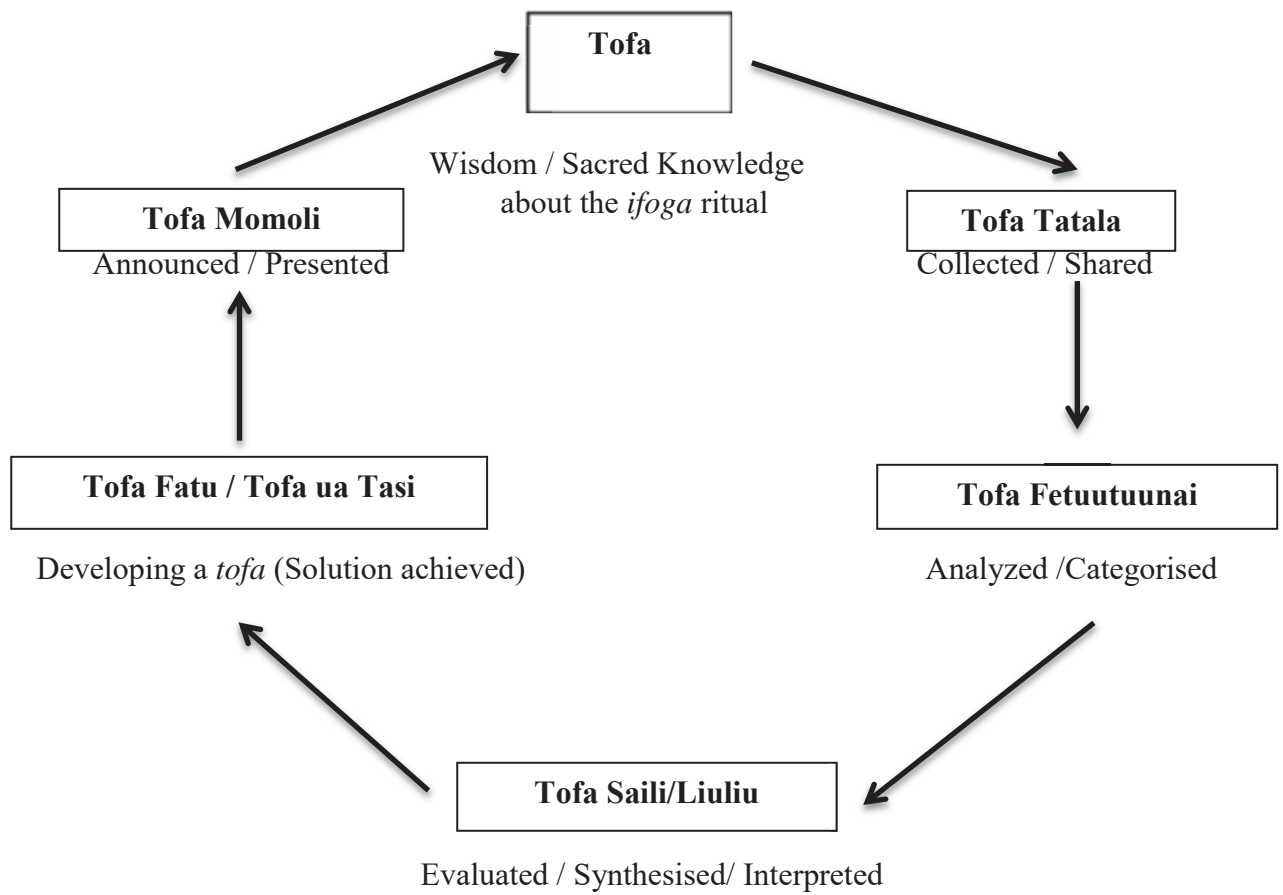
So what then are the benefits of this *soalaupule* empirical research method to my study? The strength of the method is that it can be used to pursue questions that are difficult to locate in the written documents about Samoa or in everyday interactions. For instance, the researcher can spend a lot of time reading available documents, but will not be able to uncover how the atonement ritual functions in Samoan society. For that reason, dialogues, conversations, and deliberations on the topic of the research with the people who are actually participating and doing it are more fruitful and have positive results. During the *soalaupule* process, the researcher can ask questions for clarification and elaboration, and even press for sustained discussion.

When conducting a *soalaupulega* (deliberation, dialogue, discussion) with the chiefs and elders, there is room for an exceptional degree of flexibility and control in the pursuit of the participants' understandings of the research topic. In *soalaupule* (deliberation), we are not limited by the scope, order, and items on questions prepared for the research.²¹

1.4 Soalaupule design and overview

The diagram below demonstrates the *soalupule* methodology process to achieving the *tofa* (wisdom) concerning the atonement ritual in Samoa.

²¹ See Joe Soss, "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practical-Centred View of Interviewing for Interpretative Research," in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the interpretive Turn*, ed. by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 127-149.



1.4.1 *Tofa* (Sacred Wisdom)

The Samoa epistemology *tofa* is the respectful Samoan term for the word *moe* (sleep). *Moe*, *tofa* or sleep is part of our human nature referring to rest from daily activities and commitments of the day. Papaliitele notes that the quest or seeking for the *tofa* (wisdom) means calling ones *tagatalilo* or *mauli* (psyche, spirits).²² The closest equivalent to English language, is psyche²³ and *mauli* includes body mind and spirit.²⁴ The missionaries replaced the word *mauli* with *loto* – the heart of the person and the seat of will and emotion. Tui

²² Papaliitele Dr M. Fouvaa, *Ua e pale, ua e ula, ua e titi i lou Faasinomaga*.

²³ Aiono Fagaafi. *LeTagaloa, Tapuai: Samoan worship* (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2003), 48.

²⁴ Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi, *O Samoa o le atunuu tofi, e lē se atunuu taliola*. Lauga na Aami (a keynote address for the Measina Conference at the National University of Samoa, Apia, September 30, 2012).

Atua further understands *mauli* also as the *agaga* or soul of a person.²⁵ The Samoans call on their *mauli* to find out whether the wisdom, the *faautaga* (understanding, opinion), and the wealth of sacred knowledge shared during dialogue and deliberation shall be accepted or rejected. As noted by Papaliitele this means that the chiefs do not just sleep; rather, this is an opportunity for the mind to search how feelings and opinions shall be worded and put into action.²⁶ When the process of individuals searching for the *tofa* or their psyche is completed, then they need to *soa* or share this with others and find out what their *mauli* revealed to them as well. Thus, the sharing of the *tofa* from *tagatalilo* is the highest point of the *soalaupule* process.

1.4.2 *Tofa Tatala* (Sharing Wisdom, Stories)

Sharing the *tofa* or wisdom with others present in the *soalaupulega*²⁷ is called *tofa tatala*²⁸ and is sometimes referred to as *tofa fetalai*.²⁹ The *tofa* has been *tatala* or shared because the chiefs, for example, have already questioned their own *tagatalilos* and are subject to be revealed. As common in the Samoan culture, it is not easy to *tatala le tofa* (share a sacred knowledge). This happens only when it is essential and the chief believe it is appropriate to do so. Each individual present in the *soalaupulega* will share his *tofa* so that the whole group will know and learn from it.

This sacred knowledge possessed by the chiefs has been nurtured and transferred orally from when they were young. For instance, all children of the extended family are called by the chief of the family who instructs them about

²⁵ Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi, “Le Taulasea e, ia mua’i fo’ia lou ma’i: Physician, health thyself: Planning for the next generation,” Chapter 13, in *Su’esu’e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance*, ed. Suaalii-Sauni, T. M., I. Tuagalu, et al., (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2009a), 146.

²⁶ Papaliitele Dr M. Fouvaa, *Ua e pale, ua e ula, ua e titi i lou Faasinomaga*.

²⁷ *Soalaupulega* is also a noun from *Soalaupule*.

²⁸ Literally, the word *tatala* means to open but it is used here to mean: to share.

²⁹ *Fetalai* is a respectful cultural term used when a chief speaks or shares his wisdom in any context or occasion in Samoa.

the heritage, taboos, history and cultural values. Later on, the chief will call each child, one by one, and it is expected that they re-tell the story that was shared by the chief earlier. From this practice, the chief is in a position to approve the one among them who will be called the ‘*nainai*,’ meaning the one who will be raised and trained to nurture and protect the family history and the sacred knowledge. The chief will continue to teach him/her about leadership and skills as the child will be a chief of the family in the future. Such knowledge is known by the Samoans as sacred knowledge. Thus, not all chiefs have this knowledge and there are certain people who have this gift and it is also his task to pass it on through the same process.

1.4.3 *Tofa Fetuutuunai* (Analysing Wisdom)

*Tofa fetuutuunai*³⁰ is another vital part of the *Soalaupulega*. This is this stage where the *tofa* or wisdom that has been shared by the participants will be analysed and categorised as they see fit. For example, all valid points, arguments, theories, and suggestions are assessed in practise and action. These will also be weighed to know the pros and cons and how one affects another. Hearing the different stories and wisdom is an important part of the process as versions are collected and analysed.

1.4.4 *Tofa Saili* (Searching and Evaluating Wisdom)

Tuiatua describes *tofa saili* as, “the wisdom gained through a constant searching for the truth.”³¹ The elders in the families and villages who inherit and learn such skills of evaluating and bringing together various *tofa* (wisdom). This process includes wisdom gained from observing the nature of

³⁰ *Fetuutuunai* is a process whereby the chiefs through their wisdom judge, analyze something, and measure how it will influence and affect the village.

³¹ Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, *Sufiga o le Tuoai: Negotiating Boundaries*, (public address for Brigham Young University, Laie, Hawaii, September, 2011.

the environment, and amongst other things, through balancing old and new.³² It is also during the *tofa saili* (searching for wisdom) process that new knowledge challenges or lapses in wisdom and theories shared will be indicated and weighed further. The chiefs will bring understandings to realise the issue being *fāle* (discuss, deliberate),³³ *fefulisai* (analyze)³⁴ and *saili* (evaluate)³⁵ or search constantly for the truth.

1.4.5 Tofa Fatu (Developing a Solution by consensus)

Once the *tofa* is *loloto* (deep rooted)³⁶ and the *faautaga* is *mamao*,³⁷ is being revealed and seen as a vision, then the deliberations of the chiefs have reached another stage called *tofa fatu*. *Tofa fatu* is the construction of a solution based on the wisdom shared, analyzed and evaluated. Once it is completed and a consensus reached amongst the participants, then it is called *ua tasi le tofa* or *tofa ua tasi* meaning a decision has been made, the truth has been revealed and wisdom has been achieved.

1.4.6 Momoli le Tofa (Sharing and Presenting the Resolution)

This solution or *tofa ua tasi* is then shared and given back to the village and the community. This process is called *momoli le tofa* and specific chiefs

³² Tui Atua, *Sufiga o le Tuoai: Negotiating Boundaries*.

³³ *Fāle* another respectful term for deliberation, consultation, and discussion which means that a solution for an issue has been dealt with now within the locality of the family or village.

³⁴ *Fefulisai* is also another gift the chiefs have to think critically about something and interpret it according to their wisdom so that they can be able to decide and finalize necessary actions to be carried out.

³⁵ *Saili* is searching for the truth and the best. It is through this process that learning takes place in relation to others and the wisdom develops as the process continues.

³⁶ *Tofa* is *loloto* or deeply rooted because the chiefs have dug deeply into the root of the problem and understand how it should be dealt with. This means everything has been taken apart and reformed or remodel again. That is why some called it sacred knowledge, but it is the knowledge, which is not revealed to the common people.

³⁷ *Faautaga mamao* is the term given to the orators' wisdom after they have *sua le aulapauta* and *aulatatai*. This means that the chiefs have visited every bit and piece[s] relating to the issue being discussed and a vision has been achieved or revealed how to deal with this particular issue.

have been appointed for such tasks in various villages and families. Whatever the solution a meeting may have achieved, it must be *momoli* or presented to the whole community. Since sharing is part of the *soalaupule* process and the consensus outcome, (*tofa ua tasi*) has to be revealed to the *tapuaiga* or to the community who pray silently and wait for a fruitful outcome.

1.5 Aoa Manogi: Collection of data

The research involves three methods of collecting data in addition to the review of literature. The first one is personal observation, where the author observes the uniqueness of the ritual *ifoga*. The second one is conducting the *soalaupule* (discussion and dialog)³⁸ with selected participants from a number of villages in Samoan society. The last one consists of ‘auto ethnography’ in which the authors’ personal experience and knowledge of the *ifoga* ritual and the Samoan context, especially the traditional culture, is utilised with utmost care so that they remain in line with cultural protocols and values.

1.5.1 Soalaupule: Discussion and Dialogue about Ifoga

In the Samoan culture, people *faafesagai*³⁹ (meet) and discuss important issues collectively between high chiefs, families, villages, and Churches. The *fefaasagaiga*⁴⁰ between chiefs and the researcher was chosen for the purpose of this study. The researcher facilitated all the *solaupulega* (discussions and dialogs) as with the participants’ consent. As expected, the main medium of communication was the Samoan language, taking into account the Samoan

³⁸ This may be another way of saying interview in Samoa, but the term interview does not capture the full sense of the approach. See Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 51.

³⁹ See Papaliitele, *Ua e pale, ua e ula, ua e titi i lou faasinomaga*. *Faafesagai* means to come together - meeting face to face and *soalaupule* about an issue. In this case it was all about atonement ritual and the role of the chiefs in the process.

⁴⁰ *Fefaasagaiga* is a noun from the verb *faafesagai* meaning face to face and discuss or deliberate to solve an issue or to find an appropriate way of doing something.

protocols and *va-fealoaloi*. The facilitator openly guided the discussions, attempting to gather clear and valid responses and at the same time encouraging participants to use their own words, idea, concepts and meanings. The dialogues between the facilitator and each participant were intensive and fruitful. Our conversations with them was like that of diglogues whereby the questions prepared for the discussion and informants were free to express their views in their own terms.

1.5.2 One Group Formation

Although the participants were *soalaupule* individually, some said they preferred to form a group for more discussion and a systematic comparison of their experiences. The group consisting of chiefs had additional meetings that focused on various aspects about atonement in Samoa. This group has the capacity to exchange ideas and views not only of the changes and challenges of secularism in today's society but also proposed ways in which the atonement ritual can be improved and maintained in the modern Samoan context. The group offered their support to assist the researcher with the issues relating to *tausala* and *ifoga* in the Samoan context.

1.6 Analysis

Audiotapes played a vital role in this research especially during the sharing of wisdom or the *tofa tatala*⁴¹ process. After each session, the audiotape was transcribed and held as proof for accuracy. This posed an invaluable challenge for the researcher as specialized terms and vernacular usages had to be verified.

⁴¹ See the diagram above and the description of the term *tofa tatala*. This where wisdom and sacred knowledge are shared openly for discussion and deliberation.

The researcher was concerned about the Samoan concepts discussed during the process and a decision was made to analyse (*tofa fetuutuunai*)⁴² the data in the language of the participants. The data was then categorised into different periods, themes, and subject areas according to procedures and protocols of the *ifoga* ritual as practised by the Samoans. As noted by Tamasese, an approach to data analysis is essential for languages such as the Samoan, instead of digital techniques.⁴³ This is adequate, as the language and expressions used by the Samoans are metaphorical, allegorical, and allusive. It was important that social and cultural convention be communicated in the appropriate words, terms, and language.

The *soalaupule* reports prepared by the researcher were in Samoan and was shared again with the participants. This was to check coherency, to observe appropriate cultural ritual protocols and etiquette, and to clarify and validate the various Samoan concepts and terms discussed. The group of chiefs formed also shared with the researcher about the report and received feedback for the research done.

The following chapters of this study demonstrate the last processes of the *soalaupule* methodology. The researcher's intention is have the copies of this study available in both English and Samoan. There will be a cultural ritual, which will be implemented when the author completes this study for presenting the result of his research back to the people of Samoa. This is already in the planning stages.

⁴² *Tofa fetuutuunai* is the second process in the *soalaupule* methodology as shown in the diagram above.

⁴³ Tamasese, "O le Taeao Afua," 15.

1.7 Participants

The majority of participants were chiefs from rural areas in Samoa. They were selected because they are *matua i le tuu*,⁴⁴ meaning they are the ones who have the sacred knowledge and wisdom about atonement in Samoa. Such knowledge has been passed down orally from generation to generation. In addition, they also approve and perform the ritual whenever it is necessary and take necessary solutions. Therefore, their perspectives were of vital importance for this research. Given the serious reliance on personal reflections and insights by this study, the experiences and opinions from the chiefs were obtained through *soalaupule*⁴⁵ (deliberations, dialogue, and consultation). Some participants were selected from the apex of the Samoan traditional village setting, and they held influential positions in the government and the Church.

Participants in this research included:

1. The Hon Minister of Women, Community, and Social Development.

This participant was chosen simply because he was the head of an institution which serves as the connection between the government and the village councils, through the *Pulenuu* or village mayors. The *Pulenuu* plays an influential role in implementing programmes for villages and districts especially in rural areas. The man is also the former speaker of the government and his position is normally for a period of five years and subject to re-election at the General Election.

2. Church ministers of the Samoa Methodist Church. The research required a reflection on the life and ministry of the Church in its relation to the *fa'a-*

⁴⁴ It is the common belief in Samoa that every family or village has someone whom the sacred knowledge about families and villages are stored. This knowledge has been given from an early age since he/she was young.

⁴⁵ The term will be discussed in detail later in the study. Nevertheless, for this part, in particular, it means deliberate, consult, discuss, and share opinions about the *ifoga* ritual.

Samoa from the past to the present. It was therefore important to get this perspective from people with a sense of maturity in the ministry as well as with rich experience in matters pertaining to the interrelationship between the Church and the Samoan culture.

3. *Tamalii* – Female high Chief, Professor, and lecturer at the *Le Amosa University*. It was essential to obtain the perspective of a female high chief on her role and responsibilities within the University as well as her experience of the relationship between the Church and Samoan culture. *Le Amosa University* is where young people are trained about cultural values, myths, legends, histories and the Samoan language. A deeper academic perspective on myths and legends about the *ifoga* ritual was also sought from this participant.

4. *Tamalii* – High Chief, Professor, and lecturer at the National University of Samoa. This participant was selected because he is not only a professor but also holds one of the paramount chieftaincies in his village. He provided chiefly perspectives on both the Samoan society and the academic level. He is considered a person with influence in the Samoan culture and the society. This mature person who has some involvement in the activities of the Ministry of Samoan culture was chosen particularly for this purpose.

5. *Tulafale*⁴⁶ – Orators from *Tumua*⁴⁷ (Leulumoega). These chiefs were orators from Leulumoega active in both the church and the village. Leulumoega is another important *tootoo* or orator in Samoa representing

⁴⁶ As discussed earlier *tulafale* is also a chief and his sole responsibility is to *momoli le tofa a tamalii* meaning he speaks on behalf of the high chief to voice his will and concern about the occasion.

⁴⁷ *Tumua* is a collective term referring to the specific orators from well-known villages in Upolu who always have the opportunity to speak on various occasions if they are present. In this sense, *Tumua* is used to refer to the orators. The first *Tumua* was Saleaamua, followed by Leulumoega and the last one was Lufilufi. They are well respected, as also were Puleono from Salafai.

Tumua. They were chosen in order to get a perspective and a reflection on their experiences of the ministry of *ifoga* in relation to the political situation in their region, and their involvement in the life of the church as well.

6. *Tulafale* – Orators from *Puleono*⁴⁸ in *Salafai*.⁴⁹ Similarly, a *tulafale* perspective was also sought from the large island of Savaii. The two chiefs represent the six talking chiefs (*Puleono I Salafai*) from the island of Savaii. They also shared their views on their roles as talking chiefs, and their responsibilities during the *ifoga* ritual and how they conduct the *soalaupule* process. These people were selected on the understanding that they were deeply involved in various cultural activities in their community as well as in the Church.

7. *Tulafale* – Orator from Tumua (Lufilufi). He is identified as a useful informant. His opinions on the *ifoga* in Samoa as a whole and on Samoan society would be invaluable for this study. The *tulafale* is also unique because of his roles as an orator not only in the church but also in culture. He holds status both as a Tumua and as a Puleono where he receives a title from one of the villages in Savaii. It was fitting to have the experience of a chief with a double orator responsibility as an informant for this study.

8. *Tulafale* – Orator from Tumua (Saleaamua). This person was also randomly elected to represent an important stratum of the Samoan society. He is a *Pulenuu* or a village mayor and holds five chiefly titles from five different villages. He never entered a school building yet he is one of the best orators in his district. He is also the chairperson of the church in his regional parish. His

⁴⁸ Puleono or Pule is the collective term given to the talking chiefs or orators from the island of Savaii. Six Pules are classified under this category and the two main ones are from the villages of Saleaula and Safotu.

⁴⁹ Salafai is another name given to the island of Savaii. This is the common belief because they descend from the man named Lafai.

personal reflection on his life as a *matai* for his family and as orator for the *ifoga* ritual on behalf of these villages and his influence in the decision-making process of the villages was critical to this research.

The author had personal discussion and dialog with each participant individually, on a one-on-one basis, at set times and venues appropriate and convenient for them. Most relevant issues and questions that arose during the discussion process were taken into account and added to where necessary. These oral information were collected in Samoa in August and September, 2012.

1.8 *Soalaupule*: a traditional political agenda

Soalaupule is the traditional Samoan political agenda or process whereby everything is resolved in the *faa-Samoa* (Samoan culture).⁵⁰ It is applied in the family setting, in the village council, in any organisation as well as in the church. Whatever happens in families, villages (and so forth), the people will convene together and *soalaupule* about these important issues. The *tofa* or wisdom, opinions, ideas and knowledge will be shared amongst the members. These will be analysed, weighed, and assessed by the participants until they come to a solution. Unlike the legal court system, in which the judges and the prosecutors make the final decision, the traditional *soalaupule* process depends on the participants or everyone present to make the final decision rather than just one or two people. The *tofa* or decision honours and respects traditions and values the protocols of parties involved. The decision requires a consensus or agreement, termed *ua tasi le tofa*.

In many places and occasions, the values of the Samoan culture are now being challenged by individualism, secularism, and materialism. I strongly

⁵⁰ Papaliitele Moeimanono Fouvaa, discussion with the author at the National University of Samoa, Papaigalagala Apia, September 11, 2012.

believe that the decline of *soalaupule* (dialogue, deliberation, consultation) has contributed to tensions, conflicts, and violence arising in families and villages.

1.9 *Soalaupule* and other similar methods

Soalaupule methodology can be compared to the Pacific concept *talanoa* used by many Pacific researchers today.⁵¹ *Talanoa*, literally means to talk and to discuss. *Soalaupule* can also be compared to the ‘conversation method’ proposed by Elizabeth Novach.⁵² In fact, people can *talanoa* (talk) and have conversations about anything, and in many places. However, in Samoa, *soalaupule* (dialogue, deliberation, and consultation) is unique, because it takes place only when seeking wisdom and sacred knowledge about an issue or something that needs to be solved. Accordingly, the process of *talanoa* and conversation are in the *soalaupule* methodology. Moreover, although they (*soalaupule*, *talanoa*, and conversation) have different contexts and contents they all have one same goal: to reach consensus and achieve unity. For this study, I use the *soalaupule* methodology, because my study is a quest for sacred knowledge and wisdom. It is only through *soalaupule* the author can deeply dig into the *tofa* (wisdom) of the chiefs about the *ifoga* ritual, such knowledge would not be attained through interviews. Since the knowledge and wisdom of the chiefs are sacred, they must be pursued through an appropriate cultured protocol.

1.10 Challenges and Limitations

Although *soalaupule* (deliberation, dialogue, consultation) method is a privilege for a research conducted in Samoa, there are limitations. Perhaps the

⁵¹See Jione Havea, “Reconciliation to Adoption: A Talanoa from Oceania” in *Mission as a Ministry of Reconciliation*, Regnum Edinburgh Cemetery Series Vol 16, ed. by Robert Schreiter and Knud Jorgensen (Oxford: England, 2013), 294-300.

⁵² See Elizabeth Novach, “Conversational Method” *Indigenous Research in First Peoples Child and Family Review* 5/1 (2010): 40-48.

most serious challenge for both the insider and outsider is language and the use of language. For instance, the insider will struggle to bring out the Samoan worldview into the world of academia. Furthermore, is the presentation of Samoan concepts in English so that the outsider will understand and take note of it. Moreover, there are concepts in Samoan vernacular that do not have English translations. In this case, some of their meanings will be lost, or may be changed. For the sake of providing a semblance of clarity and the researcher have no choice in the matter.

Secondly, there is the matter of working across with the two worlds – that of an insider and that of an outsider. For instance, an insider has to grapple with the challenge of distancing himself from the research and critically evaluating the information received. Unfortunately, therefore, the researcher has to move between the two worlds: that of an insider and that of an outsider perspectives, because it is also important to view the data from the outside. These two worlds are important for the author in this study as Linda Smith notes, “I was born into one and educated in to the other. I negotiate the intersection of these worlds every day. It can be a complicated, challenging, and interesting space.”⁵³ Accordingly, the author has to deal with the challenge of being in two different worlds and create more meanings.

1.11 Conclusion

The research is culturally based as noted in the aims above and therefore from a Samoan authentic approach. The *soalaupule* methodology that was adapted as described. It is the actual technique of data collection, analysis, and evaluation. A respectful approach includes Samoan protocols, values, and beliefs vital and important to our Samoan communities. It is an appropriate qualitative research approach in the Samoan cultural context to capture the wisdom and experiences of chiefs regarding the atonement ritual. Furthermore,

⁵³ Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 9.

knowledge about Samoa's past was known drawn from oral traditions such as stories, songs, poems and genealogies passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Today, some of this knowledge is also sourced through academic studies in prehistory.⁵⁴ Therefore, to look at principles underlying the *ifoga* ritual, *soalaupule* is the best method to undertake this study in order to seek out primary sources by approaching the Samoan chiefs themselves.

Finally, in this study the researcher will *soalaupule* (deliberate, dialogue, discuss) atonement in Samoa in anthropological and in Old Testament perspectives. Lastly, it is not possible to understand this *soalaupule* methodology as well as atonement in Samoa without first understanding the Samoan context and the concept *faamsinomaga*⁵⁵ (designation and identity in the *faa*-Samoa) and the Samoan worldview – which is the focus of the next chapter.

⁵⁴ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 2.

⁵⁵ The concept will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2 UNDERSTANDING THE SAMOAN COSMOGONY AND WORLDVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Much has been written about Samoa regarding its geographical environment, disputed historical origins, social-economic as well as its religious beliefs. This chapter provides a critical presentation of insider perspectives or emic views on historical, social, cultural, political, and religious aspects of the Samoan encyclopaedia.¹ Such an understanding of the Samoan indigenous² cosmogony and worldview will provide the epistemic context for a critical understanding of the function of the atonement ritual in Samoa.

2.2 Excursus: Oral traditions and written records

The lack of authentic written records about the origin of the Samoans and the ambiguity of oral traditions make it difficult for us to arrive at an accurate conclusion. In fact, most of the written records are placed in libraries and stored in archives while the oral traditions are nurtured and transmitted in communities. Therefore, it is important to have a brief over-view of the debate between oral traditions and written records. Scholars (Jack Goody, Ian Watt, and Walter Ong) have attempted to determine the differences between oral and literate societies through the study of language.³ Although the debate is still an

¹ Encyclopedia here does not mean a dictionary but in the semiotic sense of the world referring to the fundamental knowledge of the people about anything or the symbolic universe.

² Indigenous in this sense refers to the knowledge that was accessed and used by the Samoan people prior to their contact with the western world and colonial settlers (circa 18th century).

³ Mathilde Cambron-Goulet, Walter Ong, Jack Goody, and others trace back and comment about Plato, Aristotle and Socrates and their position in relation to Orality-Literacy debate. For instance, Plato criticizes the use of Literacy and Aristotle stands for the use of literacy as means of developing knowledge. See Mathilde Cambron-Goulet, "The Criticism and the

unfinished business as Walter Ong notes,⁴ the discussion enlarges our understanding of the two approaches (oral and written) and illuminates new perspectives and dimensions.⁵ For example, oral tradition is by its nature, fluid and changing.⁶ Since tradition is transmitted orally over time, there is a possibility of information being lost, modified, or added based on memories and adaptations to suit the concerns of the communities. Such practice relates to the practical gap of traditions between now and then confirmed by Goody and Watt.⁷ In this respect, written documents appear to fill in the gaps and inform people about the past. On the other hand, Goody also reminds us, “written records may have been wrongly transcribed and wrongly presented.”⁸ This can be the case for recorded documents before the availability of tape recorders and language barriers.

Catherine Bell gives a similar plausible explanation stating, “As texts have the authority to fill in the historical gap, and traditions are no longer embodied in cultural practices and customs,”⁹ people tend to rely on written documents to prove the performance of some of the rituals. Goody also notes

Practice of Literacy in the Ancient Philosophical Tradition,” in *Orality, Literacy and Performance in the Ancient World*, ed. by Elizabeth Minchin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 202-226.

⁴ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Routledge, 1982), p. 153.

⁵ See also Jack Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Jack Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. by Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 27-68; Deborah Tannen “The Myth of Orality and Literacy,” in *Linguistics and Literacy*, ed. by William Frawley, (New York: Plenum Press, 1982), 37-50.

⁶ Cambron-Goulet, “The Criticism and the Practice of Literacy,” 210.

⁷ Jack Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” 27-68. This is based on the realization that today is different from yesterday. For instance, cultural practices, traditions and attitudes of today are significantly different from what they were in the past.

⁸ Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 299. Goody states that the technologies we such as tape recorders were absent in the past and outsiders recorded most of the traditions.

⁹ Catherine Bell, *Rituals: Perspectives and Dimensions*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 202-205. Bell argues from a ritual perspective that some of the rituals at present rely on written records for information. See also Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 156; Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 272.

that today rituals are described, represented, and governed by written texts.¹⁰ In this sense, some ritual practices are seen as the re-enactment of written texts. In addition, the increasing variation among written texts of traditions introduces new dynamics.¹¹ Many texts will lead to confusion among people as they try to find truth and reliability. Furthermore is the issue of whose interest these texts have presented. Cambron-Goulet argues, “Books are not always meant to be read, they are also used to boost the author’s prestige.”¹² He claims that there is no proof what a reader reads actually conveys any truth.¹³ Thus, whoever has access to them must be aware of these issues and take note of them.

The oral-literate contrast illuminates important dimensions for this study about atonement in Samoa. Samoa is an oral society and the *ifoga* ritual is rooted in oral traditions. Whenever it is performed, it reminds the people not only about their indigenous god and his commitment for peace, wellbeing, and life, but also their history and their inheritance. Indeed, the author is also aware of the limitation of orality as information was transmitted from one generation to the next as well as the different literature available. The availability of written records about Samoa does fill in the gaps between the past and the present, and outsiders based on their own interpretation and perspectives recorded it. However, as Thomas Bargatzky notes, they (missionaries and anthropologists) have misunderstood and misinterpreted the Samoan way of life.¹⁴ Furthermore, Christianity and political agendas of chiefs who shared

¹⁰ Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 264. See also Jack Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy, 27-68.

¹¹ Goody, *The Interface between the Written and the Oral*, 270; See also Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 10. For instance, a reasonable amount of written texts about Samoan traditions is available, but that does not mean their contents are not guaranteed as reliable because they existed during political struggles, pre-eminence and chiefs shared stories to suit their own interests.

¹² Cambron-Goulet, “The Criticism and the Practice of Literacy,” 203.

¹³ Cambron-Goulet, “The Criticism and the Practice of Literacy,” 206.

¹⁴ Thomas Bargatzky, “The Kava Ceremony is a Prophecy,” in *European Impact and Pacific Influence: British and German Colonial Policy in the Pacific Islands and the*

them influence both oral and written sources about Samoa. For instance, the story about the Lua-loto-Alii in Samoa was recorded in books as belonging to the village of Falealupo, and in fact, they are located in the village of Tufutafoe. This is because the people who were interviewed by the author were from Falealupo. Therefore, the written records and oral traditions about Samoa must be handled with great care. Accordingly, the author uses an emic approach paying attention to the limitations of both orality and literacy when viewing the Samoan cosmogony and worldview.

2.3 Historical background

2.3.1 Meaning of the Name Samoa¹⁵

The French navigator Louis de Bougainville after seeing the islanders sailing as experts of the sea called it “The Navigator Islands.”¹⁶ Rev James Stair, one of the missionaries who worked in Samoa states the name properly pertains to Moa Island in New Guinea in remembrance of their old home.¹⁷ According to Stair, such practises were common and natural among the people. Moreover, William W. Gill suggests the name refers to the clan or the family of Tui Manua Moa who was one of the earliest Tui Manua.¹⁸ Gatoloaifaana

Indigenous Response, ed. by Herman J. Hiery and John M. MacKenzie (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), 82-99.

¹⁵ Samoa at this stage was one nation until it was divided East and West during the colonial period. The western part known as Western Samoa was under the leadership of Germany, then, New Zealand until Western Samoa became an Independent State in 1962. The eastern part of Samoa was under the American protection and still Territory of the United States of America.

¹⁶ “Samoa: The Isles of Navigators.” *The Century Magazine* vol 38 May 1889. *BArch R1001/2885*, Lesefilm: Accessed 13/08/2013. Cf. Richard Phillip Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900: The Politics of a Multicultural Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1; Turner, *Samoa*, 2; Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 42. The Samoans as experts of the sea are still present by the way people use small canoes for fishing and the national *fautasi* (long boat) racing done twice every year.

¹⁷ John B. Stair, “Samoa: Whence Peopled?” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol 4/1 (March 1895): 47-58, accessed June 08, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20701406>.

¹⁸ William Wyatt and Louis Becke, “Notes and Queries,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol 4/2 (June, 1895): 55, accessed July 30, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20701379>.

Pedyada Sio also pointed this out in the genealogy of the Tui Manua.¹⁹ However, Tui Atua argues that the titles Tui Atua, Tui Aana and Tui Manua existed only after the islands were named Samoa.²⁰ Furthermore, Joseph C. Finney connects the name Samoa as equivalent to *sa moana* meaning people of the sea.²¹ His view is based on how the term “moa” is translated in other related languages as ocean. In addition, the participants whom the author discussed will refer to *sa* (sacred) and *moa* (hen) meaning sacred hen or sacred chicken. The current head of State Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese also supported this view.²² Thus, let us look at the name Samoa again and see how it is can also be understood.

2.3.1.1 Samoa: The Sacred Centre²³ of the Pacific Ocean

The name Samoa is comprised of two words – *Sa* and *Moa*. *Sa* as being used in the explanations above means, ‘clan’ and ‘forbidden.’²⁴ However, the term *sa* as an adjective also means sacred, and the term *moa* means the centre.²⁵ Therefore, the name Samoa means the ‘Sacred Centre.’ How does it relate to the Pacific region and the rest of the world? Is it the sacred centre of the Pacific region? Is the land sacred and if it does, what does it mean for the Samoans and what are its implications? Does the name Samoa have a significant impact on peoples’ lives and culture, and in what ways? Two points

¹⁹ Gatoloaifaana Pedyada S. Sio, *Tapasa o Folauga i Aso Afa: Compass of Sailing in Storm* (Apia: Samoa Printing and Publishing, 1984), 1-3.

²⁰ Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, Taisi Efi, “In Search of Tagaloa: Pulemelei, Samoan Mythology and Science,” *Archaeology in Oceania: Supplement: Archaeology in Samoa, The Pulemelei Investigation*, 4 (October, 2007): 5-10.

²¹ Joseph C. Finney, “The Meaning of the Name Samoa,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, Vol. 82 (September 1973): 301-303, accessed July 30, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20704935>.

²² Tui Atua, “In Search of Tagaloa,” 5-10.

²³ The term ‘Sacred Centre’ was first used by Coleman Phillip but he referred it to the earth as the centre.

²⁴ The term family of Moa refers to the Moa clan from the Tui Manua line, and refers also to the ‘forbidden chickens of Lu-Fasiaitu.

²⁵ Jeannette Mageo, “Myth, Cultural Identity, and Ethno-politics: Samoa and the Tongan Empire,” *Journal of Anthropology Research* Vol 58/ 5 (winter, 2002): 493-520, accessed June 06, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3630677>.

need to be discussed here to support the meaning of Samoa as the Sacred Centre.

2.3.1.2 Samoa: Home of Polynesian Settlement

First, Samoa is the sacred centre and original home for the Polynesians. Missionaries, anthropologists, and linguistics in the last decade suggested that Samoa was the birthplace of many Polynesian settlement.²⁶ For instance, Stair notes “Samoa must be considered as the fountain-head and cradle of a large amount of Polynesian settlement and colonisation.”²⁷ This implies that Samoa was the centre from where people migrated and populated different parts of the vast Pacific Ocean. Stair also illustrates, “From Samoa as a centre, population spread for many generations, until a vast expanse of ocean had been visited by her colonists and many lands settled from her shores.”²⁸ For example, the name of the biggest island in Samoa, Savaii is cherished in different islands under the varied name of Hawaiki, Awaiki, or Hawaii.²⁹ These inter-island engagements resulted in inter-marriage, competition, and war especially among Samoans, Tongans, and Fijians.³⁰ Moreover, R.M. Hamilton states that Mr H. S. Leefe, a Resident Commissioner from Rotumans in Fiji, shared they have originated from Samoa.³¹ The myths and legends tell about their

²⁶ “Samoa und becahbarte Inseln (1894),” *BArch R 21001/2871*, Lesefilm: Accessed 13/08/2013.

²⁷ Stair, “Samoa: Whence Peopled?” 56.

²⁸ John Stair, *Old Samoa or Flotsam and Jetsam from the Pacific Ocean* (Oxford: Paternoster Row, 1897), 271.

²⁹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 272.

³⁰ C. Stuebel, *Myths and Legend of Samoa* (Wellington: A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1976), 60-66 and 38-53; Shawn S. Barnes and Terry L. Hunt, “Samoa’s Pre-Contact Connections in West Polynesia and Beyond,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 114/3 (September, 2005): 227-266, accessed June 06, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20707289>; Niel Gunson, “The Tonga-Samoa Connection 1777-1845: Some Observation of the Nature of Tonga Imperialism,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 25/ 2 (December, 1990): 176-187, accessed June 04, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25169037>.

³¹ R. M. Hamilton, “Notes and Queries,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 2/4 (December, 1893): 280-281.

connections with some of the villages in Savaii and Upolu islands as well as the origin of the *Tatau* (tattoo) in Samoa.

Furthermore, Siaosi Ilaiu argues that the Tui Kanokupolu of Tonga introduced the Samoan Matai System in Tonga and had social encounters with the people of Upolu Island.³² In addition, Neil Gunson records the response of a Samoan chief to the Tongans, “We are your friends, your sons, and daughters. You know that Tonga chiefs are chiefs here, and Samoa chiefs are chiefs in Tonga.”³³ This implies that they are related. They travelled back to the sacred centre for visitation, social intercourse, support, and provision. Lastly, the existence of the Samoic Languages in Oceania also relates Samoa to be the home of the Polynesian people across the region.³⁴ This evidence suggests that the name Samoa is the sacred centre of the Polynesians and so, if this explanation is accepted, people can relate to their ancestors as heroes who sailed courageously across the sea of islands and back and forth to their home of origin – the sacred centre, Samoa.

2.3.1.3 Samoa is an *Aiga* (extended Family)

Second, Samoa means an *aiga* (extended family), not a country, as the title of Frederic Koehler Sutter’s book, “The Samoans: a global family.”³⁵ People know each other and they live in a *nuu* (village) like an extended family. This was also the central point of Tui Atua’s keynote address (entitled, “Samoa is not a government, rather, it is a brotherhood, a family”) for the

³² Siaosi L. Ilaiu, *The Tui Kanokupolu Matai Establishment, and why would Tui Tonga Fuanunuiava have vied to become one? A Genealogical Analysis of Post 1550 AD New Political Hegemony in Tonga*. (MA Thesis Massey University New Zealand 2007).

³³ Neil Gunson, “The Tonga-Samoa Connection 1777-1845,” 176-187.

³⁴ John Lynch, *Pacific Languages: An Introduction* (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, 1998); John Lynch, Ross Malcolm and Jerry Caroche, *The Oceanic Languages* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2002); Jeff March, *Topics in Polynesian Languages and Cultural History* (Canberra: Pacific Linguistic Press, 2000).

³⁵ Frederic Koehler Sutter, *The Samoans: a global family* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1989). Most people who did their studies about Samoa fail to understand that Samoa has to be viewed as an extend family not as a country.

students from the University of Waikato, New Zealand.³⁶ Case in point is the honorific greetings of the whole Samoa, which begins with *O Aiga ma latou Tama, o Tama foi ma latou Aiga*, and means Paramount chiefs and their families, Families and their Paramount chiefs.³⁷ The term *aiga* (extended family) in the Samoan indigenous context refers to divinities, ancestors, people, animals, plants, land, sea, and the environment.³⁸ Central to the relationship between each member of the indigenous family is *va-tapuia* (sacred relationship). These special relations and connections are evident in family genealogies, which connect and relate them to their gods. A good example of such sacred connection is how the people of the Aleipata district learn from the birds dwelling in Nuutele island³⁹ when a strong wind or a hurricane is about to strike.⁴⁰ Moreover, in the communal mourning when someone is dead, the seashell is blown, and the people will be informed *ua sa le vao sa le sami* (fishing and hunting at this moment are prohibited).⁴¹ Furthermore, the metaphorical languages used during funerals by orators include, “*ua pau le masina*” (the moon is falling) or “*ua gase toto le la*” (the sun is covered with blood).⁴² Such phrases illuminate the sacred family connections people have with their surroundings, ancestor, divinities, land, and sea.

³⁶ Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, “Samoa is not a government, rather, it is a brotherhood, a family,” *Samoa Observer Newspaper*, August 9, 2013.

³⁷ See Kramer, *Samoa Islands*, vol 1, 233.

³⁸ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

³⁹ Nuutele is one of the inhabited islands located on the eastern side of Upolu in Aleipata district. It is also known as Vini, a name given by Robert Louis Stevenson when he visited this part of Upolu.

⁴⁰ This tradition is still active at present. It was also present before the Tsunami hit this part of the Samoa in September 2009.

⁴¹ The belief is that even the spirit of the land and the spirit of the sea mourn for the dead person. The practice is common and very important when the high chief of a village or district passed away.

⁴² Tui Atua, “Le Taulasea e, ia mua'i ifo lou ma'i,” 175-179. Tui Atua also notes a strong connection between people and their cosmos.

Accordingly, we have to understand Samoa to be the home of Polynesian settlement and migration to inhabit the sea of islands in the Pacific Ocean.⁴³ Thus, Samoa is a place where everything is centred on the *aiga* (extended family) as the heart of being Samoan and part of being Polynesia. The meaning of the name Samoa, as a sacred centre and as an extended family is reflected in the atonement ritual *ifoga*. The place where it takes place is considered sacred, it is respected and maintained in Samoa as a family tradition.

2.3.2 Origin of the Name Samoa

Although there is no recorded evidence about the migration of the ancient Samoans into their present territory, historical events can be traced as they are reflected in their mythology and legends. Several traditions and legends offer different accounts about the origin of the name, Samoa.⁴⁴ A couple of versions have been chosen for two reasons. First, they are orally transmitted as shared by the participants and been recorded by early missionaries. Second, these versions represent the two different distinct periods of history and regime in the sacred centre, home of the Polynesians.

2.3.2.1 Legend about Salevao

The first tale shared by Maulio Oso⁴⁵ and Foniti corresponds with that version recorded by Turner in his book about Samoa.⁴⁶

The Rocks married the earth, and the earth became pregnant. Salevao, the god of the rocks, observed motion in the *moa* or centre of the earth. The child was born and named Moa, from the place it was moving. Salevao ordered the umbilicus to be laid

⁴³ Many people used different terms such as Pacific, Oceania, and Polynesians to call us but the author prefer to use the term “Green Continent” referring to green rainforest and landscape in the region.

⁴⁴ See George Turner, *Samoa, A Hundred years Ago and Long Before* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies University of the South Pacific, 1984), 10-15.

⁴⁵ Maulio L. Oso (informant), discussion with author September 8, 2012. He was the *Pulenuu* (village mayor) or may of three different villages in their district where he held some of the families’ chiefly titles. These villages are Lotopue, Satitoa and Ulutogia.

⁴⁶ Turner, *Samoa*, 10.

on a club, and cut with a stone; and hence the custom ever after on the birth a man-child. Salevao then provided water for washing the child and made it *sa*, or sacred to Moa. The rocks and the earth said they wished to get some of that water to drink. Salevao replied that if they got a bamboo he would send them a streamlet through it, and hence the origin of the springs. Salevao said he would become loose stones, and that everything which grew would be *sa ia* Moa or sacred to Moa, till his hair was cut. After a time his hair was cut and the restrictions taken off, and hence also the rocks and the earth were called *sa ia* Moa, or as it is abbreviated, SAMOA.⁴⁷

2.3.2.2 Lu-Fasiaitu and his Sacred Chicken Farm

Another version is attributed to one of the Samoan warriors named Lu-Fasiaitu meaning destroyer of the gods and spirits.⁴⁸ The story about Lu or Lu-Fasiaitu is told in different ways as recorded by Turner.⁴⁹ Each account is told in a way that explains the position of the chiefs, their families, villages, and districts. However, although they are told in different ways, they all have common elements and endings. Lu-Fasiaitu was the only one who had a *fagaga-moa* (chicken farm) in the islands. According to Maulio, Lu-Fasiaitu considered the sacred chickens as the incarnation of his family gods, and therefore they were forbidden to be eaten. For quite a long time, the chicken were kept sacred and treated with much respect by Lu in his land. For this reason, some considered the name Samoa to have originated from this chicken farm.

The first story according to Coleman Phillips relates to the way the people considered both the land and the sea as sacred places in Samoa.⁵⁰ This

⁴⁷ Turner, *Samoa*, 11. See also Coleman Phillips, "Samoa and the Pacific Islands," in *Reichskolonialamt*: R1001, 2871: 1-20 (Berlin: Bundesarchiv, 1894). This paper was about Samoa written by Coleman Phillips presented to Hon R. J. Seddon 19 June, 1894.

⁴⁸ Thomas Powell, *O le tala i Tino o Manu ma Tagata ma Mea Ola Eseese; A Manual of Zoology in the Samoan Dialect* (London: Union Brothers, 1886), 192. Fonoti a paramount chief from the eastern side of Upolu Island shared this story in our group discussion as was passed down from his grandfather. See also Turner, *Samoa*, 11-15 – different tales about Lu and his chicken farm are recorded here by Turner.

⁴⁹ See Turner, *Samoa*, 10-15. Meleisea notes that each version or account of events has special meanings, values and importance for those who are related to it. See also Malama Meleisea and P. Schoeffel, eds., *Lagaga: A Short History of Western Samoa* (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1987), 10.

⁵⁰ Phillips, "Samoa and the Pacific Islands," 1-20.

opinion may have been very strong during the colonial period in Samoa and may have been influenced from their Christian beliefs.⁵¹ The second story as informed by the lively oral tradition at present appears to be the most favoured by the current generation.⁵² Even participants whom the author discussed with considered this incident as the origin of the name Samoa. Tui Atua notes the breaching of Lu-Fasiaitu's taboo (sacred chicken) by the descendants of Tagaloa leads to the downfall of the Tagaloa regime among the islands.⁵³ The marriage of Tagaloa's daughter Amoa to Lu-Fasiaitu introduced the beginning of the title "Tui" (king or leader) leadership and the naming of the islands Samoa. This does not mean the name originated from this event in history.

2.3.2.3 People migrating to other Pacific Islands

The suggestion is that the name Samoa (sacred centre) may have originated when the people populated other islands in the Pacific. They travelled back and forth to their homeland, the sacred centre, Samoa. For instance, when people moved south of the sacred centre, they called it Tonga (meaning south) and when moving north they called it Tokelau (meaning northeast), the terms used by the Samoans to name the directions and the wind. Furthermore, people have a common belief of Tagaloa as the Supreme Being and god among the Polynesians. Tui Atua argues people migrated to new places before the downfall of the Tagaloa regime in Samoa as informed by the Lu-Fasiaitu legend.⁵⁴ This implies that Tagaloa was honoured as a god,

⁵¹ O. F. Nelson and Johannes C. Andersen, "Legends of Samoa," *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 34/2 (June, 1925): 124-145, accessed July 30, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20702035>. Nelson and Anderson presented this research to the Samoan Research Society pin pointing the name of the Tui Manua Moa as the preferable origin of the name Samoa.

⁵² Some of the proverbs and rituals performed at present originated from this myth as well. For instance, the proverb "*ua faalava le Amoa*" referring to the daughter of Tagaloa and both the *Tausala* and *Ifoga* rituals.

⁵³ Tui Atua, "In Search of Tagaloa, 5-10.

⁵⁴ Tui Atua, "In Search of Tagaloa," 5-10. The story about Lu-Fasiaitu is dealt with in details in the following chapter.

worshiped for provision and security. For this reason, most of the creation stories among the Polynesians considered him (Tagaloa) as the creator god. Thus, Samoa was named before the fall of Tagaloa's reign as people move back and forth to the sacred centre. This is evident in the existence of the title Tui (king, lord) as Tui Tonga, Tui Manua, Tui Fiti, and Tui Atua, and there is no such title as Tui Samoa.

2.3.3 Origin of the Universe

Samoa has no tradition stating that they migrated from Asia, America or somewhere else.⁵⁵ People informed by their stories and myths transmitted orally that they were created by their god Tagaloa in Samoa.⁵⁶ Davidson cited a famous story about the way the Samoans look at their origins. After Sir Peter Bucks stated that the Samoans were migrants, an orator from Manua⁵⁷ stood up and responded, "We thank you for your interesting speech. The Polynesians may have come from Asia, but the Samoans, no. The Samoans originated in Samoa."⁵⁸ The incident clearly indicates the beliefs and traditions people hold about their origins. Even among the participants whom I interviewed, I observed that they still insist that Tagaloa created the Samoans in Samoa. The following were two versions written after the arrival of Christianity in Samoa.

⁵⁵ It is interesting to hear from the participants (Foniti Fatu, Mauilo Oso, Aiono Faanaafi, Tolofuaivaolelei) that they only knew about how the Samoan god Tagaloa created Samoa and her people in Samoa. They have their own creation stories about how god created them in Samoa. The missionaries took note and recorded some of these myths. See also Robert Craig, *Handbook of Polynesian Mythology* (California/Denver/Oxford: ABC Clio Inc, 2004), 175; Turner, *Samoa*, 1-15; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 2-18.

⁵⁶ As mentioned above, the transmission of traditions from one generation to the next may have been changed, modified, and altered to suit each generation's context by the transmitters.

⁵⁷ Manua is another group of Islands, which is now part of the Territory of American Samoa.

⁵⁸ James. W. Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 16; see also Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 3.

2.3.3.1 *Gafa* (Genealogical) Version of Creation

The first version about the origin of the universe and Samoa is based on the genealogy, which can be called the *Gafa* model or the genealogical model.⁵⁹ Foniti states that this model is the oldest Samoan version alluding to the importance of *gafa* (genealogy) in the Samoan culture.⁶⁰ In addition, the *papa* (rock) plays a vital role in Samoan material and religious culture. John Charlot argues the genealogical model emphasises the *papa* or rock as the foundation upon which everything is built.⁶¹ The genealogical version begins with *papatu* (standing rock), *papaele* (earth rock), then to *maataanoa* (small rocks), *to eleele* (earth) then followed by plants and human beings.⁶² For example, the one recorded by Turner, *papatu* (high rocks) married *papaele* (earth rocks) and gave birth to *eleee* (earth).⁶³ Tagaloa, the originator of men appeared in the seventh generation, was the son of *lagi-manino* (cloudless heaven) and *lagi-salalau* (spread out heaven).⁶⁴ This implies that Tagaloa is not the creator but a progenitor. In addition, one must note that version is from Samoa not Manua.

However, one finds in some recorded traditions that the genealogy of the rock is preceded by other elements. For instance, Turner's first version about the origin of the universe begins, "There was first of all *Leai*, nothing. Thence sprung *Nanamu*, fragrance."⁶⁵ Steubel begins with a couple named

⁵⁹ Turner, *Samoa*, 4; C Stuebel, *Samoanische Texte* (Berlin: Geographische Verlagshandlung Dietrich Reimer, 1896), 88 & 183. This version is written in both Samoan and the German Languages.

1896, p. 161; Stuebel, / 1976 p. 10.

⁶⁰ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

⁶¹ Jonh Charlot, "Aspects of Samoan Literature II: Geneologies, Multigenerational Complexes, and Texts on the Origin of the Universe," *Anthropos*, 86 (1991): 127-150.

⁶² Steubel, *Samoanische Texte*, 161-162; Turner, *Samoa*, 3-5; Augustin Krämer, *The Samoa Islands*, vol. 2, trans by Theodore Verhaaren vol. 2 (Auckland: Pasifika Press, 1995), 105f.

⁶³ Turner, George Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia: Missionary Life, Travels, and researches in the Islands of the Pacific* (London: John Snow & Paternoster Row, 1861), 67.

⁶⁴ Turner, *Samoa*, 4.

⁶⁵ Turner, *Samoa*, 3.

Afimusaesae and Mutalali who gave birth to *papaele* (earth rock).⁶⁶ These variations can be argued as later editions to the original genealogical creation story. This may be possible as the story was passed down from generation to generation, and some elements were added to the original version.

2.3.3.2 Tagaloa (Creational) Version of Creation

The second version is that of the creational model. This is confined to Tagaloa as the creator. This is based on “*Solo ole Va o le Foafoaga o le Lalolagi*” (The Song of the creation of the World)⁶⁷ and “*O le Tala ile Tupuaga o Samoa Atoa ma Manua*” (The Story about the origin of the Whole Samoa and Manua).⁶⁸ Tagaloa, the god⁶⁹ also known as Tagaloa-*faatupu-nuu* (progenitor) dwells alone in the ninth heavens.⁷⁰ As Turner notes, nobody knew how and where he came from. During this time, there was no sea, no sky, nor earth. However, where he stood, there grew up a big *papa* meaning rock. Out of this rock, Tagaloa through his *malelega* or spoken words created the world and all that is in it. First, he said to the rock, “*ia mavaevae*” meaning “thou split up” and different rocks existed.⁷¹ He struck the rock with his right

⁶⁶ Steubel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 10

⁶⁷ John Fraser, “Folks Songs and Myths from Samoa,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 6/121 (March 1897): 19-36, accessed July 30, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20701446>. This is the available evidence recorded by missionaries about Tagaloa and was translated with different versions. See also Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 7-10.

⁶⁸ John Fraser, “The Samoan Story of Creation – A Tala,” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 1/3 (October, 1892): 164-189, accessed August 04, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20701252>. The title of this creation story clearly indicates that Manua was not part of Samoa’s polity entity and appears to be the combination of the song “*Solo ole Va*” and the genealogical creation story.

⁶⁹ According to one of the traditions, Tagaloa was the king of Manua Island and he was the first chief in Samoa. Funefeai, a warrior from Savaii received this title Tagaloa and then, the king of Manua bestowed his new title Tui-Manua. Tagaloa also as noted by many historians is the common name of god among the Polynesians.

⁷⁰ In the Samoan oral tradition, it is called *Lagituvaiva* meaning ninth heaven. See also Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 2-7.

⁷¹ The rock split up into *papa-taoto* (lying rock), *papa-sosolo* (creeping rock), *papa-tu* (standing rock), *papa-ele* (clay rock) and *papa-lau-aau* (reef rock) and *papa-feofeo* (coral rock).

hand and both the earth and the sea were brought forth. Tagaloa turned to the right and fresh water sprung up, then the sky, the clouds and space. Again, out of the rock he created the man Fatu meaning heart and the woman Eleele meaning earth. Fatu and Eleele⁷² (Heart and Earth) were the first couple on earth who were the ancestors of all the Samoans.⁷³

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether Christianity had influenced the two versions about the origin of Samoa and the universe recorded by the missionaries. It can be argued here that these versions (*Gafa* - genealogical and Tagaloa - creational) have been modified and edited as people were influenced by their Christian belief. For instance, in the creational version (*Solo o le Va*), “Tagaloa, the creator, went down in a black cloud, that to look at the countries, and he delighted in them; and he said: “it is good”.....”⁷⁴ Furthermore, through his spoken words, he created the world from the rock.⁷⁵ It appears that this creational version about the origin of the universe is the Samoan modification of the creation story in Genesis as Charlot suggested.⁷⁶ Although the creation stories may have been modified as passed down orally, the point is that the Samoans have a concrete conception of being and of the universe. Moreover, the possible influence of Christianity in the creation stories could find a corollary in the atonement rituals. In fact, Christianity supports the practice of the *ifoga* ritual, because it preaches the gospel message of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

⁷² It is worth noting here that the Samoans also called the earth mother or mother earth, a concept which is common and well known around the world.

⁷³ For the full version of this creation stories, see Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 7-10.

⁷⁴ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 6.

⁷⁵ Fraser, “Folks-Songs and Myths from Samoa,” 19-36.

⁷⁶ Charlot, "Aspects of Samoa Literature," 127-150.

2.4 *Faasinomaga* (Home and Designation)

Faasinomaga is a place⁷⁷ and an arena of freedom where the identity, designation, and belonging of a Samoan person is defined and bound.⁷⁸ This is evident in the Samoan expression: “*o le tagata ma lona faasinomaga*,” that makes it explicit that every individual belongs to a *faasinomaga* (home and designation).⁷⁹ This implies that he/she has an *aiga* (family), she belongs to a *nuu* (village), and she has a history. *Faasinomaga* defines who they are as Samoans, their relationship to one another, to the environment, to divinities, to their ancestors, and to the *faa*-Samoa (Samoan culture).⁸⁰ Through genealogical connections, individuals are situated in their *faasinomaga* (home and designation) and within their cosmological environment.

In addition, *Faasinomaga* is an *elelele*⁸¹ (land) or space, in a certain time, filled by ordinary people who relate to each other in a certain way. They belong to various *aiga* (families), organised, and led by *matais* (chiefs) who are also the building stones of everything in the community. In the background of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) picture are the unseen powers: spirits of the sea, spirits of the land, spirits of the ancestors, and spirits of the gods. Therefore, it is appropriate to illustrate the picture of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) from an indigenous perspective.

⁷⁷ “Place” is space where people are bounded together through spoken words establishing identities and envisioned their identities. Their sense of belonging where each individual empirical cord is buried to claim their citizenship as people of the land.

⁷⁸ Tui Atua, “Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference,” in *Su’esu’e Manogi: In Search of Fragrance*, ed. by Suaalii-Sauni, T. M., I. Tuagalu, et al., 139-183 (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2009b).

⁷⁹ Tui Atua, “Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference,” 166.

⁸⁰ Malama Meleisea and Penelope Schoeffel, “Western Samoa: Like a slippery Fish,” in *Politics in Polynesia* (Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific Press, 1983), 80-114.

⁸¹ *Elelele* (earth) is also translated as blood, and it also relate to another Samoan term *palapala* (mud), which means the same thing blood.

2.4.1 Social Organisation of the *Faasinomaga*

Gilson notes in his book that the Samoan society compared to other Pacific islands is not only large but also complex in organisation.⁸² For instance, it lacks a central political authority like that found in the western world. This is because every region or village has its own king or high chief, own honorary greetings (*faalupega*) and customary laws. In addition, it is difficult to understand from an outsider's perspective how such a scattered group of islands comprise of one people, one culture, one language, one heart and one family but no central government control over its members. For this reason, it is appropriate to discuss and analyse some values and dynamic characteristics of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation).

2.4.1.1 *Aiga* (extended family)

Aiga is the basic unit of the social structure of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) and is translated by most people as extended family.⁸³ Sharon W. Tiffany refers to *aiga* as a "cognatic descent group of people" who descends from the same *Tua'a* or ancestor.⁸⁴ This same ancestor principle is the key to an understanding of the *aiga* (extended family). Moreover, *aiga* (extended family) as most studies pinpoint, consists of people related by ties of blood, marriage, or adoption.⁸⁵ In this sense, *aiga* refers to a large group of people. It comprises not only of people locally lived in the family owned land, but also to members dispersed inland (Samoa) and those living abroad. They are entitled to inherit properties, succeed in certain offices and above all perform special tasks for the wellbeing of the family. Therefore, all members of the *aiga*

⁸² Richard P. Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900: The politics of a multicultural community* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970), 8.

⁸³ G. B. Milner, *Samoa Dictionary*, Interim Edition (Manila: Samoan Free Press, 1978), 11. See also George Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary of the Samoan Language*, third and revised edition (Auckland: R. McMillan, 1984), 56.

⁸⁴ Sharon W. Tiffany, "A Note on Contemporary Samoan and Maori Cognatic Descent Groups," *The Journal of Polynesian Society*, 83/3 (1976): 375-380.

⁸⁵ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 27.

acknowledge their membership by commitment to support and contribute to the *aiga* occasions as demanded by the *matai* (chief).

The *aiga* is named after its ancestors and this name (ancestor) is a chiefly title bestowed upon a person who is elected by consensus among *falealama*⁸⁶ (members of the *aiga*) to be the *matai* (chief).⁸⁷ Accordingly, every family is known by its ancestors, and named after their *matai*'s title. For example, the title Foniti signifies that all those who descend from this line are called *aiga sa-Foniti*, meaning these people belong to the Fonoti family. As Keesing notes, an *aiga* (extended family) is a unit of life rather than that of an individual.⁸⁸

Every *aiga* has land, which is tied with the family title genealogically to its environment and surrounding.⁸⁹ The land refers not only to those places in the village centre (*aai*) near the sea, but also those, which are in inland area towards the mountains. These lands are allocated among members living in the village for plantations such as taro, bananas, and yams. In some of the *aigas* (families), men and women, work together in a plantation and the harvest is done collectively. The *matai* of the family has to make sure that every house receives a fair share of the harvest. Every member living abroad has access to any of these lands when he/she needs it after consultation with the chief and elders.

The *aiga* is also known as the *faleaoga muamua* (first school). The place where the Samoan culture, protocols, traditions, and values are founded and

⁸⁶ *Faletama* refers to the children of the original ancestor. They are the ones whom the title will be shared from time to time. Thus, each *falealama* will have a turn to hold the title and lead the *aiga*.

⁸⁷ *Aiga potopoto* is a collective term for all members of a family lineage, who can take part in the election of a new chief. See Milner, *Samoan Dictionary*, 56.

⁸⁸ Felix M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa: Its Government and Modern Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1934), 30.

⁸⁹ Tiffany, "A Note on Contemporary Samoan and Maori Cognatic Descent Groups," 375-380.

taught to all members of the extended family.⁹⁰ Each born member is raised and taught about the *faaaloalo* (respect), *fetausiai* (reciprocity), and *amiopulea* (obedience and politeness).⁹¹ In addition are the family history, genealogies, and traditions taught through the *faagogo* ritual. *Faagogo* refers to stories or tales shared by the elderly to the young ones during bedtime.⁹² The task is shared by all family members especially the women and the elders. Through this upbringing of the children, the elders will decide and choose the appropriate *nainai*.⁹³ *Nainai* is the person whom the elders believe to be the right one to be nurtured and educated about the genealogical history, land, and properties of the *aiga*. This wisdom is sacred and is transmitted only to the *nainai* of the family who will be trained to keep it. This information is passed down mouth to mouth and this implies that the traditions are kept orally by the *nainai*. In modern Samoan society, the TV and new technologies replace *faagogo* and this is great loss of valuable time according to Tui Atua.

Labour force is distributed accordingly to men and women and everyone has a role to play for the wellbeing of the family. In the traditional Samoan society, men cook not women according to the brother-sister covenant. This tradition was not accepted by the missionaries and young girls were brought into their homes and their wives taught them how to cook. Women look after the children and do light work around the house. Furthermore, the Samoan political action, power and authority, has its roots in the *aiga* (extended family). These roots legitimize political authority at village, district, and national levels. For the Samoans, at least, this is the way that things should be

⁹⁰ Maiava Carmel Peteru, *Ole Tofa Mamao: A Samoan Conceptual Framework for addressing family violence* (Auckland: Pasifika Proud Ltd, 2015), 1-28.

⁹¹ Penelope S. Meleisea, "Cultural Values of Peace in the Pacific Islands: A Case Study of Samoa," in *Teaching Asia-Pacific Core Values of Peace and Harmony*, ed. by Zhou Nan-Zhao and Bob Teasdale (Bankok: UNESCO Asia and Pacific Region Bureau for Education, 2004), 163-190.

⁹² Tui Atua, Tupua, Tamasese Taisi Efi, "Clutter in Indigenous Knowledge, Research, and History: A Samoan Perspective," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* (2005): 80-93.

⁹³ Tui Atua, Tupua, Tamasese Taisi Efi, "In Search of Meaning, Nuances, and Metaphor," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* (2003): 49-63.

and the way things are remembered to have been in the islands.⁹⁴ However, a living culture like that of the Samoans is never fixed; there are changes and adjustments to suit every situation in time.

2.4.1.2 *Nuu* (Village)

Another important unit in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) beyond the *aiga* is the *nuu*. The term *nuu* is translated into English as village.⁹⁵ However, the meaning of the term *nuu* is not fully specified by the term village. Penelope Meleisea points out that "the term village suggests a place of settlement."⁹⁶ Accordingly, the term *nuu* refers to a territory that extends from the reefs to the inlands and towards the top of the mountains.⁹⁷ Most of the borders between villages are marked by a valley running from the mountains to the seashore. A *nuu* is comprised of different *aigas* (extended families) who have a shared history in defending their territory.

The chiefs (people holding family titles) of these families govern the village through the *fono* (council of chiefs).⁹⁸ It is in this *fono* (council) that values and traditions based on the law of nature to respect peace and a harmonious life among themselves are formed and developed. In addition, are *tulafono* (rules and regulations), *aganuu* (cultures) to avoid violent manifestation in respect of maintaining its own social unity. Village affairs are

⁹⁴ Some of the participants share this feeling as well but at the same time aware of the changes and influence of Globalization. See also Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 81.

⁹⁵ See Milner, *Samoan Dictionary*, 158 and Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary*, 233. Milner translates *nuu* as village and home while Pratt prefers the term *nuu* as a district, country, or island. However, the word *nuu* as Meleisea notes is more than just a place of settlement. It is a complex set of social structure. The translations from the missionaries speak of the way people live in villages. They live as a big extended family. It was the way they interact that influenced the translation of the missionaries.

⁹⁶ Meleisea P. S, "Cultural Values of Peace in the Pacific Islands," 171.

⁹⁷ Customary Land in Samoa is owned by the people under the protection of the chief and all those belonging to different families and villages. A few lands are owned by the government for development projects.

⁹⁸ Meleisea, P. S, "Cultural Values of Peace in the Pacific Islands," 170.

managed collectively and every decision are consensually based after a long debate.⁹⁹ For instance, decisions about a *sala* (punishment) given to a family in relation to an act done that disturbs peace in the community. The chiefs of the family being penalised must bring the *sala* as agreed upon by the village council. These are the responsibilities of the village council, where all families are represented.¹⁰⁰ It can be argued here the *nuu* with its structure and organisation contributes to the cultural stability in Samoa.¹⁰¹ The *fono ale nuu* (village council) is still managing peace and order in the village.

A Samoan *nuu* (village) is divided into complementary spheres based on family rank, age, sex, and marital status. The traditional ones are – *nuu o alii* (village of men) and *nuu o tamaitai* (village of ladies). Gilson records the divisions of these *nuus* such as the *aumaga*, *auluma*, and *faletua ma tausī*.¹⁰² These divisions of the village are still active today playing different roles for the wellbeing of the society.

2.4.1.3 *Nuu o Tamaitai* (Daughters of the village)

The term *nuu o tamaitai* refers first to the *auluma*, the group of women who are born or adopted into the village.¹⁰³ The *Sao tamaitai* or *Sao Aualuma*, who is a daughter of the village high chief, governs and leads this group. Another group of women alongside the *nuu o tamaitai* is made up of the wives of the chiefs who belong to the *faletua ma tausī*.¹⁰⁴ The *faletua* are the wives of the high chiefs and the *tausī* are the wives of the *tulafale* (orators). The village

⁹⁹ Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 21-22.

¹⁰⁰ Meleisea, P. S, “Cultural Values of Peace in the Pacific Islands,” 171.

¹⁰¹ Lowell D. Holmes, “Factor Contributing to Cultural Stability in Samoa,” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Jul., 1980), accessed on July 30, 2014, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3317825>, 188-197.

¹⁰² Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 22.

¹⁰³ How the *auluma* functions is different in every village but they serve the *sao tamaitai* known as *taupou*. Some of their roles and responsibilities include cleaning the village compound and taking care of any guests. See also Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 28; Kramer, *Samoa Islands*, vol 1, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Aiono Fanaafi, “Western Samoa: The Sacred Covenant,” in *Land Rights of Pacific Women* (Suva: Oceania Printers Ltd, 1986), 102-110.

of women is responsible for the development of health awareness and to monitor the decoration and cleanliness of the village territory. In addition, they are also responsible for serving the guests and visitors when they are present in the village.

2.4.1.4 *Nuu o Alii* (Men's village)

The *nuu o alii* (village of men) is made up of two groups, the *Pulega a Alii ma Faipule* or *matais* (council of chiefs) and the *aumaga* (untitled men).¹⁰⁵ The *Pulega a Alii ma Faipule* (council of chiefs), is the judicial authority or paramount hierarchy of the village, and the *aumaga* are the *tautua* meaning those who serve the village. The *aumaga* is generally referred as the *malosi o le nuu* (strength of the village); it carries out the decisions of the village council. The *aumaga* is structured according to the council of chiefs because each chief has a *taulealea matua* meaning an old untitled man who serves in this sub-village under the authority of the chief. The complexity of the *faa-Samoa* is evident in the many different roles of the groups mentioned above which may vary from village to village.

2.4.2. Governance and Leadership

2.4.2.1 *Pulega Alii ma Faipule* (Council of Chiefs)

The *pulega alii ma faipule* is a collective term given to the council of chiefs from various *aiga* (extended family) present in a respective village. This council of chiefs also known as the *faa-matai* or chiefly system is the backbone of the social and structure organisation of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation).¹⁰⁶ Even the political order of the *faasinomaga* settlement is associated with the council of chiefs. The structure of the village council is

¹⁰⁵ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 28.

¹⁰⁶ Brad Shore, *Salailua: A Samoan Mystery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 71. See also Aiono Fanaafi, "Western Samoa: The Sacred Covenant," 105, Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 29; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 12-14.

present in *faalupega* (set of ceremonial greetings),¹⁰⁷ which expresses the rank and order of the political hierarchy of *matai* titles belonging to the village.¹⁰⁸ For instance, whenever the council of chiefs convene, they are seated according to their formal status and ranks in the *faalupega* (honorific greetings) framework. The same applies to how women and young men are treated or addressed in village gatherings. Their seating position and meeting protocols stem and structure according to the chiefly system. The village meeting begins and ends with a kava ceremony.¹⁰⁹

2.4.2.2 *Matai* (Chief)¹¹⁰

The term *matai* is translated into English as chief, referring to a leader or ruler of a clan or village.¹¹¹ Literally, the term *matai* (chief) means the one whom everything is *mata-iai* meaning looked upon in *aiga* (extended families) and *nuu* (villages).¹¹² They (chiefs) are sometimes treated like gods because they have sacred connections with the gods and the ancestors. The *matai* (chief) is more than just a person with a high rank in the village. The family title carries with it the family identity, traditions, values, and genealogy. Furthermore, the *suafa matai* (name or title of chief) are from those who shed their blood for their *faasinomaga* (home and designation), defending its

¹⁰⁷ The first Book of *Faapulega* was collected and published by the Congregation Christian Church of Samoa followed by the Methodists. See *O le Tusi Faalupega o Samoa* (Malua: London Missionary Society Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁸ See Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 10-28; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 290.

¹⁰⁹ The kava ceremony is described in detail in the next chapter because of its function in the *ifoga* ritual.

¹¹⁰ The term chief in other countries may be totally different from the Samoans concept of a *matai* which is commonly translated into English as 'chief'. This is because the title of the *matai* or family is about their existence and origin.

¹¹¹ *The New Oxford Dictionary*, ed. by Judy Pearsall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 316.

¹¹² See Milner, *Samoa Dictionary*, 136 and Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary*, 213. Both translate it as “the head of an extended family”. However, it is more than that. It is about the family tradition and history, ancestors and gods.

boundaries and heritage.¹¹³ The *matai* (chief) can be a male or female depending on the families' consensus decision. To find someone to lead an *aiga* is not an easy process and some titles take years to search for one especially the paramount ones like Tui Atua, Tui Aana and Malietoa.

The installation of the chiefly title is done through a ritual. The council of chiefs conducts these ritual ceremonies to install and bless every *matai* (chiefly) title.¹¹⁴ The ritual for the high chief is called *Faafotu-Tupu* or *Faafotu-alii* and the other ritual for the *tulafale* is known as the *Faafotu-ulu*. The ceremonial rituals connect the successor of the title spiritually to the ancestors and the gods whom the title originated. The ancestors are overseers of the family life while the gods give them wisdom to do things such as building a canoe. The *matai* (chief) has the responsibility to play over his or her *aiga* (extended family) members regulating their everyday activities such as the distribution of the *aiga* resources.¹¹⁵ Apart from being the custodians of titles and communally owned land, the *matai* or chief represents her *aiga* (extended family) in the *fono ale nuu* or village meetings and deliberations.

The *matais* (chiefs) have two categories, the *tamalii* (high chief) and the *tulafale* (orator) who are also known as talking chiefs.¹¹⁶ Each has different roles and ranks in their respective families and villages. As Meleisea notes, the *alii* (high chief) titles are sacred because they link to the historical lineage of the Samoans' gods such as Tagaloa.¹¹⁷ They have the *mana* (power, authority)

¹¹³ Matai titles in every village *faalupega* or Honorary Greetings are believed to be warriors of that village and those families belonging to that village. They shed their blood in defending the boundaries and land belonging to the family or the village. In respect of their contribution, their names are honored and remembered.

¹¹⁴ The installation of a Samoan chief is one of the most important and sacred event in a family especially those of high chiefs in a village.

¹¹⁵ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 28.

¹¹⁶ H. G. A. Hughes, *Samoa: World Bibliography Series* vol. 196 (Oxford: CILO Press, 1997), xxi.

¹¹⁷ As stated above Tagaloa is believed to have created Samoans in Samoa. This is one of the reason why the Samoans hold firm their tradition for Samoa to be led by chiefs. See also Meleisea M and Meleisea P, S, *Lagaga*, 27.

of the gods and wisdom from them to lead families. It is in this respect that people firmly believed that god chose Samoa to be led by chiefs.

The *tulafales* (orators) as Meleisea notes, is another group of chiefs, who although related to ancestral origins, do not have the *mana* (power, authority) like that of the *alii* (high chief).¹¹⁸ The collective term for the circle of *tulafale* is called *faleupolu*.¹¹⁹ Literally, the term is formed up of two words – *tula* meaning masters and *fale* meaning house. In this sense, the orators are the masters of every ceremony or ritual that take place in the house of chiefs. Pratt notes *tulafale* (orators) are rulers of a village and councillors of the council of chiefs.¹²⁰ For this reason, it is expected that *tulafales* (orators) know the sacred history of well-known families lineages, traditions, connections and village *faalupega* (honorific greetings). According to Tui Atua, they are the custodians of the indigenous knowledge:

The knowledge of *tulafale* is sacred as is the transfer of this knowledge to the *nainai*. Generally speaking, *tulafale* were all schooled in genealogical history and in the meanings of mythology, rituals, chants, songs, dances and so on. Senior *tulafale* are known as *tuua*. When *tuua* transfer their knowledge to a *nainai* the transfer is considered to have depth.¹²¹

These are some of the characters of the *tulafales* (orators), which make them unique in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) setting. In additions, *tulafale* (orators) also have special responsibilities to play for their *alii* (high chiefs).¹²² For example, the *tulafale* (orator) speaks on their behalf during special occasions such as a funeral, marriage, or gatherings.¹²³ It is common in villages that *tulafales* (orators) make the rules and discuss a case such as

¹¹⁸ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 12.

¹¹⁹ Stuebel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 114.

¹²⁰ Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary*, 326.

¹²¹ Tui Atua, “Clutter in Indigenous Knowledge, Research, and History,” 80-93.

¹²² One of the *tulafales* significant role is an orator – speaking in various occasions to present or voice the *tofa* or wisdom of his/her chief.

¹²³ See Llewella Pierce Churchill, *Samoa Uma: Where Life is Different* (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1902), 54. Churchill shares her experience about the role of a *tulafale* as an orator when Pufanaoti speaks on behalf of Luafalealo during Luatuanuu’s visit to Falefa.

breaching taboos and boundaries in the village but the final decision such as punishment is given by the *aliis* (high chiefs).

2.4.3 *Faa-Samoa*: Cultural and Social Principles

The Samoan culture as Tui Atua notes is not just a way of life or a manner of doing things but also refers to the values, attitudes, customs, and norms that define peoples' identities as Samoans.¹²⁴ As evident in the organisation of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation), the space is relational and the life style is communal. Of course, that does not mean that the individual self is less valued or not important at all. Everything in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) is connected to one another in different ways. As Tui Atua notes:

I am not an individual; I am an integral part of the cosmos. I share divinity with- my ancestors, the land, the seas and the skies. I am not an individual, because I share a “tofi” (an inheritance) with my family, my village and my nation. I belong to my family and my family belongs to me. I belong to my village and my village belongs to me. I belong to my nation and my nation belongs to me. This is the essence of my sense of belonging.¹²⁵

The basis of the Samoan culture and social relations in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) is centred on the Samoan concept *Va* (relational space). Everyone in his or her *faasinomaga* (home and designation) is taught about the importance of these relational spaces, and how to move and live it out in their everyday life. This is evident in one of the Samoan expressions, “*ole tama a tagata e fafaga i upu ma tala ao tama a manu e fafaga i fuga o laau.*”¹²⁶ This means that a son of a Samoan is fed with words of wisdom while birds feed their young ones with flowers. It can also be argued that a well cultured and a well-educated Samoan means someone who knows her inheritance, genealogy, cultural norms, and values and knows the relational

¹²⁴ Tui Atua, “Clutter in Indigenous Knowledge, Research, and History” 88.

¹²⁵ Tui Atua, “In Search of Meaning, Nuances, and Metaphor,” 49-63.

¹²⁶ This expression goes together with another famous Samoan expression – *E iloa le Samoa i lana tu ma lana tautala* meaning every Samoan is known how he/she speaks with respect and his/her behaviour.

spaces in his or her *faasinomaga* (home and designation). To understand more about the culture of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) and how harmonious social engagement is maintained, the concept of *va* (relational space) needs further exploration.

2.4.3.1 The Concept *Va* – Relational Space

The term *va* means space between objects and is also referred to as relational space. *Va* is vital and central to the way people perceive and relate in their *faasinomaga* (home and designation).¹²⁷ For example, in families – *va o matua ma fanau* (relational space between parents and children) it is clearly defined with respect and obedience of the children to their parents. It is for this reason that the children learned the fifth commandment by heart and they recite it at almost every family devotion in the evening. Furthermore, is the *va o le matai ma lona auaiga* (chief and her/his extended family), where all members of the extended family are expected to show gratitude and honour the leadership of their chief. Every family member knows his/her position and his role played for the benefit of the clan. These relational spaces (*va*) have special features of social engagement based on *va-fealoaloai*, *va-tapuia* and *va-nonofu* (social relation, sacred relation and sitting relation).¹²⁸ These contexts clarify how each individual relates to one another in their respective *faasinomagas* (home and designation) according to their age, sex, gender, and status.

¹²⁷ Fanaafi. Aiono le Tagaloa, *Tapuai: Samoan Worship* (Apia: Malua Printing Press, 2003), 25. See also Tamasese, pp. 28-29.

¹²⁸ Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi, “More on Meaning, Nuance, and Metaphor,” in *Su’esu’e manogi: In search of fragrance*, ed. by T.M. Suaalii-Sauni & I. Tuagalu (Apia: National University of Samoa, 2009), 71-72. Keynote Address to the Pacific Fono: Moving Ahead Together conference, Pataka Museum, Porirua New Zealand, November 22, 2002.

2.4.3.2 *Va-Fealoaloi* (mutual relations)

*Va-fealoaloi*¹²⁹ refers to the mutual respect between people. This operates in a reciprocal way, as individuals are aware of their social encounter. Tui Atua notes that *faaaloalo* (respect) and *alofa* (love) are the two important key elements of *va-fealoaloi* (mutual relation).¹³⁰ This means that it is impossible for mutual social intercourse to take place when these components are absent. *Faa-aloalo* is *alo mai alo atu* meaning face meeting face. Tui Atua clarifies further about the concept of face: “.....face is not the individual secular, private face as in the Palagi context, face is the collective face of the family, village, and ancestors.”¹³¹ This means that every individual tells the story about his family, his ancestors, and their divinities. For instance, the Samoan saying, *A iai Tanuvasa ua atoa Aana*¹³² meaning when Tanuvasa is present in an occasion or a traditional function, the region of Aana is fully represented. He represents all the chiefs and the people of Aana.

Alofa literally translated as love is a collective term comprising two words – *alo* means face and *fa* means four.¹³³ This means that when an individual is going to face someone with honour and prestige during a social encounter, he/she tries to reveal her inner being and heart in four dimensional ways: culturally, economically, socially, and spiritually. In addition, this is a holistic approach in the life of a Samoan in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation). This stems from the belief that he/she is not doing it for that

¹²⁹ *Va-fealoaloi* meaning a relational space for meeting face to face honouring and respecting the boundaries of both parties and people present.

¹³⁰ Tui Atua, “More on Meaning, Nuance, and Metaphor,” 73

¹³¹ Tui Atua, “More on Meaning, Nuance, and Metaphor,” 71-72.

¹³² The saying is commonly used by chiefs in most of the occasions especially when some of the people do not turn up in a meeting or fellowship.

¹³³ This is different from the Greek understanding of love such as *eros* (friend), *philos* (brotherly love), and *agape* referring to God’s love. The Samoan term *alofa* is about the feeling and nature of the individual’s heart. The Samoans combine other terms to *alofa* such as *alofa-faavalea*, *alofa-mafanana* etc for *eros*; *alofa-faaleuso* for *philos* and *alofa-tunoa* for *agape*.

individual person alone, it is also for her/his family, his village and his ancestors – *alo-fa* (i.e. four dimensions).

2.4.3.3 *Va-Tapuia* (sacred relations)

In the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) setting, certain actions and behaviour are not allowed in some places and these spaces are governed by taboos. *Va-tapuia* as Tui Atua notes, refers to sacred relationships enshrined within *feagaiga* or covenants.¹³⁴ All these sacred relations and taboos are related to the issue of purity and danger. For instance, there is a covenant relationship between the families and chiefs, between people and their environment; and between people and their divinities. These relationships have special taboos and spaces that one needs to be aware of during engagement. All members of the community are taught about the importance of these sacred relations, their obligations, and the rules associated with them. Breaches of *va-tapuia* (sacred relations) are not an insult, but also bring danger to the whole community. Therefore, saving community and its face is only through rituals and deliberations. In addition, divinities can intervene through bringing bad luck and curse upon the community. Thus, taboos have to be respected and peace must be maintained.

2.4.3.4 *Va-Nonofo* (social relation or community life)

The two *Va* (relational spaces) mentioned above focus more on the mutual relationships within the family circle. *Va-nonofo* on the other hand refers social relations and the way people relate to their neighbours, and other families in the village. This means that respect is not just for the people of your respected family and those one knows, but it is a community affair. It is about the way people relate and behave among themselves in their *faasinomaga*

¹³⁴ Tui Atua, “More on Meaning, Nuance, and Metaphor,” 74.

(home and designation), in families and villages.¹³⁵ Respecting the otherness is clearly the goal of *va-nonofo* in order for peace and harmony to be maintained in the society. A good example of such life is the exchange of food and goods between families. If your family needs sugar for your tea, salt, or anything you need but have nothing; you can go to your neighbour and ask for it. That sort of life is at the heart of the Samoan communal life. In addition, are the events such as funerals, weddings, and bestowal of a chiefly titles and how the whole village is involved, and the people contribute whatever way they can afford and give to the families who have such *faalavelave* (occasions).

Consequently, the foundation of the *va-nonofo* (social relations) for the Samoans is rooted in extended family under the guidance and supervision of the chiefs. The stability of the *va-nonofo* (social relations) among the *aigas* (extended families) in the village comes about when they respect and honour the decisions of the village council. A well organised, structured, and harmonious *aiga* (extended family) or *nuu* (village) is a true picture of *va-nonofo* (social relation).¹³⁶ It is the responsibility of the chiefs and the elders to make sure that each individual is taught and educated to know their respected space, position and responsibilities in his/her *faasinomaga* (home and designation). This is a symbol of “*pulega mamalu*” meaning good governance and leadership.

2.4.3.5 The Concept *Amanaia* and *Fetausiai* (Reciprocity)

The concept *amanaia* describes the attitude, the actions and the response of chiefs or families toward others especially guests and strangers during social

¹³⁵ There are customs and laws, which govern the *va-nonofo* (living mutual space) of the people. And these laws must be respected and obeyed for maintaining peace and harmony.

¹³⁶ Maulio Oso (informant) believes that a harmonious setting or *va-nonofo filemu* is symbolic of good management and leadership from the elders in a family and a village. Each individual member shows awareness and keeps the laws of the *faasinomaga*.

intercourse, encounter and engagement.¹³⁷ Central to the concept *amanaia* (reciprocity) is the term *faaeaea* (honour)¹³⁸. *Faeaea* means to honour by treating a person with utmost care and respect. It is because of *amanaia* (reciprocity) that people respect and honour one another; keep the *va-fealoai* (social relation), obey the laws, maintain the taboos, and the different covenants. Case in point is when *Sione*'s father passed away and *Foniti* comes with a *Sii* (way of offering support),¹³⁹ but they are not related. *Sione*'s family will be deeply moved and honoured believing that *Foniti*'s family *amanaia* their *va-nonofa*. They will give more to *Foniti* than their related relatives and friends. So how one is being treated, respected, and honoured will all be determined by levels of *amanaia* (reciprocity). People will never visit or even accept you if they do not *amanaia* (reciprocity) who you are as a person. If someone is honoured and treated as a king or queen, that is signal of how high the level of him/her being *amanaia* (reciprocity) by others.

2.4.3.6 *Feagaiga* (Covenants and Testaments)

The term *feagaiga* (covenant) stems from the word *feagai* meaning opposite, facing each other or an allocated task.¹⁴⁰ *Feagaiga* (covenant) is literally translated as covenant relationship between people. *Tui Atua* notes *feagaiga* (covenant) referring to both status and covenant.¹⁴¹ However, it is more than that, it carries with it roles and commitment from each party. For instance, the most valuable covenant in Samoa is the *Feagaiga ale Tama ma*

¹³⁷ *Foniti* emphasizes the importance of this concept *amanaia* in the *faasinomaga* locality. It is because of *amanaia* that people obey, the law and taboos; and it is because of *amanaia* people respect one another.

¹³⁸ *Amanaia* concept is hardly used, but it was an important concept in the Samoan culture. This is the term which I summaries the attitude of people towards everything in their lives.

¹³⁹ *Siifaaaloalo* is the term given to a holistic cultural act of expressing remorse and sympathy during funerals and other occasions. It is comprised of *ietoga* or fine-mats, *tapa* and today with money.

¹⁴⁰ Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary*, 153. Pratt refers to *feagaiga* as an established relationship between different parties. Covenant and agreement seems to be lately adopted meanings. This may have been influence by the arrival of missionaries.

¹⁴¹ *Tui Atua*, "In search of harmony," 6.

lona Tuafafine (Brother-Sister Covenant).¹⁴² This covenant means the *feagaiga* (sister) has to fulfil her responsibilities such as peacemaker, reconciler, and intercessor during violence and tensions in the community. The brother, on the other hand, has to serve his sister as demanded by their covenant.¹⁴³ Another *feagaiga* (covenant) is that of *Feagaiga ale Matai ma lona Aiga* (Chief and his/her Family). The covenant is bonded when the title is bestowed upon the successor and it is his/her responsibility to serve the family until his last breath.¹⁴⁴ A new covenant is *Feagaiga ale Faifeau ma le Aulotu* (Pastor and his Congregation).¹⁴⁵ This *feagaiga* (covenant) marks the arrival of Christianity in Samoa when the chiefs had agreed for all the Samoans to treat the Missionaries or pastors according to the brother-sister covenant (*feagaiga ale tama ma lona tuafafine*).¹⁴⁶ Until now, the pastors in Samoa are called *Faa-feagaiga* meaning to be served and cared for like our sisters in our community for their wellbeing.

2.4.3.7 Tuaoi (Boundaries)¹⁴⁷

Tuaoi (boundary) in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) does not refer to brick walls or fences pinpointing boundaries or borders between families, but rather refers to relational relationships.¹⁴⁸ This is evident in the Samoan expression, *o Samoa e tuaoi i upu ma lana avafatafata*, meaning boundaries are based on words and mutual respect. For example, the *tuaoi*

¹⁴² This covenant is the same as the salt covenant in the Old Testament about David's Lineage as heirs of kingship in Israel. It is forever until death.

¹⁴³ This is based on a well-known story of the first family in Samoa as the final testament of a dying father to his sons that they shall serve the wellbeing of their sister. Today this *feagaiga* (brother-sister covenant) is still strong in the Samoan culture.

¹⁴⁴ See Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 26.

¹⁴⁵ See Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 26.

¹⁴⁶ There is an oral tradition that says that this was one of the dying wishes of Malietoa Vainuupo that the pastors or servants of God should be cared of, served, and treated as *feagaiga* (brother-sister covenant). This is a conflict of opinions about the effect of the brother-sister covenant since pastors are treated as *faa-feagaiga*.

¹⁴⁷ See Pratt, *Grammar and Dictionary*, 320.

¹⁴⁸ Oianatai Matale (informant) discussion with the author August 21, 2012.

between parents and children, are defined by cultural norms, responsibilities, gender, and expectations of the communal life setting in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation). Tui Atua notes that when speaking of one's own personal or close relationships, the term *va-fealoaloi* is used. In speaking objectively of the relationship of others, as in those relationships that are unfamiliar to the speaker, the appropriate term is *tuaoi*.¹⁴⁹ The children in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) are taught, raised and nurtured how to differentiate, identify and respect these *tuaois* (boundaries) of relationships.

2.4.4 Key Elements of Samoa's Traditional Religion

Ulrich Dehn, in his book, *Annäherung an Religion*, notes that it is difficult to define the term religion.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, his analysis reveals the complexity of the term religion and its meaning is debatable depending on each individual, based on her/his own context, interest, and perspective. He suggests to look at religion from the perspective of myths and rituals for both are instruments showing the reality of how the world came into being.¹⁵¹ I proposed to add culture alongside myths and rituals for the Samoans considered both (myths and rituals) as intertwined in their culture.

The missionaries introduced the term religion in Samoa, and it appears to be something separate from culture. In fact, there was no Samoan term equivalent to 'religion' and the missionaries referred to it as *Tapuaiga*. Consequently, the term *Tapuaiga* means worship, which is parallel to the Christian services or worship. Part of the problem is that Samoa is a relative culture and people cannot separate religion from culture, politics, and the

¹⁴⁹ Tui Atua, "Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference," 161.

¹⁵⁰ Ulrich Dehn, *Annäherungen an Religion: Religionswissenschaftliche Erwägungen und interreligiöse Dialog* (Berlin/Göttingen: EB-Verlag/Hubert & Co., 2014), 11-69. See also, Dehn, "Religion und Mythos. Ein Versuch, zu einem Funktionslen Religionsverständnis," *MDEZW* 3/2004, 83-96; Dehn, "Ebenen des Religiösen, *Esoterik und Christentum* (Helmut Obst zum 65), (hg) Michale Bergunder, Daniel Cyranka (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2005), 63-73.

¹⁵¹ Dehn, *Annäherungen an Religion*, 50.

social structure of the community. Everything is intertwined and connected to one another in their *Faasinomaga* (home and destination). In addition, religion is not an individual affair, but a community event where all members are expected to participate and take part.

When the missionaries arrived in Samoa, they did not find any temples, statues, or symbols of a religion as they found in other parts of the Pacific.¹⁵² Stair notes, "They had no idols or teraphim, neither were they accustomed to offer human sacrifices to their gods."¹⁵³ Missionaries came with the notion of differentiating culture from religion. As Ahrens says, their perception was shaped in this way because they found only the Samoan culture but no sign of a religion.¹⁵⁴ This leads to the perception of the Samoans, as "godless people."¹⁵⁵ Some people think of Samoans as animists,¹⁵⁶ polytheists, and of ancestral worship.¹⁵⁷ Stair states, "the Samoans had several superior divinities and a host of inferior ones, 'lords many and gods many,' they were also accustomed to deify the spirits of deceased chiefs."¹⁵⁸ Stair missed a point here because every family, village, and region in Samoa has his or her own deities and gods. This is evident in the spread of Christianity in Samoa having one to four churches in one village. The point is one high chief wishes not to share the

¹⁵² Stair, *Old Samoa*, 210; See also Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 35.

¹⁵³ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 210.

¹⁵⁴ Ahrens discussion with the author October 20, 2013.

¹⁵⁵ See Turner, *Samoa*, 16-17; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 35. Meleisea notes that the Rarotongans referred to the Samoans as "godless" claiming the introduction of Christianity was their first experience of a religion. However, this is not true if one understands the logic of the Samoan *Lauga* ritual and the kava ceremony where the gods are addressed and honored by the Samoans. Having no temples or statues does not necessarily mean there is no religion.

¹⁵⁶ The term 'animism' was developed by E. B. Taylor in 1871 and defines in the Encyclopaedia as "religious believes involving the attribution of life divinity to such natural phenomena as trees, thunder, or celestial bodies." D. E. Hunter and P. Whittens (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Anthropology* (New York: Harper and row, 1976), 12. See also, Nurit Bird-David, "Animism revisited: Personhood, environment, and relational epistemology," in *Readings in Indigenous Religions* ed. by Graham Harvey (New York/London: Continuum, 2002), 72-105.

¹⁵⁷ Turner, *Samoa*, 17.

¹⁵⁸ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 211.

same denomination with another and this reflects the notion that each family has its own *tapuaiga* (religion). In addition, one could observe the notion that the ancestors, the spirits, dead, gods are all part of the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) and *aiga* (extended family). Therefore, they are respected and honoured but not worshiped as missionaries and anthropologists assumed. This means that their belief were not based on idols and statues but natural living objects and the presence of their gods and ancestors as part of the whole family in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation).

2.4.4.1 Rituals

Religion in Samoa is expressed through rituals, myths, dances, and some of the cultural events that people still practise today. As Dehn notes, it becomes a common practice to bring in the connection of religion to the themes of myth, ritual, and religious patterns of activities involved in their deliberations.¹⁵⁹ Rituals illustrate not only how religious the Samoans were before the arrival of the missionaries; but they also demonstrate how traditional (tribal) the communities are in the pluralistic modern world. Almost all rituals in Samoa address a divine being and offer a gesture of acknowledging their presence and thanksgiving. For instance, the rituals such as the atonement ritual *ifoga*, the kava ceremony, the ritual for the installation of a chiefly title, the death ritual, and many others connects to the divine being and the gods. Accordingly, religious beliefs and practices are more than ‘grotesque’ reflection or expressions of economic, political, and social relationships; but rather they are to be seen as decisive keys to the understanding of how people think and feel about those relationships, and about the natural and social environments in which they operate.

¹⁵⁹ Dehn, *Annäherungen an Religion*, 65.

2.4.4.2 Myths

Another aspect which helps us to explore and understand more about religion in Samoa are myths. Dehn notes that myths are conceivable as essential aspects of religious identity and community building.¹⁶⁰ This is true of the Samoan context, where myths are orally transmitted, and some of the religious traditions are now kept as written narratives. For example, the two myths about the creation stories discussed at the beginning of this chapter are not only being recorded, but also given in the memory of the elders, for it was orally nurtured. These myths inform the people about the origin of the universe, and how things came into being demonstrating the existence of a creator god who prepares everything. The significance of these two myths the Samoans kept is that Tagaloa is the same creator who is also believed among the Polynesian people. In the next chapter, a myth about the origin of the Samoan atonement ritual will be described and analyzed.

2.4.4.3 *Tapu* (Sacred Restrictions and Sacred Integrity)

Tapu or taboo is another element which illustrates the religious belief in Samoan communities. In fact, the Samoans refer to the Ten Commandments as taboos, and this was one of the reasons why the acceptance and the spread of Christianity was incredible. Taboos are also part of life in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) and everyone is required to be aware of them and respect. Tui Atua notes that in the Polynesian context, *tapu* means both sacred and taboo.¹⁶¹ *Tapu* (taboo) differentiates the level of attention between *tulafono* (customary laws) and sacred restrictions because they (taboos) relate to rituals and covenants. *Tapus* (taboos) are made for maintaining harmonious relationships between people and the environment, with ancestors and spirits. Turner gives a variety of taboos as a way of maintaining peace and harmony

¹⁶⁰ Dehn, *Annäherungen an Religion*, 40.

¹⁶¹ Tui Atua, "Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference," 157.

out of a superstitious fear of cursing.¹⁶² Stuebel also notes that families place their trust in their gods to guard their taboos for blessing and safeguarding their properties.¹⁶³ For instance, the blinds of the traditional Samoan house that are down at night must not be raised up if men are fishing. The same applies to the rubbish such as breadfruit leaves around the house; they can only be collected and picked when the fishermen have returned home.¹⁶⁴ This is out of fear that something might happen to the men at sea or on their way returning home without any fish. *Tapu* (taboo) is the sacred essence, which underpins and permeates people's relationships with all things; with the gods, the cosmos, environment, other people, and self.¹⁶⁵ Thus, *tapu* (taboo) in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) ensures that a state of wellbeing is protected and maintained.

2.4.4.5 Belief in a Supreme Being

Like their Polynesians counterparts, the Samoans believe in the existence of a Supreme Being and Atua (god) named Tagaloa.¹⁶⁶ Much has been said about Tagaloa regarding him as the creator of everything. Moyle notes, "They worship a great Spirit they called Tagaloa. They at times go into the bush and pretend to hold conversations with Tagaloa. They do not offer sacrifices of any description."¹⁶⁷ Stair claims that Tagaloa is the principal Samoan deity.¹⁶⁸ As evident in their creation story, Tagaloa is described as a

¹⁶² Turner, *Samoa*, 183.

¹⁶³ Steubel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 154.

¹⁶⁴ Foniti and Maulio (informants) have shared their experience of catching nothing at sea and both believe that the *tapus* (taboos) have been breached at land by some family members especially those who are not aware of men going out fishing.

¹⁶⁵ Tui Atua, "Bio-ethics and the Samoan Indigenous Reference," 175.

¹⁶⁶ See for example Th. Achelis, "Die Stellung Tangaloa in der polynesischen Mythologie," in *Globus* 67 (1965): 229-231. According to the Samoan creational model of the origin of the universe (*Solo o le Va*) Tonga and Fiji was created by the Samoan god Tagaloa. See also Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 7-10.

¹⁶⁷ Richard M. Moyles (ed.), *The Samoan Journal of John Williams 1830 and 1832* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1984), 102.

¹⁶⁸ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 212.

High God in the sense of *Le Atua foafoa* (Creator God). He is the progenitor and creator, preparing the sacred centre and a home called paradise.¹⁶⁹ According to Stair, Tagaloa was also responsible for creating other gods and did not participate in daily life activities of the people.¹⁷⁰ As discussed, Tagaloa is warrior and a famous Samoan chief whose legend was retold by the Samoans influenced by the creation stories in Genesis.

In addition, Stair records that Atua (non-human god) like Tagaloa did not have a temple or priests and are believed to reside in Puluotu or in Lagi (heaven).¹⁷¹ This contradicts with the Samoan ritual called *Auala or Tatala le Lagi* during the death of chiefs, which is practised until today.¹⁷² Moreover, the kava ceremony has a tradition of libation, the pouring of the kava on the ground during the Kava ritual with the saying “*Lau ava lea le Atua*” (This is your kava oh god).¹⁷³ It is an expression of thanking god for the occasion, good health, and peace. This implies that Tagaloa can be contacted and approached by any member of the community, not just appointed priests during special rituals in the community. The Samoans belief in Tagaloa was strengthened and confirmed when the missionaries arrived with their version of YHWH, the true creator of heaven and earth.

2.4.4.6 Belief in *Aitu* (Human gods)

Apart from Tagaloa who is the creator of the universe, Samoan traditional communities believe in the existence of *Aitus*. The nature, function, and the significance of these gods have an area of much debate among the anthropologists. *Aitu* as John Fraser notes is one of the spirits of the lower rank not an *atua* or high god.¹⁷⁴ Horst Cains claims the concept *Aitu* to mean

¹⁶⁹ Turner, *Samoa*, 4; Stair, *Old Samoa*, 212.

¹⁷⁰ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 212; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 4.

¹⁷¹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 212; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 36.

¹⁷² Stair, *Old Samoa*, 177.

¹⁷³ A brief description about the kava will be given in the next chapter.

¹⁷⁴ Fraser, “Folk-Songs and Myths from Samoa,” 35.

"Totengeist" (spirit of the dead).¹⁷⁵ According to Fonoti, when the *agaga* (spirit) of a dead person fails to enter Puloṭu, it would become an *Aitu* and his/her family members can feel their presence. Meleisea shows that *Aitu* "were sometimes born as the result of incest between brother and sister or a sister's daughter and a brothers' son."¹⁷⁶ Since this is a taboo in the Samoan culture, it does bring pollution in the community. They were born as *alu'alu toto* (clots of blood) and some were able to take human forms. A good example is that of Tamafaiga (both human and *aitu*), Tuimavave, Nafanua (a goddess warrior in Savaii), and Saveasiuleo (who had the form of an octopus).¹⁷⁷ *Aitu* can also visit people in the form of an animal, bird, fish, and other natural objects. Unlike Tagaloa, *Aitu* can only be consulted through a Taulasea (spirit mediator) who may be related to these human gods or people who have the power from their gods to speak to the *Aitu*.¹⁷⁸ *Aitus* intervenes during daily activities when something is not done in a proper way or they being angered by an individual's behaviour that brings shame to the family or the village.

2.4.4.7 Belief in Ancestral Spirits

Like the Africans who believe in the ontological connection of the people to each other,¹⁷⁹ the Samoans religious thoughts maintain that every member of the *faasinoaga* (home and designation): the dead, the living, and the unborn are bound to each other. The Samoans named their ancestors as *Tuaa*. The term illustrates that these people were the backbone of an *aiga* (family) and *nuu* (village). Those categorised under this classification are

¹⁷⁵ Horst Cain, *Aitu: Eine Untersuchung zur Autochthonen Religion der Samoaner* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1979), 14.

¹⁷⁶ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 36.

¹⁷⁷ Steubel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 78; Tuner, *Samoa*, 17.

¹⁷⁸ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 36.

¹⁷⁹ John D. Kwamena Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study oo Akan traditional priesthood in dialogical relation to the priest-christology of the epistle to the Hebrews, and its implications for a relevant function priesthood in selected churches among the Akan of Ghana* (Hamburg: Verlag and der Lottbek, 1994), 32.

people whom their works contributed a lot to the wellbeing of the community. These include great grandparents and holders of the family's chiefly title. This means that not all the deads are considered as *Tuaa*, only those who honoured and remembered by the community for their good works. Each *aiga* (family) have a special buried place for their *Tuaas* called *Tiasa* meaning sacred monuments built above the ground near the houses. One feature of the *Tuaa* is that people feel their spiritual presence in the family compound and their wishes for the community is revealed to the elders and the chiefs through dreams. The Samoans do not worship their ancestors but they respect and honour them. This is evident in most cultural events and social discourse, chiefs acknowledge the *Tuaas* tremendous influence in the society. The *Tuaas* have a close spiritual relation with the chiefs and execute their will through them. Thus, ancestral spirits are honoured and respected in the family and village circles.

2.4.4.8 Belief in Family gods

The Samoans believe that the *agaga* or souls of their ancestors remain in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation). The concept *Agaga* literally means, “That which comes and goes.”¹⁸⁰ Both Turner and Steubel note the importance of family gods and their genealogical connection to every family’s chiefly title.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, Meleisea argues that every chiefly lineage is connected to the family god.¹⁸² Moreover, their family gods have given the power that chiefs inherit to rule and govern the community. Like the *Aitus* (human gods), the

¹⁸⁰ Turner, *Samoa*, 8.

¹⁸¹ Cf Turner, *Samoa*, 19; Steubel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 79.

¹⁸² Foniti states that this practice of family gods is evident in villages who have more than one church denomination or one village with three churches from the same denomination like Satupaitea and Salelologa. High chiefs politically want to prove their status in village by establishing his/her own church.

Samoans believed their ancestral gods incarnated in an eel, owl, turtle, lizard, and fishes as well.¹⁸³ Turner records the confession of a Samoa:

The new religion was spreading in our village. One and another joined, eat the incarnations of the spirits, no harm followed, so I determined to join. The sea-eel and the sea-spider (common octopus) were the incarnations of the gods to whom our family prayed.¹⁸⁴

The *matai* (chief) and his sister were the priests who addressed the gods during evening meals.¹⁸⁵ Traditionally, a small circle made up of stones near the middle post of every family house was used as a sanctuary to offer prayers to family gods every evening.¹⁸⁶ People asked their gods for assistance such as chasing away sickness, protection from famine, war, and death.¹⁸⁷ They can even talk to them and ask for guidance or to prove if their decision is a necessary action, or even a plan for the wellbeing of the family. Both Meleisea and Turner note that a cup of kava was also presented to family gods during evening *tapuaiga* (worship).¹⁸⁸ Foniti and Maulio agree that each family has a god for protection and guidance different for those classified as ancestors. Some family gods are believed to be ancestral spirits who incarnate into different forms like a bird, fish, or an insect when revealing themselves to the family members. Hence, family gods play a vital role to the life of every chief and his family.

¹⁸³ Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 104.

¹⁸⁴ Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 104.

¹⁸⁵ Turner, *Samoa*, 18.

¹⁸⁶ This tradition is still practise and re-enforce by some of the village today, whereby a horn is blown, and all family member must gather in the house for evening prayer. No one is allowed to walk outside the house until the third horn sound – meaning it is allow continuing with the normal activities.

¹⁸⁷ Moyle, *Journal of John Williams*, 103.

¹⁸⁸ The libation during the Kava ritual is different from the family practice during their evening prayers. The ritual itself is directed to Tagaloa, but in family circle as Turner and Steubel note are for family gods.

2.4.4.9 Belief in Village gods

Village is one of the important components in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) as described above. Turner notes, “Every village had its own god and everyone born in that village were regarded as property of that god.”¹⁸⁹ Like family gods, these village gods are ancestors who were warriors and established villages. They are honoured and respected for they have shed their blood defending village land and territory from their enemies.¹⁹⁰ Fonoti shares that *tamalii* (high chiefs) are the village priests’ who can consult the village gods during sports, war, hunting or fishing through the *tapuaiga* (silent meditation and reflection, worship).¹⁹¹ This *tapuaiga* is done in a special place called *malaefono* (meeting place, sanctuary), and usually located in the middle of the village.¹⁹² In fact, this is the place where the atonement ritual *ifoga* is held when villages seek forgiveness and reconciliation from another. Meleisea argues that some village gods had special feast days and others were also given food and kava at a sacred place by the people of that village.¹⁹³ This implies that village gods play vital roles in daily activities and village life.

2.4.4.10 Belief in the Spirit of the Land

As evident in the meaning of the name Samoa, both *eleele* (land) and *vasa* (sacred place) or sea are sacred places. People believe that the spirits control the land production, harvest, and roads governs the *eleele* or land. It is not clear where these spirits have originated but Fonoti states that, they are ancestral spirits. His argument is based on the Samoan term for the bush and

¹⁸⁹ Turner, *Samoa*, 18

¹⁹⁰ Fonoti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

¹⁹¹ See Turner, *Samoa*, 38. Turner gives a reasonable amount of family gods and one of them is Moso. He incarnated as a fish or a pigeon and in other villages, a stone represented him.

¹⁹² Maulio (informant), discussion with the author September 8, 2012. Every village has a *malaefono* or meeting place to discuss village matters and issues. According to Maulio these are the same places used for village *tapuaiga* (silent prayer), rituals and festivals.

¹⁹³ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 37.

forest *Va-o-matua* meaning “space of parents.”¹⁹⁴ It is their space and they have all means of protecting and controlling it. The bush is the space where they continue to support the lives of the people. Maulio confirms the belief in the spirit of the land by referring to the *tapu-a-fanua* or taboos of land.¹⁹⁵ These taboos are also made for awareness of the spirits of the land. In addition, the spirit of the land is mentioned in the cultural speech called *Lauga*, through the phrase, “*faafetai ua le afe se atua ole ala*”, meaning thanks to the gods of the roads that the difficulties of the journey have been defeated.¹⁹⁶ This implies that the spirits of the land have made travels safe and secure. Thus, it is a way of expressing thanksgiving to the spirits of the land for protection.

2.4.4.11 Belief in the Spirit of the Sea or *Vasa* (Sacred Space)

The Samoans also believe that the rivers and the sea are protected and controlled by the spirits. These spirits give them the wisdom to read and understand the meanings of wind directions, the current, the waves, the stars, the moon, and the sun when they travel from one place to another, or, going out fishing. Maulio states that these spirits are also spirits of the ancestors who were skilful fishermen and they prefer to control the sea.¹⁹⁷ Turner in his book notes that they “were supposed to have fallen from the heavens at the call of a blind man to protect his son.”¹⁹⁸ Wherever they may have originated, people feel their presence and they believe that these spirits protect them when they travel from one place to another. Just as the spirits of the land, their roles played are also mentioned, and addressed during cultural gatherings by the orators. In addition, the family god incarnated into a fish or turtle and it would be prohibited from eating. The chiefs are the ones who acknowledge these

¹⁹⁴ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

¹⁹⁵ Maulio (informant), discussion with the author September 8, 2012.

¹⁹⁶ The Samoan chiefly speech or *Lauga* has five main parts. One of its parts is called the *Faafetai* or thanksgiving. This is where people hear the orator mentioning the gods of the sea and land as a way of honouring their spirits in daily activities.

¹⁹⁷ Maulio (informant), discussion with the author, September 8, 2012.

¹⁹⁸ Turner, *Samoa*, 23.

spirits during the *Lauga* (cultural speech) and are able to speak on behalf of the people to the spirits of the land and sea.

2.4.4.12 Belief in Life after Death

The Samoans have a strong belief that the spirits of the dead live forever after death. This strong understanding connects with the tradition of honouring ancestors and respecting their good deeds. Case in point is the *Auala* or *Tatala le lagi* ritual performed before burying the dead. The ritual is conducted by the chiefs and untitled men of the village during the funeral of a chief. Every participant takes the tip of the coconut leaves and they walk around the house where the deceased is laid and chant words such as, "*Tulona le Lagi*" meaning a prayer addressed to heaven. The priest is chosen from among the *tulafales* (orators) of the village to pray to Tagaloa on behalf of the deceased person, his/her family, and the village to open the door of heaven and receive the spirit of the chief. If the prayer is accepted, then the spirit of the deceased person enters Pulotu¹⁹⁹ where all the spirits of the dead go. In addition, if not accepted, the dead person's spirit will become one of the *Aitus* (a human god) and participate in the affairs of the family and village.

Questions arise in relation to this ritual and the Christian belief about heaven. For instance, who has the power and the right to open the door of heaven: is it the pastor or the Samoan chief? Which heaven does the spirit of the dead person go to – Pulotu or the kingdom of God Almighty? Why did the missionaries allow such ritual to continue during their presence in Samoa? Shall the Samoans continue to perform this ritual or not? These are questions for further research about the importance of this Samoan belief and its connection to Christian doctrines.

¹⁹⁹ In the Samoan belief, Pulotu is a place in Savaii where the two caves, Lualoto-o-alii and Lualoto-tufanua are located. These are the places where the spirit of the deads goes when people died.

Religion in Samoa as referring to the Tagaloa, the ancestors, the dead and the spirits are also very important during the atonement ritual *ifoga*. Whatever happened in the community, it also affects the gods. Therefore, the *ifoga* ritual is not just for the sake of the living. It is also to ask for acceptance and reconciliation with the ancestors and the gods. This is based on the belief of communal living and fear of a curse from the ancestral gods and spirits. Thus, the orators of both *ifoga* parties are aware of these issues and relationships when they are engaged in dialogue and deliberation.

2.4.5 Toia le Va (Violation of Relational Space)

Samoa as viewed above seems to be a harmonious place or the so called Paradise and Pearl of the Pacific. However, life in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) was never that easy because the Samoans were human beings. It is a society filled with fierce competition and the struggle for pre-eminence.²⁰⁰ These conflicts and tensions resulted from their competition about the resources, about land and the sea, about women, and as well about kingship.²⁰¹ In fact, whatever form of a crime occurred in the community, the chiefs will convene and discuss a possible solution. Crimes do exist in the community and chiefs make decisions and agreed upon the *sala* (penalties) to be allocated to the individuals' families. However, there are *agasala matuia* (severe crimes) that bring bedlam to the *faasinomaga* (home and designation). Not only do they ruin the purity of good order, peace, and harmony among the people, but they also violate the *vafealoai* (relational space), which is at the heart of the Samoan culture.

²⁰⁰ For instance, the war between Tamafaiga and Malietoa; See Stuebel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 54-57; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 56.

²⁰¹ Turner, *Samoa*, 175.

2.4.5.1 *Faamaligitoto* and *Fasiotitagata* (Bloodshed and Murder)

Faamaligitoto (bloodshed) and *fasioti-tagata* (murder) are forbidden in the Samoan culture. This is because blood is associated with land in the Samoan worldview. The Samoans use the word *eleele* to translate the English words blood, earth, and land. Therefore, shedding blood and taking someone's life for the Samoans is the like taking the land and claiming ownership for it. For this reason, such crimes are taboos to be present in the community and people try to avoid them. These crimes violate the the *va-fealoai* (relational space) and the whole community will be in danger. This relates to what Mary Douglas notes that primal societies protect sacred relations and places from pollution and defilement.²⁰² In Samoa, bloodshed and murder break *tapus* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenants), and *tuaoi* (boundaries) between people, families, and therefore have severe consequences on both parties involved. Turner and Stair record that murder provoked war among the families and villages.²⁰³ Murdering a member of the *aiga* (family) creates a quagmire situation and the Samoans viewed it as equal to slaying their high chief as an animal. The victims' family and the whole village share the same feeling, and that ignites retaliation. This parallels the Old Testament code of an eye for an eye (Ex 21:22-25) and Samoans sometimes live with this code of retaliation.

2.4.5.2 *Mataifale, Solitofaga or Moetolo* (Incest, Rape, Violence against Women)

In the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) daughters in a family are called sacred children. This is rooted in the oral tradition as expressed by the brother-sister covenant and the special treatment given to them. Sisters are considered as the pupil of her brothers' eyes and in Samoan culture it is the responsibility of family members to protect and look after their well-being. Elders and parents have fear of incest and rape; therefore, boys are not allowed

²⁰² Cf. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 19.

²⁰³ Turner, *Samoa*, 189; Stair, *Old Samoa*, 96-97.

to enter the space of the house allocated to their sisters. Incest and rape bring shame and damage the honorific status of families involved in the eyes of the society. Shame has different levels such as *ma* and *maasiasi* for an individual while it is called *faaluma* for families and villages. These actions result in the loss of face meaning *faaaloalo* (*alo mai alo atu* or respect), *va-fealoaloai* (social relation), *tapus* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenants), and *tuaois* (boundaries) are totally overturned and broken when breaches of relational space happens. Like murder, these crimes have great impact upon the family and the whole community in which the victim belongs. In order for purity to be restored in the community and pollution to be removed from the *faasinomaga* (home and designation), chiefs have to perform the atonement ritual *ifoga*. Through the atonement ritual, all forms of *va-fealoai* (relational space) will be restored and reconciled.

2.5 Conclusion

The purpose of presenting the Samoan indigenous worldview and cosmogony is to locate the atonement ritual *ifoga* in its epistemic context. Central to the understanding of the sacred centre (Samoa) is the concept *aiga* or extended family. A family where *faia* or *sootaga paia* (genealogical and sacred connections) are very important as evident in the *faasinomaga* (space of identity and designation), which is a space filled with ordinary people led by the chiefs and believed to be created in Samoa land by their god Tagaloa. These genealogies connect people to their origins and chiefs to the gods and ancestors where their power came from. Through *va-fealoaloai* (social relationship) and *va-tapiiua* (sacred relation) relationships are organised and respected to maintain harmony and peace. Further studies need to be conducted about the importance of the origin of the Samoan people and their religion. In addition, we should try to observe the Samoan culture, ritual, and religion from the *Faasinomaga* (home and designation) and *Aiga* (extended family)

perspectives. This will help us to understand fully the Samoan encyclopaedia and epistemic context.

However, like any other society, Samoa was never a paradise and never without violence. Tensions, competition, and lust for power and pre-eminence dominate the minds of the chiefs. Whenever the *Va* (relational space) is *oia* or breached, all the different entities such as *feagaiga* (covenants), *tuaoi* (boundaries), *tapu* (taboos) are violated and even the ancestors, gods and members of the community are affected. People through their chiefs have their own ways of dealing with conflicts and tensions in order to maintain relationships among themselves. The next chapter deals with a typical ritual for purifying *tapus* (taboos), *feagaigas* (covenants), and *tuaois* (boundaries) in order to overcome violence and to heal broken relationships.

CHAPTER 3 THE ATONEMENT RITUAL *IFOGA*

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, we have seen that the Samoan society is polluted and in chaos when taboos, covenants, and boundaries associated with *va-fealoai* (mutual relationships) are violated. The whole family and the whole community are in danger; even the ancestors and divinities are affected. The Samoan saying “*a toia le va, manatua le alii ole va* (when sacred relations are breached, remember the lord of sacred relations) points to the chiefs of families, who had been chosen by the gods, as their sole responsibility, to heal the taboos and broken relationships within the communities. In light of this, it makes sense to ask how the community can be purified in order to be free from pollution.

The following chapter explores the traditional Samoan reconciliation ritual *ifoga*: its development, its meaning, and its function. The objective is to examine and analyze the main features, aim, process, significance, and function of the *ifoga* ritual in the Samoan context. What is *ifoga* and what is its scope? How far is it indeed holistic and consensus based? Why do Samoans value this ritual as means of healing relationships and overcoming violence? Such questions guide the study in order to achieve a comprehensive view of the *ifoga* ritual.

3.2 Excursus: Ritual theories

The term ‘ritual’ has attracted many scholarly discussions concerning definition, role, significance, and practices. Dehn notes that rituals play a role in many areas and situations, and therefore have been investigated by many disciplines.¹ This means that the term ritual is open to a number of definitions

¹ Dehn, *Annäherungen an Religion*, 51.

as David Hicks states, “most (scholars) incorporate some reference to repetitive forms of behaviour.”² For instance, Victor Turner defines ritual as “prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powers.”³ In another instance, Turner refers to ritual as “a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests”⁴ This means that rituals are storehouses of meaningful symbols by which information is revealed and regarded as authoritative, as dealing with the crucial values of the community.

3.2.1 Arnold van Gennep

Arnold van Gennep, in his book, *The Rites of Passage*, discusses a tripartite analytical framework describing the structure and progression of rituals.⁵ These rites make basic distinctions, observed in all individuals and groups of a community, between young and old, male and female, living and dead. The first stage is “separation.” The individual person or a group becomes detached from everyday activities, social functions, and cultural events. This is undertaken as a response to some crisis, either in an individual’s life or in the life of a society.⁶ The second stage is “liminality. As a result of existing from community social life, the individual or a group enters into a threshold phase

² David Hicks, *Ritual and Belief: Readings in the Anthropology of Religion* (Maryland: Alta Mira Press, 2010), 94.

³ Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 19. See also Mathieu Deflem, “Ritual, Anti-Structure, and Religion: A Discussion of Victor Turner’s Processual Symbolic Analysis,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30/1 (1991): 1-21.

⁴ Victor Turner, “Symbolism in African Ritual,” in J. L. Dolgin, D. S. Kemnitzer, and D. M. Schneider, *Symbolic Anthropology: A reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 19.

⁵ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedon and Gabrielle L. Coffee (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1960).

⁶ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 23.

where everyday notions of identity, time, and space are suspended.⁷ During the liminal phase, the individual (or group) engages in mimetic activity re-enacting the crisis motivating the ritual. Van Gennep states that in the liminal phase “structure” and “anti-structure” of the community are simultaneously enacted.⁸ The third stage concerns the “reintegration” of the individual or group back into the community normal social life.⁹ Having confronted both the justification and the problems arising from social structures and practices, the individual re-enters the community with a clearer understanding of the norms and obligations incumbent upon them, and of their role in society. For van Gennep, all rituals share this general structure, which effectively integrates individual life processes and social events into a unified framework that fosters social stability and cultural vitality.

3.2.2 Victor W. Turner

Victor Turner, in his book, *The Ritual Process*, engages with the structure and the role of symbolism in Ndembu rituals.¹⁰ Turner develops Van Gennep’s concept of liminality beyond its original ritual phase, and it has taken on new meaning. He forms his main theoretical argument, meditating on the relationship between the concepts of ‘liminality’ and ‘*communitas*’ that arise from his analysis of rituals, and their co-dependence with the concept of structure.¹¹ According to Turner, liminality illustrates the stage whereby the individuals lose their identity as defined by social structure: they have “no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system – in short, nothing that may distinguish them from their fellow neophytes or initiands.”¹² He argues that *communitas* (community) and

⁷ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 23.

⁸ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 23.

⁹ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 24.

¹⁰ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

¹¹ Turner V, *The Ritual Process*, 96.

¹² Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 95.

structure are two opposed yet mutually necessary modes of social life. He defines the concept of structure as “society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of ‘more’ or ‘less.’”¹³ He refers to *communitas*, as an unstructured society and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.”¹⁴ Furthermore, in his discussions of the ritual complex among the Ndembu, Turner presented the processual view of ritual with a distinction between life-crisis rituals and rituals of affliction. These analytical frameworks proposed by van Gennep and Turner relate to the underlying theoretical framework behind the Samoan atonement ritual, which will be dealt with later in the chapter.

3.2.3 Catherine Bell

Catherine Bell in her book *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, defines ritual “as a complex socio-cultural medium variously constructed of tradition, exigency, and self-expression; it is understood to play a wide variety of roles and to communicate a rich density of over determined messages and attitude.”¹⁵ In this sense, ritual is employed as a medium for establishing, strengthening, or mending relationships. As Bronislaw Malinowski suggests, “People resort to rituals when they are threatened.”¹⁶ This implies that ritual was founded on mutual relationships, and as Hicks argues, “ritual is a function of social interaction.”¹⁷ This social interaction depends heavily, as Bell argues, on different social structures, organisations, and situations in various cultures.

¹³ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96.

¹⁴ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 96.

¹⁵ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), xi.

¹⁶ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex, Culture, and Myth* (New York: Harcourt, 1962), 219.

¹⁷ Hicks, *Ritual and Belief*, 94.

Bell discusses some of the approaches for analysing rituals. The first approach Bell highlights is the “Linguistic” approach, which highlights the importance of the language, used during rituals in reflecting social and structural relationships.¹⁸ This is achieved by looking at how syntax and semantics are shaped in rituals. The second approach concerns “Performance,” focussing on different sets of activities dramatized to give a meaningful expression of cultural patterns and values.¹⁹ The third approach is known as the “Praxis or Practise,” the term derived from Karl Marx.²⁰ Bell summarises the practise theory by noting that it looks at ritual as:

- A historical process in which past patterns are reproduced, reinterpreted, and transformed.
- Concerned with what rituals do, not just, what they mean.
- Addressing the issue of individual agency and forging individual experience
- A first step in opening up the particular logic and strategy of cultural practices.²¹

Central to the practise approach is the analysis and understanding of the ritual in a particular focus of reference or knowledge system.²² For Bell, it is only in the epistemic context of a ritual under investigation that we can understand fully and be able to observe why people do what they do. In addition, the movement of the people within a specific space or an environment to perform a ritual is also vital.²³ Such is the case in Samoa when the *ifoga* ritual takes place in the *malae* (meeting place), which is sacred, and no one is allowed to enter or cross during any cultural ceremony. Moreover, Bell argues that the practise theory also offers an opportunity to formulate how

¹⁸ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 68. See also Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Bell proposed in this book a more systematic way of analyzing rituals. Catherine Bell, “Performance,” in *Critical Terms for Religion Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 205-224.

¹⁹ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 73.

²⁰ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 76.

²¹ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 83. See also Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* 67-73.

²² Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 81.

²³ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 82

power is recognised and diffused in society. A case in point is *mana* (authority, power, wisdom), a popular term amongst Pacific peoples" it is given to an individual and it must be shared for the common good of the community.

Accordingly, ritual is more about social relationships, structures, and organisations in societies. It is also about identity, family and heritage as Francesca Mason Boring suggests in her book, *Connecting to our Ancestral Past*.²⁴ It is through rituals such as *ifoga* that the Samoan people connect the past to the present, to their ancestors and gods. Stories about what their ancestors had done are retold, shared, and transformed whenever rituals are performed to influence the present situation. Therefore, it is through family gatherings, ceremonies, and rituals that healing and restoration are supposed to take place.²⁵ Moreover, for oral cultures like Samoa, rituals are important because they are means of recording indigenous history making it available for future generations as references.²⁶ In addition, rituals play an important role in the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) and its culture as means of communicating the reality of what was happening in the past.²⁷ Before analysing the atonement rituals, it is important to give a brief overview of the Samoan myth where-by the idea of atonement in Samoa is founded.

²⁴ Francesca Mason Boring, *Connecting to Our Ancestral Past: Healing through Family Constellations, Ceremony, and Ritual* (California: North Atlantic Books, 2012).

²⁵ Boring, *Connecting to Our Ancestral Past*, 23.

²⁶ In addition to rituals, other tools of recording history includes dances, chants, songs, honorifics, family genealogies and names of places, peoples and events. Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese, *Clutter in indigenous knowledge, research and history. A Samoan perspective* is based on a presentation that was part of the Pacific Research & Evaluation Series of Symposia and Fono, Wellington, New Zealand, 24 November 2004.

²⁷ The Samoans maintained their family genealogies and descendants through these oral traditions and there are specific people who have such gift within the family circle.

3.3 The origin of the reconciliation ritual in Samoa

3.3.1 The Myth

Rene Girard, in his book, *Violence and the Sacred* highlights two theories about the origin of myth and ritual.²⁸ The first one suggests ritual originated from a myth and the second one states that both myth and the gods originated from the ritual.²⁹ The first theory of Girard seems to parallel the Samoan understanding of the various rituals and ceremonies they uphold and practice and the rituals function as means of maintaining, retelling, and passing down of these legends through generations. In addition, Francesco Pellizi argues, “Ritual also tends to reconstitute itself, often manipulating or reshaping, so to speak, its own myth, or even abandoning it.”³⁰ The *ifoga* ritual carries with it a basic mythological understanding of the Samoan god Tagaloa.³¹ A famous myth recorded in the 19th century by missionaries (George Turner 1861 and Thomas Powell 1886)³² explains how the idea of atonement came into existence in Samoa through a divine being.³³ This is the description by Turner, which is similar to the Samoan version recorded by Powell.

Two people of Tagaloa of the heavens came down to fish. As they were returning with two baskets of fish, the fowls of Lu leaped up to peck at the fish. The lads caught and killed the precious preserve, or Sa Moa, and ran off with them in heaven. In the morning, Lu missed the fowls, and went off in search of them. Lu wanted revenge and chased the lads as they fled to the nine heavens. When they reached the tenth heaven, Tagaloa made his appearance and called out, “What is this all about? Don’t you know this is *Malae totoa*, the place of rest? There must be no fighting here.”

²⁸ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, 89.

²⁹ Girard, *Violence and Sacred*, 89.

³⁰ Francesco Pellizzi, “The Ritual: A Diptych” in *Paragrana: Internationale Zeitschrift für Historische Anthropologie*, Band 12. 2003. Heft 1 und 2, trans by Gini Alhadeff (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003), 102-113

³¹ Tagaloa is a common name among the Polynesians for their supreme god.

³² Turner, *Nineteen Years in Polynesia*, 15; Powell, *O le tala i Tino o Manu ma Tagata ma Mea Ola Eseese*, 192.

³³ Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 202.

Lu told his cause of anger: his Sa Moa or preserved fowls had been stolen, and he had found the thieves in the very act of eating them. Tagaloa said, “It is indeed very bad and now you have come to this heaven of peace, let your wrath abate, spare these men. You shall go back with the title “King of heavens, and take my daughter Lagituavalu (Eighth Heaven) as your wife.” “Very good,” said Lu; let these men live, and let us be at peace, and conform to the custom of Malae totoa.³⁴

The last part of this English version differs from that of the Samoan oral one where Tagaloa’s daughter Amoa (Lagituavalu)³⁵ intervenes by bowing down (*ifo*), covering herself with her long black hair in order to save her father and her relatives.³⁶ This is evident in the Samoan proverb: “*ua faalava le Amoa*,” meaning ‘Amoa intervenes.’³⁷ She intercedes and pleads for her brothers. The myth is significant because it contains basic historical elements like the downfall of the Tagaloa regime. Without exception, violence appears to be the main cause of the *tausala* ritual and the *ifoga* ritual.³⁸ As Girard argues, “Violence, in every cultural order, is always the true subject of every ritual or institutional structure.”³⁹ It was from this incident that the idea of atonement and settling disputes became a way of life for the Samoans. It not only connects it genealogically to the gods, it justifies it.

The Samoan myth can be viewed in light of Girard’s theory of “acquisitive mimesis.”⁴⁰ Girard in his book, *I see Satan Fall like Lightning* proposes that much of human behaviour is based on “mimesis” and describes a situation where two individuals desire the same object.⁴¹ This leads to conflict

³⁴ See Turner, *Samoa*, 14; Powell, *O le tala i Tino o Manu ma Tagata ma Mea Ola Eseese*, 202.

³⁵ In the recorded version, the name of Tagaloa’s daughter is Lagituavalu, but according to the oral tradition, it is Amoa, as supported by the proverb, which is mostly quoted by chiefs in various rituals and social gatherings.

³⁶ Tui Atua, “In Search of Tagaloa: Pulemelei,” 5-10.

³⁷ Tui Atua, “In search of Tagaloa,” 7.

³⁸ The title *tausala* is also given to daughters of the chiefs and it is still used in modern Samoan society.

³⁹ Rene Girard, *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, trans. by Stephen Bann and Michael Metter (California: Stanford University Press, 1987), 210.

⁴⁰ Rene Girard, “Mimesis and Violence: Perspectives in Cultural Criticism,” *Berkshire Review* 14 (1979), 9-19.

⁴¹ Girard, *Satan falling like Lightning*, 44-51.

and violence, as both desires the same object or one craves for an object belonging to another.⁴² We can suggest that scarcity, wealth, and power are the causes of conflict between Tagaloa and Lu-Fasiaitu. Tagaloa through his descendants' desires to have the chicken belonging to Lu, and according to Girard, conflict must always occur since acquisitive mimesis is one of the core human traits.⁴³ As Lu proceeds to take revenge, Tagaloa appears as a mediator and wishes for peace and not war. Tagaloa then proposes for his daughter Amoa (as a scapegoat) in marriage instead of killing his descendants.⁴⁴ Although, the scapegoat (Tagaloa's daughter) is not slaughtered according to Girard's theory, she has been removed from the community. She was offered as a payment for the survival and wellbeing of her family members from the mighty hand of Lu.

3.3.2 Analysing the Myth

Based on this Samoan myth, we can discern several important facts. Firstly, the idea of *agassala* (sin) is illustrated in the myth resulting in the violation of taboos and order in the society. The question that needs to be answered is whether this is the first experience of sin and violence in the Samoan community. According to the Samoa Bible (oral tradition), this is the first act of sin told, recorded, and remembered.

Secondly, the idea of atonement is first and foremost the act of the Samoan creator god Tagaloa for the sake of peace and harmony. While the Christians preach, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (John 3,16); the Samoans learned from the myth that Tagaloa sent his daughter in order to save his descendants. In fact this is origin of the *tausala* ritual in

⁴² Girard, *Satan falling like Lightning*, 45-48; Girard, "Mimesis and Violence," 9.

⁴³ Girard, "Mimesis and Violence," 10.

⁴⁴ Girard, "Violence and the Sacred," 2.

Samoan communities. Consequently, the establishment of the *ifoga* ritual is rooted in the same incident.⁴⁵

Thirdly, what Tagaloa did demonstrates that he stands for the victim and giving his daughter as a wife for the victim is a way of restoring Lu-Fasiaitu's dignity and right. The fine-mat was not available during this time and the most precious thing that he had was his daughter. However, what happened to Amoa (daughter of Tagaloa) is the basis of women's role as peace makers in Samoan societies today.

Finally, the participation of chiefs in the practice of the *ifoga* is due to the involvement of Tagaloa because of the *tapus* (taboos), *tuaoi* (boundaries), and *feagaiga* (covenants) breached by his descendants.

3.4 The *Tausala* ritual

3.4.1 Definition of the term *Tausala*

The term *tausala* is formed up of two words, *tau* and *sala*. *Tau* means the price, payment, or cost and *sala* means punishment. This punishment is delivered by the judicial proceedings of the village council based on an act or behaviour that is unacceptable in the community.⁴⁶ The *sala* (punishment) is given especially when the crime committed violates and breaches the *tapus* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenants), and *tuaoi* (boundaries).⁴⁷ According to Stair, *sala* involves the destruction of houses, livestock, plantations, and seizure of

⁴⁵ Another story was told by Faamatuainu T. Luamanuvae. The daughter of Funefeai a warrior from Savaii was pregnant by the Tuiatua. Tuiatua refused to announce him as his heir to the throne. Funefeai was not happy about it and he wanted to fight in revenge. Upon hearing about his fathers' plan, the daughter went to convince his father and saw the fleet in the sea as she reached the village of Vaialele. She stood at the beach, waved the *ietoga* and shouted to his father to save the Tuiatua. Funefeai and his party then returned to Savaii. The girl gave birth and named her son Tologataua meaning – 'postponing the war.' Some considered this as the beginning of the *ifoga*.

⁴⁶ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 91.

⁴⁷ The importance of *tapus* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenant), and *tuaoi* (boundaries) as means of maintaining peace and harmony in the *faasinomaga* has already been discussed in chapter 2.

personal properties.⁴⁸ Literally, the term *tausala* means the payment for what has been committed as sin. The myth described above illustrates how the descendants of Tagaloa violated the taboos of Lu and definitely, their punishment should be death. However, it was amended after negotiations and deliberations between Tagaloa and Lu. Lu accepted the petition and the apology from Tagaloa and received the *tau ole sala* (atonement) offered to him.

3.4.2 *Tausala* as a payment for Sin

Payment is one of the base meanings of the term *tausala*. Definitely, every *sala* (crime or punishment) has a *tau* (price or value) and is related to the word *totogi* meaning compensatory payment. In the Samoan culture, food has value and every *sala* (crime) has a food value ranging from *mata-selau ma le aumatua* (1 sow and 100 taro) to *selau aumatua* (100 sows). However, the crime committed by the descendants of Tagaloa has no value in food because it violates the taboos associated with the beliefs of Lu and his ancestors. Therefore, Tagaloa had sought another way of making atonement. Furthermore, *tausala* is payoff or ransom in order to turn away retaliation and revenge. Fonoti argues that the virginity of the *tausala* (Amoa) and her life given to Lu symbolizes a holistic and a complete transaction. One can argue that Amoa was offered as a ransom to settle the *sala* (crime) of the Tagaloa's family, if not Lu will killed the perpetrators. Amoa substituted life for death.

3.4.3 *Tausala* as a *Taulaga* (gift or offering)

The presentation of Amoa as a payment for the crime committed by the descendants of Tagaloa is a appropriation. Stephen Finlan suggests "the term appropriation means" appeasing and making peace with someone who is

⁴⁸ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 91.

angry."⁴⁹ Tagaloa did not take lightly the violation of Lu taboos by his descendants and managed to make peace with him. This peace was achieved through Amoa who was offered as a *taulaga* (gift) on behalf of her father and the family. She is the precious daughter of Tagaloa, offered with all his heart and soul to pacify and honour the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationship) between her father and Lu. She pacifies the anger of Lu and seals the union of the two families in history. It is suggested that it is through this event that the Samoan culture of *sua faatamalii* (gesture of honouring visitors or guests) originated. The *sua faatamalii* is done with food and it is a way of sealing peace and good friendship.

3.4.4 *Tausala* as a Title

Apart from the metaphorical meanings applied to the ritual *tausala*, the term itself has become a *faalupega* (title) in Samoa. The title *tausala* is given to the unmarried daughters of the chiefs and she is a virgin who is treated with utmost care and respect within the family and the community. When she is married, the next daughter in line will take over the task. *Tausala* is different from the *taupou*, another title given to the daughters of the high chiefs. However, both who have special tasks and responsibilities to fulfil in the family and the village.⁵⁰ While the title *tausala* is used to describe the role-play in entertainment and cultural festivities, the *taupou* is more about rank and authority. For example, if the eldest daughter of the chief married a man of another village and the husband passed away, she can return to her village, and lead the *Aualuma*. However, both can participate and take part in serving the village guests by joining the *aualuma* (unmarried daughters of the chiefs).⁵¹ The name also is used for fundraising and it refers to the *tausala* who will dance to raise funds for the community.

⁴⁹ Stephen Finlan, *Problems with Atonement* (Minnesota: Liturgical Pres, 2005), 12.

⁵⁰ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 115.

⁵¹ See chapter 2 bullet 2.4.1.3.

3.4.5 Legends about the *Tausala* Ritual

The *tausala* ritual was practiced in Samoa during the times of preeminent struggle for power and competition for land and resources.⁵² The wealth of information about this ritual can only be accessed through oral traditions and legends about *feagaiga* (covenants) between villages, district, and regions. This implies that when the missionaries arrived, the *tausala* ritual was no longer practised except for the *ifoga* ritual. However, through family histories and traditions, we learned that paramount chiefs who were either defeated in war, or surrendered to end bloodshed did perform the ritual.⁵³ It is the presentation of the king's or the high chief's daughter in marriage to the warrior of the winning party or the enemy.

The ritual became part of the Samoan culture as a means to end war and bloodshed, settle disputes, and reconcile parties. The *tausala* must dress up in her traditional costumes including a *siapo* (*tapa* cloth), *ietoga* (treasure), *tuiga* (traditional Samoan crown).⁵⁴ Her family prepared the *toga* (wealth) to be presented such as *ietoga* (treasure), *fala-lilii* (fine mats), *papa-laufala* (floor mats) and *fala moe* (sleeping mats).⁵⁵ A big feast will follow the occasion and entertainment from both parties. The conclusion will be the presentation of *oloa* (food such as pigs, taro, and cows) prepared by the bridegrooms' party to the brides' family to seal the new covenant and union between two tribes.

3.4.5.1 Tuatuamamao Daughter of Sagapolutele (Ulutogia)

Maulio Oso shares his family tradition about Tuatuamamao, daughter of their high chief Sagapolutele from the village of Ulutogia, Aleipata.⁵⁶ The warrior of Manono named Tamafaiga, waged war against Atua on the eastern

⁵² Foniti (informant), discussion with the author, August 17, 2012.

⁵³ Tolofuaivaolelei Faalemoe (informant), discussion with the author, September 13, 2012. The story is well known as it shows how families and regions were connected through the *tausala* ritual.

⁵⁴ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 115.

⁵⁵ Turner, *Samoa*, 82-83

⁵⁶ Maulio Oso (informant), discussion with the author, September 8, 2012.

side of Upolu Island.⁵⁷ The king of Atua heard about Tamafaiga's plan and vowed not to have a war because he understood the consequences. Tuiatua then prepared to welcome Tamafaiga and his war party with the *tausala* ritual. However, there was problem as - Tui Atua did not have a daughter for the ritual, and he then inquired help from other high chiefs in the region. Sagapolutele, who is also called *Tama ole Malo* (Man of the Kingdom) responded to Tuiatua's request with favour.⁵⁸ Sagapolutele's daughter named Tuatuamamao had agreed to be the Togiola (payment for life) of Atua.

Tamafaiga and his war party observed as they approached the harbour that the beach at Ulutogia is decorated with flowers and trees wrapped with coconut leaves. This is not a sign of war but a symbol for welcoming guests. Tuiatua welcomed Tamafaiga and his party with the *Ava* (kava) ceremony, then, proceeded to *soalauipule* (deliberation), and concluded with a great celebration of the marriage between Tamafaiga and Tuatuamamao. Sagapolutele also offered the *laumei* (turtle) or a sacred fish as gift on behalf of her daughter.⁵⁹ The marriage sealed the union between Atua and Manono. It was through the *tausala* ritual of Tuatuamamao that Atua called Manono their '*Feagaiga*' (covenant), and for Manono to have the *ia sa* (sacred fish) or *laumei* (turtle) on their shores and ocean. Tuiatua offered the islands in Aleipata (Nuutele, Nuulua and Namua) for Sagapolutele as a gift for his kindness. Until today, Sagapolutele, the paramount chief of Ulutogia village is the sole owner of these islands especially Nuutele and Nuulua.

⁵⁷ Both Turner and Stair record Tamafaiga as the famous warrior who died just before the arrival of Christianity. See also Moyle, *Journal of John Williams*, 10.

⁵⁸ See Krämer, *Samoa Islands* vol 1, 234,

⁵⁹ The *laumei* (turtle) is called the *ia sa* meaning sacred fish because it was also considered as the incarnation of the gods. Therefore, the turtle was forbidden from eating and was assumed as a sacred fish.

3.4.5.2 Faalulumaga Daughter of Tuiaana

Salue F. Tuimaunei and Tolofuaivaolelei from Leulumoega share the story of Faalulumaga, the daughter of Tuiaana, king of Aana region on Upolu Island.⁶⁰ Tuiaana, went to visit the island of Savaii and he was attacked with his party upon their arrival at Faasaleleaga district. A famous warrior named Letufuga was *seu-lupe* (catching pigeons), and noticed from where he was and decided to find out more. He joined the war and fought without knowing whom they were fighting against on that day. As the war party from Upolu was weak and almost defeated, Letufuga observed that they were fighting against Tuiaana and his party. At that very moment, Letufuga ordered the people of Faasaleleaga to withdraw and he stopped the fight. He approached the king and welcomed them to Malaefatu, his residential area. After their feast, the king and the remaining members of his party departed safely back to Aana. Tuiaana was so thankful for what Letufuga did by saving his life. In return, he offered his daughter, Faalulumaga in marriage to Letufuga. It was from this incident that the place where the war took place was named Salelologa where the Faasaleleaga district originated. Letufuga had a few chiefly titles such as Aloalomaivao, Lologa, and Tufuga-alofa to commemorate the covenant between Salelologa village and Aana district.

3.4.6 Significance of the *Tausala* Ritual

The *tausala* ritual plays an important role apart from ending war and violence. Pierre Bourdieu notes that a political function is fulfilled when gifts, words, or women are exchanged among parties.⁶¹ The *tausala* ritual did connect and unite families in Samoa by blood and genealogy.⁶² Parties

⁶⁰ Salue F. Tuimaunei, dialogue with the author, August 21, 2012; Tolofuaivaolelei (informant), dialogue with the author September 13, 2012.

⁶¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 14.

⁶² This is the Samoan saying *Ua malu Aiga* meaning families are united, secured, and protected; and the term *Paolo* referring to the cultural encounter between the father and the mother's family in funerals originated.

involved no longer consider themselves as enemies but as relatives because they are related (*fai'a*).⁶³ As families were connected, the value and the practise of the *tausala* ritual diminished. Foniti states that the idea of giving the *tausala* as atonement during war and pre-eminence times had ended because people are genealogically connected.⁶⁴ The chiefs contemplated about what Amoa did (bowing down on the road) and decided to perform accordingly. The suggestion is that the chiefs began to introduce what is now known as the *ifoga* to resolve conflicts and heal tensions among themselves.

At present, the *tausala* ritual with its content, practises, and purpose is different from its original form. Today, the term *tausala* refers to 'fundraising.' For instance, if it is a church project, the whole congregation will gather and families will have a *tausala*. The *tausala* will dress in traditional costumes and each family *tausala* will perform a traditional dance. The garments and the dresses that each *tausala* wear tells the story of the past because each (*tausala*) represents every family's chiefly title. For, instance the *tuiga* (crown) placed on the head had either three or five poles on the top. In addition, the *tausala* has to wear either an *ietoga* (fine mat) or a *tapa* cloth. Normally, the fine mats are worn by *tausala* belonging to the paramount chiefs. Thus, ritual in its modern version serves the function of fundraising for church and cultural projects and activities. Therefore, the *tausala* ritual in its original function of an atonement is no longer practised, but the *ifoga* ritual conducted by the chiefs has replaced it until today.⁶⁵ Although the *tausala* does not participate in the *ifoga*, the *ietoga* (fine mat) used in the ritual is symbolic of her presence. This is because

⁶³ The common Samoan saying during cultural speech ritual called *Lauga* goes: *ua fesootai gafa, ua tasi lo ta aluga, tasi lo ta ieafu* (meaning genealogies are connected and we are one family). The *tausala* ritual expresses the idea of an investment for life to secure peace and harmonious obligations.

⁶⁴ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012. See Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 83.

⁶⁵ The *ifoga* ritual is more about reconciliation while *tausala* ritual emphasises the notion of atonement.

most of these fine mats are made when a daughter is born in a family and will be removed from the family when she is married.

3.5 The ifoga ritual

3.5.1 Definition of the term *ifoga*

Ifoga is a noun derived from the verb *ifo*. Literarily, *ifo*, according to Pratt and Milner, means “to bow down”⁶⁶ on your knees and your eyes facing the earth.⁶⁷ In the traditional Samoan understanding, a person will *ifo* (bow down) for two main reasons. Firstly, it is a symbolic act of paying respect and honour to their gods and their chiefs.⁶⁸ For instance, when someone enters a sacred space (*malae, maota*), they either bow down or lower their heads to pay respect. A certain parallel expression of respect is also noted in the word “*tulou*” (pardon me) in everyday life especially during cultural gatherings and rituals.⁶⁹ The same idea is continued in Christian worship, because the word *ifo* (bow down) is commonly used by pastors and priests during worship services, “*ia tatou ifo ma tatalo i le Atua,*” meaning, “let us bow down and pray to God.” Thus, *ifo* (bow down) in this sense is a gesture of honour and for worship.

Secondly, warriors and chiefs *ifo* (bow down) to prevent hostility and to surrender to the opposition in war.⁷⁰ Stair notes “*ifoga* is the usual mode adopted by a conquered people on submitting to their conquerors.”⁷¹ This is where the Samoan proverb, “*ole malolo a le tamalii*” (the lowering of a chief)

⁶⁶ George Pratt, *Pratt’s Grammar and Dictionary: Samoan – English, English Samoan* (Papakura: R. McMillan, 1984), 86-87; Miller, *Samoan Dictionary*, 82-83. See also Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 9 – 12; Macpherson C, and Macpherson L. “The Ifoga,” 109.

⁶⁷ Such practice is also common among members of the Samoan Methodist Church when they pray, which distinguishes them from other denominations.

⁶⁸ Chiefs are respected in their respective families and the life of the community depends on their wisdom, governance, and leadership.

⁶⁹ For a complete analysis of the concept *tulou* from the Pacific perspective see Havea, “Reconciliation to Adoption,” 294-300.

⁷⁰ Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 49. See also Pratt, *Pratt’s Samoan dictionary*, 86-87; Milner, *Samoan Dictionary*, 82-38.

⁷¹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 101.

originated. It would be inappropriate for the proverb to mean being defeated because the *tofa* (wisdom) of the chief has ruled against war for the sake of his people. In this sense, *ifo* (bow down) can be seen as an act of submission and public humiliation for the sake of peaceful resolution.⁷² For example, when Tamafaiga and his war party waged an attack against Atua,⁷³ Tuiatua surrendered because his people would not be able to defeat Tamafaiga and his war party.⁷⁴ Accordingly, the word *ifo* (bow down) has positive and negative aspects. Both aspects describe the actions of giving and receiving from the sender and the receiver. However, in the context of the *ifgoa* ritual, the action of *ifo* (bow down) is more than that of respect and submission. This is where we can differentiate the secular aspect of the action *ifo* (bow down) from that of the religious one.

The *ifoga* ritual is to purify the community from its violated taboos. It is an act of *faamaualaloga* or showing remorse out of love for the victims of what has happened. *Faamaualalo* means seeking for acceptance, yearning for peace and searching for *leleiga* or reconciliation.⁷⁵ The *ifoga* ritual is the foremost approach people will resort to when they try to heal divisions and tensions in both social and sacred boundaries. It is the most respected and effective way of maintaining *vafealoai* or mutual respect and curbing anger. Lotofaga Lima argues that *ifoga* is a *taulaga*⁷⁶ (sacrifice) referring to high chiefs sacrificing their honorific status for the sake of bringing things back to

⁷² Turner, *Samoa*, 189.

⁷³ Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 29-31. Atua refers to the eastern side of Upolu Island according to Pili's distribution of the land to his children.

⁷⁴ This story was shared by Maulio Oso (informant) during discussion with the author on September 12, 2012.

⁷⁵ Turner, *Samoa*, 189. Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012. *Leleiga* means to be one, to have peace, to fellowship and reunite again. Most of the time people use the term *leleiga* when talking about reconciliation.

⁷⁶ Lotofaga Lima (informant) consider the *ifoga* as a *taulaga* or sacrifice as the high chief sacrifice his dignity, his honorific status and pride of being a chief and perform the ritual for the sake of his people and the community. He was interviewed by the author for the purpose of the research on September 14, 2012.

order. Steubel, in his book about “Samoan Myths” notes, “*ifoga* is an act of submission,”⁷⁷ while Tuala considers it as a healing mechanism.⁷⁸ The *ifoga* is also viewed as humbling one’s self and honouring the other out of guilt from what has happened.⁷⁹ Consequently, these colourful views give a vivid picture of how complex the *ifoga* ritual has been modernised.

3.5.2 Origin of the *ifoga* Ritual

The origin of the *ifoga* ritual is rooted in the myth about Lu and his sacred chicken farm that was violated by the descendants of Tagaloa.⁸⁰ The oral tradition suggests that Amoa the daughter of Tagaloa who bows down (*faalava le Amoa*) on the road to Lu was the one who initiated the ritual. However, it could be argued that the *ifoga* ritual was performed after the *tausala* ritual was no longer necessary because families are united by blood and lineage. The question that needs to be addressed is who performed the first *ifoga* ritual in Samoa. In fact, only the oral traditions that could help us with some information about the ritual.

3.5.3 The Legends about the *ifoga* Ritual

It is not known when the first *ifoga* ritual took place after the downfall of the Tagaloa regime,⁸¹ but Oianatai Matale shared a legend about the origin of using the *fala lau ie*⁸² or *ietoga* (valuable or treasure)⁸³ in the *ifoga* ritual.

⁷⁷ Steubel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 146-147. See also Turner, *Samoa*, 89.

⁷⁸ Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 23-31.

⁷⁹ Macpherson. C and Macpherson. L, “The Ifoga,” 109-134.

⁸⁰ See bullet point 3.3 of this chapter about the origin of the atonement rituals in Samoa.

⁸¹ See Turner, *Samoa*, 14; Powell, *O le tala i Tino o Manu ma Tagata ma Mea Ola Eseese*, 202.

⁸² Oianatai Matale (informant), discussion with the author August 21, 2012. *Fala-lau-ie* is the first common name given to the traditional Samoan fine mat. The name *ietoga* originated here in this event in Tonga because it was brought back to Samoa when they left Tonga. See also Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*.

⁸³ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 82. Stair translates *ietoga* as valuable mats. The most common translation of the Samoan term is fine mat and this may be misleading for outsiders because

The story is about Fuaautoa, a warrior in Tutuila,⁸⁴ and Lautivania, the brother of Talaifeii, king of Tonga. The Samoans in Tutuila led by Fuaautoa defeated Lautivania and his Tongan war party. Then Fuaautoa said to Lautivania, “I will not slay you and your people if you promise me that you will free all the Samoans in Tonga and send them back safely.” Lautivania agreed and promised to do so. A woman named Futa with some Samoans accompanied them back to Tonga. Fuaautoa gave a *fala lauie* (treasure or valuable) to Futa and said to her, “A *iai ni pefea, fofola le fala* (if anything happens in Tonga, then spread the fine-mat).” Then Lautivania and his war party sailed and headed back to Tonga.

When they arrived, his brother, Talaifei’i, the king of Tonga severely defeated from Upolu Island, had already prepared a huge fire to burn all the Samoans in Tonga.⁸⁵ Lautivania forgot the promise he had made to Fuaautoa and supported his brother’s decision. As the Samoans were about to be burned alive, Futa spread the *fala lauie* or the *ietoga* (treasure or valuable) and covered herself with it. Lautivania saw the *fala lauie* (treasure or valuable) and its *ula*⁸⁶ (decorations) were very beautiful. As Lautivania had observed the fine mat and its decorations, he saw Fuaautoa’s *fofoga* (face) and remembered his promise to him. Lautivania then removed the fine mat and begged the king Talaifei’i to free the Samoans and send them back to their island. The Samoan party retreated with no violence. Since that day, *ietoga* (treasure or valuable),

people can use the mat to sit on everywhere in the house or outside. However, no Samoan will sit on the *ietoga* because it is a treasure and something valuable for the people.

⁸⁴ Tutuila was traditionally part of Samoa until 1899 when the Tripartite Treaty replaced, Treaty of Berlin and Western Samoa passed into the hands of Germany, whilst America gained the Eastern part including Tutuila and Manua as what is now called American Samoa.

⁸⁵ Steubel, *Myths and Legends of Samoa*, 60-65. Talaifeii was defeated in Aleipata by Tui Atua Tapuloa with the help of Tuna and Fata from Tumasasaga. The oral traditions recorded by Europeans were from Tuamasaga and Aana not from the people who live in the place where the war was held. Their view is also worth knowing.

⁸⁶ *Ula* refers to the feathers of birds used to decorate the *fala* or *ietoga*. Based on this story, the *ula* of the *ietoga* is also called *fofoga* meaning face – because it was through the *ula* of the *ietoga* that Lautivania saw the face of Fuaautoa.

has been considered as a symbol of peace and the humbling of oneself.

The story reveals the development of the *ifoga* ritual and introduces the implementation of the *ietoga* (treasure or valuable). Other new names of the *ietoga* (treasure and valuable) include “*pulou o le ola*”⁸⁷ (cover of life) and *ie o le malo*⁸⁸ (treasure of the kingdom). All these names are used interchangeably in the present Samoan context.

3.6 Function of the *ifoga* ritual

3.6.1 Faamalieina o le Toatamai (Propitiation)

Faamalieina o le toatamai means appeasing and making peace with someone who is angry.⁸⁹ As mentioned above, when a crime is *matuia* (severe) to the extent that it fuels revenge and war, then this is the time ‘*E masii ai le fala siigata*.’⁹⁰ *Fala siigata* in this case refers to high chiefs. Usually, the chiefs remain at home and *tapuaia faiva o lona aiga* (pray for success in daily activities for his people).⁹¹ However, there are specific events where his/her highness will participate and people would say “*ua masii mai le fala siigata*.”⁹² The *ifoga* ritual is the time for high chiefs to intervene, to pacify and *faamalie le ua toatamai* (propitiation). Whether the chief is related to the perpetrator or

⁸⁷ *Pulou o le ola* (cover of life) as mentioned above is another name given for the *ietoga* (treasure) because of what happened in Tonga. This means that the lives of the Samoan people were saved because of the use of the *ietoga*.

⁸⁸ *Ie o le malo*, means the treasure of the kingdom. Every chief has a kingdom and every kingdom has an *ietoga*, which is treasured and kept for many years. Only special occasions such as the *ifoga*, funerals, and weddings that these types of *ietoga* (treasure) are used.

⁸⁹ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

⁹⁰ *Ua masii le fala siigata*, this saying is commonly use when a person with an honorific status attends an event in the Samoan culture such as the high chiefs and the pastors. There are two side of the coin here in relation to the meaning of the saying. First the high chief *amanaia* (highly respect) the high chiefs of the receiving party. Second, this is the only way to end tensions and conflicts among titles and families – high chiefs’ *soalaupule* (deliberate, dialogue, discuss) in order to find a solution to solve a problem such as maintaining peace.

⁹¹ Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 16.

⁹² Foniti (informant) says that in the *faa*-Samoa, whatever bad feelings such as hatred, revenge, and willingness to retaliate against the perpetrator’s family, all change suddenly when people see the chiefs kneeling down and covered with a fine mat. This may vary in different cases and situations in various places.

not, once the *nuu masii* (whole village will do the *ifoga*), he has to sacrifice his dignity and kneel on the ground for sake of his people. According to Foniti and Maulio, some families changed the feelings of revenge and hatred when they see a paramount chief kneeling before them. Their presence appeases and pacifies broken hearts of the victim's family. It is significant, implying that they have taken the matter seriously. In Samoan terms this is *amanaia* (respecting the dignity of the other chiefs) when the *fala siigata* is moved to be that of a scapegoat.⁹³ His/her presence contributes to calming down the feelings of anger, hostility, and revenge.

3.6.2 *Sufiga o Tuaoi, Tapu ma Feagaiga* (Purification and Restoration)

As been discussed in the last chapter, boundaries, taboos, and covenants in the Samoan culture refer to the *va-fealoai* (mutual respect among people).⁹⁴ These aspects of the Samoan *faasinomaga* (home, designation) and culture are in chaos, damage and ruin when something severe happens such as a crime or violence. For instance, the *tuaoi* (boundaries) between chiefs, the *feagaiga* (covenants) between families, and the *tapus* (taboos) between villages are all *oia* (broken, chaos). These three vital elements (boundary, taboo, and covenant) central to the *faa*-Samoa spirituality of mutual respect among people can only be purified, and transformed by the *ifoga* ritual. It is through the act of bowing down to express remorse, acknowledging guilt, and exchanging of speeches between two parties.⁹⁵ It is through the *ifoga* ritual that the sacredness

⁹³ The chiefs are scapegoats here because they take the blame upon themselves because of what has happened.

⁹⁴ I have discussed in detail the meanings of the three terms in chapter three. See also Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, "In search of harmony: Peace in the Samoan indigenous religion" in *Pacific indigenous dialogue on faith, peace, reconciliation and good governance*, ed. by T.M. Suaalii-Sauni (Netherlands: Springer, 2007).

⁹⁵ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 98. Purifying and transforming boundaries, taboos and covenants in Samoa are words and cultural speeches, which takes in consideration the importance of *faia* (genealogies) and *sootaga* (connections). It is through this process that people will discover that they may be in one way or another be related by blood.

of these three aspects mentioned is negotiated, purified, and maintained in the Samoan context. Although the process is complex and requires more courage as Stair notes,⁹⁶ the *vafealoai* (mutual respect) between chiefs and their sympathy for one another is important for transforming different *tuaois* (boundaries), *feagaiga* (covenants), and *tapus* (taboos) being affected.

3.6.3 *Faamaualaloga* (Apology and Asking for Acceptance)

One of the most vital elements in the *ifoga* ritual is the expression of love for the victim by lowering one's self shamefully like an animal in the field. *Ifo* (bowing down) is not only for a public apology as Stewart argues,⁹⁷ but it is also "a ceremonial request for forgiveness."⁹⁸ The *ifoga* ritual conveys these feelings through the chief who acts as a scapegoat by kneeling on the grass in the rain or in the hot sun. Gilson notes, "This gesture was the greatest loss of face which a Samoan could suffer voluntarily."⁹⁹ Tui Atua, on the other hand, argues that this public humiliation in the Samoan context is severe punishment for those who bring shame upon families and villages.¹⁰⁰ Thus, *ifoga* is indeed from a modern approach, a symbolic act of submission in pleading for forgiveness because both communities involved in a dispute never view it lightly.¹⁰¹ In the context of the *ifoga* ritual, when the *ietoga* (fine mat) is removed, and the *ifoga* party is welcomed into the house, it means that the *faamaualaloga* (apology) is accepted. Once you are accepted, you have peace and harmony. To be sure, violence is the real enemy, it destroys, and it does so irrefutably, which is why eliminating it must be made every chief's first priority.

⁹⁶ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 96-98.

⁹⁷ Stewart, W.J. "Ifoga," 183.

⁹⁸ Milner, *Samoan Dictionary*, 82-83.

⁹⁹ Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ Tui Atua, "In Search of Meaning, Nuances' and Metaphor," 49-63.

¹⁰¹ Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 49.

3.7 Symbolic elements of the *ifoga*

Victor Turner defines symbols expansively as the “basic building-blocks, and the ‘molecules,’ of ritual.”¹⁰² This means that every symbolic element used, every gesture employed, every unit of space and time, by convention stands for something other than itself. For Turner, a symbol is the smallest unit of ritual, which still retains the specific properties of ritual behaviour; it is a “storage unit” filled with a vast amount of information. A symbol for Turner has three separate but closely related properties:¹⁰³

1) Condensation – one concept represents many things at the same time. For instance, in the *ifoga* ritual, the high chief under the fine-mat represents the sinner (perpetrator), or an animal. These associations need not be logically related, and can even be contradictory.

2) Unification of disparate referents – built on the property of condensation, symbols are able to represent concepts drawn from different “domains of social experience and ethical classification.”¹⁰⁴ So again, the fine-mat can represent concepts drawn from political, familial, and individual experiences of the women who made it.

3) Polarization of meaning refers to the symbols uniting different referents concepts drawn from (a) physiological and (b) social and moral experience. For instance, the *taumafataga* (feast) in the *ifoga* ritual represents a shared meal and fellowship, while *faaaloaloga* (gifts) represents honour and political status of the chiefs. Symbols thus “unite the organic with the sociomoral order, proclaiming their ultimate religious unity, over and above conflicts between and within these orders.”¹⁰⁵ For Turner the emotions encountered in people’s life-experiences are evoked by and channelled into ritual symbols, such that not only can people experience joy in a ritual, but also

¹⁰² Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 14.

¹⁰³ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 52.

¹⁰⁵ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 52.

so that negative emotions such as hate, fear, and grief, can be given a safe outlet that doesn't threaten actual social unrest. Thus, Turner's idea of symbols as building blocks for any ritual is relevant in exploring the basic molecules of the *ifoga* ritual in Samoa.

Ifoga is a unique cultural event and its process is typical in the Samoan culture. The process begins with *soalaupule*.¹⁰⁶ *Soalaupule* as discussed means to deliberate and to share the *tofa* (wisdom) and *faautaga* (perspectives) among the chiefs.¹⁰⁷ This consultation will decide whether to proceed for an *ifoga* or not. Once the *tofa* is *tasi* or consensus is reached for an *ifoga* to be done, then the meeting proceeds to other vital components of the ritual.¹⁰⁸ For instance, who will be the *taulaga or pulou*, meaning the one who is willing to be the scapegoat (one kneeling down and covered with the fine mat) for the sake of the village? Then, whose *ie o le auafa* (chief's fine mat) will be used for the ritual? This is time people will see the fine mats, which have been kept for so many years. Thus, everything will be sorted out during the *soalaupule* (deliberation) event including the date, the time, and other preparations.

3.7.1 *Osi Taulaga (Scapegoat)*¹⁰⁹

In the Samoan culture, high chiefs are the ones, who perform the ritual on behalf of the community.¹¹⁰ Keesing notes, "Within the family circle, wrongs were dealt with by the appointed head, the *matai* (chief), or by an assembly of the family."¹¹¹ For the *ifoga* ritual, the *tamalii* (high chief) acts on behalf of the perpetrator, and he takes the responsibility as defined in the

¹⁰⁶ This is the first step (deliberation and dialogue) taken by the chiefs of the family or the village of the perpetrator whether to proceed to *ifoga* or not. Because *ifoga* is the outcome of chiefs' consultation.

¹⁰⁷ The concept *soalaupule* and its meaning are discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁰⁸ Maulio Oso (informant), discussion with the author September 8 2012.

¹⁰⁹ I use the term scapegoat here, because the *tamalii* is not the one who commits the crime but he does it on behalf of whoever it was in his family or village who committed the crime. Compare with Leviticus 16.

¹¹⁰ Gilson, *Samoa 1800 to 1900*, 49 – 50; Turner, *Samoa*, 189-192.

¹¹¹ Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, 215.

Samoan proverb: *ole sala ole mea a le tamalii* (Atonement is the sole responsibility of the high chief). However, in cases where the *tamalii* (high chief) is travelling, and not present, another high chief performs the ritual. The *tulafale* (orator), with some honorific rank, can also become the *taulaga* (scapegoat). However, the sacredness of the ritual is with the high chiefs because they are the ones who have equal status with the scapegoat (daughter of the chief) performing the *tausala* ritual. They are like gods in families and villages, whom honour, respect, and the most valuable things in the community are given.¹¹² In fact, once the high chief lays down his crown, honorific status, and dignity by bowing down on the ground under a fine mat, he is an animal. What does this mean for the Samoans and the victim's family? It is a shameful act in the eyes of the Samoans and no family or village want their chief to be treated as an animal. For this reason, the perfect scapegoat for ritual is the high chief. The uniqueness of the high chief under the fine mat in the eyes of the victims' family can be compared to the aroma of the burnt offering and sin offering that YHWH enjoys in Old Testament.

3.7.2 *Ie o le Malo*¹¹³ (Fine mat of the Kingdom / Family)

Ie ole malo is one of the honorific names given to the Samoan treasure *ietoga*, translated into English as fine mat. It is used here to refer to the *ietoga* (fine mat) kept by high chiefs of families. It has symbolic meanings not only for the chiefs themselves, but also for the family and the village.¹¹⁴ As Krämer notes, they (*ietogas*) are fine mats of rank, power, prestige, and history.¹¹⁵

¹¹² The Samoans look at their high chiefs as gods and this is the Samoan saying, “*Afai e leai se atua, o lona uiga e leai se tamalii*,” meaning if there is no god that means there is no high chief.

¹¹³ The author uses the name *ie ole malo* for the fine mat because *ietoga* (fine mat) has many names. For the *ifoga* ritual itself, it is the treasure of the kingdom that should be used and this one belongs to the high chief of the family.

¹¹⁴ Paramount chiefs and high chiefs have a special name for their fine-mats and it carries with it its origin as well as the history of the family.

¹¹⁵ Krämer, *Samoa Islands vol. 1*, 440-445.

They are also unique in terms of quality and their names in relation to their origins. Sometimes they are called *Ie-ole Auafa* (treasure wrap with the *afa* - Samoan rope made from skin of a special coconut) that people use during special occasions, such as the *ifoga* (atonement), funerals, and weddings. The *ietoga* (treasure) is a crucial and a valuable element of an *ifoga*.¹¹⁶ It represents the qualities of prestige, gratitude, deference, respect, and recognition.¹¹⁷ In the *faalupega* (honorific greetings) of every village, each paramount chief has a specific name for his *ietoga* (treasure).¹¹⁸ *Ie ole malo* (treasure of the Kingdom) connects the *tausala* ritual and the *ifoga* ritual for the *ietoga* (treasure), represents and symbolises the presence of Amoa (daughter of the Tagaloa) and daughters of chiefs.

3.7.3 Laolao (Time)

The time for the *ifoga* party to leave their place depends on the distance between villages and the place where the *ifoga* will be done. Usually, the preferable time for the ritual to begin is early in the morning around 4am to 5am.¹¹⁹ There are various reasons for this preferable time. According to Tui Atua, “the morning gives the image of birds singing, soft dew, flowers, and plant life at its most alive.”¹²⁰ This atmosphere shapes the framework of mood and marks the dawn of a new day. This same time, anglers and fishermen conduct the *alafaga* (type of fishing) for catching trevallies and bonitos. The Samoans believe that this is the best time to catch them before the sun rises. Furthermore, Tui Atua states that “Taulaga”, meaning ritual offering, is thus in

¹¹⁶ The making and producing of *ie-toga* (fine mat) is the sole responsibilities of *tamaitai* or Samoan women. The valuable ones are small and soft and can be produced for one year or more. All *ietoga* have different sizes and its *ula* or decorations.

¹¹⁷ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 52.

¹¹⁸ Krämer, *Samoa Islands, vol. 1*. Krämer recorded every village in Samoa and their honorific greetings and some people reacted against this because of the way their honorific greetings were recorded. It represented the perspective of the people who shared them.

¹¹⁹ Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 6-12; Macpherson C and Macpherson L, “The Ifoga,” 109-135.

¹²⁰ Tui Atua, “In search of Meaning, Nuance and Metaphor,” 61-73. Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 10.

harmony with nature in celebrating a beginning.”¹²¹ The nature of the *ifoga* ritual and its religious aspects of fasting and silent meditation lead to this nature of conducting it early in the morning. Such is the wisdom behind every *ifoga* party as people prepare themselves to perform the ritual. They prefer to perform without being noticed by the victim’s family. Thus, the rising of the sun has a spiritual significance in the Samoan culture.

3.7.4 *Malae poo le Nofoaga (Venue or Sanctuary)*

There are special venues to conduct the ritual and the selection of the place depends on the wisdom of the chiefs and the reason for performing it. It can be conducted either in front of the high chief’s *Maota* (house) or in front of the victim’s family house.¹²² This depends on the *ifoga* party and their preparations. Some of the *ifoga* parties prefer to perform the ritual in the *malae fono* (meeting place) of the village.¹²³ Such is the case if what happened causes both villages to war. According to Fonoti, the ritual has to perform in the *malae fono* (village meeting place) if the victim is a chief.¹²⁴ Both venues, the chief’s residence and the village meeting place, are sacred places in the Samoan culture. The *ifoga* party is also aware that every *maota* (high chief’s residence) and *malae fono* (meeting place) has taboos, and this is different from village to village. The Samoans also understands that it is taboo for anybody to pass through or enter the place once the *ifoga* ritual is carried out. It continues until the victim’s family has agreed to accept the *ifoga*. In case

¹²¹ Tui Atua, “In Search of Meaning, Nuance and Metaphor,” 61.

¹²² In some of the villages, there are special places allocated for festival, celebrations, and rituals such as *ifoga*.

¹²³ Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*. 49; Turner, *Samoa*, 88.

¹²⁴ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 19, 2012.

where the victim's family is not willing to accept it, the *ifoga* party returns back home, and continues on the next day until the ritual is accepted.¹²⁵

3.7.5 Ava (Kava Ceremony)¹²⁶

The Kava Ceremony has two symbolic meanings: thanksgiving ceremony and welcome ceremony. In the context of the *ifoga* ritual, when it is done as soon as the perpetrator's family entered the house, then it is an official welcoming ceremony. However, if the kava ceremony occurs at the end of the dialogue and deliberation, then it is a thanksgiving ceremony.

3.7.6 Feast

The feast also has a symbolic meaning for the Samoans. They can be a demonstration of how the victims have coped with the tragedy and by celebrating what has been achieved by the two parties. One can argue that the feast is another way of understanding violence from the perspective of the victims, for they are the ones who prepared the feast for the celebration of peace and reconciliation.

3.7.7 Gifts

The gifts presented in various forms: food, fine-mats, money, etc. are in their symbolic use. They are symbolic for achieving reconciliation and confirming a new beginning among the parties involved.

These symbols have powerful meanings in the *ifoga* ritual and as Turner, notes not only do they reveal crucial social and religious values; they are also

¹²⁵ In most cases, the *ifoga* is accepted either on the first day or on the second day. Culturally, it is also impolite not to accept the *ifoga* but the *ifoga* party understands the feelings of the victim's family and demonstrates their patience in receiving a response.

¹²⁶ The Kava Ceremony is described in details later in the chapter.

(precisely because of their reference to the supernatural) transformative for human attitudes and behaviour.¹²⁷ The handling of symbols in the *ifoga* ritual exposes their powers to act upon and change the persons involved in ritual performance

3.8 Process and structure of the *ifoga* ritual

The *ifoga* ritual will be analysed based on a tripartite theoretical framework: *Toia le Va* (breaching the mutual relationships), *Pupulu le Va* (healing the mutual relationship) *Teu le Va* (care for the relationship or in this context reconciliation).¹²⁸

The first conception *toia le va* means that individuals, families, or village relationships are in chaos as a result of a crime or violence. At this stage people separate themselves from the normal social activities in the community and others prefer to be alone. This is related to what van Gennep calls “separation.”¹²⁹ Sometimes people out of shame of what has happened in the eyes of the community, and fear for revenge by the victim’s family separate themselves from community activities and life.

The second one is *pupulu le va*, results from departing the stage of separation and deals with the issue through dialogue and proceeds to performing the ritual. The process of healing the wounds through acknowledging the wrong done and asking for forgiveness is at the heart of this stage. We can also relate to the “liminality” concept used by both van Gennep and Turner.¹³⁰

The last stage is called *teu le va*. The healing process at this stage is completed and the parties involved have settled their dispute. Reconciliation has been achieved and this means that honour, dignities and rights not only of

¹²⁷ Victor Turner, *Natural symbols: Explorations in cosmology* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1978), 12.

¹²⁸ See J. Mageo, “Myth, Cultural Identity, and Ethno-politics,” pp. 493-520.

¹²⁹ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 23

¹³⁰ See Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 23; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 94-96.

the victims but also the perpetrators have been restored. Van Gennep named this stage as reintegration as people are also to join the normal procedures and social life within their communities.¹³¹ For the Samoans, the process of *teu le va* ends with a celebration, a feast, and the presentation of gifts.

First stage: *Toia le Va* (Breaching Relational Space)

3.8.1 The Acknowledging the wrong done (Confession of sin)

When the perpetrator's party arrives early in the morning at the venue of the ritual, they do everything quietly and cover the *ositaulaga* (high chief) with the most valuable fine mat. The other party members will sit behind the person covered with the fine mat. We must not forget that the *ifoga* party at that very moment, begins to fast from food and drink until they are accepted and welcomed to the house. In addition, the chief under the *ietoga* (fine mat) is struggling for fresh air, because it is the finest fine mat, one, which the air is difficult to pass through. In fact, that is the reality of the ritual and every individual member of the *ifoga* party will meditate silently and pray for acceptance.

3.8.2 *Faaulufalega ole ifoga* (Acceptance of the Perpetrator's Family)

Once the victim's family acknowledges an *ifoga*, they *soalaupule* (deliberate, dialog) among themselves and discuss whether the *ifoga* will be accepted or not.¹³² According to the participants with whom the author discoursed, genealogical connections (*faia ma sootaga*) are very important

¹³¹ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 24.

¹³² The informants: Maulio Oso, Tolofuaivaolelei, Foniti, and Salue share their experiences about how they take part in the process of accepting *ifoga* in their respective places. All share the pain and joy of such experiences as they try to heal relationships among families, villages, and districts.

during this deliberation.¹³³ Families and villages in Samoa are connected somewhere genealogically and that is vital for the acceptance of every *ifoga*. If it is accepted, a feast will be prepared and all other customary protocols will be organised.¹³⁴ The *Tamalii* or high chief of the victim's family removes the *ietoga* or fine mat and welcomes the *ifoga* party inside the house. Foniti and Maulio state that sometimes a chief of the village, who is related to the perpetrator's family or someone related to that village is asked to welcome the *ifoga* party.

Second Stage: *Pupulu le Va* (Healing Process)

3.8.3 *Ava*¹³⁵ o le *Feiloaiga* (Welcome Ceremony)

The Roman Catholic Cardinal Pio Taofinuu writes about the significance of the *Ava* (kava) ceremony in the *Faa-Samoa* (Samoan culture) in one of his booklets "*Ole Ava o se Perofetaga: The Kava Ceremony is a Prophecy.*"¹³⁶ *Ava* (piper methysticum) is used for the traditional Samoan ceremony called the *Ava ole feiloaiga* (welcome ceremony). The ceremony is also known as the 'thanksgiving ceremony' giving thanks to the god Tagaloa for allowing the fellowship to take place.¹³⁷ The kava ceremony can take one to

¹³³ The Informants: Foniti, Salue, Maulio, Tolofuaivaolelei, Faamatuaina, Fauatea, Lima, Matale, Aiono, and others all value the importance of genealogical connection for the *ifoga* ritual.

¹³⁴ In cases where the *ifoga* may not be accepted on the first day, the *ifoga* party will withdraw and return on the next day. This seldom happens, since the arrival of Christianity.

¹³⁵ *Ava* is a traditional drink made up of the root of the *Ava* plant. They are dug up and dried in the sun. Then they will be ground-using stones, mixed with water and then drunk. The plant has a genealogical history according to traditions. It is not clear where the plant originated, as each region in Samoa tells their own version regarding ownership of the plant.

¹³⁶ *O le Ava o se Perofetaga: The Kava Ceremony is a Prophecy*, September 8, 1983. See also Urima Faasii, "Gospel and Culture in the *Ava* Ceremony," *Pacific Journal of Theology*, 10 (1993): 61-63.

¹³⁷ Lipp Thorolf, *Kava: The drink of the gods*, a Film, VHS Videocassette ca. 90 mins. by the Institute of the Pacific studies, 1998. Whenever families, villages and the churches today have guests, they are welcomed culturally with a kava ceremony. It is either before, or after a pastor leads a devotion or prayer.

two hours during the *ifoga* process, depending on traditional speeches from both sides.

Chiefs of the host village or family bring dried kava sticks to the occasion. After greeting the *ifoga* party or the guests, an orator (from the host party) performs the task of the *Sufi Ava*. The *sufi ava* asks a *taulealea* (young man) to bring a *fala* (mat) in the middle of the house. Then, he calls out each high chief's name and the *taulealea* (young man) collects all the kava sticks on the mat. This mat of kava sticks is presented as a gift to the guests' (*ifoga* party).

An orator from the guests *po le fala* (slaps the mat) and says "Ava" (kava), and he receives the kava sticks on behalf of the *ifoga* party. This person is called the *Folafola Ava*. His task is to acknowledge the *faaloalo* (mat filled with kava sticks), and then, he distributes the kava sticks. The first kava stick is given to the *aumaga* (young people) and the *tausala* (daughter of a chief). They grind kavavoot, mix it with water, and prepare the kava mix for the ceremony.¹³⁸ The second one is presented to the high chief of the *ifoga* party and the third kava stick is for the high chief of the host's party. The distribution of the kava sticks depends on the *Folafola Ava*'s (orator) knowledge of the high chiefs and the people present at both parties.

After the *Folafola Ava* distributes the kava sticks, the orators of the host's party proceed to their *faatau*. *Faatau* is a deliberation between the orators (host party) to choose from among them the *osi-taulaga* (priest, celebrant). The *osi-taulaga* or priest delivers the welcoming speech known as the *Lauga usu*. He speaks on behalf of the host party and their families. The *Lauga* is like a prayer and it has five main parts.¹³⁹ J. E. Buse notes,

¹³⁸ The *Tausala* (daughter of a chief) here is called the *Paluava* meaning she is the one mixing the Ava for the ceremony with the help of the young men. *Paluava* is the sole responsibility of young girls especially during this welcoming ceremony.

¹³⁹ The *Lauga* (A Samoan oratory speech) varies depending on the occasion such as village meetings, funerals, weddings, *ifoga* rituals, and so forth. However, the structure remains the

A Samoan talking-chief speaking at a traditional function is not there to air his own views. He is there to play the part laid down for him in the ceremony, to say the things, which custom and courtesy require, and to say them in the right way at the right time, so that tradition is honoured and ritual observed.¹⁴⁰

The *tulafales* (orators) are aware of these protocols and they prepare accordingly, the same manner pastors do with their sermons. Skillful orators present the *Lauga* (cultural speech) according to these values. The first part is *Paia* (sacredness or holiness). In this part, the orator acknowledges the presence of the god Tagaloa, the sacredness of the *maota* (sanctuary), the honorific status of people present, and the *faalupega* (honorific greetings) of their respective villages. The second part is the *Ava* (*kava*). The orator apologises to the guests for not having the best kava shoot and sticks.¹⁴¹ The third part is the *Faafetai* (thanksgiving): thanking the god Tagaloa for allowing the occasion to take place and for the wellbeing of both parties involved.¹⁴² The fourth part is *Taeao* (literally Morning), recalling the major important historical events in Samoa as well as the arrival of Christianity.¹⁴³ The last part is called the *Faamoemoe and Faamatafi*, which is a prayer for god's blessings and wishing for good health.¹⁴⁴

The *Lauga usu* (speech from the host's) will be followed by a respond from the guest's party. This response from the guests is called, *Lauga tali*. Its

same and skill orators have their own unique ways of presenting them based on their knowledge. This knowledge in the Samoa culture is power because orators have to prepare every day. See Alessandro Duranti, "Speechmaking and the Organization of Discourse in a Samoan *Fono*," *The Journal of Polynesian Society*, 90/3 (Sept 1981): 357-400.

¹⁴⁰ J. E. Buse, "Two Samoan Speeches," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1961): 104-115, accessed: 04/08/2014 04:28 URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/610297>.

¹⁴¹ The Samoans hospitality nature is to offer the best they have for the guests and even though the quality and the quantity is enormous, the orators always apologise for what they have received.

¹⁴² Today, the *Faafetai* or the Thanksgiving part of the *Lauga* is now directed to the God of the Christians and not Tagaloa.

¹⁴³ The three mainline churches recognized by the culture are the congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Methodist Church of Samoa, and the Catholic Church. They are the only ones who have *Taeao* (Morning) because they are the oldest denominations.

¹⁴⁴ See Tatupu Faafetai Matafa Tui, *Lauga: Samoan Oratory* (Apia, Suva: National University of Samoa, University of the South Pacific, 1987).

structure is similar to that of the *Lauga usu*, and sometimes varies depending on the experience, and the knowledge of the orators.¹⁴⁵ However, the most important part in the *Lauga tali* (responding speech from the guests) is giving thanks to the host's for the *faaaloalo* (gift of kava sticks) presented to them.

Whenever, the speeches from both parties conclude, the *Tufa-ava* (kava distributor) informs the participants of the ceremony that the kava is well mixed and is ready to be distributed. During this time, chiefs clap their hands and become ready to receive their kava cups. Another young man called the *Tautu-Ava*, distributes the kava already mixed by the *tausala* (daughter of a chief) to both parties.¹⁴⁶ The *Tufa-Ava* announces the names of chiefs who receive the kava while the *Tautu-Ava* presents the cup to the person. The first kava cup goes to the high chief of the *ifoga* party, and the second one goes to the high chief of the host's party. The rest of the *kava* cups are presented according to the ranks and status of the people present. After presenting the last kava cup, the *Tufa-ava* concludes the kava ceremony.

3.8.4 Sufiga o Tuoai ma le Leleiga (Healing Process)

The two parties proceed to the main agenda of the day: healing their wounds and reconciliation after the kava ceremony. The process depends on the first speaker. In some cases, the orator of the *ifoga* party speaks first. He admits the feelings of remorse, and takes full responsibility of what has happened.¹⁴⁷ Such speech parallels to what Keesing states as “a kind of confessional called, *tautoga*, used either within the family or by the

¹⁴⁵ The *Lauga* from the guests can begin with the *Paia* (honorific greetings) and proceeds to the *Ava* (kava) presented to them by hosts. This is because there will another opportunity at the end of the fellowship such as the *ifoga* ritual to officially thank and bless the hosts for their hospitality.

¹⁴⁶ See Dorothee von Horschelmann, “The Religious Meaning of the Samoan Kava Ceremony,” *Anthropos* Bd. 90 H.1/3. (1995): 193-195. Dorothee gives not only a religious meaning of the *Kava* ceremony but also a detail account of the *Kava* ritual.

¹⁴⁷ Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, 216.

community to place the responsibility for guilt.”¹⁴⁸ The orator acknowledges the inappropriate action of humiliation, shame, and guilt, and at the same time prays for peace, harmony, and reconciliation.¹⁴⁹ In this very moment, one can hear a turbulence of words such as laments and frustrations from the victim’s family.¹⁵⁰ The mood of the consultation and the deliberation fluctuates during the process as Stair states that the receiving party “sometimes vented their displeasure upon the visitors and the *ifoga* party replied with due submission.”¹⁵¹ The *ifoga* party is also aware that such feelings are normal during the reconciliation process. They accept with sympathy the frustration and accusations from the victim’s family and humble themselves. Even though these harsh words are spoken, shared, and deeply expressed, the *vafealoai* (mutual relationship) among the chiefs and parties are valued and *amanaia* (respected).

Third Stage: *Teu Le Va* (Reconciliation)

3.8.5 Reconciliation: From Enemies to Honoured Guests and Hosts

Honour and shame are part of the Samoan communal life and culture. These two aspects create a quagmire among the Samoans and people struggle to overcome them. In the reconciliation process, both parties proceed to negotiating the violated *tapu* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenants), and *tuaoi* (relational boundaries). These elements are important in achieving harmony and peace between the two parties. They (people) reconcile within themselves,

¹⁴⁸ Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, 215.

¹⁴⁹ Maulio (informant) shares that every *ifoga* is different depending on the receiving family. Sometimes the hosts will be the first to take the floor and proceed on.

¹⁵⁰ This is time people can hear lamentations from the victim's family like those of the psalmists as they express their feelings, but at the end of the process peace and reconciliation is achieved.

¹⁵¹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 98.

having no feelings of being victimized, and their self-esteem rises.¹⁵² The high chiefs of both sides testify to honour their *feagaiga* (covenant) and must confirm that their families will respect and honour the peace they have made.¹⁵³ The status of both parties changes when they reconcile. For instance, the *ifoga* party becomes honoured guests and no longer enemies; and the victim's family becomes hosts. This is important moment for the sealing peace and harmony between the parties involved. Thus, healing and reconciliation restore the *va-fealoai* (social relationship) and the *va-tapuia* (sacred relationship) between families involved.

3.8.6 *Taumafutaga* (Feast and Celebration)

Food has value and power in the Samoan culture like the fine mats. The status of families is based on the quantity of food production having big taro plantations and farms. If one asks a person about a funeral or wedding he/she attended saying: "how was it?" The response will surely be based on the *taumafutaga* (feast). It represents everything that happened in a Samoan fellowship and it is an important part of the Samoan culture of hospitality.¹⁵⁴ It is sign of having good relations and fellowship. Everyone can contribute whatever he or she can afford and share with the community. The Samoan feast includes roast pigs, fish, chickens, taro, breadfruit, and coconuts depending on their farms and plantations. For the host's (victim's family), this is another way to show their hospitality to the guests (*ifoga* party). This raises questions from an ethical perspective – that of the victim's family preparing all

¹⁵² Stair, *Old Samoa*, 98. This is very important, though sometimes both the victim and the perpetrator are not present during this process but hearing about it leads to new beginnings and self-esteem.

¹⁵³ Foniti (informant) shares about the importance of the *ifoga* for some families especially if they have established a new concrete treaty.

¹⁵⁴ Feasting in Polynesia especially Samoa and Tonga is a major event. People have the understanding that the more you give, the more you receive, – and that is the Samoan philosophy. In addition, some people believe that if they are not hosting guests as much as they can, it means they did nothing. The Samoans believe that whatever service they offer to someone is a sacrifice that brings blessing.

these things for the perpetrator's family.¹⁵⁵ However, we must not forget that both parties change their status. The *ifoga* party becomes honoured guests while the victim's family becomes a host. Hosting guests is a pride for the Samoans, because this reveals the true status of a Samoan family in the village or the district. Thus, hospitality to the guests and having a big feast is another way the Samoans express such cultural pride. Feast is another way of confirming peace, harmony, and having a good relationship.

3.8.7 *Faaaloaloga* (Presentation of Gifts for the *ifoga* party)

In the Samoan culture, every *mafutaga* (fellowship), *fefaasagaiga* (social gathering) has a *taualuga* (conclusion, ending). For instance, in weddings, funerals, opening of a new church building and so forth, they conclude with the ritual of *faaaloaloga* (presentation of gifts). *Faaaloaloga* or the presentation of gifts is part of the Samoan culture and it is typical in the *ifoga* process. Meleisea notes, "Gifts make statements about relationships and about the nature of obligations, commitments, and ties between givers and receivers."¹⁵⁶ This may contradict what Bourdieu argues, namely that the exchange of gifts has a political function.¹⁵⁷ It features a way of honour, respect, happiness, and sealing the fellowship with the guests in the Samoan culture by presenting the *sua faatamalii*, and a *faaoso*.¹⁵⁸ The *sua* is a symbolic act done by the high chief and the host's (victim's family) to show their appreciation and respect for the guests (the perpetrator's family). The components of the *sua* include a coconut, taro, chicken, and tapa cloth, roast pig and an *ietoga* (treasure). After the host's presents the *sua faatamalii*, then, they offer the *faaoso* (variety of goods). This includes pigs, cows, taro, *ietoga*

¹⁵⁵ It is very difficult to understand the Samoan culture and its protocols if one does not view it from an *aiga* (extended family) perspective. It is also a sign of showing their ancestors and gods that have fully forgiven and made peace with the *ifoga* party.

¹⁵⁶ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 52.

¹⁵⁷ Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 14.

¹⁵⁸ The participants, with whom the author discussed, have acknowledged the importance of the gifts or *faatamalii* presented to the *ifoga* party.

(treasure), and so forth. The presentation of gifts has a symbolic use. It is also a way of informing the *ifoga* party (guests) that the *ifoga* is accepted with much appreciation. Thus, it symbolizes that *tapus* (taboo), *feagaiga* (covenant), and *tuaoi* (boundary) are purified, harmony among parties is restored, and reconciliation is achieved.

3.9 Significance of the *ifoga* ritual

The *ifoga* ritual is very important because it deals with social and sacred relationships among the Samoans. These relations associate with *tapu* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenants) and *tuaoi* (boundaries) that are in chaos when they are broken. The common belief is that these three features (*tapu*, *feagaiga*, and *tuaoi*) connect the living with their ancestors, land, waters, and the environment.¹⁵⁹ As Keesing illustrates, the elders also fear that what has happened, provokes “the anger of the supernatural powers.”¹⁶⁰ The *ifoga* ritual is conducted based on the chiefs’ *tofa fetutunai* (wisdom).¹⁶¹ To proceed to the *ifoga* ritual as Foniti argues, means, to mend and to negotiate relationships, otherwise violence will prevail.¹⁶² Moreover, it overcomes shame and retains honour and respect from the community.

The Samoans are proud of being a Christian country, but when *vatapuia* (sacred relations) and *vafealoai* (social relations) are breached, their whole worldview is in bedlam. For these reasons, the chiefs have no choice, but accept the burden and are ready to sacrifice his dignity for the sake of his

¹⁵⁹ As discussed above the *aiga* (extended family) is central to the Samoan way of life and fear of the ancestors and the gods intervening with curse and punishment are still felt by the people today.

¹⁶⁰ Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, 216.

¹⁶¹ *Tofa fetutunai* means the wisdom of the chiefs to judge and decide upon something to be done. This is the wisdom, according to Samoans, that God give King Solomon when he prayed to him – *tofa fetuutuunai*.

¹⁶² Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

people.¹⁶³ The *ifoga* ritual is conducted by either the whole *aiga* (extended family), the *nuu* (village) or the *itumalo* (district) of perpetrators and offenders to the family of the victims. From a Samoan cultural perspective, when a whole village is participating in an *ifoga*, it is a symbolic act of communal remorsefulness. It is also an expression of guilt and to show that they are filled with shame from an *aga ua tufanua* (crime being committed).¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, from the perspective of the victim's family, the presence of the whole village assures them that the chiefs of the perpetrator's village have *amanaia* (high respect) of their chiefs' status and rank.

Furthermore, the *ifoga* ritual is part of the Samoan culture and it fits well in the Samoan communal context. It has been practiced for an extended period of time and has evolved within the Samoan societies since the pre-contact era.¹⁶⁵ The *ifoga* mechanism means that it was traditionally and culturally initiated according to a Samoan myth¹⁶⁶ rather than being the product of external importation.¹⁶⁷ Thus, it fits well in the village way of life that values the *vafealoai* (mutual relationship) among people and where order and security are governed by the *pulega alii ma faipule* (chiefly system).

Moreover, *ifoga* ritual is a post violent conflict healing mechanism. It focuses on the future of the two parties involved to end violence and prevent

¹⁶³ Oninatai Matale (informant), discussion with the author August 21, 2012. He argued that once the chiefs proceed to *ifoga*, it means that they are ready to die. This was the case prior to the arrival of the missionaries and in the 19th century.

¹⁶⁴ As mentioned above *tu fanua* means those behaviors that are not suitable for sacred places. For instance, the cases such as rape, murder, stealing and expressing harsh words. The Samoans also maintain that only animals behave like this and that is the sense I use at this point. People doing such things are called *maile* (dog) or *meaola* (animal).

¹⁶⁵ Based on the myth about the origin of the *ifoga* ritual and the incident in Tonga mentioned above, there is an enormous consensus among the participants that it was indeed a tradition.

¹⁶⁶ This Samoan myth will be dealt with in the second chapter when I talk about the origin of the *ifoga* ritual. The myth explains that the ritual has been initiated by the Samoan god named Tagaloa.

¹⁶⁷ I. William Zartman, "Conclusions: Changes in the New Order and the Place for the Old," in *Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts. African Conflict Medicine*, ed. by I. William Zartman (Colorado/London: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2000), 219–230.

further retribution. This should not be the case from a western point of view as reflected in both Ahrens and Gutmanns arguments.¹⁶⁸ However, in the Samoan culture, once the *ifoga* ritual is done, the feelings of hatred and revenge is overcome. When the family of the perpetrator realise the seriousness of the crime committed, *ifoga* must be done to prevent further violence even though the case is dealt with by the state court. As has been pointed out already, it is not just the individual perpetrator who is involved, the whole extended family and the village is at stake.

In addition, *ifoga* ritual is conducted and performed outside of the legal court, as the Samoan saying goes, ‘*e le faia i le auala upu o aiga ma nuu.*’ It means that matters related to families and villages are not solved on the road. The culture has its own sacred court places and allocated meeting places where tensions, divisions, and conflicts are resolved and healed. It has its own procedures which are totally different from the rules and regulations that managed and governed the affairs in the state legal court. As mentioned earlier, *ifoga* is the outcome of the *soalaupule* session where the decision to conduct an *ifoga* is finalised. While the legal court identifies the actions of the perpetrator and its effects upon the victim, the traditional healing mechanism considers the wider communities and people affected because of what had happened.

One of the major achievements in the process of the *ifoga* ritual is how it deals with the issue of healing memories. The bad and evil nature of the violent actions of the perpetrator upon the victim are sent by the high chiefs of both families (perpetrator and victim) spiritually to the place called *Nuu-le-aina* (place nobody lives, or dessert). This is to make sure that incident will not be remembered by both parties and this will be kept as a covenant between

¹⁶⁸ See Ahrens, “Interrupting Violence in Postcolonial Society,” 180-197; Gutmann, *Gewaltunterbrechung*, 45. For Ahrens violence can be interrupted as in the case of PNG, while Gutmann argues that the cycle of violence can be disrupted. Both terms "interrupt and disrupt" appear to signify that violence cannot be overcome.

them. The affirmation of forgiveness is at the heart of healing the memories and both parties shall move on peacefully with their lives.

Finally, *ifoga* is a holistic approach and is process-oriented. As mentioned, the *ifoga* ritual begins with the *soalaupulega* (consultation, deliberation and dialog) whether to conduct one or not. Its purpose is *ia tasi le tofa*, meaning the participants should have a consensus and agreed upon a unified decision. It is based on *faaaloalo* (meeting face to face), *va-fealoai* (social relationship), and *va-tapuia* (sacred relationship) of the Samoan people. It provides a platform for comprehensive inclusion and participation among all families and the people involved heal their minds and souls by taking what has happened as a positive way forward for both parties involved.

3.10 Limitations and contemporary challenges

The ritual *ifoga* plays a complementary role in keeping the peace and stability among the Samoan people. Despite its significant role for community and its recognition by the state legal system, it has challenges and limitations. The first challenge concerns the chiefs themselves. The *ifoga* ritual according to the Samoan culture is the sole responsibility of the high chiefs, however, some of the chiefs failed to commit themselves and to strengthen their roles in conducting the ritual.¹⁶⁹ Reasons pertaining to this issue ranges from political, social, and financial matters. The informants (Maulio, Foniti, and Aiono) raised their concern about those chiefs who avoid it but they are leaders of families and the community. For instance, a chief holding a higher rank title will refuse to perform it to those of lower ranks as illustrated by Meleisea.¹⁷⁰ They have to be reminded of the Samoan proverb, *ole sala ole mea ale tamalii*, meaning atonement is the sole responsibility of the high chief. Their wisdom

¹⁶⁹ See Macpherson C and Macpherson L, "The Ifoga," 109-133. Foniti and Tolofuaivaolelei (informants) share their sadness about some of the issues in villages that lead to violence because of the failure of the chiefs to conduct an *ifoga* as part of the culture.

¹⁷⁰ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 59.

and *tofa-faatamalii* (grace and *mana*) is for the wellbeing of the community under their leadership.

Secondly is the challenge of collective interest versus the individual human right. For example, in the past there was no clear demarcation between collective interest and individual rights. The chief or the elders made decisions on behalf of the family and were presented as collective opinion. Today, the state has moved towards making a distinction between collective interest and individual rights. Individuals are free to express their opinions and voice their concerns when needed. This relates to the issue of the victim's voice in the process of the *ifoga* ritual. In fact, the voice of both the victim and the perpetrator are not heard in the process and this might be challenged from the perspective of modern human rights.¹⁷¹ In fact, from the Samoan cultural perspective, their voices would not be heard because the issue is dealt with in the family context. Members of the community and their respected *aiga* (extended family), speak on their behalf. One can observe this as a challenge to the ritual reflecting the perspective of human rights as recognised internationally.

In addition, the issue of collective interests versus individual rights has even touched on the way family members live and socialize. In the past, people lived in a common *aiga* (family) compound, which ensured family unity, peace, and cohesion. Rising standards of living and greater emphasis on individual self-expression has made living together in the family land increasingly difficult to sustain. People migrate to the city; break with tradition, and live completely independent lives.

¹⁷¹ Macpherson C and Macpherson L, "The Ifoga," 109-133. We take the issue of rape as an example to clarify this point in relation to *ifoga*. When the perpetrator's family conducts an *ifoga*, the elders will deal with it and the belief is that the elders speak on her behalf. Thus, her true feelings and emotions for what happened will not be shared.

Thirdly, the *ifoga* ritual and its dignity are also open to abuse by the people.¹⁷² Families of the perpetrators can abuse this cultural ritual as a way to cover up for their misbehaviour and wrong actions committed. Furthermore, chiefs can misuse the *ifoga* as a way of gaining self-honour and prestige. The validity and dignity of the *ifoga* ritual will be lost especially if it is done just to fulfil cultural obligations and not from the heart. According to Maulio, when the *ifoga* is done in this sense, it sometimes lead to severe things happening in the future.

Finally, the ritual has been secularized and the cash economy influence the way the *ifoga* has been conducted.¹⁷³ This is one of the concerns raised by the Macphersons as a challenge for the young generation.¹⁷⁴ The new generation and those living overseas are mindful of the *ifoga* as an expensive ritual. This is because every member of the families affected contributes to the occasion to show their support and solidarity with the *aiga*.

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have examined the use, purpose, function and the logic of the ritual *ifoga* in its epistemic context. The *ifoga* ritual is part of the Samoan culture and can be traced back mythologically to the Samoan god Tagaloa and her daughter Amoa. It recapitulates part of the Samoan history whenever the ritual is performed. Since Tagaloa, initiates both the *tausala* and the *ifoga* rituals¹⁷⁵ only the chiefs, leaders of families and villages, and priests in the Samoan religion are preferable as scapegoats. It functions as a

¹⁷² The participants whom I discussed with share this concern about the young generation of chiefs who have not fully considered the value of the ritual.

¹⁷³ Macpherson C and Macpherson L, "The Ifoga," 109-135. Foniti shares that the western world use the bank to deposit and save money but the Bank for the Samoans are their extended families. The philosophy – the more you give, the more you receive is very meaningful for the Samoans and families support one another.

¹⁷⁴ Macpherson C and Macpherson L, "The Ifoga," 109-135.

¹⁷⁵ The common belief among the Samoans is that the *ifoga* is the initiative from their god, Tagaloa, and his daughter Amoa.

mechanism to purify the sacred places, affirms the establishment, maintenance, and restoration of order and covenants, which are in bedlam and polluted because of a *tu-fanua*¹⁷⁶ or misbehaviour. Such behaviour such as incest leads to the violation of peaceful and harmonious life among families.

Furthermore, the *ifoga* ritual is a communal event lead by the chiefs for healing tensions, restoring harmony and overcoming more violence. The ritual is significant, for when the *va-fealoaloai* (social relations) and *va-tapuia* (sacred relations) are restored, the status of both parties is changed. This change is a symbolic sign of reconciliation being achieved and concludes with a feast and the presentation of gifts prepared by the host (receiving party).

The *ifoga* ritual is part of the Samoan culture, which means, it is not static but open to changes that keeps it alive at present. Accordingly, the *ifoga* ritual is a historical process and it has been reproduced, reinterpreted, and transformed over time and that is what we are going to explore in the next chapter, looking at the changes and the modern *ifoga* ritual in Samoa and the reasons for these changes.

¹⁷⁶ *Tufanua* is an action that is not suitable for the sacred places that leads to the violation of its taboos and boundaries. The Samoans refer to such behaviour as *amio faa-manu* meaning, behaving like an animal.

Chapter 4: The changing face of the ifoga ritual

CHAPTER 4 THE CHANGING FACE OF THE *IFOGA* RITUAL

4.1 Introduction

The *ifoga* ritual is not static and it changes from time to time to suit the various contexts and demands of every generation. The ritual has maintained its core values and form; however, there are significant changes that need to be addressed. In this chapter, the author engages with the questions: when, why and how the *ifoga* ritual changed over time. The chapter explores the causes of these changes and the roles of social, political, theological, and economic factors in the transformation and spiritualization of the structure, form, and content of the ritual. In addition, it clarifies the role of the *ifoga* ritual in the Samoan legal system and illuminates it through some case studies.

4.2 Different accounts of the *ifoga* ritual

To understand the changes in the *ifoga* methodologically, it is important to present some brief accounts about the ritual. The accounts of the missionaries (Turner and Stair) highlight some additional elements used by the *ifoga* parties apart from the normal preparations mentioned in the last chapter.¹ Stair notes that:

When it was thought necessary to appear very humble, the parties took pieces of firewood, stones, and leaves with them, to signify that they put themselves entirely into the power of the aggrieved party, who might kill, cook, and eat them, if thought proper.²

The question that needs to be asked: why is the bowing down of the high chief under the fine mat not enough? Was it because they were afraid of being rejected? How did such performance influence the receiving party? This is a symbolic affirmation that it was difficult and strenuous to conduct an *ifoga*

¹ See Turner, *Samoa*, 189 and Stair, *Old Samoa*, 96-97.

² Stair, *Old Samoa*, 96.

ritual in those days. There was fear of being rejected and attacked by the receiving party.

Turner adds bamboos to the list and demonstrates that these elements are symbolic for “abject submission.”³ He points out that they correspond to the saying,

“Here we are, you pigs, to be cooked if you please; and here are the materials with which to do it. Taking bamboos in the hand was if they said, we have come, and here are the knives to cut us up.”⁴

The saying reminds of the pigs and cows kept outside of the field covered with coconut leaves presented as part of the *Sua-faatamalii* (traditional way of honouring someone) to guests and honoured visitors in the Samoan culture. Whenever they (pigs and cows) lie in the field, it means they are ready to be *faavai*, meaning they are ready to be cooked and distributed. In the same manner, the chief (scapegoat) of the perpetrator’s family is presented as an animal, like a pig, or a cow ready to be cooked and eaten. It can be suggested that these elements can be traced back to the pre-contact society as informed by oral traditions. In fact, they do illustrate the uniqueness of the ritual and the willingness of the perpetrator’s family to be accepted. As Stair and Turner note, the purpose is to convey their guilt and remorse feelings to the victim’s family. In addition, they want to acknowledge that they take full responsibility for the *agasala* (wrong committed) done by their family.

Oral traditions on the other hand give another perspective about the significance of these cooking elements. These elements are also weapons used in war and can impose threats to the receiving party.⁵ One can suggest that the *ifoga* party have come prepared for a war if the receiving party attacked them. Foniti shares that although the elements are meant to present a comprehensive

³ Turner, *Samoa*, 188.

⁴ Turner, *Samoa*, 189.

⁵ The informants shared about the elements in some of the *ifogas* in which they took part and participated in their youth. It was not only for conveying deep guilt and remorse, but for preparations for war. The practice is not done anymore in Samoa today, this implies that people perform the ritual with the intension that they will be accepted.

submission to the victims, they also bring comfort for the *ifoga* party once the war broke out.⁶ The elements are placed behind the person (high chief) covered with the fine mat. Subsequently, these elements are additional preparations of the *ifoga* party, but they are not necessarily required for the ritual. Despite the political function of these elements as informed by oral traditions, they do illustrate a strong religious commitment by the *ifoga* party as Turner and Stair noted. It was a way to prevent war among the people.

In his book, *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, Derek Freeman asserts that the cooking elements are no longer used.⁷ It is not known when these cooking elements have been left out from the preparations of the *ifoga* party. The participants confirm that they (cooking elements) are no longer present in the ritual. Why did people abandon these elements, which strengthen the expression of being submissive and feeling responsible for what has happened? What motivates them to think that the cooking elements are no longer valuable and needed? How does this affect the ritual? Are there any other elements that are used to replace them, or not? These questions illustrate that the cooking elements were valued significantly in the past, but in the modern Samoa, they are no longer appropriate. Based on the accounts of the missionaries, it appears to be a normal practice then, but later on it was diminished as an impact of Christianity. As discussed, these cooking elements were used when the *ifoga* party wanted to prove their guilt and remorse to the receiving party. Today, once an *ifoga* is conducted, it is a symbolic illustration of acknowledging the wrong being committed and claiming full responsibility for it.

Furthermore, Freeman claims the *ifoga* ritual is normally done with fine mats only in contemporary Samoa.⁸ Two points are relevant about this statement. First, the statement supports the religious aspect of the ritual using

⁶ This implies that the *ifoga* ritual was not easily accepted and some ended up in war between the two parties.

⁷ Freeman, *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, 189.

⁸ Freeman, *Margret Mead and Samoa*, 190.

only the fine mats. Second, the statement on the other hand corresponds to the reality today that the *ifoga* party uses many fine mats.⁹ This suggests the change in metaphorical understanding of the ritual from the cultic one to that of monetary or compensational one. Fine mats have power and value, which could be used to pay the damaged done or the penalty. Still, this is not case because the ritual itself is done with only one *ietoga* (fine mat). It is not just any fine mat, but the one kept by the high chief called *ie ole auafa* meaning the fine mat for the security and protection of the *aiga* (family) and the *nuu* (village). Such fine mat is the appropriate one for the ritual especially severe cases in the community.

Gilson reports, “The *ifoga* ritual could be performed in respect of any dispute, but it was particularly effective in small scale disputes between villages, which in the nineteenth century were very numerous.”¹⁰ The using of the term dispute in the statement needs to be defined, and requires more elaboration. The question that needs to address is what kind of offences does require the *ifoga* ritual? As discussed in the second chapter, only two *agasala matuia* (severe cases) that bring pollution and danger in the community because they violate taboos, covenant, and boundaries.¹¹ They are *faamaligito* or *fasioti-tagata* (bloodshed, murder) and *solitofaga, mataifale, mulilua* (rape, incest, and adultery). For disputes that does not require the performance of the ritual, the chiefs of the perpetrator’s family go to the victim’s family and *soalaupule* (deliberate, discuss, and consult), express their apology and settle their dispute.¹² However, the statement demonstrates the development of the interpretation concerning the *ifoga* ritual and the reality today. It is performed variously ranging from someone hit by a car, exchange of harsh words, to the rejection of the village council decision.

⁹ See chapter 3 bullet point 3.7.2.

¹⁰ Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900*, 49.

¹¹ See chapter 2 bullet 2.7.

¹² Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

4.3 The impact of Christianity

Samoa was Christianised and 60 years later, it was colonised. This proves that Christianity played a major role in shaping society and culture. Samoa had their first experience of Christianity from migrants such as Saivaaia,¹³ a Samoan migrant who was baptised as a Methodist by Nathaniel Turner, a Methodist missionary in Tonga.¹⁴ He returned with this new faith and began to share it with his family and his village Salelologa Savaii.¹⁵ In addition are Sio Vili, traders, whaler, beachcombers, and explorers as noted by Derek Freeman and D.J. Inglis.¹⁶ Two years after Savaaia arrived; John Williams from the London Missionary Society accompanied by another Samoan named Fauea landed in Sapapalii (home of Malietoa Vainuupo)¹⁷ and established the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. Having heard of the Methodist church already established in Samoa, the Methodist Mission in Tonga sent Peter Turner in 1835,¹⁸ but after four years (1839), he was asked to withdraw.

¹³ Saivaaia is a Samoan from the village of Salelologa and Tafua who visited his relatives in Tonga and was baptized there as a Christian.

¹⁴ Tupu Folasa, *Amataga ma le Faavaega o le Ekalesia Metotisi Samoa, 1827-1968* (Apia: Methodist Printing Press, 1970), 27; Martin Dyson, *O Lau Tala ole Metotisi Samoa* (Apia: Methodist Printing Press, 1875); R. Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900: The Politics of the Multi-Cultural Community* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1970), 67-69.

¹⁵ Saivaaia is from the village of Salelologa and Tafua Savaii. Note – The name of the first Methodist Church in Salelologa is “Uluai La ole Talalelei” meaning The First Sun of Christianity or Good News in Samoa. In Salelologa, there are three Methodist churches and the first one is located in the subsection of the village known as Saloga and was established in 1828.

¹⁶ J. Derek Freeman, “The Joe Gimlet or Siovili Gult: An episode in the Religious History of Early Samoa,” in *Anthropology in the South Seas* ed. J.D. Freeman and W.R. Geddes (New Plymouth: Thomas Avery, 1959), 102-113. D.J. Inglis, “The Siovili Cult,” in *Religious Studies in the Pacific* ed. Jack Lewis and Kapil Tiwari (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1978), 37-44; Gilson, *Samoa 1830 to 1900*, 68-70.

¹⁷ “Häuptling Malietoa,” BArch R1001/2878, Lesefilm: Accessed 13/08/2013. The people of Samoa from then to the present still believe that the arrival of John Williams is the fulfilment of the Queen Nafanua’s (A warrior and a Priestess) prophecy to Malietoa. Nafanua distributed the Kingdoms of Samoa among the chiefs. Malietoa arrived late and requested a kingdom from Nafanua. Nafanua responded to him by saying, “*Tali i lagi se Ao o lou Malo*” meaning wait, you will receive one from heaven.

¹⁸ Moyles ed., *Journal of John Williams*, 34-35. For historical accounts about Samoa’s embracing of Christianity, see John Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars: Christian Origins in Oceania* (Geneva and Suva: WCC / University of the South Pacific, 1982). Neil Grunson,

John Williams (LMS) complained that Samoa was assigned to him and his colleagues after a conversation with the Methodists in Tonga. Ten years later, the Catholic Mission arrived (1845).¹⁹

Hughes states, the three mainline churches “became genuinely Samoan in character” and played a major role shaping Samoan society and culture.²⁰ For instance, they build schools and health sectors for the people.²¹ Villages have either one or four churches. The Congregation Christian Church and the Catholic Church have two services every Sunday while Methodist church has three, for the same people. The pastors (until today) are not paid by the church, even those serving overseas (New Zealand, Australia, and U.S.A.); however, members of the congregations provide and support them. The other denominations arrived during the colonial period (1880) such as the Seven Day Adventist, Mormons, and the Assembly of God.²² Without doubt, people condemned many indigenous cultural practices as they embraced the new faith, the God of the Missionaries.²³

Consequently, it was not clear why the *ifoga* ritual was remarkable for the missionaries. Was it because they have seen it as another way of preaching the Christian message of peace, unity, forgiveness, and reconciliation?²⁴ Was it because they prefer the Samoans to settle their own disputes and tensions among themselves? According to Stair and Turner, they recorded the *ifoga*

Messengers of Grace: Evangelical Missionaries in the South Seas 1797-1860 (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978; Janet W. Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa* 31-45; R. P. Gilson, *Samoa* ; George Turner, *Samoa A Hundred years Ago*.

¹⁹ Ralph M. Wiltgan, *The Founding of the Roman Catholic Mission in the Oceania 1825 to 1850* (Canberra: ANU Press, 1981).

²⁰ Huges, *Samoa*, xxvi.

²¹ Turner, *Samoa*, 124-141.

²² Garrett, *To Live Among the Stars*, 67-98.

²³ See Turner, *Samoa*, 44-56; Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 52-70; Moyles, *Journal of John Williams*, 21-24.

²⁴ See the previous chapter about the *ifoga* ritual where its purpose highlights some of the Christian key elements such as forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation.

ritual as means of overcoming war and settling disputes among the Samoans.²⁵ It could be argued that the missionaries confirmed the practise of the *ifoga* ritual, its practise, function, and significance. Case in point is the one recorded by Stair concerning a chief from Aana region, named Tuioneula.²⁶ He met a chief from Manono while fishing and they had an argument. It ended up in a fight and the chief from Manono died. Manono learned of the incident and prepared to wage war. The high chiefs of Aana region called a meeting and *soalaupule* (deliberate, discuss) among themselves and decided to *alu le savali i Manono* (plead Manono for a meeting). After that, they sought the wisdom of the missionaries and their advice about their problem. Stair notes that he was asked by the chiefs of Aana (offended party) “to form part of the deputation and back up their pleading.”²⁷ After long and earnestly consultation, the two parties finally reached a consensus agreement and the war was overturned. Upon returning to Aana the chiefs informed Tuioneula and his family to perform the *ifoga* ritual to the victim’s village for what he had done.²⁸ Tuioneula and his family conducted the *ifoga* ritual; they were accepted, and reconciled with the victim’s community.

The participation of Stair in this sensitive case between Aana and Manono illustrates the importance of the ritual to the missionaries. One can argue that his presence was significantly and greatly influenced the decision of the chiefs. Although the chiefs of Aana requested of him to assist them in their plea, he appeared to act as a mediator in the process. Whatever role he played in this case, the point is that the pastor of the church was present in the healing process. In addition, his presence gives an impression of how the people respect the pastors and how important the role of the church in the Samoan society. He was there with the people as they struggled to deal with the issue

²⁵ Turner, *Samoa*, 189 and Stair, *Old Samoa*, 96-97.

²⁶ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 98-101.

²⁷ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 99.

²⁸ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 100.

that might result in bloodshed because of retaliation. Furthermore, we can suggest that his participation is a confirmation by the church of the uniqueness of the *ifoga* ritual as a way of preaching the gospel of peace and forgiveness. Thus, the church plays an important role in the transformation of the ritual.

4.3.1 Acceptance of the *ifoga* ritual

All *ifoga* rituals are different and how they will be handled, depend on the *toga fetuutuunai* (wisdom) and the *faautautaga mamao* (knowledge, vision) of chiefs from the receiving party. It is clear from the case of Tuioneula where Stair was involved that the *ifoga* ritual is not an easy process. Although, the *ifoga* ritual is where the protective authority of the high chiefs to protect family members from harm and retaliation, it relies on the receiving party. Stair points out that:

It (*ifoga*) occasionally happened that the injured party were unable to control their passions on seeing the enemy prostrate before them; in which case they rushed out with spear and club in hand to inflict summary chastisement upon the humbled company.²⁹

The statement confirms that the *ifoga* ritual were not easily accepted and that it may also end up in war and more violence. Turner affirms this nature of rejecting an *ifoga* saying, "If, however, the chiefs of the district were determined to resist, they would prepared accordingly."³⁰ This means that they prepared for war and revenge. For instance, Faamatuainu, shares about an unforgettable tragedy in their village when he was ten years old.

A young man from the village of Salelavalu raped the daughter of the pastor (Congregational Christian Church). On the next day early in the morning, the village of Salelavalu performed the apology through the *ifoga* ritual when they had learned of the incident. As the chiefs of Salelologa discussed and decided for a possible solution for the *ifoga* party, the pastor who's daughter was raped shouted, "*ole a tou nonofo ae le fasioti loa le ifoga*" meaning why are sitting, kill the *ifoga* party. As a result, a war broke out. The people of Salelologa attacked the *ifoga* party from

²⁹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 97.

³⁰ Turner, *Samoa*, 189.

Salelavalu and chased them into the sea. Some were drowned and others badly wounded from this incident.³¹

Foniti supports that before the arrival of Christianity, *ifoga* were either accepted, rejected, or ended in more violence and war.³² He believes it is a natural Samoan human nature that their blood becomes hot, when family members are attacked. The issues of shame and honour play a role here especially when pride dominates feelings of the victim's family and their village. This leads onto revenge and retribution. In the case of Tiuoneula, what would happen if the missionaries did not arrive? How would it be if Stair was not present? Would there be a war between the two districts? A war could be possible because the missionaries arrived just after Aana led by Malietoa defeated Tamafaiga, the greatest warrior from Manono.³³ Hence, the *ifoga* was not easily accepted and sometimes resulted in war.

In fact, without doubt, the missionaries taught people about Jesus, his ministry, death, and resurrection. Turner notes a confession from one of his students saying, "I was at the battle at Safata..... and I made up my mind to break away from the war party. I thanked God; I begged forgiveness of my sins through the blood of Christ."³⁴ This means that the Samoans learned about the importance of peace, forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation as central to the Christian message. Such doctrines influenced the way chiefs and families have dealt with the *ifoga* from then to the present. Despite anger and vengeance feelings, people have hardly rejected any *ifoga*. Thus, conversion of the chiefs to Christianity influenced their decisions about the acceptance of the *ifoga* ritual, and its transformation began to take shape, as people understood the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection.

³¹ Faamatuainu (informant), discussion with the author, August 23, 2012.

³² Foniti (informant), discussion with the author, August 17, 2012.

³³ Moyle ed., *Journal of John Williams*, 10.

³⁴ Turner, *Samoa*, 144-145.

4.3.2 Ideological Change: YHWH, God Almighty for Tagaloa

The traditional ideology of the *matais* (chiefs) *mana* (divine grace and authority) derived from the ancestors' blessings and their god Tagaloa.³⁵ Since the arrival of Christianity, this indigenous belief has changed, the *mana* (divine power or spirit, grace and authority) is considered as divinely sanctioned by Yahweh, and not Tagaloa.³⁶ For example, there is a libation rite in the *Ava ole Feiloaiga* or the welcoming ceremony, which is also a typical part of the *ifoga* ritual. Traditionally, the culture of pouring of the *kava* on the ground (libation) with the verbal phrase “*lau ava lea le Atua*” (this is your kava oh God) before every chief drinks was presented to the indigenous god Tagaloa and the ancestors. Turner illustrates that during evening prayer, “the first cup of kava was in honour of the gods.”³⁷ This is done to show respect and reverence to the traditional gods and spirits. However, such belief has changed, and instead of addressing the ancestor's spirits and Tagaloa, the ‘libation rite’ is now directed to the one true God, YHWH, who created heaven and earth as taught by the missionaries.

Furthermore, in the first part of the *Lauga* ritual, (*Paia* - honorific greetings) as described in the last chapter, the Samoans honour the presence of their traditional gods. The sacredness of the *malae* (meeting place) and the dignities of the chiefs present are recognised, and even the presence of Tagaloa is acknowledged.³⁸ The usual Samoan expression says, “*Ua paia le taeao ma le aso aua e paia le Atua na afua ai le aso,*” means the fellowship and the day is

³⁵ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 267; Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 12-14.

³⁶ Bargatzy, “The Kava Ceremony is a Prophecy,” 82-99.

³⁷ Turner, *Samoa*, 20. What Turner noted is the libation in the evening worship during the Tapuaiga or family worship. However, libation is a typical part of the kava ritual ceremony that chiefs perform out of respect of the gods before they drink it. See also Tevita Amituanai, “Kava in Samoa,” in *Pacific Rituals – Living or Dying?* Gweneth and Bruce Deverall (eds.) (Suva: University of the South Pacific, 1986), 35-42.

³⁸ Lipp Thorolf, *Kava: the drinks of the gods*, VHS Videocassette, c. 90 mins.

holy, for the god who creates this day is holy.³⁹ Who is the creator whom the chiefs are referring to during their traditional speeches? For the Samoans it is Tagaloa as informed by their traditional creation story.⁴⁰ Moreover, in the third part of the *Lauga* (*Faafetai* – thanksgiving) the Samoan god is honoured, and thanked for good health and prosperity. Today, neither Tagaloa nor the ancestors are referred to as the sources of everything. Instead of the indigenous god, people offer and give thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty God, YHWH. They acknowledge his presence, for he confirms the occasion to take place.

It could be argued based on the Samoan creation story that the living god whom the Samoans called Tagaloa is the same god called by the Jews YHWH as recorded in the creation accounts in the book of Genesis.⁴¹ Turner states Tagaloa exists in space and he is the god of the heaven.⁴² Stair records that Tagaloa is “the progenitor of the other gods and mankind.”⁴³ The point is that the changing of the Samoan belief and the name of the creator god from Tagaloa to YHWH was not an issue for the people. They already believe in a powerful god apart from their ancestors and the spirits. In addition, this is evident in the spread of Christianity as Anthon Knuth argues that the chiefs played a major role for the church mission in Samoa.⁴⁴ The chiefs were the priests in the traditional religion and they were the ones who initiated and confirmed this change. Hence, this transition from Tagaloa to YHWH changes the theological perception of the *Lauga* during the *ifoga* ritual.

Moreover, the *ifoga* ritual is a process towards receiving and acceptance back to the family or village circle. Tui Atua asserts that the understanding of

³⁹ This expression reminds us about the Samoan creation story, where Tagaloa created heaven and earth.

⁴⁰ See chapter 2 bullet point 2.3.3.2.

⁴¹ See Genesis 2, 4-25. The term YHWH is used in the second creation story.

⁴² Turner, *Samoa*, 7.

⁴³ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 212.

⁴⁴ Anthon Knuth, “Christianization of the Pacific: A Process of Self-Christianization?” *The Pacific Journal Theology* 48 (2012): 89-99.

Samoa as an extended family influences the process of the *ifoga* ritual and its protocols.⁴⁵ For such a small country like Samoa, people are somehow related (*sootaga* and *faia*). Therefore, the victim and the perpetrator are connected somewhere in their genealogies and ancestors.⁴⁶ Christianity on the other hand with its fundamental principles, strengthens the religious value of the ritual by contributing a theological meaning based on forgiveness, guilt, and repentance.⁴⁷ Thus, from a theological perspective, the church stresses the need for people to repent and to forgive. Accordingly, forgiveness is deeply rooted in the performance of the ritual and its holistic outcome.

4.3.3 Inculturation⁴⁸ of the *ifoga* ritual as Part of Catholic Mass

Changing the mindset of the people and their theological perception create a platform for the 'gospel and culture' to interact. The term inculturation, as Stephen Bevans' notes, was officially introduced in 1979 by the Pope in an address to the Pontifical Biblical Commission.⁴⁹ The term inculturation in the Catholic *Redemptoris Missio* "means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures."⁵⁰ Aylward Shorter argues that

⁴⁵ Tui Atua, "Samoa is not a government; rather, it is a brotherhood, a family."

⁴⁶ According to the participants (chiefs), it is very easy to accept an *ifoga* when there is a strong connection and relation (*sootaga, faia*) between the two parties.

⁴⁷ This will be dealt with in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ The author employs the term Inculturation to highlight the engagement of the Samoan culture and Christianity. Catholic leaders and theologians have used in recent decades to denote a process of engagement between the Christian Gospel and a particular culture. See, Aylward Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 3-116; 59-67.

⁴⁹ Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 50.

⁵⁰ *Redemptoris Missio* 52, quoting the Final Document of the Extraordinary Synod of 1985, II, D, 4.

“Inculturation is essentially a community process” and the process should start from the local culture.⁵¹

The Christianisation of the *ifoga* ritual creates an opportunity for the *ifoga* ritual to be performed in a new venue apart from the *malae* (traditional sanctuary) into the church temple. This is evident in Roman Catholicism in Samoa as part of Mass, performed during the forgiveness section of the service. During the Mass, the chiefs bow down covered with fine mats in front of the altar while the congregation sings a hymn. At the end of the hymn, the Priest accepts the ritual by removing the fine mat and continues the service with its normal order. Maulio shares that he is one of the participants covered with a fine mat during these *ifoga* practices in the church when they are held on special occasions such as Good Friday and Easter Sunday.⁵² The ritual is a way of welcoming the sinful community back to the family of God and especially to the communion table. The inclusion of the *ifoga* as in the liturgy is to be observed only in the Catholic Church up until now. This illustrates the theological implication of the ritual as a way of asking for forgiveness out of guilt and repentance. Furthermore, it also elucidates the point that acceptance (forgiveness) is deeply rooted in the *faa*-Samoa spirituality.

4.3.4 Participation of the pastor as a *Taulaga* (Scapegoat)

The respect people give to pastors in various parts of the globe differs from place to place. A pastor in Indonesia or Germany for example is not treated in the same way as a Samoan pastor. As described in chapter 2, the pastor, his family in Samoa are treated and respected as sisters in a Samoan family based on the brother-sister covenant.⁵³ They are called *taulaga ola* or

⁵¹ Aylward Shorter, *Towards a Theology of Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 254.

⁵² Maulio Oso (informant), discussion with author September 8, 2014.

⁵³ See chapter 2 bullet point 2.5.4. The author discussed the covenants cherished by the Samoan people and one of them is between the pastor and the village.

taulaga soifua a aiga, meaning their lives have been offered by the families as living sacrifices to YHWH and his mission. Even more, pastors hold the top position in the Samoan village setting, which was traditionally held by sisters and the chiefs. They are treated with honour and respect, like Samoan women, and are addressed in different titles. For instance, in the Samoan honorific greetings, the pastors are called *ao-faalupega* (head of the status quo) and *Faa-feagaiga* (covenants).⁵⁴ Furthermore, the members of the congregation addressed them as *Papa* (daddy) and *Mama* (mummy). For the Samoans, the presence of a pastor in a village is a blessing; they are like kings and queens. People have a close family relationship with their pastors and their wives, and they honour the *faa-feagaiga* (pastors) and respect them more than high chiefs. Whatever happens in the village, people seek the wisdom and the blessing of the pastors in various matters concerning life.

As discussed in the previous chapters (2 and 3), chiefs are the priests in the indigenous Samoan religion. They intercede on behalf of the people when the village is in jeopardy especially issues relating to the breaching of *tapu* (taboos), *feagaiga* (covenants) and *tuaoi* (boundaries). Having the same role, function, and status with the chiefs in the Samoan religion, pastors sometimes offer themselves as scapegoats for the *ifoga* ritual. However, there are special cases that pastors feel that they should participate in the *ifoga* ritual. Pastors know the right time to take part for the sake of the community especially severe incidents such as murder or war among the villages. Tolofuaivaolelei shares that the victim's family and villages treat the *ifoga* where the pastor acts as scapegoat with utmost honour.⁵⁵ The mood of such *ifoga* is very different and the feeling of *faamalaiaina* (curse) is present because the pastor is a typical symbolic presence of God in the Samoan perspective.

⁵⁴ Krammer, *Samoa Islands* Vol 1, 05-110.

⁵⁵ Tolofuaivaolelei (informant), discussion with the author 13 September 2012.

Another way pastors take part in the process of the *ifoga* ritual is through *tuualalo* (pastoral counselling and advice), as Stair did to settle the case between Aana and Manono. Since they are called *Ao-o-faalupega* (most honoured and respected) and *Faa-feagaiga* (like a brother-sister covenant) in villages, their *tuualalo* (counsel and advice) is always respected and they do influence the decision of the village council especially the family of the receiving party.⁵⁶ Accordingly, we can say that the pastors hold both “the throne and the altar” at the same time in the Samoan society. The chiefs listen to them and their role in the *ifoga* ritual is vital for the nurturing tensions and settling disputes among the people. While the Catholic priest performs the ritual in the church, the protestant pastors conduct the *ifoga* outside in the village sanctuary.

4.4 The impact of colonialism and the independent state

Samoa was colonised almost 60 years after the arrival of Christianity. Although natural minerals are absent, Peter Hemenstall notes that Samoa’s agricultural potential, deep-water harbours and a good place for trading and commercial centres make Samoa an attractive acquisition.⁵⁷ Great Britain, Germany, and the United States of America were present around 1880. They deliberated over Samoa as to whom shall best rule and control her affairs. During this period, Samoa’s civil war existed because each super power supported different paramount chiefs and provided guns and ammunitions for support.⁵⁸ As a result, they divided Samoa between east and west without the

⁵⁶ The participants share in solidarity the importance of pastors’ *tuualalo* (advice and counsel) and sometimes it is not easy for the chiefs to go against what the pastors have suggested fearing curses befalling the village.

⁵⁷ Peter Hemenstall, “The Colonial Imagination and the Making and Remaking of the Samoan People,” in Hermann J. Hiery and John, M. MacKenzie (eds.), *European Impact and Pacific Influence: British and German Colonial Policy in the Pacific Islands and the Indigenous Response* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), 65-81. See also Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa*, p. 65-69; Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900*, 56.

⁵⁸ Meleisea M and Meleisea P. S, *Lagaga*, 75-86.

consent of the Samoans. The eastern part was under the United States of America and called American Samoa until today. The western part was under Germany and called Western Samoa.⁵⁹ Great Britain took over after the First World War through New Zealand until Western Samoa became independent in 1962. In 2007, the country changed its name again to Samoa. Since then colonial imperialism in Samoa and its independence have also influenced the *ifoga* ritual and its role in the society.

4.4.1 Establishment of the Land and Titles Commission

When Wilhelm Solf was appointed as governor of Germany in Samoa, he made sure that Samoa land must be protected for future generations of Samoa according to the Berlin treaty of 1889.⁶⁰ This led to the establishment of the Land and Titles Commission in 1903 with the function to resolve land and title disputes among the Samoans.⁶¹ Tolofuaivaolelei shares that around the same time, the first prison was built in Samoa. This is because people stole equipment's such as guns, shovels, etc.⁶² One can look at this Commission as a way of weakening the traditional protocols as Meleisea states, "the Land and Titles Commission was an attempt to weaken the Samoan customary tenure, and authority in land matters with the aim of strengthening the rights of the individual."⁶³ I disagree here with Meleisea on one point, because the Land and Title Commission was established to protect customary land from

⁵⁹ Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa*, p. 65-69; Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900*, 56.

⁶⁰ Samoa: Land Commission 1891-1907, BArch R1001/2918, Lesefilm: Accessed 13/08/2013. Maulio (participant) shares how his great grandfather who talked about Solf and his time as a governor in Samoa. People owed a lot to Solf in terms of the land issues. He states that Solf did not allow the Europeans to take advantage of the traditional land but protected the rights of the Samoans and to own their land. Today, the people, not the government like other countries, owned the majority of the land in Samoa. See Hepenstall, "The Colonial Imagination," 65-81; Davidson, *Samoa mo Samoa*, 45; Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900*, 63; Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, 123; Meleisea, *The Making of Modern Samoa*, 64.

⁶¹ See Mr Blaine, "What America will Contend for at Berlin," *New York Information* 15 April, 1889, R1001/2884; Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 65.

⁶² Tolofuaivaolelei (informant), discussion with the author September 13, 2012.

⁶³ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 64.

foreigners.⁶⁴ Samoa is a communal life setting society and the introduction of the commission changed system of decision making by consensus to the ruling of one person, the judge. In addition, there is no space for healing and reconciliation in the procedures of the commission, unlike traditional protocols, chiefs have a time to express their opinion, guilt, or heal their difference during the consultation. These are vital aspects that are absent in the Land and Titles Commission.

However, on the one hand, Solf has a point here because the chiefs could not resolve some of the issues, and that was the sole purpose for the existence of the commission. For example, Meleisea notes that the first report of the Commission recorded 64 cases related to land and title issues.⁶⁵ In some cases, the Commission encouraged both parties to settle their disagreements among themselves and only in court when they failed to do it.⁶⁶ In this sense, the chiefs had abused the Land and Title Commission as a way to escape customary protocols and dialogs among family members. Accordingly, this is the beginning of the tension between collective interests and individual rights and thus, it affects the practise of the *ifoga* ritual.

4.4.2 The State Legal System

The legal system represents the western ideas of re-enforcing and interpreting the law in Samoa. In fact, it is an imported system having different procedures, rules and regulations from that of the chiefly system. Like the Land and titles commission, the state legal system concerns with the one who commit the crime, how and when did it happen, and why did he/she do it. It does not concern with network of different relations both the perpetrator and

⁶⁴ See – “Samoa: Land Commission 1891-1907,” BArch R1001/2918, Lesefilm: Accessed 13/08/2013; “Verhältnisse in Samoa: Berichte des Spezialkommission,” BArch R1001/2917, Lesefilm: Accessed 13/08/2013.

⁶⁵ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 68.

⁶⁶ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 69.

victim is connected. Meleisea demonstrates the same struggle when the constitution of Samoa was drafted:

One of the most difficult questions was that of the Fundamental Rights. This is a principle, which has developed over the centuries in Western Europe, particularly in British Common Law, which has come to be an underlying principle of western legal systems. Unlike the Samoan customary law, which places greater emphasis upon group or corporate rights, the concept of Fundamental Rights is aimed at the individual, irrespective of his or her status in society.⁶⁷

The legal system deals with the individual perpetrator, who commits the crime, and the chiefly system on the other hand deals with issues on the family level where the perpetrator belongs.⁶⁸ The family and its chief will pay the *sala* (punishment) to the village council and this will be distributed among the chiefs. The *tulafale* (orator) who distributes the *sala* (punishment - mainly food) has to make sure that each family through their chiefs receive a share of it. As describe, the *sala* (punishment) varies from *mata-selau ma le aumatua* (100 taros and a female pig) to 100 sows and *atimale lau* (taro harvest with leaves).⁶⁹ Thus, in the customary law it is the responsibility of the chief and his family to pay the fine in food.

Another significant factor from the legal system is the re-enforcement of prison terms in Samoa. Perpetrators when convicted of crimes committed are taken to prison for some time depending on the decision of the court, and this was indeed new for the Samoans.⁷⁰ The prison is like a forsaken place where bad people, those who are not worthy to live among the rest of the community are kept. A person who goes to prison is called a *pagota* someone who breaks the law and they are sometimes stigmatised by the community for their bad behaviour. Even people are afraid to associate and socialise with them. In addition, in prison, prisoners have limited opportunities or none at all to

⁶⁷ Meleisea M, and Meleisea S, *Lagaga*, 155.

⁶⁸ Cf. Ahrens, "Interrupting Violence," 185.

⁶⁹ The purpose of having a female pig is that they do not produce any more pigs and the same also applies to bringing taro with leaves. The family will look for taro patch to plant. The whole idea behind such punishments is to the make the family suffer.

⁷⁰ It has been mentioned by the Informants that Germany build the first prison in Samoa.

transform them spiritually, mentally, and psychologically.⁷¹ This may be some of the reasons prisoners commit more crimes when they return to the society.

In the Samoan chiefly system, when perpetrators are expelled from their villages, they stay with relatives in another place until they are allowed to return to the family and village. They are not cut off from the communal life setting and the care of the elders. In this way, the (perpetrators) will have a chance to be counselled, and nurtured by the chiefs and relatives whom they stay with while on exile. The Samoan proverb says “*E le po pea se nuu, aua e fotu pea malama ole aso fou*” meaning the village will not remain in darkness forever, because there will be light of a new day. The new day refers to the day for reunification when the village council allow those who have been exile to return home. On that day, the family of the perpetrator can perform the *ifoga* ritual and provide food to feed the village council and it will be distributed to all families of the village. Such aspect in the communal Samoan society is missing in prison since the legal system is introduced.

4.4.3 The Cash Economy

Samoa’s cultural economic system was based on its valuable items such as fine mats, *tapa* cloth, tools, and so forth. Each treasured element has its own value and worth in the eyes of the community. People share and exchange these goods and commodities with those who have lack access to them in a peaceful manner. For instance, a chief who needs a pig for a weddings or funeral will exchange with the one who has one using a fine mat.⁷² The backbone of this barter system is the *vafealoai* (mutual relationship). It

⁷¹ The prison in Samoa today is offering various programs for the prisoners to develop prisoners spiritually, physically and mentally so that they can be transformed.

⁷² Most families have raised their own pigs and there are times that what they had is not suitable for the occasion. Therefore, people can get one from a friend or a chief who has a pig necessary for their needs, but they will balance later when theirs (pigs) are ready for the person whom they borrowed. For the Samoans, the pig is much important than a cow for a *faatamalii* (honorary gift presented to someone.)

motivates the sharing of elements and people can *asamo* (request for food), and *totoma* (request for fine mats, fishing hooks, etc.) to one another without exchange. Foniti reminds that the Samoan culture of *fetausiai* (reciprocity) motivates people to give and share goods, because one day the receiver will balance the account when the giver also has a *faalavelave* (family occasion) such as funerals.⁷³ Without informing the giver, the receiver in his good conscience returns the hospitality offered to him back to the giver. Accordingly, these valuable elements circulate among families and they are used for occasions such as the *ifoga* ritual.

However, the introduction of the cash economy created a quagmire to the barter system and the culture of sharing goods among the people. For example, a person goes fishing and instead of sharing the surplus of the catch to the neighbours as it was before, he sells it to get money. The same applies to taro crops, bananas, yams, pigs and cows. They are now raised for profit and then sell to neighbours if they need them. The elements that have been used for the *ifoga* ritual are replaced by the cash economy. In this modernised world, some people think that it is impossible to conduct the ritual without money.⁷⁴ Although, people need money, it should not be a burden or a reason for not performing the ritual. As discussed, the *ifoga* ritual is a religious rite and it is about acceptance and reconciliation. It is not about money and compensation; it is about love and forgiveness. Therefore, the *ifoga* ritual can be conducted without money as informed by the traditional custom of dealing with severe issues affecting taboos, covenants, and boundaries of relations among people.

4.4.4 The Court ordered the practice of the *ifoga* Ritual

The existence of the Land and Titles Commission have impacted the way chiefs nurture the traditional culture and also reduces value and the

⁷³ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author in August 17, 2012.

⁷⁴ See Macpherson C and Macpherson L, "The Ifoga," 109-134.

practise of *ifoga* ritual.⁷⁵ Case in point was Talamaivao a high chief from the village of Fagaloa. He was ordered by Wilhelm Solf, the German consulate in Samoa to make an *ifoga* to the chiefs whom he had punished in his village. However, Talamaivao took the chiefs to the Land and Title Commission to settle their dispute.⁷⁶ In the end instead of him doing the *ifoga* as he had been told, the other chiefs did it to him. In this sense, the Commission had been abused for personal interest and benefit, neglecting his responsibility as a high chief to his village. Another example are the *matais* (chiefs) of Leulumoega, who were asked to perform an *ifoga* to Wilhelm Solf for what they did to Alipia, one of the chiefs working in the administration of Solf.⁷⁷ Alipia abused his position in the Commission as a representative of Leulumoega for his own individual benefit and self-esteem. The council of chiefs in Leulumoega banned him from the village. Although the village was right in relation to Alipia's behaviour, but what they did was considered as an act against the administration, for Alipia was chosen by Solf to represent Leulumoega in the government.

The *ifoga* rituals mentioned above were done out of the normal procedures of *soalaupule* (deliberation and consultation).⁷⁸ They were conducted without the chiefs' *tofa-fetuutuunai* (wisdom and sacred knowledge). When we look at these requests from the perspective of the Samoan saying, "*ua aveva le tofa*" meaning wisdom and *mana* are gone from

⁷⁵ Although the purpose of establishing the court is to protect the customary land from foreigners and settle disputes among Samoans, some chiefs have abuse it of their advantage.

⁷⁶ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 59. This case is crucial because Talamaivao is one of the paramount chiefs of Fagaloa and the status of chiefs whom he had been told to perform an *ifoga* were lower in rank compared to him. In this case, it was a shame to bow down to those chiefs that was behind his refusal to perform it.

⁷⁷ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 61. Alipia is one of the respected *tulafale* of Leulumoega but he abuse his position as a representative of their district – *Taitai-Itumalo*. He tried to rule as having all the power in Leulumoega and the council decided to expel him from the village. Solf who insists on the individual rights supports Alipia that led to the requested *ifoga* ritual to be conducted by the whole village to Wilhelm Solf.

⁷⁸ See chapter 3 – process of the *ifoga* iritual.

the chiefs; then, families and villages are in trouble. The value of the ritual is reduced because it just done to please the governor's administration as Foniti shares *tau lava ina faataunuu* (we do it because we are told).⁷⁹ Such act is a challenge not only for the chiefs but also for the ritual itself and its purpose, features, value and qualities as founded by the ancestors. This raises questions, where is the *tofa-tatala* (shared wisdom), *tofa-fatu* (developed wisdom), *tofa-fefulisai* and *tofa-fetuutuunai* (analysed wisdom), *soalaupule* (deliberation, consultation and dialog), and *mana* (sacred grace and power)? Where have they gone?⁸⁰ These indicated that the essence of the *ifoga* ritual during the colonial period began to fade. Despite this, the *ifoga* ritual played an active role in solving some of the cultural communal issues that the court cannot handle.

4.5 The modern form and practice of the *ifoga* ritual

Although the Samoans are generally conservative, their culture is not static and immutable. The interaction of the Samoan culture with Christianity and the western world has incorporated new ideas from time to time. Bell notes, "Change may be construed as a constant and relatively unproblematic in oral societies."⁸¹ For Bell, the issue of truthfulness is not important from the point of view of the oral societies, rather, the coherence and maintenance of their tradition is important.⁸² For such a small communal community like Samoa, changes are sometimes problematic as is the case with the *ifoga* ritual. It is not fixed in any written document and people are free to perform it based on what they know and learned from their elders. Thus, the modern form of *ifoga* ritual that people practise and perform today is shaped by the combination of the *faa*-Samoa (Samoan culture), the Christian doctrines such

⁷⁹ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

⁸⁰ Papalii (informant), discussion with the author September 11, 2012.

⁸¹ Bell, *Ritual*, 203.

⁸² Bell, *Ritual*, 204.

as forgiveness and repentance, as well as western ideologies of conflict resolutions and compensations. Such modification changes the content as well as the spirituality of performing the ritual. As discussed above, the *ifoga* ritual in its content and philosophical aspects is totally changed and these changes are evident in the preparations of both parties involved.

4.5.1 The number and size of the *ietoga* (fine mat)

The *ifoga* ritual and its dignity and sacredness is religiously performed using one *ietoga* or fine mat.⁸³ Why is it important to have one fine mat? What is the logic behind this tradition? According to the participants whom the author had *soalaupule* (discussed) with about the ritual, there are reasons behind having one *ietoga* (fine mat). First, the ritual suggests only one person who will be the *taulaga* (scapegoat) and that person is the high chief of the family or the village. This means that not all chiefs are properly fit or worthy for the task of conducting the ritual as informed by the myth. The reason for this is, because of the taboos, covenants, and boundaries, which have been polluted and need to be purified. Therefore, only the high chief and nobody else will be able to purify the pollution and remove the danger from the communities. Second, the *ietoga* or fine mat is a symbolic representation of the *tausala* based on the role of Amoa, the daughter of Tagaloa.⁸⁴ The *tausala* is no longer presented as the atonement for the family, but she is replaced with the fine mat. The fine mat is presented as a substitute for the human life, and to remove pollution. Finally, every *aiga* (family) has one *tausala* or *taupou* and she will be chosen from among the daughters of the chiefs. Usually, the eldest daughter will have this honour and if she married and move out of the family,

⁸³ See Chapter 3 where the typical elements for the ritual are described.

⁸⁴ As informed by the ritual, Amoa was the one who initiate the atonement ritual in Samoa as the proverbs, *ua faalava Amoa* meaning, Amoa intervened by bowing down to Lu-Fasiaitu.

the next in line will take over the role of the *tausala* and *taupou*. Today the *ifoga* parties presented more than one fine mat.

The fine mats of the kingdoms are not only small (two to three meters long) in size, but are also the fineness like silk cloth material.⁸⁵ The fineness quality of the fine mat symbolises its value and worth in the Samoan culture. Today, the *ietogas* (fine mats) are not only *loloto* (big), but also long ranging from four to twenty meters long. Moreover, they are *malo* (hard), not *vaivai* or fine like the real ones before and even their *tosi* or stripes are also bigger. These *ie-tetele* or *ietoga* (big fine mats) are used at present because the size does matter today, but in those days, it was the quality and its fineness. In addition, people can buy these big fine mats from the market or borrow from other chiefs. This implies whoever has the biggest *ietoga* (fine mat) during consultation and preparation, will be used as the main one for the ritual.

4.5.2 *Ositaulaga* (Scapegoats Increased)

The increased in number of fine mats used parallel the rise in number of those bowing down covered with *ietogas* (fine mats).⁸⁶ The tradition of the *ifoga* ritual and its practice consists of one person. As mentioned earlier whatever happened, the high chief of the family or the village will be the scapegoat. Foniti shares that villages that have more than one high chief like theirs, will choose among themselves who will take his turn of performing the ritual.⁸⁷ However, things have changed, and people in solidarity and sharing sympathy with the victim's family contribute to the idea of having more than one chief covered with the fine mats. Foniti states that when he was enthroned

⁸⁵ Each family especially the paramount chiefs has a special name for their *ietoga* which tells the history and origin of their fine-mat and family.

⁸⁶ The increase in number of those covered with fine mats has a political motivation on the other hand when it is done in a way to persuade the minds of the victim's family to accept the *ifoga*. However, when the whole village perform the ritual nowadays, there will be more than one scapegoat especially villages who have more than one high chiefs. But the *mamalu* (sacred, dignity) according to Foniti is one scapegoat.

⁸⁷ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

as a paramount chief, he did the ritual alone because the others (high chiefs) were absent.⁸⁸ However, when they were present during one of the severe cases, all three of them were scapegoats. Other high chiefs also wanted to acknowledge their presence and participation during the ritual. Aiono believes that the *va-fealoaloai*, the need to prevent more violence, longing for peace and reconciliation all play a role in the increased number of scapegoats and the changes.⁸⁹ Thus, there are varieties of complex ideologies, which lead to an increase in number of the participants as scapegoats.

Moreover, Maulio claims that one of the reasons for the increase in number of the high chiefs covered with fine mats is to show collective remorse and illustrate public humiliation.⁹⁰ The suggestion is that the rise in number of those bowing down under the fine mats corresponds to the cooking elements, which are not used anymore. It is a sign of "abject submission" as Turner notes.⁹¹ In fact, it is another way of conveying the message of a collective demonstration and willingness to be accepted.

4.5.3 Gifts as Compensation

Today, most *ifoga* party also take money and boxes of tin fish especially if the ritual is for reconciliation between a family and the whole village or if the victim lost his/her life in the incident. In this sense, one can suggest that the ritual is taken as a way of making compensation for the *agasala* (sin, wrong action) being done. As discussed, the *ifoga* party only has one vital element to take with them and that is the *ietoga* (fine mat). Fonoti argues that this fine mat is called the *tasi-ae-afe* meaning one but thousands.⁹² This means that the

⁸⁸ Fonoti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

⁸⁹ Aiono Fanaafi (informant), discussion with the author September 6, 2012.

⁹⁰ Maulio (informant), discussion with the author September 8, 2012.

⁹¹ Turner, *Samoa*, 189.

⁹² See chapter four. *Tasi-ae-afe* is another title given to the best fine mat. The quality of this type of *ietoga* is precious and hardly seen only in special occasions and severe incidents which provoke an *ifoga*.

value of the fine mat is more than many fine mats. It is enough for its purpose because of its quality.

The same applies to the receiving party during the presentation of their gifts. The Samoan gesture of presenting a *Sua-faatamalii* or gift given to the *ifoga party* (pastors, high chiefs, and guests) is modernised as well. Instead of *taisi and moa* (bundle of sliced baked taro and a roast chicken), it is replaced by a box of biscuits and 3lb corned beef.⁹³ The western roll of material cloth replaces the Samoan *tapa* and the whole box of tin fish or corned beef for a roasted pig and these cost a lot of money. In addition, is the term *pasese ole faiga malaga* (bus fare for the visitor), such practise is not a tradition but since people have money they have done it.

In some cases, money replaces all these preparations. Even the fine mat presented during the *Sua-faatamalii* is replaced by money especially during church functions. For instance, when a pastor from Samoa preached in a congregation in New Zealand, Australia or in U.S, sometimes all the traditional gifts are done and presented in monetary form.⁹⁴ The ideology behind is that, it is easier for the receiver to take with him/her to Samoa or to the final destination. This practise in the church has great influence in the society because chiefs are the same one who initiates these changes.

4.5.4 Change in ideological Understanding

As the *ifoga* ritual has been modified in the independent state of Samoa in its colourful modern content, people's philosophical understanding also changed. For example, when Christianity arrived people learned about the Christian doctrine of forgiveness as an important aspect of the ritual.⁹⁵ Now Samoa is independent, the idea of *ifoga* changed as that of a conflict resolution

⁹³ People use these goods sometimes not only they have it but also to save time from baking the traditional elements for the *Sua-faatamalii*.

⁹⁴ Cf. Fepai Kolia, *Lost Reality* (Apia/Suva: Mana Publication, 1988), 64.

⁹⁵ Reupena Asiata (informant), discussion with the author, September 6, 2012.

and management. At the same time, the issue of individual rights becomes a challenge to the customary chiefly system and the village government. Moreover, people look at the *ifoga* ritual as another form of compensation, considering it as an opportunity for the perpetrator's family to balance and pay packs the damage or the wrong being done. In this sense, one can observe here the power of the cash economy as a motivating factor for the ritual. The changes in peoples' ideological understanding of the ritual lead to the transformation of its content and emphasis. However, despite these paradigmatic shifts in performing the *ifoga* ritual, its foundation remains and the Samoan saying goes, "*e sui faiga ae tumau faavae*," (practise change but the foundation remains).

4.6 How to balance tradition and modernity

The changes in the Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga* as Bell demonstrates, indicates that even stable tradition in oral society has been subject to transformation and gradual modifications.⁹⁶ The structure of the *ifoga* ritual has changed and its meaning is developed as people look at the ritual with different questions and concerns. This brings us to the issues of balancing the traditional way of doing the ritual with that of the modernity or the present form. Such question relates back to the Samoan saying, "*e sui faiga ae tumau faavae*" (foundations remains but performance and practice changed). The lively wisdom and *tofa-mamao* (vision) of the *tuaa* (ancestors) handed down from generation to generation clarifies to the Samoans how to *tausi* (nurture) the *aga-nuu* (*aga* – breath of life and *nuu* – village). By doing this, people have to hold on to the *faavae* (foundation) of the *aganuu* (culture), but its practice and ways of doing it, is subject to change to suit every context. It does not condemn traditions, nor to exalt cultural heritage as a practicable way of proceeding into the future. Instead, cultural elements are to be valued

⁹⁶ Bell, *Ritual*, 221.

reasonably and practice in various aspects in the tradition over the years need examination and adjustment. By this way, the Samoans could march into the future with confidence and having a sense of commitment to their cultural heritage. Such is the case for an *aiga* (extended family) like Samoa whose traditions is the foundation in which its economic and social life is built on.

4.6.1 Collective Interest versus Individual rights

The relationship of tradition to modern ideology speaks of the two systems (*faa*-Samoa and the western government system) nurtured by the Samoans. This is evident at the social communal life in *nuu* (villages) governed by the council of chiefs and the city life in urban areas where order and peace depends on national government.⁹⁷ Foniti accentuates that the communal system does not exclude individualistic values, and stresses the importance of a balance between the two.⁹⁸ He fears, that the balance could be disturbed by urbanization and socio-economic situations in favour of individualism. In communal life setting, individualism is a threat to traditional moral and social values and practices in the wake of rapid social change. In fact, the relationship between these two sides is complex and fraught with tensions that often come to the surface when important decisions are being considered. These tensions force the Samoans into a complex balancing act between tradition and modernity. For example, in the past, there was no clear demarcation between collective and individual right; the *aiga potopoto* (extended family) owned everything its wealth is available to every individual based on his or her need. Although *aiga potopotos* (extended families) families move towards making a distinction between collective and individual rights, but they still maintained a system of reciprocity based on *va-fealoaloai* (social

⁹⁷ Both systems are still a problem at present especially when people prefer to be individualistic rather than being part of the collective interest.

⁹⁸ Foniti (informant), discussion with the author August 17, 2012.

relations) rooted in the *faa*-Samoaan spirituality of *alofa* (reaching out heartfelt to your *aiga pototpototo* (extended family), *nuu* (village), ancestors and God.

4.6.2 The Role of the *ifoga* Ritual in the Samoan Legal System

Tuala in her studies of the *ifoga* ritual from a legal perspective clearly clarifies that the Samoa legal system acknowledges and honours the cultural ritual.⁹⁹ Such was also the concern of Solf when he established the Land and Titles Commission alongside the village government to deal with tensions and conflicts surrounding land and title issues.¹⁰⁰ In light of this, the court respects the role played by the chiefs for maintaining peace and harmony as Tuala states,

...the performance of an *ifoga* would affect the sentence should an accused plead or be found guilty. In tiny Samoa where all the Samoan Judges are *matai* with their fingers on the pulse of their villages, it would be naive to expect that a serious crime could be committed without the Judges of the High Court being aware of the performance of an *ifoga*.¹⁰¹

This means that the decision and punishment handed by the court will be affected by the performance of the ritual. Accordingly, this was the purpose for both systems to deal with conflicts until today. For example, in some court cases, the judges suggests parties involved to solve to the issue in the customary approach *soalaupule* (as discussed above) especially cases which affects the *va-fealoai* (mutual relation), *va-tapuia* (sacred relation) and *va-nonofo* (social relation).¹⁰² One can observe that the *ifoga* ritual represents not only the collective interests but also the village government or the village

⁹⁹ See Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*.

¹⁰⁰ Meleisea, *Making of Modern Samoa*, 64-88. This initiative of Solf based on the Samoan culture was officially declared as a court during the New Zealand settlement in 1934. The reason for this emphasis on land and titles not only because the two are inseparable but also most of the tensions and conflicts arise out of these two elements in the Samoan setting.

¹⁰¹ Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 23.

¹⁰² In a case relating to land issue, the chief justice Tiavaasue Falefatusapolu has requested for the parties involved to solve the issue through traditional means of healing such as *soalaupule* (deliberation, dialog, consultation). He believes that the issue affects future generations, as the court shall not deal with it. This is also a good example how the state legal system works with the Samoan culture.

council. On the hand, there is the state legal court, which is more for the individual rights and interests. The practise of the two systems sometimes raises tensions and conflicts among the Samoans especially (as mentioned) when the legal system's ruling is against the common interest of the chiefs in favour of the individual. Despite these challenges, the role played by the *ifoga* ritual is vital not only for the legal system itself but also for overcoming violence. The case studies below illustrate and clarify the role of the *ifoga* ritual in the Samoan society.

4.7 Case Studies

4.7.1 Conflicts handled by the State Legal Court without the *ifoga* ritual

Case 1: High Chief versus Village Council

The village council of Solosolo expelled one of its the high chiefs, who was also the former Speaker of the Parliament from his residential place.¹⁰³ He did not accept the punishment and instead of proceeding to customary ways of healing such as the *ifoga* ritual, he took the matter to the court. The court, which stands for the individual human rights, ruled against the decision of the village council. Things had gone even worse when the village council did not consent with the decision of the court. The village council of chiefs proceeded to one of the severe traditional punishment *mu-le-foaga*, which is burning he high chief's house and destroying his properties.¹⁰⁴ The sad point about this incident is that the *taulealea* (untitled men) who carried out the decision of the village chiefly council are related to the victim. Again, the court acted against this decision of the village council and put in prison the two young men who

¹⁰³ Marieta Heidi. Ilalio, "Leota Leuluai alii ban from his village Solosolo," *Samoa Observer*, December 10, 2011, accessed February 15, 2012, <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/2012/2/15/other/culture.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Marieta Heidi. Ilalio, "Former Samoa Speaker's House Burned," *Samoa Observer*, February 21, 2012, accessed, February 25, 2012, <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/2012/2/25/other/culture.htm>.

did it. The high chief was shocked when he found out that those who did it are members of his own family.¹⁰⁵ Finally, the chief decided to reconcile with his village again through customary ways.¹⁰⁶

This is definitely not only a clash between the two systems of justice (village council and the legal court) present in Samoa, but also collective interests versus individual rights. Such an incident demonstrates the absence of the *tofa fetuutuunai* (wisdom) of chiefs and their failure to fulfil their responsibilities for maintaining peace and harmony. Moreover, the absence of the church's role in such a sensitive case is questionable. Where is the church? Why did the *ao-faalupega* (head of honorific greetings in Samoa, i.e. Pastors) not intervene and settle the issue? The suggestion is that, the church should at least be the bridge offering the spiritual counselling for both parties involved. This is very important especially for cases, which falls in the tension between collective interest and individual rights. Furthermore, we wish that the court continued to suggest and urge the high chiefs to make use of traditional cultural ways of healing tension and settling their dispute. We would have a different story if the court managed to do that and the high chief would not have lost his house and his properties. In addition, the two young men who carry out the decision of the chiefs would not end up in prison.

Case 2: Satitua village and one of its chief

Mase Lafua, a chief who is not only a member of the Assemblies of God, but also owns the land, whereby the church is established. He was not happy how the pastor addressed him in front of the congregation.¹⁰⁷ He was

¹⁰⁵ Ilalio, Speaker's House Burned.

¹⁰⁶ Marieta Heidi. Ilalio, "Cour grants Leota's return to Solosolo," *Samoa Observer*, November 25, 2015, accessed, December 5, 2015, <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/2015/12/5/other/legal/14616-court.htm>.

¹⁰⁷ This is the case shared by Maulio Oso (informant) during discussion with the author of what happened in their village during his reign as the village mayor.

ashamed and had an argument with the pastor in front of the congregation. After the meeting, he went with a machete to attack the pastor but did not succeed. The village council convened and informed the family of the chief to perform the *ifoga* ritual, ask for forgiveness, and reconcile with the pastor. However, Lafua refused to do it believing that he was right. The village council then performed the *ifoga* ritual and the pastor and his family accepted it. The council proceeded on to punish Lafua according to the village rules and regulation. Mase was punished again to *faa-savali ile ala* meaning he is prohibited from his residence and the village). The *sala* (punishment) implies that he has no right as a human being to enter the village nor his properties. He disobeyed the ruling of village council and decided to remain in his land. The council of chiefs met again and agreed to the punishment of *mu-le-foaga* (burning houses and destroying properties). The *taulelea* (untitled men) carried out the decision of the village council and Lafua fled with his wife and children. The state legal court intervened because of the chief's personal human rights and properties. Instead of putting the chiefs who made the decision in prison, the police took the *tauleleas* (young people) who carried out the decision of the village council. Until today, this chief, his wife, and children are not in the village any more, only his relatives.

The case of Mase is related to that of Leuluaialii. One can observe that in Mases case, all the institutions in the Samoan society (church, culture and the state legal court) take part. However, the pastor failed to act as a mediator and consulted with the village council about their decision. He did not even intervene when the young people carried out the decision of the village council. The pastor can play a key role because he could influence the decision of the village council and reconciled with the chief. On the other hand, we hoped the high chief would had a sense of remorse and be able to settle their differences with his pastor. Again, the issue of individual rights clashes with communal interests. The village council should also look at their traditional

punishment and may seek the opinion of the pastor before the decision is finalised.

The two cases mentioned above can be solved if the chiefs have managed to *soalaupule* (deliberate, consult and dialog) among themselves. Both cases underline the absence of the *tofa-faa-le-Atua* (wisdom of God) and the *mana* (sacred authority, wisdom) from the chiefs and the pastors. The court would not intervene if the traditional healing the *ifoga* ritual is performed to settle the disputes. Would it be different if the church (pastors) take part and solve such tensions with the chiefs? This question will be dealt with in chapter six.

4.7.2 Conflicts handled by the State Legal Court after the *ifoga* ritual

Case 3: Vaimoso conducted an ifoga ritual for the village of Vaipuna

A group of young boys from the village of Vaimoso attacked an old man from the village of Vaipuna (near the city) as he was walking to church on Saturday morning.¹⁰⁸ The old man was badly beaten by these drunken youth and a Samaritan took him to hospital. Such an incident provoked retaliation and war from the victim's family and village. The chiefs of Vaimoso *soalaupule* (deliberate, consult, dialog) among themselves and performed the honourable and reverent ritual *ifoga* to the victim's family and village asking for forgiveness and reconciliation.¹⁰⁹ The *tofa-faa-le Atua* (God's spirit of forgiveness) of the victim himself and his family was shown through the acceptance of the ritual.¹¹⁰ Although the *ifoga* has nothing to do in averting the incident, but it has put a complete stop to any possible and severe revengeful

¹⁰⁸ Pai Mulitalo Ale, "Brutal Beating on the way to Church," *Samoa Observer Newspaper*, October 4, 2012, accessed January 30, 2013, <http://www.samoaoobserver.com/2013/1/30/other/court/1341-brutal-beating-on-the-way-to-church.html>.

¹⁰⁹ Ale, "Brutal beating on the way to church."

¹¹⁰ Ale, "Brutal beating on the way to church."

and retaliatory actions. Such incident could have ended up in war between the two villages.

The families of the youths were punished according to the customary laws of the village council while these young men were taken into prison according to the state legal court ruling. However, the court also take into consideration the collective effort of Vaimoso's village council and their contribution to settle the dispute culturally first before the court. In fact, the punishment for these young people by legal court was reduced because of the *ifoga* ritual was performed and accepted by the victim's family.

Case 4: The family of the bus driver conducted the ifoga ritual because of negligent driving causing death

Malaki Taatiti, a bus driver from the village of Vaitele was taken into custody for careless driving causing death.¹¹¹ The deceased was one of his passengers who jumped out of the bus while it was still moving. He fell on the ground and was rolled over by the tires at the back of the bus. The victim was taken to the hospital and he died because of severe injuries. While Mr Taatiti was held in custody, his *aiga* (family) performed the traditional ritual *ifoga* to the family and village of the deceased. The chiefs of his family believed that it was Taatiti's responsibility as a driver to take care of the passengers. In addition, it was also appropriate in order to prevent violence and retaliation from the relatives of the deceased. The victim's family accepted the ritual and both families shared remorse for what had happened.

During the hearing of the case, the judge said that alcohol played a role in the behaviour of the victim, which led to the terrible accident.¹¹² However, she reminded the bus driver that the lives of the passengers were in his care,

¹¹¹ Pai Mulitalo Ale, "Suspended Sentence for bus driver," *Samoa Observer Newspaper*, February 18, 2015, accessed June 6, 2015, <http://www.samoobserver.com/2016/6/6/other/legal/1235-court.htm>.

¹¹² Ale, "Suspended Sentence for bus driver."

and it was his responsibility to stop the bus completely before anyone gets out. It was reported to the judge that the family of the bus driver had conducted the traditional *ifoga* ritual to the victim's family and was accepted. The judge Leilani Tuala took note of the ritual and commented, "An apology conducted in the traditional Samoa culture is a true sign of remorse."¹¹³ The ruling of the court resulted for the bus driver to serve 12 months of supervision for the offence and 100 hours of community service.

The last two cases illustrate how the state legal court and the village council work together to prevent more violence and retaliation. What is unique about them is that Leilani Tuala who did a study about the *ifoga* ritual while she was a lawyer, is now one of the judges for the "Land and Title Court" in Samoa. In addition, she is also a high chief in her family and she understands how important the *ifoga* ritual is in the Samoan society.

4.8 The changing of *ifoga*: a structural analysis

The *ifoga* ritual as discussed in this chapter has changed tremendously due to the integration of Samoan culture with Christianity and the western world. In the case of this interaction, the religious aspects of the ritual were diminished, and some of its original indigenous values lost. As a result, the ritual has been transformed from over time changing its function and its realization in the contemporary Samoan society. In order to understand the changes of the *ifoga* ritual in different historical contexts,¹¹⁴ I suggest the application of structural analysis (coined by V. Propp, A. Dundes, K. L. Pike, A. J. Greimas and H. Boers) as analyzed and discussed critically by Werner Kahl in his book, *New Testament Miracle Stories in their Religious Historical*

¹¹³ Ale, "Suspended Sentence for bus driver."

¹¹⁴ The term contexts refer to the Pre-contact, Christian era, Colonial, Post-colonial times in Samoa.

Setting.¹¹⁵ The narrative schema presented by H. Boers¹¹⁶ as cited and used by Kahl seems a practical tool for the analysis of the *ifoga* ritual.¹¹⁷

| Lack | Preparedness | Performance | Sanction |
|--|--|---|---|
| A subject of a circumstance, disjoined from a desirable object, or conjoined with an undesirable object. | An active subject, willing or obliged, and able (having the power), to overcome the initial lack by a performance. | The active subject attempts, by means of a performance, to reverse the initial situation. | Judgement on the preparedness or recognition of the outcome of the performance. |

The narrative schema helps us to categorize and recognize the overall structure of the *ifoga* ritual in its religious, social, and cultural context. This will allow us to evaluate and identify the functions and the motifs of the *ifoga* ritual in various contexts within the Samoan society.¹¹⁸

At a later step, Biblical passages will be analyzed by the same method. This allows for an academically sound comparison of Biblical material with the narrative of the *ifoga* ritual.

4.8.1 The initial Lack

The *ifoga* ritual presupposes an unwanted circumstance caused by misconduct and misbehaviours resulting in a lack of peaceful and harmonious order in the community. The creation of the initial lack varies from over the ages. For instance, in the pre-contact times, the initial lack or circumstance resulted from *faamaligi-toto* (bloodshed), *fasioti-tagata* (murder), *moetolo*

¹¹⁵ Werner Kahl, *New Testament Miracle Stories in their Religious-Historical Setting* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 37-55. See also Werner Kahl, “Strukturelle Erzähltheorie am Beispiel des religionsgeschichtlichen Vergleichs neutestamentlicher und rabbinischer Versionen einer Story,” in *Exegese und Methoden-diskussion*, eds. Stefan Alkier and Ralph Brucker (Tübingen: A. Francke Verlag, 1998), 155-177. Kahl highlights the importance of the morphological analysis to compare the miracle stories in the New Testament by differentiating their functions (*motiphemes*) from motifs (*allomotifs*).

¹¹⁶ Boers, *Neither on this Mountain nor in Jerusalem*, 9.

¹¹⁷ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 45; Kahl, “Strukturelle Erzähltheorie und Exegese,” 159.

¹¹⁸ Lately, the Narrative Schema has shared precisely in cultural studies outside the field of ethnology especially in structural studies.

(rape) and *solitofaga* (entering the chief's house at night without permission).¹¹⁹ These were the most severe incidents that brought about pollution in the community, for they led to violence through retaliation and revenge. The person who commits the crime is the active subject in the performance that creates this initial lack, e.g. as a murderer or a rapist.¹²⁰ In the case of Tuioneula, he is the murderer because he killed a chief from Manono when they went out fishing.¹²¹ His action created the initial unwelcome circumstance, since both communities involved were polluted by the death of the high chief from Manono. The people of Manono wanted revenge by raging war against Tuioneula, and any person belonging to the Aana region would be slaughtered.

However, when the missionaries arrived and introduced certain values of gospel and (their) culture, committing adultery was added to the list of constructing the initial circumstance (lack).¹²² In pre-contact Samoa, adultery and polygamy were common practices among the Samoans. It was a pride for the chiefs to have many wives. According to Foniti, many chiefs have different *faletama*, meaning children from various unions and adultery.¹²³ However, the missionaries taught people about the importance of marriage and faithfulness to one another. As a result, adultery is strongly forbidden in villages until today. Maulio Oso shares that he went with chiefs of his village to conduct the *ifoga* ritual to the family and the village of the Assembly of God pastor, who served in their village.¹²⁴ He had been caught committing adultery with one of

¹¹⁹ Turner, *Samoa*, 189 and Stair, *Old Samoa*, 96-97.

¹²⁰ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 70.

¹²¹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 99.

¹²² Moyes ed., *Journal of John Williams*, 45-49.

¹²³ A child born because of adultery is called by the Samoans, *tama-ole-po* meaning a child of the darkness.

¹²⁴ Maulio Oso (informant) discussion with the author September 8, 2012.

the women in his congregation.¹²⁵ The pastor, feeling guilty of what had happened, decided to leave the congregation and he returned to his family.

During the colonial period, the western legal system was introduced and the causes of the lack were not limited to murder, rape, and adultery, but also included shaming the high chief and the village name publicly (in the court), as in the case of Talamaivao the high chief of Fagaloa. Since independence until today, the establishment of the initial lack incorporates harsh words to chiefs or pastors, careless driving causing death, arson, and theft.¹²⁶ The reason for this is that all these unwanted circumstances might lead to violence, vengeance, retaliation, and punishment. Finally, they all relate to the issue of violating the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationship) that binds the purity of law and order in societies. Thus, the creation of initial circumstance or lack varies from generation to generation.

4.8.2 Preparedness of the Active Subject

The second phase (Preparedness) Kahl notes, - “aims at the bestowal of an active subject¹²⁷ with *motivation* (*vouloir- /devoir-faire*) and *ability* (*savior- /pouvoir-faire*) to engage successfully in a performance.”¹²⁸ In the case of the *ifoga* ritual, one could argue that the active subjects is the high chief of the perpetrator’s family, who initiates the performance of the ritual, and the high chief of the victim’s family who accepts the ritual in order to continue the process of reconciliation. Both chiefs received the *mana* (divine power, authority) from their ancestors for the roles they play in the *ifoga* ritual so that it achieves its purpose of reversing the initial lack. How could the active subject (AS) be activated and prepared by the ancestors to carry out the task of reversing the initial lack?

¹²⁵ For Maulio, it is the responsibility of the village to protect and serve the pastor.

¹²⁶ Macpherson C and Macpherson L, “The Ifoga,” 109-134.

¹²⁷ Kahl refers the active subject to the one (subject) whose commitment is to reverse the initial circumstance or lack.

¹²⁸ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 76.

In the pre-contact Samoan society, the *mana* (divine power, authority) was believed to have originated from the ancestral gods corresponding to Kahl's term "bearer of numinous power (BNP)."¹²⁹ This is evident in the first part of the ritual, which is the *soalaupule* (deliberate, dialog) process whether to conduct an *ifoga* or not. The chiefs consult the ancestors through meditation during their night sleep. A response from the ancestral gods will be revealed either in the form of a vision, or, through a dream to the chiefs and they should act accordingly.¹³⁰ In this sense, the chiefs are "petitioners of numinous power" (PNP) according to Kahl's analysis.¹³¹ They pray to the ancestral gods (BNP) and appeal to give them the *mana* (power and authority) and their blessing to perform the ritual. Chiefs need courage, peace, and strength as they prepare to liquidate the initial circumstance. Furthermore, they ask their ancestors to enable the hearts of the victim's family to accept the ritual.

However, when the missionaries arrived, they taught the people that this *mana* (power, authority) is derived from YHWH, and it is he who had called them (chiefs) to lead their families and their respective villages.¹³² In this context, the chiefs have to prepare themselves spiritually, mentally, and physically and pray for God's peace to guide their preparations to reverse the initial circumstance.¹³³ Although, the preparations to liquidate the lack is the sole responsibility of the chief as informed by the Samoan saying, "*ole sala ole mea ale tamalii*" (atonement is the sole responsibility of the chief), they cannot do it alone without the help of God, the bearer of the numinous power (BNP). Case in point is the *kava* ceremony and the traditional *lauga* ritual described in

¹²⁹ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 76. Kahl uses the term 'bearer of numinous power' to refer to the subjects who have powers themselves.

¹³⁰ Cf. reference in Papaliitele M. Fouvaa, *Ua e pale, ua e ula, ua e titi i lou Faasinomaga*, 1-6 with Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 126.

¹³¹ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 76.

¹³² See Chapter 2 section 2.4.2.2 Chief.

¹³³ Part of the chief's preparations includes the *faalupega* (honorific greetings), taboos, and covenant associated with the family and the village where the ritual will be held.

the last chapter.¹³⁴ In both rituals, the presence of God (BNP) is acknowledged, and thanksgiving is expressed to him for the success of the ritual performance for the achievement of peace and reconciliation.

In the contemporary Samoan societies, people still hold on to this understanding of God's role in the process of the *ifoga* ritual.¹³⁵ God is at the background of the whole event. Thus, in the pre-contact Samoa the bearer of numinous power (BNP) were the ancestral gods, replaced by YHWH from the time of the missionaries until today. They do not however engage directly in the process of the ritual. The BNP prepares the chiefs as another active subject for the *ifoga* process.

As discussed, the high chiefs from both parties involved in the *ifoga* ritual function active subjects (AS). Accordingly, the chiefs are prepared spiritually, mentally, and physically by God, the bearer of numinous power (BNP) to perform the ritual. As Kahl states after bestowing them “with *vouloir-/devoir- and/ or pouvoir-/savoir-faire,*” they are able to function as active subjects to reverse the initial circumstance.¹³⁶ For example, the chief of the perpetrator’s family after receiving a vision and wisdom to conduct the ritual also prepares himself as well as his family. He acts as a scapegoat, letting go of his dignity, honorific status, and he kneels down on the ground covering with the traditional *ietoga* (fine mat). The scene is heartfelt in the eyes of perpetrator’s family members seeing their chief treated like an animal publicly.¹³⁷ He carries the burden of what has happened and fasts from the very moment he performs the ritual until it is accepted. In addition, the chief struggles to breathe fresh air under the fine mat because its quality is fine and soft, and thus, it is difficult for the air to penetrate. In fact, there is a possibility

¹³⁴ See Chapter 3 section 3.8.3 *Kava Ceremony*.

¹³⁵ The idea of God’s presence and his involvement in the process may have been influenced by the people's Christian belief and upbringing. However, this is the case as expressed in the traditional speeches and other rituals.

¹³⁶ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 102.

¹³⁷ Stewart, “Ifoga : The Concept of Public Apology,” 183 - 195.

for the chief to die under the fine mat in the heat of the sun, especially if the *soalaupulega* (consultation, deliberation) of the receiving party continues for quite some time. In addition, death can also be caused by hunger and thirst, because once the high chief is under the fine mat, he fasts until he and his party are welcomed in the house. Thus, everything depends on the *mana* (divine power) of the chief from the receiving party.

Much has been said about the preparations of the perpetrator's family; however, it is also important to acknowledge the preparation of the victim's family. The high chief of the victim's family plays a vital role during this time of hurt and mourning. First, as a leader of the community, he prepares himself spiritually, mentally, and physically especially if what has happened leads to violence and vengeance. He consults his ancestors and shares any vision he received with his community. This is a vital step towards the healing process within the locality of his family. It is through the *soalaupule* (deliberate, dialog) process that the high chief nurtures and controls the feelings of hatred and revenge within his household. Accordingly, it is not an easy to accept a severe crime committed against family members and healing the wounds takes time and effort.

In addition to their own (victim's family) preparations is the performance of the chief of the perpetrator's family under the fine mat. This is significant and crucial moment because it is directed towards the victim's family. The action of the perpetrator's high chief not only attracts the attention of the other chief (victim's family), but at the same time prepares him to reverse the initial lack. As discussed, behaving in such a way (bowing down) demonstrates not only the request to restore peace and harmony among communities, but also conveys a strong message to the victim's party about how guilty they are about what had happened. An act that communicates the values of unworthiness to be considered as a human being, but rather, to be considered as an animal. The demonstration under the fine mat appears as

means of medicine for the wounded and broken hearts and that it soothes the souls of the victim's family. One can suggest that the action of the perpetrator's high chief under the fine mat has a political function. In fact, it does prepare and influence the high chief of victim's party to consider their plea for reversing the initial lack. Furthermore, we must not forget that the ritual has a spiritual nature and that both chiefs are mediators of the numinous power (MNP).

Accordingly, there is no other way to restore peace and purify the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationship) outside the performance of the ritual. The performance (bowing down covered with a fine mat) of the chief has not been changed since then until today, however, other elements have been added to the process such as the increased number of fine mats, money, and the number of chiefs covered with fine mats. These elements are later additions to the original structure and performance of the ritual.

4.8.3 The Performance

Previous studies about the *ifoga* ritual (Tuala, Macpherson, Foliialii and Knowles) considered the bowing down of the high chief of the perpetrator's family under the *ietoga* (fine mat) as the 'Main Performance.' Although his performance is the first act of the *ifoga* ritual, it is not the main performance to liquidate the initial lack. It is suggested that his performance (high chief of the perpetrator's family) under the fine mat is part of the 'Preparedness' process. As pointed out in the discussion, his act aims at the high chief of the victim's family, persuading him to accept his offering¹³⁸ and welcomes him. Theoretically, this performance contributes and prepares the high of the victim's family spiritually to change and alter his attitude in order for harmony and peace to reign again. One can suggest that this is a symbolic reality of

¹³⁸ In the context of *ifoga* ritual, the high chief under the fine mat is like an animal offered as part of the traditional *sua-faatamalii* (honorific presentation in the Samoan culture) for the high chief of the victim's family.

God's role in preparing the perpetrator's high chief and his family spiritually. As discussed above it is not easy for a high chief in the Samoan culture to be treated in such a way.

The 'Main Performance' of the *ifoga* ritual that leads towards the successful effect for the liquidation of the initial circumstance or the lack is when the chief of the victim's family enters the sanctuary, removes the fine mat, and welcomes the *ifoga* party into the house.¹³⁹ This performance of the high chief of the victim's family is significant because it is the decisive moment. He is the hero of the *ifoga* ritual in the process of reconciliation. His symbolic action reveals that he accepts the offering and his family is willing to reconcile. It demonstrates the change of heart and opts for peace and harmony not war, vengeance, and violence. Accepting an enemy and welcoming him in your house is a supreme challenge and courage. In fact, this is not an easy process and his action proves that he has received the *mana* (divine power) from God to accept the action of the perpetrator's high chief and his family. Accordingly, the decisive moment is not taken for granted, because it is difficult to change the feelings of hatred, vengeance, and revenge from the perspective of the victim's family. However, God has prepared the victim's family spiritually and this is at the heart of the ritual. Accordingly, this is the outcome of many preparations and meditations spiritually from both families involved.

Furthermore, once the offering of the perpetrator's family is accepted, the protocols and the remainder of the process will continue to achieve the purpose of reversing the initial lack. For the Samoans, this is how the *mana* (divine power) works in their midst. When the chiefs received the *mana* (divine power) from God, they would judge with wisdom and act wisely in difficult situations as in the context of violence. Everything that happens during the *ifoga* ritual is considered by the Samoans as having been motivated and influenced by their spiritual preparations. For instance, the feast and the

¹³⁹ Cf. with reference to chapter 3 section 3.8.2.

presentation of gifts are all part of their spiritual preparations. Thus, the high chief of the perpetrator's family and his party will obey and act accordingly to the continuation of the reconciliation process conducted by the victim's family.

4.8.4 Sanctioning the Performance of the *ifoga* ritual

Various rites are conducted to seal the liquidation of the initial lack as the recognition of the outcome of the performance. In addition, the process highlights the change of status between the two parties involved: Host (victim's family) and Guests (perpetrator's family).

The *kava* ceremony (welcome ceremony) signifies the changing status of the enemy to that of honoured guests. In this *kava* ritual, God (BNP) is praised, honoured, and thanked for the outcome of the event. Both chiefs and their parties during their traditional *lauga* (cultural speeches) address God and acknowledge his presence and contribution. This corresponds to Kahl's *allomotif*, "the rewarding of the BNP in recognition of the extraordinary preparedness."¹⁴⁰ In terms of libation during the *kava* ritual, God gets a share as chiefs call his name and pour his portion of the ground before they drink the *kava*. This is the acknowledgment of satisfaction and happiness by the outcome of the process.

Moreover, the feast prepared by the victim's family is a clear indication of sanctioning the performance and affirming the new friendship. As discussed in the last chapter, food has value, power, and political influence in the Samoan culture. It illustrates and expresses how one feels and relates to one another. Food is one of the crucial elements in fellowship, friendship, and it expresses having good relations with guests. The feast is a symbolic sign of celebrating peace, restoration and the achievement of reconciliation.

Finally, the presentation of the *faaaloaloga* (gifts, presents) is the concluding element in every fellowship as in the case of the *ifoga* ritual. The

¹⁴⁰ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 145.

sua faatamalii (traditional Samoan way of honouring someone) demonstrates the honour given back to the high chief of the perpetrator's family, who was treated like an animal ready to be slaughtered at the beginning of the ritual. Furthermore, it seals the new covenant and friendship and the purification of taboos and boundaries polluted because of what had happened. It could be suggested that this is an appropriate send off for the guests as they return back home. They are sending off in peace with the blessings from the hosts. All these elements demonstrate and highlight the sanctioning of the main performance and affirm the liquidation of the created initial lack.

In conclusion, the involvement of God, the bearer of the numinous power (BNP) in the whole process is important. He prepares the first high chief (high chief the perpetrators family) for the preparedness stage as well as the second chief (high chief of the victim's family) for the performance. This is evident in the sanctioning of the main performance of the second chief. The presence of God and his role in the process is acknowledged, praised, and thanked by both parties involved.

4.8.5 The Function of the *ifoga* ritual in different contexts

The performance and the structure of the *ifoga* ritual throughout time are similar, but the use of significant modern elements such as money and goods changes the function and meaning of the ritual. For instance, in pre-colonial Samoan society, the ritual means purifying taboos, covenants, and boundaries associated with the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationships). In this sense, it is more about its religious values and the manifestation of its ritualistic aspects. In the Christian era as recorded by the missionaries, the ritual functioned as a mean to prevent war. Stair and Turner state the performance of the ritual has overcome war among regions, villages, and paramount chiefs in Samoa.¹⁴¹ In the colonial period and under the strong influence of the west, the *ifoga* ritual means an

¹⁴¹ Stair, *Old Samoa*, 99 and Turner, *Samoa*, 189.

apology expressed for the wrong being done.¹⁴² This is evident in the order given by Solf's administration to Talamaivao, for a chief of Fagaloa to perform the ritual for the two chiefs he had accused in his village.¹⁴³ In contemporary Samoan society, the ritual functions as a means of making compensation for crime committed and asking for forgiveness.¹⁴⁴

However, despite the different meanings and the functions of the *ifoga* ritual from time to time, the religious aspect, the *mana* (divine power) the chiefs received from God (BNP), the *vafealoai* (mutual relationship) among the people, and the willingness to reconcile with one another is at the heart of the ritual. Thus, the meaning of the ritual has changed, and before it loses its spiritual and communal values altogether, the church should make use of biblical traditions to redefine and revitalise religious aspects and values to keep society together by means of a spiritually deepened *ifoga* ritual.

4.9 Conclusion

We have attempted to demonstrate the transformation of the *ifoga* ritual as a result of the engagement of the *faa*-Samoa (Samoan culture) with Christianity and the western world. The *ifoga* ritual has been spiritualized, changing its theoretical basis, meaning, content, and function. It is no longer limited to purifying sacred places, negotiating social and sacred boundaries; and acceptance in the family circle; but it is also about forgiveness, reconciliation, and compensation. Both Christianity and the western legal system acknowledge the role played by the ritual for the benefit of society. Christianity considers it as another way of preaching and sharing the message of forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation. From the point of view of the legal system, it is a way of 'restorative justice. It concerns solving conflicts and overcoming violence among different parties involved. Such characteristics of

¹⁴² Cf. Stewart, "Ifoga : The Concept of Public Apology," 183 - 195

¹⁴³ See section 4.4.4 above.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Folialii L and Knowles, "The Ifoga," 384-388.

the *ifoga* ritual are acknowledged by the legal system when handling the punishment of perpetrators. In the course of time, the *ifoga* ritual has lost an essential function of its original indigenous religious value and sacredness.

Despite the changes in its meaning and content, the foundational basis of the *ifoga* ritual remains the same. As we have shown, the changes in performing *ifoga* correspond to functional transformations of the ritual. There is a need to regain the essence of its original meaning for developing a peaceful Samoan society. Since the church plays a major role in shaping Samoan society and its moral values, it is vital for the church to redefine that *ifoga* ritual. The church has to come in with its biblical traditions that might help in reshaping the *ifoga* ritual for it to regain its essential function. For instance, parallels are seen in the book of Leviticus chapter 16, where atonement is clarified highlighting the pure goat, as a scapegoat and that will be dealt with in the next chapter. Another essential parallel is the Christ-event featuring Christ as the high chief offering himself on behalf of his family and the community. Viewing the *ifoga* ritual from a biblical perspective could inform a transformative understanding of the ritual and that is what we are going to do in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5 LEVITICUS 16

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present firstly a variety of exegetical analyses of Lev 16, highlighting central aspects of the controversial scholarly debate. Secondly, I will offer my own analysis of the passage by applying the Narrative Schema. This structural analysis helps to identify parallels – and distinct differences – between the *ifoga* ritual and Lev 16, as will be demonstrated in a subsequent intertextual comparison of the two narratives. The results of the comparison might inform the direction a transformation of the *ifoga* ritual could take in light of the biblical text.

5.2 Introductory note on biblical hermeneutics

In the field of biblical exegesis, methodology is a prominent concern. Since the dominant ‘historical-critical method’¹ has been increasingly challenged, exegetes explored new alternatives to biblical interpretive approaches.² The complexity of biblical hermeneutics is widely classified under the banners of ‘diachronic and synchronic’ approaches.³ While the

¹ The ‘historical critical method’ refers to the study of biblical texts in their original historical contexts, and it seeks to identify the meaning its author(s) intended for their original audience(s) or addressees. Some scholars refer to it as the study of ‘the history behind the text.’ See William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg and Robert L. Hubbard Jr, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 185-188; Paul E. Hughes, “Compositional History-Source, Form, and Redactional Criticism,” in *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis*, ed. Craig C. Broyles (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 221-244.

² Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovell (ed.), *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012).

³ The two terms are attributed to Ferdinand de Saussure who described them as his modes of studying language. See Ferdinand de Saussure, *Courses in General Linguistic*, trans. Wade Baskin; eds. Perry Meisel and Haun Saussy (New York: Coloumbia University Press, 2011); Cf. Johannes C. de Moor (ed.), *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Old Testament Exegesis* (Leiden-New York-Köln: E.J. Brill, 1995); Zilpora Talshir, “Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches in the study of the Hebrew Bible: Text Criticism within the Frame of Biblical Philology, *Textus* 23 (2007): 1-32; P. Hong Koog, “Synchronic and diachronic in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation,” *CBQ*, 75 (2013): 521-539. Koog

methods of the diachronic approach are aimed at reconstructing the history behind biblical texts, the methods of the synchronic approach are directed at analysing academically and interpreting the texts in their final state, as unified wholes.⁴ The approaches are radically different from one another with their own distinct presuppositions, questions, and interests. However, despite the different methodological and theoretical orientations of various approaches, each individual approach can enhance and benefit from another one as Koog Hong puts it: “By listening to other's reading, one's own reading can be enriched.”⁵ Although the two approaches sometimes cause ambiguity and confusion,⁶ they are not to be ignored in today's pluralistic context. They are however, to be used with caution and a critical mind, and not to be taken as value free or objective approaches. That exegetes, even using the same methods, have come up with often contradictory results in their textual analyses, also applies to the many studies conducted on Leviticus 16. Whatever approach or method one chooses to study a biblical text, it illustrates the preferences and interests of the researcher.

For the analysis of the selected passage in the context of this study, I propose again the application of the “Narrative Schema” (cf. above 4.8). This method avails itself since it has been successfully tested in the study of ritual, myth, and biblical texts across cultures. For instance, in the humanities it has been used by ethnologists, anthropologists and folklorists such as Vladimir

challenges the use of the synchronic and diachronic approach as a scheme to embrace all approaches in today's variety of biblical criticism. He argues that the mutual interaction among various approaches to biblical interpretation serves better under a tripartite division of author, text, and reader. According to Koog, the synchronic and diachronic scheme can be implemented in the tripartite (author, text, reader) division of biblical interpretation.

⁴ See James Barr, “The Synchronic, the Diachronic, and the Historical: The Triangular Relationship in *Synchronic or Diachronic? A Debate on Old Testament Exegesis* ed. by Johannes C. Moor (Leiden-New York-Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995); 1-14.

⁵ Koog P. Hong, “Synchronic and Diachronic,” 521-539.

⁶ De Moors, *Synchronic or Diachronic*, 45.

Propp who analyzed the basic components of Russian folk tales and myths.⁷ Following Propp, the semiotician A.J. Greimas developed the “Narrative Schema” to help identify the functions of narrative transformation.⁸ Hendrikus Boers and David Jobling, but also Daniel Patte, made use of the “Narrative Schema” to bring out the meaning of biblical texts.⁹ It provides the means of investigating what holds a text together; i.e. what provides cohesion by linking the various elements of the text together, and what constitutes its coherence and meaning.¹⁰

With respect to the narrative in Lev 16, the “Narrative Schema” helps to identify the functions of various acts and rites. Once the basic meaning of these functions has been determined, it can be compared to the meaning of functions of the ifoga ritual. The results of this comparison might help to reshape, transform and strengthen the ifoga ritual and its function in the Samoan society.

5.3 Overview on the scholarly debate and on the approaches to Leviticus

16

Leviticus 16 has drawn the attention and the interest of many scholars since the time of Oort (1876) and Benzinger (1889).¹¹ This is due to the significance of the Yom Kippur ritual in Judaism and the complexity of the ceremony as a whole.¹² As a result, diverse interpretations and questions arose

⁷ See Vladimir Propp, *The Morphology of the Folktales* (Austin/London: University of Texas), 1975.

⁸ Algirdas J. Greimas, *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). See also Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 42-44.

⁹ Hendrikus Boers, *Nethier on this Mountain nor in Jerusalem* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); David Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative: Structural Analysis in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986).

¹⁰ Werner Kahl, “Biblical Hermeneutics,” (lecture presented for the Missionsakademie an der Universität Hamburg Doktorand Colloquium, Hamburg, July 7, 2015).

¹¹ See Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 340-371.

¹² See Martin McNamara, “Reception of the Hebrew Text of Leviticus in the Targums,” in Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kugler (eds.), *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and*

concerning its composition, function, and its relation to the rest of the priestly narrative.¹³ I shall not offer a detailed analysis of the history of research for the text under scrutiny. This task is beyond the scope of the present study and such histories are offered in a number of works and in more detail than we can present here.¹⁴ However, our brief orientation to its history provides a useful framework for capturing modern approaches and issues concerning Lev 16. The following approaches can be identified:

5.3.1 The Literary Approach

Although there is a remarkable consensus about the division of Leviticus 16 into two parts (1-28) and (29-34),¹⁵ the discussion concerning the original ritual is a matter of dispute. For instance, Karl Elliger recognises the repetition of verse 6 in verse 11a as a starting point in his literary-critical analysis for the identification of the original ritual in Lev 16. He asserts that the basic layer of the text – its *Grundschrift* – consists of verses 1, 2, 3a, 4, 11, 14-15, 17, 20b, 22b-24, and 34b.¹⁶ This basic layer according to Elliger implies the original version of the text concerning the atonement for the priest, his household and the whole community. This means that the atonement for the sanctuary, the tent of meeting and the altar were interpolated later. For Elliger, the first revision – *erste Bearbeitung* –, manifest in verses 3b, 5-10, 16, 18-20a, 21-22a, and 25-28, were inserted later by a redactor who introduced the rite of the two

Reception (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 267-298. The term ‘*Yom Kippur*’ is not found in Lev 16, however, McNamara notes that the expression was coined by the Rabbis. In fact the expression יום הכפרים is present in Lev 23,26-32.

¹³ Benedikt Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung: Leviticus 16 in seinem literarischen Kontext* (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 2001); Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 344.

¹⁴ Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung*; Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*; T. Seidl, “Levitikus 16 – Schlussstein des priesterlichen Systems der Sündenvergebung,” in H. J. Fabry and H. W. Jüngling (eds.), *Leviticus als Buch (Bonner Biblische Beiträge 1999)*, 219-248; Sabina Werfing, “Untersuchungen zum Entsühnungsritual am grossen Versöhnungstag (Lev 16),” (PhD Diss., Bonn, 1979).

¹⁵ The majority of scholars agree that vv. 1-28 are to be distinguished from 29-34a. The latter is a supplement to the first part (1-28). See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

¹⁶ Karl Elliger, *Leviticus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr / Paul Siebeck, 1966), 220-217.

goats. He concludes that the final redactor – *Schlussredaktion* – is responsible for the interpolation of verses 29-34 by means of he transformed the ritual to be conducted in a fixed time of the year.¹⁷

Sabina Wefing, drawing on Elliger's reconstruction of the text, assigns the limitation of the original ritual of Lev 16 to the atonement of the high priest in verses 3, 6, 11b and 14.¹⁸ Contrary to Elliger, Wefing assumes the atonement of the community as interpolated later to the original version. Corinna Körting, along the same observation, supports the idea that the original ritual is for the atonement of the high priest and his house hold.¹⁹ However, unlike Wefing who concludes the section on the atonement to the high priest in verse 14, Körting extends the scope to the first layer of the original version of the text and includes verses 23f (*Grundbestand* vv.2a. βα, 3f, 6, 11b, 14, 23f).²⁰ According to her, these verses constitute the original version of the text followed by later developments.

Christophe Nihan argues that the verses 2-28 should be considered as the original version of Lev 16 with the exception of v. 17 and the phrase וְאֵת־ (אֵת־) in verses 16aβ and 21aβ, and, possibly 4b.²¹ This is contrary to the proposals of Elliger, Wefing and Körting as mentioned above. Although the text has a complex structure with the combination of different rites, Nihan observes a remarkable coherence concerning the content of Lev 16, 2-28. For him, the passage comprises three different rites: first, the admission of the priest to the inner-sanctum where YHWH dwells (v. 2 ff., 13-13); second, the purification of the sanctuary (v. 14-19); and finally, the disposal and elimination of the community's sins (v. 20-22).²² All these rites

¹⁷ Elliger, *Leviticus*, 220-221.

¹⁸ Wefing, *Untersuchungen*, 82-86.

¹⁹ Corinna Körting, *Der Schall des Schofar* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 126-127.

²⁰ See Körting, *Der Schall*, Footnote 179, 126.

²¹ Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 368-371.

²² Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 368.

are organised around the motif of Aaron's entrance and survival in the holy place, so that he can purify the entire sanctuary beginning from the inner-sanctum, moving towards the altar and finally to the people. Thus, he argues that the ritual of atonement is coherent as prescribed in Lev 16.

5.3.2 The Symbolic Approach

Another model of approaching Lev 16 emphasises the symbolic meaning of the rite associated with the function of the *hattat*. Corinna Körting notes that the “two-handed gesture” in Lev 16,21 has the function of transferring “the inequities, transgressions, and sins of the people of Israel onto the animal so that it can carry them away.”²³ In this respect she agrees with the careful analysis offered by Bernd Janowski who observes that the imposition of the *two* hands appears only in Lev 16,21 (“*der einzige Text des Alten Testaments*”)²⁴ contrary to the normal practice of laying on *one* hand as recorded, e.g., in Lev 1,4; 3,2.8.13. He also points out that the laying on of both hands, the transference of sins, and the sending off of the live goat to the Azazel for the removal of the sins are unique as compared with the usual practice of the imposition of one hand on the head of the goat. Janowski excludes the Azazel rite from the usual sacrificial usages; the Azazel rite is not a sacrifice. This argument is based on the observation that sacrificial animals have to be slaughtered. The Azazel goat, however, is sent away alive carrying with it the sins of Israel. He understands the rite in Lev 16,21f. as “*eliminatorischer Ritus (...), dessen Grundstruktur in der magischen Übertragung (kontagiöse Magie) und anschließender Entfernung (Elimination) der materia peccans durch ein dafür vorgesehenes Substitut besteht.*”²⁵ As

²³ Corinna Körting, “Hands, Laying on of,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (EBR), vol. 11 Halah – Hizquni; ed. by Dale C. Allison (et al.); in cooperation with Heinrich Assel (et al.); (Berlin:de Gruyter, 2015), 202-203.

²⁴ Janowski, *Sühne*, 210.

²⁵ Janowski, *Sühne*, 210.

Janowski maintains, Lev 16,21f. has to be understood as a rite of elimination by means of the laying-on-of-hands (*Eliminationsritus mit Handauflegung*) which is also supported with reference to Hethitic texts.

Furthermore, Janowski interprets the blood manipulation symbolically in the context of the *hattat* on the basis of Lev 17,11.²⁶ He considers this blood of the sacrificial animal as a gift from YHWH to humanity. Through the *hattat* ritual, the animal is put to death and its blood is offered on the altar to atone for the sins and offences of the people. He views the death of the animal as representing the vicarious death of the offerer himself.²⁷ Since blood is a symbol of life according to P, its symbolic use in the *hattat* is a sign of YHWH's willingness to reconcile with his people.

Nobuyoshi Kiuchi challenges Janowski treatment of the Azazel rite as having no relationship with the surrounding text.²⁸ Kiuchi stresses that the distinctiveness of the imposition of the hands and the blood manipulation does not necessarily mean that they have nothing to do with each other. He asserts that the Azazel rite is the continuation of the *hattat* ceremony and "it is a special form of burning of the *hattat*."²⁹ His argument is based on the notion that the term *kipper* includes both 'purification' and 'bearing guilt.'³⁰ He demonstrates the strong relationship between the Azazel rite and the blood rite by examining the verses associated with it (vv. 5, 10, 16a and 21a). Aaron bears the guilt of the community while purifying the holy of holies and then confesses them on the live goat when he lays his two hands on the animal. He concludes by saying that the imposition of both hands in verse 21 symbolizes the idea of substitution as in Lev 1,4.

²⁶ Janowski, *Sühne*, 221ff.

²⁷ Janowski, *Sühne*, 246-247.

²⁸ Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *The Purification in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 143-159.

²⁹ Kiuchi, *The Purification in the Priestly Literature*, 156.

³⁰ Kiuchi appeals that when we apply this understanding of *kipper* involving both purification and bearing guilt to Lev 16,14ff., then the connection of the two rites becomes clear.

5.3.3 Ritualistic Approach

Some scholars prefer to approach Lev 16 from a ritualistic perspective and highlight its functions. For instance, Gordon Wenham views Lev 16 containing a ritual performed by the priest for the purification of the tabernacle.³¹ The purpose is to clean the different parts of the tabernacle from the uncleanness of the people of Israel referring to the blood as the appointed means of cleansing and sanctification. For Wenham, the ritual secures Aaron's entry into the holy place which allows him to make an atonement for himself and the people. However, the memorable event of the Day of Atonement for him is the Azazel rite where the live goat is sent to the wilderness.³² He notes that the rite is seen by all the people and that they understand it, contrary to the blood manipulation in the holy of holies where Aaron is alone by himself and nobody witnesses what he was doing in the inner-sanctum.

Jacob Milgrom ascribes to the ritual in Lev 16 two functions: one would be to clean the sanctuary from the sins of Israel with the blood of the goat drawn for YHWH, and another one would be the elimination of all the sins of Israel by the living goat sent for Azazel.³³ Fundamental to his view is his interpretation of the term *kipper* to mean 'purge.' He suggests that the term *kipper* means differently in various contexts. For instance, in the context of the *hattat*, the term means 'to purge,' but in other contexts such as עלה (Lev 1,4), המנחה (Lev14, 20), and אשם (Lev 5, 16. 18. 26) it means 'expiate.'³⁴ This cleansing of the sanctuary occurs in three steps using the blood of the bull and the blood of the goat. It applies first to the holy of holies, then the tent of meeting and finally to the altar. He sees in this blood manipulation a symmetric structure.

³¹ Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Michigan: Grand Rapids, 1979), 225-238.

³² Wenham, *Leviticus*, 237.

³³ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1009-1082.

³⁴ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1081. Milgrom links the history of this interpretation of *kipper* as atonement or expiation to Victor Turner.

Another study on Lev 16 from both ritualistic and literary approaches is that of Benedikt Jürgens.³⁵ He argues that Lev 16 is concerned about holiness and reconciliation (*Heiligkeit und Versöhnung*) between YHWH and his people. He develops and redefines Erich Zenger's argument concerning the connection between Lev 16 and 17.³⁶ He notes that the atonement ritual in Lev 16, the *hattat*, and the *'asam* are all different expiation rites (*Sühneriten*).³⁷ This means that each has a specific function. Thus, the atonement ritual in Lev 16 represents the culmination of the purification rites in which the blood serves as the main instrument in the restoration of the cosmic order after it has been polluted and disrupted by the community's sins and crimes.³⁸ Lev 16 functions to purify and to protect the purity and the holiness in the inner-sanctum, and to enable any possible meeting between JHWH and his people. Therefore, reconciliation between YHWH and his people is possible through the ritual as described in Lev 16.

5.4 Leviticus 16 in its context

In order to understand the meaning of the text under scrutiny, it is important to analyse it in its literary context. The book of Leviticus is located at the heart of the first part of the Old Testament known as the Torah or the Pentateuch, between Exodus and Numbers.³⁹ Accordingly, the book of Exodus ends with YHWH changing His place of residence. He lives no longer on the

³⁵ See Benedikt Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung*, 431.

³⁶ This attempt of Jürgens and Zenger is challenged by Nihan as weak claiming both did not address the differences in the structure of the two texts. For Nihan, the two texts are not connected at all.

³⁷ Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung*, 435.

³⁸ Cf. Jürgens, *Heiligkeit und Versöhnung*, 425. "Indem die Sühneritiale auf diese Weise immer wieder die anfängliche Heiligkeit des Heiligtum wiederherstellen sollen, tragen sie auf ihre Weise dazu bei, den Prozess der partiellen Resitution der ursprünglichen Schöpfungsordnung im Heiligtum und damit in der Wirklichkeit dieser Welt fortzusetzen."

³⁹ Cf. A. G. Auld, "Leviticus at the Heart of the Pentateuch?" in *Reading Leviticus: A Conversation with Mary Douglas*, ed. J. F. Sawyer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 40-51; A. G. Auld, "Leviticus: After Exodus and Before Numbers," in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, eds. Rolf Rendtorff and Robert A. Kluger (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 40-54.

mountain (Ex 19) but in the holy sanctuary (Ex 40,34-35). This means that YHWH dwells among the Israelites as symbolised by the appearance of the cloud in the tent of meeting. In addition, YHWH's new residential place improves the way of communication between Him and Moses. Moses will not go to the mountain anymore to receive the instructions from YHWH for the children of Israel. Instead, YHWH will speak with him directly "from the tent of meeting." Leviticus begins with a divine call to Moses from the tent of meeting (וידבר יהוה אליו מאהל מועד [Lev 1,1]) and concludes with the phrase, "These are the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses for the sons of Israel on Mount Sinai (Lev 27,34)." If YHWH dwells among the people, the question arises, how should people behave and live in the presence of YHWH. This question is of concern in Leviticus 16, which discusses a ritual concerning purity and holiness that Aaron has to perform in order for Israel to live a holy life in the presence of YHWH in their midst.

5.5 Form and function of the passage

Baruch Levine in his article, "Ugaritic Descriptive Rituals" analyses and classifies ritual texts in two categories: Prescriptive and Descriptive.⁴⁰ For Levine prescriptive texts concern the manner in which rites were to be performed, how, why, and when they should be conducted. Descriptive texts on the other hand are concerned with the recording of ritual performances and the rites associated with them. Accordingly, the former explains what will happen in the future while the later tells about what has happened in the past. Bryan D. Bibb states that, rituals focusing on maintenance and restoration occur in prescriptive words given by YHWH through Moses.⁴¹ These

⁴⁰ Baruch A. Levine, "Ugaritic Descriptive Rituals," *JCS*, 17/4 (1963), 105-111, accessed April, 2015, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1359178>.

⁴¹ Bryan D. Bibb, *Ritual Words and Narrative Worlds in the Book of Leviticus* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2009), 45-45.

prescriptive rituals serve as road map or manuals for the actual ritual performances at a given present time.

In light of Levine's and Bibb's analysis, Lev 16 is a *prescriptive* text.⁴² The text tells us about YHWH's speech to Moses concerning what Aaron should do on this day. It is not a narrative of what had happened in the past. However, at the end of the text (Lev 16,34c), we are informed that Aaron did as YHWH had commanded Moses. The presence of *wajjiqtol* verb forms (ויעש, ויאמר, וימתו, וידבר) plays a major role in shaping the framework of YHWH's speech and it marks the beginning and the ending of each unit.⁴³ Thus, YHWH's speech is embodied in the narrative frames as indicated by *the wajjiqtol* verb forms.

In addition, although there is an internal cohesion in YHWH's speech to Moses shaping the whole unit from the beginning to the end, one must also observe and pay attention to the changing of the syntactic forms from that of indirect speech to direct speech. This is marked by the change of persons from third person masculine singular (3ms) in Lev 16,28c to second person masculine plural (2mpl) in Lev 16, 29a. For instance, Lev 16,28c reads המחנה יבוא אל (he shall come into the camp) while Lev 16,29a addresses the people and reads והיתה לכם לחקת עולם (and it shall be to you a statute forever). The transition (from 3ms to 2mpl) marks the distinctive boundaries in YHWH's speech to Moses shifting its focus from Aaron to the whole community of Israel, and from indirect speech to direct speech. In this sense, v. 28c ends the first part of YHWH's speech or the indirect speech while Lev 16,29a begins the second part of YHWH's speech or the direct speech. This second part of YHWH's speech ends in Lev 16,34a, where the last appearance of the 2mpl is located והיתה לכם לחקת עולם (and this shall be for you a statute forever). It

⁴² Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering*, 78.

⁴³ Cf. David Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 21.

appears before the *wajjiqtol* verb form ויעש (and he did), which embodies YHWH's speech into the narrative frame and closes the entire text of Lev 16.

5.6 Translation

For the purpose of this study, the author relies not on the available English translations, but rather produces his own translation of the text (Lev 16) based on the Hebrew Text and its textual-critical apparatus as well as the Septuagint version of the Old Testament.⁴⁴ The translations are presented in the English and the Samoan languages. Significant changes found in the author's versions and major modern versions already existing will be highlighted and notified.

| | Hebrew | English | Samoan |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה | And YHWH spoke to Moses | Sa talanoa ⁴⁵ le Alii ia Mose |
| | אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן | after the death of the two sons of Aaron. | ina ua tuanai le oti o atalii e toalua o Arona |
| | בְּקִרְבָּתָם ⁴⁶ לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וַיָּמָתוּ: | (When they approached | na la solitofaga ⁴⁷ i le maota o |

⁴⁴ These are the books used by the author for the translation of the Old Testament Texts: *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967/77/83/99); *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia: A Reader's Edition* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Pub Marketing, LLC, 2014); Martin Karrer und Wolfgang Kraus, (eds.) *Septuaginta Deustch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft, 2011); Albert Peitersma and Benjamin G. Wright (eds.) *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York/Oxford: Oxford Uni. Press, 2007); Wolfgang Kraus und Martin Karrer (eds.) *Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008).

⁴⁵ The Samoan Bible version uses the verb *fetalai* to translate English word speak. The term *fetalai* is used in both the chiefly vernacular and the ritual vernacular. Many Samoans especially those leaving overseas do not understand what the term *fetalai* means. However, *talanoa* (speak) is a common word spoken by all people and it is understood by everyone.

⁴⁶ The Septuagint (Pershitta, Targum and Vulgate) had another version and it reads: ἐν τῷ προσάγειν αὐτοὺς πῦρ ἀλλότριον ἔναντι κυρίου – 'when they offered strange fire before the Lord.' This (Septuagint version) parallels (as indicated in the BHS) the account recorded in Num 3:4 (בהקרבתם אש זרה לפני יהוה). The difference appears in the *inf. cstr. qal.* (בקרבתם) of the Masoretic text compared to the Hebrew model of the Septuagint text, which has an *inf. cstr. hifil* (בהקרבתם) whereby the offence of Nadab and Abihu (the two sons of Aaron) is paraphrased. The Masoretic text (Lev 16:1) is vague and silent about the reasons for their approached before the Lord. Thus, the Targum, the Pershitta and the Vulgate have a more precise description of the offence committed by Nadab and Abihu than the Masoretic text.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | | before YHWH, they died.) | le Alii, ma maliliu ai. |
| 2 | וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה | And YHWH said to Moses: | Ona fai atu lea o le Alii ia Mose: |
| | דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ | “Speak to Aaron your brother, | “Talanoa ia Arona lou uso, |
| | וְיָבֹא ⁴⁸ בְּכָל־עֵת אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֵל מִבֵּית לְפָרֹכֶת אֶל־פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת ⁴⁹ | he shall not come at any time to the holy <i>place</i> behind the curtain before the <i>kapporet</i> ⁵⁰ | e sa ona ulufale i soo se taimi i le mea paia |
| | אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרוֹן ⁵¹ | that is on the Ark (of the Covenant) | o loo i luga o le atolaau o le feagaiga |
| | וְלֹא יָמוּת | so that he will not die. | ina ia le oti o ia. |
| | כִּי בֶעָנָן | Because in the cloud, | Aua o totonu o le ao |
| | אֶרְאֶה עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת | I will appear upon the <i>kapporet</i> . ⁵² | o le a ou faaali atu ai i luga o le nofoa o le alofa. |
| 3 | בְּזֹאת ⁵³ יָבֹא אַהֲרֹן אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ | In this way, Aaron shall come into the holy <i>place</i> : | O le mea lea, ia ulufale ai Arona i le mea paia |
| | בְּפָרַת בֶּן־בָּקָר לְחֻטָּאת | with a young bull for (the) <i>ḥatta't</i> , ⁵⁴ | ma se tamai povi mo le taulaga mo agasala |
| | וְאֵיל לְעֹלָה: | and a ram for (the) <i>'ólāh</i> . ⁵⁵ | ma se mamoe poa mo le taulaga mu. |

⁴⁷ The term *solitofaga* refers to one of the severe crimes in Samoa. It means that someone enters the residential place of the high chief (e.g. at night) without any permission. It refers to a crime such as raping a woman. The author uses it here to emphasise the entrance in the high chief's house without permission and whenever someone is caught, his punishment is death.

⁴⁸ The religious significant of the holy place and its sacredness can be illustrated by the term taboo. Taboo has both a sacred and a secular meaning. It can be used here to demonstrate this unique boundary of the sanctuary and thus distinguishes it from other spaces. For this reason, it is taboo for the priest to enter the holy place at any time, only when he is performing or fulfilling his responsibilities and duties as a priest, whereby he is allowed and possible to enter.

⁴⁹ This part of the sentence “before the *kapporet*” is missing in the Targum. The BHS explains that it was error of omission resulted from reading *לפרכת* (veil / curtain) as having a similar ending with that of *הכפרת* (the *kapporet*).

⁵⁰ The specific name of the place is missing, *אל פני הכפרת*. In the HOL (Holladay, Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament), the term *kapporet* was traditionally translated as the “mercy seat.” Literally, the *kapporet* refers to the cover or the gold covering-slab for the ark, which is the base for the two cherubim (HOL).

⁵¹ The Septuagint reads: *τῆς καὶ βωτοῦ τοῦ μαρτυρίου* (upon the ark of the testimony or witness) and could be read in Hebrew as: *על הארון לעדת* cf. Ex. 31:7.

⁵² The term is translated in most English versions (e.g. NRSV, NAS, and KJV) as “mercy seat”.

⁵³ The LXX have the adverb *οὕτως* and it is translated as 'thus'.

⁵⁴ It refers to as “sin offering”. This term will be discussed later in the study.

⁵⁵ Translated as “burnt offering” and it will be discussed later in the study.

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| 4 | ⁵⁶ כְּתָנִתְּ בְד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ | A holy linen tunic he shall put on, | O se ofutino lino paia e ofu ai, |
| | וּמְכַנְסֵי־בָד יִהְיוּ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ ⁵⁷ | and a linen breeches shall be upon his body. | ma se ofuvae uumi lino ia ofu ai lona tino. |
| | וּבִאֲבָנֶט בְּד יִחַגֵּר | And with a linen sash he shall gird, | E fusia lona sulugatiti i se ie lino, |
| | וּבְמִצְנַפֶּת בְּד יִצְנַף | and a linen turban he shall wrap around: | ma se pulou lino e pulou ai: |
| | בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם | holy garments are they. | O ofu paia ia. |
| | וְרָחַץ בַּמַּיִם אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ ⁵⁸ וְלִבְשָׁם: | And he shall wash his body with the water and put them on. | Ma ia taele lona tino i le vai, ona ofu ai lea. |
| 5 | וּמֵאַתְּ עֲדַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | And from the congregation of the sons of Israel, | Mai le faapotopotoga o le fanauga a Isaraelu, |
| | יִקַּח שְׁנֵי־שְׂעִירֵי עִזִּים לְחַטָּאת | he shall take two goats for (the) <i>ḥatta't</i> , | ia aumai ai e ia o oti poa e lua mo le taulaga mo agasala, |
| | וְאֵיל אֶחָד לְעֹלָה: | and one ram for (the) <i>'ólāh</i> . | ma se mamoe poa e tasi mo le taulaga mu. |
| | | | |
| 6 | וְהִקְרִיב אֶהָרֹן אֶת־פָּר הַחַטָּאת | And Aaron shall bring the bull of the <i>ḥatta't</i> | E aumai foi e Arona le tamai povi poa mo le taulaga mo le agasala, |
| | אֲשֶׁר־לּוֹ ⁵⁹ | which is for him, | ua faatatauina mo ia, |
| | בַּעֲדוֹ וּבְעַד בֵּיתוֹ: וְכִפֵּר | and he shall make atonement for himself and for his house. | ma ia fai ai e ia le togiola mo ia lava ma lona aiga. |
| 7 | וְלָקַח אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים | And he shall take the two goats. | Ia auma e ia oti poa e lua. |
| | וְהִעֲמִיד אֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה | And he shall set them before YHWH | Ma tuuina atu i luma o le Alii |
| | בְּפֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד ⁶⁰ : | at the entrance of the tent of meeting. | i le faitotota o le fale fetafai. |
| 8 | וְנִחַן אֶהָרֹן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים גֹּדְרֹלוֹת | And Aaron shall cast the lot upon the two goats, | Ma ia tuuina atu foi e Arona le vili i luga o oti e lua, |

⁵⁶ The Samaritan Pentateuch added the conjunction “ו” (and) at the beginning of the sentence and it reads: וכתנת בד קודש ילבש – And he shall put on a holy linen garment. The Targum as well as the Septuagint did the same: καὶ χιτῶνα λινοῦν – and a linen garment.

⁵⁷ The term also means flesh.

⁵⁸ According to the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint, the whole body shall be washed and therefore added the particle כל (all) to the phrase. It reads: את כל בשרו - and all his body. The only place where one has to wash the whole body is recorded in Lev 15,16. May be the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint considered to connect the two incidents together.

⁵⁹ The Masoretic text had a relative clause while the Septuagint used a possessive pronoun. Thus reads: And Aaron shall bring the bull of his *hatta't*.

⁶⁰ The Septuagint reads: τῆς σακηφῆς τοῦ μαρτυρίου – the tent of witness or testimony.

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| | גֹּזֶל אֶחָד לַיהוָה | one lot for YHWH | o le tasi vili mo le Alii |
| | וּגֹזֶל אֶחָד לְעֶזְאֵל: ⁶¹ | and one lot for Azazel. ⁶¹ | ma le tasi vili mo le oti e tuuina atu e alu. |
| 9 | וַהֲקָרִיב אֶהָרֹן אֶת־הַשְּׂעִיר | And Aaron shall bring the goat, | E avatu e Arona le oti, |
| | אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגֹּזֶל לַיהוָה | upon which the lot had gone for YHWH. | ua faasaga iai le vili mo le Alii. |
| | וַעֲשֶׂהוּ חֲטָאתַ: | And he shall make it a <i>ḥaṭṭa't</i> . | ma fai ai e ia le taulaga mo agasala. |
| 10 | וְהַשְּׂעִיר | And the goat, | Ao le oti, |
| | אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגֹּזֶל לְעֶזְאֵל | upon which the lot had gone for Azazel, | ua faasaga iai le vili mo le oti e tuuina atu e alu, |
| | יִעֲמַד־תִּי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה | shall be presented ⁶² alive before YHWH, | ia tuuina atu ola i luma o le Alii, |
| | לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו | to make atonement upon it, | e fai ai le togiola i luga ia te ia, |
| | לְשַׁלְּחַ אוֹתוֹ לְעֶזְאֵל הַמִּדְבָּרָה: | and to send it to Azazel into the wilderness. | ma auina atu ia te ia i le vao. |
| | | | |
| 11 | וַהֲקָרִיב אֶהָרֹן אֶת־פָּר הַחֲטָאתַ | And Aaron shall bring the bull of the <i>ḥaṭṭa't</i> , | E aumai e Arona le tamai povi poa mo le taulaga mo agasala, |
| | אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ | which is for him ⁶³ | ua faatatauina mo ia |
| | וַכִּפֵּר בְּעֻזּוֹ וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ | and he shall make atonement for himself and for his house | ma ia fai ai le togiola mo ia lava ma lona aiga. |
| | וַיִּשְׁחַט אֶת־פָּר הַחֲטָאתַ | And he shall slaughter the bull of the <i>ḥaṭṭa't</i> , | E fasi foi e ia le tamai povi poa mo le taulaga mo agasala |
| | אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ: | which is for him. | ua faatatauina mo ia. |
| 12 | וַלָּקַח מְלֵא־תִמְחֶמֶת גְּחָלֵי־אֵשׁ | And he shall take the censer full of burning coals | E ave foi e ia le ipu ua tumu i malala ola |

⁶¹ The name Azazel is not found in the Greek text (Septuagint). Both Lev 16,8a and Lev 16,0a is read in the Septuagint with an adjective τῷ ἀποπομπάίω – the sending one / the one send away.

⁶² Both the Masoretic and the Septuagint texts show different points of interests here. The Masoretic text reads *Hofal imperfect 3ms* יעמד (shall be presented) with והשעיר (and the bull) as subject. The Septuagint on the other hand changes the subject by presenting it (Masoretic subject) as an accusative object καὶ τὸν χίμαρον. Therefore, for the Septuagint, Aaron remains as the subject while the bull becomes the object. In addition, the Septuagint reads with the verb στήσει αὐτὸν (he shall stand it) in the *Indicative future active 3ms*. This is equivalent to יעמיד אתו - *3ms imperfect Hifil* (he shall set it).

⁶³ For the Masoretic text, the bull is determined only for Aaron (אשר לו). In the Septuagint it reads, τὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ μόνον – for you and your household only. In this sense, the determination of the the *ḥaṭṭa't* bull in the Septuagint is different for the Masoretic text. It is not only for Aaron alone but also for his family as well (excluding the Israelites). However, it can be argued that the reading אשר לו in the Masoretic text does include the family of Aaron.

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| | מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה | from upon the altar before YHWH, | mai le fata faitaulaga i luma o le Alii, |
| | וּמְלֵא חֲפָזָיו קִטְרֹת סַמִּים דָּקָה | and his hands full of small spices of perfumed incense. | ma ona lima ua tumu i mea manogi ua tuininiia. |
| | וְהָבִיא מִבֵּית לְפָרֶכֶת: | And he shall bring it behind the curtain. | E ave e ia i tua atu o le ie puipui. |
| 13 | וְנָתַן אֶת־הַקִּטְרֹת עַל־הָאֵשׁ | And he shall give the incense on the fire | E avatu e ia o mea manogi i luga o le afi |
| | לִפְנֵי יְהוָה | before YHWH | i luma ole Alii |
| | וְכֶסֶה אֶת־הַכַּפֹּרֶת עֲנַן הַקִּטְרֹת | and the cloud of the incense shall cover the <i>kapporet</i> | ma ia ufitia e le ao le nofoa o le alofa |
| | אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדוּת | that is upon the testimony. | o loo i luga ae o le tautoga |
| 14 | וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר | And he shall take of the blood of the bull, | E aumai foi e ia le toto ole tamai povi poa, |
| | וְהִזָּה בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ | and he shall sprinkle with his finger | ma sausau ai i lona tamatamai lima |
| | עַל־פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת קִדְמָה | on the front of the <i>kapporet</i> towards (the) east. | luma o le nofoa o le alofa agai i le itu i sasae. |
| | לִפְנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת יִזָּה שֶׁבַע־פְּעָמִים | And before the <i>kapporet</i> , he shall sprinkle seven times | O luma foi o le nofoa o le alofa, ia sausauina faafitu e ia |
| | מִן־הַדָּם בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ: | of the blood with his finger. | i le toto i ona tamatamailima. |
| 15 | וְשָׁחַט אֶת־שְׂעִיר הַחֲטָאֹת | And he shall slaughter the goat of the <i>hatta</i> ' ⁶⁴ | Ona fasi ai lea e ia le oti mo le taulaga mo agasala |
| | אֲשֶׁר לְעָם | that is for the people, | ua faatatauina mo le nuu, |
| | וְהָבִיא אֶת־דָּמּוֹ ⁶⁵ | and he shall bring its blood | ma avatu e ia lona toto |
| | אֶל־מִבֵּית לְפָרֶכֶת | behind the curtain. | i tua atu ole ie puipui. |
| | וַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־דָּמּוֹ | And he shall do with its blood | E fai foi e ia i lona toto |
| | כְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָם הַפָּר | as he has done with the blood of the bull. | e pei ona faia i le toto o le tamai povi poa. |
| | וְהִזָּה אֹתוֹ עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת | And he shall sprinkle it upon the <i>kapporet</i> , | Ona sausauina ai lea e ia i luga o le nofoa o le alofa, |
| | וְלִפְנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת: | and before the <i>kapporet</i> . | ma luma o le nofoa o le alofa. |
| 16 | וְכִפֶּר עַל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ | And he shall make atonement for the holy <i>place</i> , | E fai foi e ia le togiola mo le mea paia, |
| | מִטְּמֵאֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | because of the impurities of the sons of Israel | ona o amio leaga o le fanauga a Isaraelu, |
| | וּמִפְשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם | and for their transgression | ma a latou solitulafono ona o |

⁶⁴ The Septuagint mentions in contrast to the Masoretic text the place where the goat for the people shall be slaughtered: ἔναντι κυρίου – before the Lord.

⁶⁵ The Masoretic text introduces the blood with an accusative-particle, the Septuagint on the other hand applies a genitive formulation: ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ - from the blood of it / him (from its blood). However, both texts pointed out that the blood of the goat should be used in the same way like that of the *hattat* bull. The bull would be given for the *hattat*, and only some of its blood should be sprinkled on the *kapporet*.

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| | | concerning all of their sins. | a latou agasala uma. |
| | וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה לְאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד | And so, he shall do for the tent of meeting | E fai foi e ia mo le fale fetafai, |
| | הַשֹּׁכֵן אִתָּם בְּתוֹךְ טְמֵאוֹתָם: | remaining with them in the midst of their impurities. | o loo tumau ai ia te i latou o latou leaga. |
| 17 | וְכֹל־אֲדָם לֹא־יִהְיֶה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד | And no one shall be in the tent of meeting | Aua nei iai se tasi i le fale fetafai |
| | בְּבֹאוֹ | when he comes in | pe a ulufale o ia i totonu |
| | לְכַפֵּר בְּקֹדֶשׁ עַד־צֵאתוֹ | to make atonement in the holy <i>place</i> until he comes out. | e fai le togiola i totonu o le mea paia seia ulufafo o ia. |
| | וְכִפֵּר בְּעֻדוֹ וּבְעֻד בֵּיתוֹ | And he shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, | E fai foi e ia le togiola mo ia lava, atoa foi ma lona aiga, |
| | וּבְעֻד כָּל־קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל: | and for the whole community ⁶⁶ of Israel. | faapea foi ma le faapotppotoga o Isaraelu. |
| 18 | וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ | And he shall go out to the altar | E alu atu foi o ia i fafo i le fata faitaulaga |
| | אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה | that is before YHWH | oi luma o le Alii, |
| | וְכִפֵּר עָלָיו | and make an atonement upon it. | a fai le togiola mo le fata. |
| | וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וּמִדָּם הַשְּׂעִיר | And he shall take of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat, | E ave e ia le toto o le tamai povi ma le toto o le oti, |
| | וַיָּתֵן עַל־קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כְּבִיב: | and put it on the horns of the altar. | ma tuu i luga o nifo o le fata faitalulaga. |
| 19 | וַיִּזְרֹק עָלָיו מִן־הַדָּם | And he shall sprinkle on it from the blood | E sausauina foi e mai le toto |
| | בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים | with his finger, seven times. | i ona tamaitamailima, faafitu, |
| | וַיְטַהְרֵהוּ | And he shall clean it, | ma faamamaina ai e ia, |
| | וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ | and he shall consecrate it | ma faapaiaina ai |
| | מִטְמֵאוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: | from the impurities of the sons of Israel. | mai leaga o le fanauga o Isaraelu. |
| | | | |
| 20 | וְכִלְהָ מִכֹּפֵר אֶת־הַקֹּדֶשׁ | And when he has completed, atoning the holy <i>place</i> | A maea ona faia e ia le togiola mo le mea paia, |
| | וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ | and the tent of meeting and the altar, ⁶⁷ | ma le fale fetafai, ma le fata faitaulaga. |

⁶⁶ The Septuagint reads καὶ περὶ πάσης συναγωγῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ - and all the synagogue of the sons of Israel. The Pershitta follows the same reading. This formulation does not correspond to the Hebrew expression of the Masoretic text כל קהל ישראל all the congregation of Israel. The Septuagint emphasizes the importance of the synagogue as a place of fellowship and worship, where people hear the word of YHWH. In addition, referring to the synagogue may indicate not one synagogue, but many.

⁶⁷ The Septuagint texts adds that Aaron should be cleanse regarding he is the Priest - καὶ περὶ τῶν ἱερέων καθαριεῖ.

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| | וְהִקְרִיב אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר הַחַיִּי: | (and) then he shall bring the live goat. | Ona aumai lea e ia le oti o loo ola. |
| 21 | וְכִסָּד אַהֲרֹן אֶת־שְׁתֵּי (יָדָיו) | And Aaron shall lay his two hands | E faace ai e Arona on lima e lua |
| | עַל רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁעִיר הַחַיִּי | upon the head of the live goat. | i luga o le ulu o le oti o loo ola. |
| | וְהִתְנַדָּה עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתָיִם | And he shall confess over it all the iniquities | E tautino ai e ia i ona luga o amioleaga uma |
| | בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | of the sons of Israel | a le fanauga a Isaraelu |
| | וְאֶת־כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם | and all their transgressions concerning all of their sins. | ma latou solitulafono i a latou agasala uma. |
| | וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל־רֹאשׁ ⁶⁸ הַשְּׁעִיר | And he shall put them on the head of the goat, | E tautino e ia ia te i latou i luga o le ulu o le oti, |
| | וְשָׁלַח | and he shall send it | ona tuu lea e ia atu e alu, |
| | בְּיַד־אִישׁ עֲתִי | by (the) hand of a man, who is available, | i le lima o le tagata ua saunia, |
| | הַמִּדְבָּרָה: | into the wilderness. | i le vao. |
| 22 | וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׁעִיר עָלָיו | And the goat shall carry upon itself | E tauave e le oti i lona luga |
| | אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתָם | all their iniquities | a latou mioleaga uma |
| | אֶל־אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה | in a separated land. | i le eleele e le aina. |
| | וְשָׁלַח אֶת־הַשְּׁעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר: | And he shall send the goat in the wilderness. | E auina atu foi e ia le oti i le vao. |
| | | | |
| 23 | וַיָּבֹא אַהֲרֹן אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד | And Aaron shall come to the tent of meeting | Ona ulufale lea o Arona i le fale fetafai |
| | וַיִּפְשֹׁט אֶת־בְּגָדָיו הַבְּיָד | and he shall take off the linen garments | ma talai ese ofu lino |
| | אֲשֶׁר לָבַשׁ | that he had put on | sa ofu ai o ia |
| | בְּבֹאוֹ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ | when he had come into the holy <i>place</i> , | ina ua ulufale i le mea paia, |
| | וְהִנִּיחָם שָׁם: | and he shall leave them there. | ma tuu ai i o. |
| 24 | וְרָחַץ אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם | And he shall wash his body with water | Ia taele mama lona tino i le vai |
| | בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ | in a holy <i>place</i> | i se mea paia |
| | וְלָבַשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדָיו | and he shall put on his garments. | ona fai ai lea o ia i ona lava ofu. |
| | וַיֵּצֵא | And he shall go out, | E ulufafo o ia, |
| | וַיַּעַשׂה אֶת־עֹלָתוֹ | and he shall make his 'ólāh | ma fai lana taulaga mu |
| | וְאֶת־עֹלַת הָעָם | and the 'ólāh for the people. ⁷⁰ | ma le taulaga mu a le nuu. |

⁶⁸ To make sure that the sins of the sons of Israel fall upon the right place, the Septuagint has added the term ζῶντος (living) and it reads: τὴν κεφαλὴν τοῦ χιμάρου τοῦ ζῶντος.

⁶⁹ In verses 23 and 24, the Septuagint uses the term ἤν στολήν (Rope) while the term ἱμάτια (garments or clothes) in verses 4 and 28. This implies that the Septuagint preferred to distinguish the ropes of the high priest Aaron from the garments of the person who send the alive goat to Azazel.

| | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| | וּכְפַר בְּעַדוֹ וּבְעַד הָעָם: | And he shall make atonement for himself and for the people. | E fai foi e ia le togiola mo ia lava, atoa foi ma le nuu. |
| 25 | וְאֵת תֵּלֶב הַקֹּטֶטֶת | And the fat of the <i>ḥaṭṭa't</i> | O gao foi o le taulaga mo agasala, |
| | יִקְטָר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: | shall be burnt on the Altar. | ia susunu e ia i luga o le fata faitaulaga. |
| 26 | וְהַמְשִׁיחַ אֶת־הַשָּׁעִיר לְעִזָּאֵל | And he who has sent the goat to Azazel, ⁷¹ | O le na tuu atu le oti e alu |
| | יִכְבֵּס בְּגָדָיו | shall wash his clothes | ia tata ona lavalava |
| | וְרָתַץ אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם | and bathe his body with the water, | ma taele lona tinno i le vai, |
| | וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָבֹא אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה: | and after that, he shall (can) come into the camp. | a maea ona ulufale lea o ia i le mafutaga. |
| 27 | וְאֵת פֶּר הַקֹּטֶטֶת | And the <i>ḥaṭṭa't</i> bull, | O le povi poa mo le taulaga mo agasala, |
| | וְאֵת שְׁעִיר הַקֹּטֶטֶת | and the <i>ḥaṭṭa't</i> goat, | ma le oti mo le taulaga mo agasala, |
| | אֲשֶׁר הֵוָבֵא אֶת־דָּמָם לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ | whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, | o la toto na avatu i totonu e fai ai le togiola mo le mea paia, |
| | יֹוצֵיא אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה | one shall bring outside of the camp. | ia aumai e se tasi i fafo mai le mafutaga. |
| | וְשָׂרְפוּ בָאֵשׁ אֶת־עוֹרָתָם | And they ⁷² shall burn in the fire their skins, | Ona latou susunuina lea i le afi o latou pau, |
| | וְאֶת־בְּשָׂרָם וְאֶת־פְּרָשָׁם: | and their flesh, and their dung. | ma o latou tino atoa foi ma latou totoga. |
| 28 | וְהַשָּׂרֵף אֹתָם | And the one who has burned them, | O le sa susunuina i latou, |
| | יִכְבֵּס בְּגָדָיו | shall wash his clothes, | ia tata e ia ona lavalava, |
| | וְרָתַץ אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם | and he shall bathe his body with the water. | ma taele lona tino i le vai. |
| | אֲחֵרֵי־כֵן יָבֹא אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה: | And after that, he shall come into the camp. | A uma ona ulufale lea o ia i le mafutaga. |
| | | | |
| 29 | וְהָיְתָה לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם | And it shall be ⁷³ to you a statute forever: | Ia aveva o se tulafono lea ia te outou e faavavau: |

⁷⁰ The Masoretic text mentions that the *'ólāh* is only for Aaron and the people בעדו ובעד העם וכפר, while the Septuagint reads: καὶ περὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ καὶ περὶ τοῦ λαου - to make atonement for himself, for his family and for the people.

⁷¹ The Septuagint reads διασταλμένον as participle perfect passive with a final determination εἰς ἄφεσιν (he was determined to set free / send away) but not the name לעזאזל as in the Masoretic text.

⁷² The Masoretic text reads: ושרפו (they shall burn) but the Samaritan text has a singular form of the verb and it reads: ושרף (he shall burn). This implies that for the Masoretic text, it is not Aaron nor the one who send the live goat to Azazel, who shall do it, but, but some managed person/s belonging to the congregation of Israel.

| | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| | בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּעֶשְׂרֵי לַחֹדֶשׁ | in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, | I le masina e fitu, i le aso sefulu o le masina, |
| | תַּעֲנִי אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם | you shall humble your souls. | ia faamaualalo o outou loto. |
| | וְכָל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ | And you shall do no work at all, | E sa ona fai ai o soo galuega |
| | הָאֶזְרָח וְהַגֵּר | neither a native nor the sojourner | E se tagata nuu, po o se tagata ese |
| | הֵגֵר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: | abiding among you. | e aumau ia te outou. |
| 30 | כִּי־בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יַכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם | For on this day, one shall make atonement for you, ⁷⁴ | Aua o le aso lea, e fai ai e se tasi le togiola mo outou, |
| | לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם | to clean you | e faamamaina ai outou |
| | מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם | from all your sins, | mai a outou agasala uma, |
| | לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ: | you shall be clean before YHWH. | ina ia mama outou i luma o le Alii. |
| 31 | שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן הִיא לָכֶם | <i>šabbat šabbâton</i> , it ⁷⁵ is for you, | O le sapati e malolo ai outou, |
| | וְעִנִיתֶם אֶת־נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם | and you shall humble your souls. | ma faamaualalo ai o outou loto. |
| | חֻקַּת עוֹלָם: | It is a statute forever. | O le tulafono lea e faavavau. |
| 32 | וַיַּכְפֹּר הַכֹּהֵן | And the priest shall make atonement, ⁷⁶ | E fai e le osi taulaga le togiola, |
| | אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּשַׁח אֹהֶוּ | one who will be anointed, ⁷⁷ | o le o le a faauuina, |
| | וְאֲשֶׁר יִמְלֵא אֶת־יָדוֹ | and whose hand will be filled, ⁷⁸ | o lona lima o le a faatumuina, |

⁷³ The Septuagint in contrast to the Masoretic text (והיתה - and it shall be) adds the demonstrative pronoun (καὶ ἑσταλωτοῦτο) – “and this shall.” It is difficult to decide whether the Septuagint had another model as the Masoretic or the Septuagint corrected the Masoretic text.

⁷⁴ The predicate יכפר - he shall make atonement (*PK - Imperfect Piel 3ms*) is problematic because the subject is missing as expected. In this context, Aaron is the same priest who shall be the subject of the predicate יכפר. However, the Pershitta suggests that this predicate יכפר is to be read as Pual יכפר (Pual Imperfect 3ms) – For on this day, atonement shall be made. The same version is also present in the Vulgate (*expiation erit*).

⁷⁵ The personal pronoun היא (she, it) as in שבת שבתון היא לכם - *šabbat šabbâton*, it is for you” and the masculine substantive לכם (to you) is incongruent in the Masoretic text. Such problem is not present in the Samaritan Pentateuch, where one finds a masculine personal pronoun הוא (he, it).

⁷⁶ The Samaritan Pentateuch does not have such reading: וכפר הכהן (*waw perfect 3ms*) – ‘And the priest had made atonement,’ but, instead uses the imperfect form of the predicate וכפר, which is יכפר הכהן - And the priest will make atonement. This implies a future task for the priest who will be anointed.

⁷⁷ We have the same difficulty here, as we encounter in verse 31a. The predicate אשר ימשה is problematic because the subject is missing. The Septuagint reads with a plural predicate χρίσωσιν while both the Syrian and Vulgate have a passive predicate.

⁷⁸ The Masoretic text has in the second relative clause a singular predicate ואשר ימלא as in the first one אשר ימשה, while the Septuagint maintains its plural strategies and reads ἃν χρίσωσιν αὐτὸν; καὶ ὃν ἃν τελειώσουσιν.

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|---|
| | לכהן תחת אביו | so that he be a priest in the place of his father. | ina ia avea o ia ma osi taulaga e sui ai lona tama. |
| | ולבש את בגדי הברד | He shall put on the linen garments, | E ofu foi o ia i ofu lino, |
| | בגדי הקודש: | the holy garments. | o ofu paia. |
| 33 | וכפר את מקדש הקודש | And he shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary. | E fai foi e ia le togiola mo le malumalu paia. |
| | ואת אהל מועד ואת המזבח | And for the tent of meeting and the altar, | O le fale fetafai ma le fata fai taulaga, |
| | יכפר | he shall make atonement. | e fai foi e ia le togiola. |
| | ועל הכהנים | And for the priests | Mo osi taulaga |
| | ועל כל עם הקהל | and for all the people of the congregation, | atoa foi ma tagata o le faapotopotoga, |
| | יכפר: | he shall make atonement. | e fai foi e ia le togiola. |
| 34 | והיתה זאת לכם לתקתולם | And this shall be to you a statute forever, | O le tulafono lea ia te outou e faavavau, |
| | לכפר על בני ישראל | to make atonement for the sons of Israel | ina ia fai le togiola mo le fanauga a Isaraelu |
| | מכל חטאתם אחת בשנה | from all their sins once a year.” | ona o a latou agasala uma, e fai faatasi i le tausaga.” |
| | | | |
| | ויעש כאשר צוה יהוה את משה: | And he did ⁷⁹ as YHWH had commanded Moses. | Ona ia faia lea e pei ona poloai o le Alii ia Mose. |

5.7 Structure

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Narrative Frame | Lev 16, 1-2a; 34b |
| First part of YHWH's speech to Moses | Lev 16, 2b-28 |
| Preparations for the ritual | Lev 16, 2b-5 |
| Taboos of the holy place | Lev 16, 2b |
| Provisions for priest | Lev 16, 3-4 |
| Provisions for the people | Lev 16, 5 |
| Lots rite | Lev 16, 6-10 |
| The first part of the ceremony: Purifying the Sanctuary | |
| The <i>hatta't</i> | Lev 16, 11-19 |
| Second part of the ceremony: Purifying the community | |
| The Scapegoat rite | Lev 16, 20-22 |
| Conclusion of the ceremony | Lev 16, 23-28 |
| | |
| The second part of the YHWH's speech to Moses | Lev 16, 29-34a |
| Responsibility of the people | Lev 16, 29-34a |
| Compliance and execution report | Lev 16, 34b |

⁷⁹ The Masoretic text is different from that of the Septuagint in relation to the verbs: the Masoretic text reads: ויעש (*Nar / waw imperfect 3ms Qal*) 'And he did,' while the Septuagint on the other hand reads with a predicate in the passive form ποιηθήσεται - 'it was done.'

5.7.1 The Narrative Frame (Lev 16,1-2a and 34c)

The narrative frame of the text (Lev 16) is deeply rooted in the use of the *wayyiqtol* verb forms in verses 1-2a and 34c that separates it from YHWH's speech. The narrative frame places YHWH's speech into its literary contexts and sets the stage for its meaning and purpose. Furthermore, it also describes the structure, the order, and the execution of YHWH's speech to Moses from the beginning (Lev 16,2bc) to the end (Lev 16,34a). Although, YHWH's speech is inserted into the narrative frame of Lev 16,1-2a and Lev 16,34bc, one must also notice some of the remarkable elements present in the narrative frame in relation to the speech. For instance, the verbs change their forms from the Imperative (Lev 16,2b) to Imperfect forms (8), and *waw* consecutive Perfect forms (8). Moreover, the change of persons is evident: from third person masculine singular (3ms – Lev 16,2b-28) to second person masculine plural (2mpl - Lev 19,29a) that separates the two parts of YHWH's speech. In addition is the repetition of Lev 16,6 in Lev 16,11, which is a matter of much debate among the scholars about its function and role in the text.

5.7.2 First part of YHWH's Speech to Moses (Lev 16,2b-28c)

The first part of YHWH's speech (Lev 16,2b-28c) contains the description of the whole ritual concerning purification of the holy places and the people of Israel from their sins and iniquities. YHWH's speech is introduced by the Imperative (second person masculine singular) verb form **דבר** commanding Moses about what Aaron should do in relation to the ritual.

5.7.2.1 Preparations for the ritual (Lev16,2b-5)

5.7.2.1.1 Taboos of the holy place (Lev 16,2b)

The phrase *וְאֵלֵי־יְבֹא בְכָל־עֵת אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ* in Lev 16,2b specifies the taboo and clarifies the boundary of YHWH's dwelling place in the sanctuary.⁸⁰ The taboo functions to illustrate the religious significance of the holy place, and its sacredness, which distinguishes it from other parts of the sanctuary. It also demonstrates the sacred covenantal relationship that YHWH has established with the Israelites. In this sense, Aaron has to prepare himself spiritually, mentally, and physically before performing his allocated duties. Therefore, Aaron is forbidden to enter the holy of holies at any time, except, when he comes before YHWH to perform the atonement ritual. Accordingly, the taboo has to be respected, and honoured, for it is about recognition, acceptance, and understanding the covenantal relationship between YHWH and the Israelites. Thus, Aaron has to make sure of the taboo otherwise he dies like his two sons and the will of YHWH is not fulfilled.

5.7.2.1.2 Provisions for priest (Lev 16,3-4)

The first preparation for the Day of Atonement concerns Aaron, who will be the main celebrant, and what he should bring in the holy place for the ritual. Aaron has been requested to provide a young bull (*בֶּפֶר בֶּן־בָּקָר לַחֲטָאת*) for his *ḥaṭṭa't* (sin offering) and a ram for the *'ólāh* (burnt offering) (*וְאֵיל לַעֹלָה*). The text does not elaborate for the choice of the animals necessary for the atonement process; but states what YHWH suggests and is suitable for the purpose of the ritual.

Aaron has to prepare his costumes to wear when he conducts the ritual. The tunic, the breeches, the sash, and the turban are holy garments made of linen. He will have to wash his body first with water before he puts them on.

⁸⁰ Kiuchi, *Purification Offering*, 78-80. Scholars have debated about the possible translation of the expression *בְּכָל־עֵת* and how it relates to verse 3.

This implies that the clothes have significant values, purpose and meaning not only for the priest but also for the people. The holy garments transcend the nature, time, and the importance of the task that Aaron is going to perform when he approaches before YHWH.

5.7.2.1.3 Provisions for the Congregation (Lev 16,5)

The phrase יקה שני שעירי עזים לחטאת states what is required of the congregation of the Israelites for the *ḥaṭṭa't*. This demonstrates that Aaron has to consecrate himself first so that he is eligible to perform the ritual in the presence of YHWH. For this reason, a separate provision for the congregation is needed to purify them. Aaron shall take two goats for the sin offering and ואיל אחד לעלה - one ram for the *'ólāh*. The description of the goats' sizes, colours, and the provider is not mentioned in the text. This means that Aaron will receive the goats from whomever he appointed to supply them, or from anyone, who volunteered to provide these animals on behalf of the community.

5.7.2.1.4 Lots rite: Choosing the goats for YHWH and Azazel (Lev 16,6-10)

The purpose of the lot rite that will be conducted by Aaron is to choose between the two goats. Both goats are designated for the *ḥaṭṭa't* (Lev 16,5), but their fate has to be arranged, one for YHWH and the other for Azazel. This implies that Aaron has no right to choose for himself between the two goats, instead, the lot rite determines the destiny of the animals. Both animals have to be presented alive before YHWH at the entrance of the tent of meeting. In fact, the lot rite is also important to prevent Aaron and the community from committing another sin of choosing the wrong animal. Furthermore, if the whole nation is impure because of their transgressions and sins, then there is no one suitable for determining the destination of the two goats. Therefore, the lot rite has to be carried out for the purpose of determining the respected destinations of the two goats from the congregation.

5.7.2.2 The first part of the ceremony: Purifying the Sanctuary (Lev 16,11-19)**5.7.2.2.1 The *ḥaṭṭa't* (Lev 16,11-19)**

The section commences with Aaron as the active subject והקריב אהרן (Lev 16,11a) of the action denoted by the verb וכפר. Aaron needs one bull for the *ḥaṭṭa't* concerning him and his family and two goats for the community. The ceremony begins with Aaron. He purifies himself first and carries out the allocated task. The rite will be performed in the presence of YHWH as indicated by the appearance of the cloud on the *kapporet* (v. 13). He is requested to make atonement for himself and his family, and for the community of Israel.

In addition, this section contains three subsections describing the distinctive manipulation of blood rite. The first one (Lev 16,14-16a) is concerned with the atonement of the holy of holies. The blood of the bull for both Aaron and his family shall be sprinkled once on the front of the *kapporet*; and seven times before the *kapporet*. Aaron will do the same for the blood of the goat for the congregation's sin offering (Lev 16,14-16a). The second subsection (Lev 16,16b-17a) deals with the atonement concerning the tent of meeting. However, it is not mentioned in the text, how the atonement for the tent of meeting shall be conducted. The last sub-section Lev 16,18-19 describes the atonement of the altar, where the blood of both animals is put on the horn of the altar. The first part of the ceremony ends when the blood of the *hattat* animals (bull and the goat) are applied to the altar (Lev 16,19).

5.7.2.3 Second part of the ceremony: Purifying the community**5.7.2.3.1 The Scapegoat rite (Lev 16,20-22)**

The scapegoat rite consists of three characteristic elements. First is the laying of both hands on the head of the goat as indicated by the verb וַיִּסַּח (and he shall lay). This practice of both hands is found only in the Day of Atonement ritual compared to the normal sacrificial practice of one hand found

in other texts such as in Lev 4,4. The hands are not of the elders as in Lev 4,15; but of Aaron alone without any assistance. Secondly, is the transference of sins signified by the verb ונתן (and he shall put). Aaron confesses all the sins of the congregation upon the head of goat. Lastly, the sending away of the goat into the wilderness ושלח (and he shall send). The goat has to be sent through the hand of the one who is ready, and not Aaron himself.

5.7.2.4 Conclusion of the ceremony (v. 23-28)

The last part of the ceremony contains the taboos for Aaron (Lev 16,23-24) and his assistant (Lev 16,26) concerning purity and impurity as symbolised by their clothes and washing their bodies. By doing this, they can rejoin the community for the rest of the ritual. It concludes with the burning of the *hattat* bull and the goat in a fire outside of the camp (Lev 16,27-28). This is significant for the ceremony, because the animals that have been used for the atonement rituals will be consumed by fire outside the tent of meeting and not by the priest or the people.

5.7.3 The second part of the YHWH's speech to Moses (vv. 29-34a)

The second part of YHWH's speech is marked by the changing of the subjects from third person masculine singular (3ms) to second person masculine plural in Lev 16,29a (2mpl). The change of persons shifts the focus from Aaron to the whole community of Israel. The last words of YHWH to Moses prescribed the responsibility for the people of Israel concerning the day of Yom Kippur. First, the Israelites shall keep this day as a statute forever, and declares the appropriate time for the ritual to be performed every year. Secondly, the taboos have been laid out to be respected by the Israelites and the sojourners alike. The appointed priest who will perform the ritual shall put on the holy garments and make atonement for the holy sanctuary, the tent of

meeting and the altar. Finally, he shall make atonement for himself and for all the people of Israel.

5.7.4 Compliance and Execution report (Lev 16, 34b)

The last phrase of Lev 16 (ויעש כאשר צוה יהוה את-משה), which is in the narrative form states that Aaron has done what YHWH had commanded Moses. This means that the people sought reconciliation with YHWH after Aaron purified the sanctuary, the tent of meeting and the altar. In addition, the phrase also functions as a narrative frame to end the text.

5.8 The narrative schema as a means of analyzing Lev 16

The analysis of the ritual in Lev 16 can be formalised in terms of the narrative schema as described above.⁸¹ The sequence of Aaron's preparations for the Day of Atonement can be schematized as follows:

| | | | |
|----------|-------------------|------------------|--------------|
| Lack (L) | Preparedness (Pp) | Performance (Pf) | Sanction (S) |
| v. 1 | v. 2-34b | | v. 34b |

5.8.1 The initial Lack

The first part of the narrative frame (Lev 16,1) describes explicitly the situation that leads to the Day of Atonement. The phrase אחרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהֱרָן (after the death of the two sons of Aaron) functions to connect Lev 16 to the historical event in Lev 10, where the death of the two sons of Aaron is recorded. The reason for the death of Nadab and Abihu, although not clear in the Masoretic text,⁸² suggests that they drew near before the YHWH (with

⁸¹ Boers, *Neither on this Mountain nor in Jerusalem*, 9. See chapter 4 section 4.8; Cf. Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 45; Kahl, "Strukturelle Erzähltheorie und Exegese," 159.

⁸² See the translation notes. The Septuagint version of Leviticus 16 suggests that they make strange fire before YHWH, however, it does not solve the questions concerning what kind of strange fire did they brought to the holy place, why and how did they do it? C.f. John C. H. Laughlin, "The Strange fire of Nadab and Abihu," *JBL*, 95/ 4 (Dec 1976): 559-563, Accessed June 09, 2015, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3265571>. Laughlin discusses the various interpretations of the expression "strange fire." One expression suggests that Nadab and Abihu offered the incense at the wrong time of the day. Another one states they done it in a wrong motives. In addition includes an idea that they tried to act as priests in front of

strange fire), and they died בקרבתם לפני־יהוה וימתו. This affirms that the cause of their death is the consequence of a divine punishment (Lev 10,1-3). The divine punishment presupposes their act of disobedience by entering the prohibited area in the sanctuary (Lev 16,1). Moreover, the action of Nadab and Abihu pollutes the covenant relationship between the Israelite and YHWH. Its consequences brings more chaos to the cosmic order and their relationship. For example, the harmonious and peaceful life that YHWH enjoys in the midst of the society, dwelling in his new place of residence (tent of meeting), is polluted by the same act of Aaron's sons.

Accordingly, the death of Nadab and Abihu affirms the negative 'Sanction' YHWH gives to the two sons of Aaron for their 'Performance' (Lev 10,1-3). This negative 'Sanction' leads to the 'Preparedness' of an active subject who will carry out a proposed course of action. At the same time this negative 'Sanction' becomes the expression of a new 'Lack' and the need to be liquidated in the main Narrative Programme (verses 2-34b). The 'Lack' therefore stands as how to survive in the holy of holies and in the presence of YHWH. But, how can the chosen active subject approach the presence of YHWH and not die? What are the conditions that guarantee his survival in the holy of holies when he draws near before YHWH? Would the active subject dies like the sons of Aaron or survive? The answer to these questions is the prescriptive ritual YHWH gave Moses as evident in the text in the form of a direct speech.

Furthermore, once Aaron, who is active subject in the program of YHWH, assures of his survival in the presence of YHWH, then, the need to purify the sanctuary from pollution will then be carried out as Milgrom argues

YHWH while they are lay people. Furthermore is the interpretation that Nadab and Abihu were punished because they brought pagan incense to the holy place. Accordingly, whatever incense they used, priests or lay, and the time they perform it, there is no evidence that suggests Nadab and Abihu did wrong when they offered the incense. However, there is strong message that the Masoretic text emphasises and what they did is not important for the author of the text but their presence in the holy of holies is not acceptable.

that “the entire sanctuary, including the adytum, would need to be purged.”⁸³ In fact, the initial lack needs to be liquidated, for the taboos that have been violated, the covenants that have been broken, and the shaken boundaries to be purified from pollution. All these relational aspects between YHWH and Israel were polluted because of the crime committed by Nadab and Abihu. The liquation of the “Lack” and the need to restore the purity of a peaceful and harmonious society motivates YHWH to propose a program of action.

5.8.2 The Preparedness

The sequence moves into the phase ‘Preparedness’ marked by the change of verbs from narrative to imperative. It focuses on the approval of an active subject who has the ability and the motivation to conduct the proposed program. YHWH, who is the bearer of numinous power (BNP), talks to Moses and proposes a program of actions and responsibilities. His proposal is for Aaron to be the active subject to carry out the program. But why did YHWH choose Aaron to carry it out? Why not Moses? Was it because Aaron and his household fail to teach Nadab and Abihu about the taboos of the sanctuary? One could argue that Moses already had such a contact with YHWH on Mount Sinai, and experienced his glory (Ex 19,20-25). Therefore, it is Aaron’s turn to witness and have such encounter with YHWH. Whatever reason YHWH prefers Aaron and not Moses, we can suggest that it is because of what has happened to Nadab and Abihu that makes Aaron the possible candidate. Thus, Aaron is now the petitioner of the numinous power (PNP) whose function is to invoke and to activate YHWH, the bearer of the numinous power (BNP) who is not directly accessible to the congregation of the sons of Israel. He is the representative of the congregation before YHWH and acts accordingly to mediate the subject of circumstance to the BNP.

⁸³ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1003.

5.8.2.1 The Preparedness of the PNP

In order for Aaron (PNP) to activate the BNP, he has to go through a series of actions and performances. He is not only going to pray to the BNP, but also, to establish a spatial contact with YHWH by engaging in a performance that requires much preparations on his part as the PNP. The preparations include:

5.8.2.1.1 Taboos

The first program of action concerns the taboos of the Day of Atonement. The taboos associated with the sanctuary includes the time allowed for a visit to the inner-sanctum. The phrase *וְאֵלֵיבָא בְכָל־עֵת* although variously interpreted by scholars, reminds us of the taboos that was broken by Aaron's sons.⁸⁴ Accordingly, YHWH's residential place shall not be approached at any time by Aaron, only when it is necessary such as during special ceremonies like the Day of Atonement.

In addition to the time are the appropriate garments for the priests. It is forbidden to wear any daily garments or clothes on that day.⁸⁵ The taboo highlights not only the uniqueness of the occasion, but also tells the story of what is happening. It is YHWH that Aaron is going to meet, not an elder from the congregation. This means that even the clothes worn by the sons of Aaron are forbidden in the holy place. To claim that they make fire before YHWH is not enough, they also wear clothes that are taboo to be worn in the inner-sanctum.

⁸⁴ Cf. Ex 19, 20-25. Such taboos are also specified in Ex 19 where people are not allowed to approach the top of Mount Sinai, to protect them from death. See Kiuchi, *Purification*, 156.

⁸⁵ This taboo concerning clothes is associated with the Samoan Methodist Church tradition of wearing only white clothes on every worship service. The idea is to remind people that they are going to a special occasion: to worship God. Therefore, daily clothes are not allowed and only white is recommended.

5.8.2.1.2 Venues and Places

The places where the ritual process will be held is important for Aaron to keep and observe. The first place is the holy of holies or the inner-sanctum with the *kapporet* where YHWH dwells among his people. The place is a highly restricted area and the penalties for violating the restrictions are often severe. Only Aaron and his descendants are allowed to inside to offer sacrifices (Lev. 10,1-7). This place is unique for Aaron, because he will meet YHWH there and affirm his survival. It is the place where his life will be determined, whether he will come out alive or people will find him dead like his sons. It is task of the priests to preserve the sanctuary's dignity and conduct their duties.

The second place is the tent of meeting, where the people fellowship and receive the instructions from YHWH. It has to be purified from all the iniquities of the sons of Israel. Even the entrance of the tent of meeting is significant for the lot rite and Aaron has to make sure where the two goats are to be presented before YHWH. In addition, the place outside of the tent of meeting or the camp has to be marked, where the skins, the flesh, and the dung of the animals whose blood had been used for the purification rite will be burned. Moreover, it is taboo for the people to be present in the tent of meeting when Aaron enters to purify the sanctuary. This taboo is very important because anybody who enters will die except Aaron. Therefore, it is forbidden for the people to enter the tent of meeting during the atonement process, and they are only allowed when Aaron completes the ritual and comes out of it.

The third place of attention is the wilderness. It is the final destination of the live goat that will be sent away. It could be a place of refuge for the sent away goat or vice versa. What is important is that Aaron and his assistant have to make sure that the goat is driven to its expected destination in order for the ritual of disposal to be completed. But how can they guarantee that the goat

will not go back to its owner? This means that the one who sent it away has to go with the goat near the wilderness before returning to the camp.

The final place of importance on this day is that of the *olah*-altar, the place where the burnt offerings will be held. This could be called the kitchen, where the meals of YHWH are prepared, because the aroma and the smell of the burnt animals that he cherishes and enjoys originate from the altar.

All these venues and places mentioned above are an important part of the preparations for Aaron. These are the places where he will move back and forth as he carries out the purification process so that reconciliation can be achieved and the restoration of the order in the community.

5.8.2.1.3 The required objects

5.8.2.1.3.1 Clothes

In fact, Aaron has to make sure that all the required objects for the task he has been chosen to carry out are available. He has to make sure that his clothes and garments are ready and in place for him. These garments define the status of Aaron as a person as well as his role in the community. The clothes and the garments illustrates the uniqueness of what he is doing and is an important function for the people.

5.8.2.1.3.2 Water

One of the objects needed for the ritual is water. The symbolic nature of water for cleaning and removing the dirt from our bodies is the purpose for its function in the ritual. It is necessary for not only Aaron and his assistants to wash their bodies, but also to clean the clothes they use. Water also functions here symbolically to differentiate the natures of the profane and the pure. Aaron and his assistants have to clean themselves as they move within the two realms of life: pollution and being clean again. Thus, water is needed during the atonement process so that the celebrant can wash themselves and return

back to his normal procedures, and join the community for the rest of the ritual process.

5.8.2.1.3.3 Lot rite instrument

Aaron needs a lot rite instrument for the two live goats from the community. He must have it available in order to determine the destinations of the two sacrificial animals. This is because Aaron and the congregation cannot choose for themselves which goat shall be presented for YHWH, and which one for Azazel. Without the lot, he cannot fulfil this important lot rite of choosing the goats for the different destinations: YHWH or Azazel.

5.8.2.1.3.4 Censer, Goals, Spices

Another part of the preparations include the censer, the coals and spices of perfume incense. These elements are taken behind the curtain and the incense are put on the fire before YHWH. These elements produce the cloud that is needed for the symbolic presence of YHWH when it appears on the *kapporet*. Aaron has to prepare them to ensure his survival and the presence of YHWH.

5.8.2.1.3.5 Scarified Animals

Accordingly, there are 5 sacrificial animals involved for the whole ritual. Aaron himself and his family requires one bull and a ram; and for the congregation they need two goats and a ram. All these add up to five animals all together: 1 bull, 2 goats and 2 rams. The animals have different functions and how they are used as described in the text. The bull and the goat for YHWH will be for purification, the rams for the burnt offerings, and the scapegoat will not be slaughtered.

5.8.2.1.3.6 Blood

One of the unique elements in the atonement ritual is blood. Blood is the symbol of life for the flesh **כי נפש הבשר** (Lev 17,11). This blood is from the young bull and the goat destined for YHWH. The other animals will not be used for blood manipulation, but placed upon the altar for the burnt offering. First Aaron has to use them one after another, upon and before the *kapporet*, then to the tent of meeting and finally, the blood of the two animals will be put together and applied upon the horns of the altar. Thus blood is the medium of consecration and cleaning the sanctuary, the tent of meeting and the altar from the impurities and the transgressions on the sons of Israel through the application of the blood.

The final part of the preparedness is concerned with placing the prescribed ritual into the calendar for the people to perform once a year. As prescribed, it has to be on the tenth day of the seventh month in each year. It will be a statute forever and a Sabbath for the people to humble their souls and forbid working. The ritual will be performed by the appointed priest following the same procedures as YHWH spoke to Moses.

Accordingly, one can observe in the prescribed ritual of Lev 16 that Aaron has to prepare all these things before the ritual is performed. All these required objects for the atonement ritual have symbolic meanings and functions which helps us understand how YHWH prepares Aaron to carry out the allocated task in order to purify the people and the sanctuary.

5.8.3 The Sanction

The “Sanction” part is contained in the last section of verse 34b (**יעש**) **כאשר צוה יהו את משה**: He did as YHWH has commanded Moses. This means that Aaron and the people of Israel from that day onwards perform the ritual to clean the sanctuary, the tent of meeting and the altar from the sins of the people.

In fact, one can observe in the narrative schema that the performance is missing in the procedure. The reason is that the major part of Lev 16 as demonstrated is “Preparedness” preparing the PNP for the task allocated to him. As discussed, the program was put forward by YHWH through Moses to prepare the active subject, Aaron so that through him the Lack can be reversed. Since the task allocated to him is associated with death, he has to fully prepare physically, mentally and spiritually. In fact, he has to observe many things: the clothes, the objects required, the places and functions of each rites he has to carry out. Thus, Lev 16 is not about the “Performance” of Aaron on the day of Yom Kippur, but it concerns about the “Preparedness,” how he can liquidate the initial Lack and the need. Finally, the sanction part confirms that Aaron, the PNP managed to activate the BNP and the places, the people and he himself were purified from their sins.

5.9 Intertextual comparison of the *ifoga* ritual and Lev 16

5.9.1 *Ifoga* and crime of Nadab and Abihu

The parallel initial circumstance that leads to the creation of a need between the atonement ritual prescribed in Lev 16 and the *ifoga* ritual is the first occasion to ask for the relation of both rituals. As discussed in chapter three and four above,⁸⁶ the *ifoga* ritual is conducted in the pre-contact Samoan society when the two severe crimes of *solitofaga* (entering the high chief’s residence without permission) and *fasioti-tagata* (murder) occurred. When someone is caught committing the crime of *solitofaga* in Samoan societies, there is no hope that the person will survive. Normally, he will be killed at that moment by the victim’s family and his death is justified in the community. Even though, the one who commits the crime is dead, his family will still have to conduct the *ifoga* ritual for the sake of peace and purifying the communities from the pollution caused by the crime.

⁸⁶ Refer to chapter three and four described above.

Accordingly, the crime committed by the two sons of Aaron can be understood in the context of the *ifoga* ritual as *solitofaga*. Nadab and Abihu enter the *maota* or the dwelling place of YHWH - the holy place without permission. Not only did they break the taboos of entering the holy place at the wrong time and with the clothes they wore, but also their action was unacceptable. Bringing strange fire in the sanctuary can be interpreted in different ways. Were they presenting a sacrifice or planning to burn the holy place? In fact, the text is not clear about the meaning and the reason of their action. It could be the effect of drinking too much alcohol. From a cultural-anthropological perspective, YHWH may have been disturbed and distressed when Nadab and Abihu broke in. Without doubt, they deserve to die according to Samoan culture. Thus, the consequences of their action brings pollution to the entire community including the sacred places and the people.

The difference between two initial circumstances is that there is no way anyone who commits *solitofaga* (entering the place without permission at the wrong time) in the dwelling place of YHWH can survive, while there may be a possibility of survival in the *maota* (residential place of a Samoa high chief) of the Samoan high chief.

5.9.2 *Ifoga* and the Presence of YHWH (in cloud) on the *kapporet*

One of the significant moments that connects both rituals is the presence of the victim's family high chief and accepts the high chief of the perpetrator's family, who is kneeling down on the ground covered with an *ietoga* (fine mat); and the presence of YHWH on the *kapporet* (mercy seat). In the *ifoga* ritual, all hope for the success of the ritual and its protocols lies in the *tofa fetutunai* (wisdom and sacred knowledge) of the high chief of the victim's family. Once he enters the sacred place, and accepts the high chief of the perpetrator's party,

this is a true sign peace and not war.⁸⁷ His symbolic presence is for life and not death, because it confirms that peace reigns, and not war. This means that he (chief under the fine mat) and his party are safe and will not be killed nor burnt alive according to the symbolic demonstration and expression of their performance.

Here we are, your pigs, to be cooked if you please; and here are the materials with which to do it. Taking bamboos in the hand was as if they said, “We have come, and here are the knives to cut us up.”⁸⁸

The acceptance of the *ifoga* party not only affirms life over death and war, but also signifies the continuation of the reconciliation process and remaining rites of the ritual. In addition (as discussed in chapter 3), all *ifoga* are different, depending on the reason for performing it; the chiefs, families, and village involved, and the response of the victim’s family. Thus, the situation varies from time to time and cases involved.

It could be suggested that the presence of YHWH on the *kapporet* symbolized by the cloud (Lev 16, 2) is the main performance of the Day of Atonement as prescribed in the text. This concerns the continuation of the atonement process, because the ritual relies very much on the survival of Aaron in the holy of holies. It could be argued that YHWH’s presence has two functions. First, his presence affirms that Aaron will not die like his two sons, and gives assurance of his survival. His survival also gives peace, security, and confidence to the people who mourn the death of his two sons. Second, YHWH’s symbolic presence certifies that he will continue to dwell among his people, despite the tragic incident which costs the lives of Nadab and Abihu. YHWH’s presence among his people motivates them to be holy and this is

⁸⁷ See chapter 3.

⁸⁸ Turner, *Samoa*, 189.

achieved by his acceptance of Aaron in the holy of holies and the remaining procedures of the purification ceremony.

5.9.3 *Ifoga* and Purifying the Sanctuary

The theme of purification is shared by both rituals as one of their major functions. One of the functions of the *ifoga* ritual is to purify the *faasinomaga* (home and designation) where the sacred places such as the *maota* (residential home of the high chiefs and pastors), *laoa* (habitat of the orators) and the *malae-fono* (village sanctuary or meeting place) are located. All these places are polluted when a severe incident happened such as *solitofaga* (entering the chief or pastors house without permission) and *fasioti-tagata* (murder). The question then is: how are these sacred places in Samoa purified during the *ifoga* ritual? Is there any symbolic element which signifies that purification takes place?

The *ietoga* (fine mat) plays an important role in the ritual as discussed in chapter four, and it is the symbolic element used by the Samoans for the purification purpose in the ritual.⁸⁹ The fine mat is the symbol of life in the Samoan society, and therefore the high chief of the perpetrator's family is the one who conducts this rite through bowing down and covers himself with it. For this reason, the high chief is the subject who has to conduct it. In the past, people used the same fine mat that covered the high chief for the purification purpose. Today, with the increased numbers of fine mats available, the purification process is done with more than one fine mat. This fine mat has a special name and it is called *Ie ufi ai le eleele* (fine mat for purifying the sacred land).

⁸⁹ Moreover, the *ietoga* (fine mat) has a connection with the purity of life in the Samoan society. When it is open and demonstrates in the fields, houses and even the church, it symbolises the *ufi tai o mea uma* (it the is cover of everything polluted and damaged) in the community. There is nothing beyond the demonstration of the Samoan fine mat in every customary functions and occasions.

In contrast, according to Lev 16, the *hattat* ritual involves a distinctive manipulation of the blood. The blood is sprinkled on the *kapporet*, the tent of meeting, and smeared on the horns of the altar of the burnt offering. The occurrence of two verbs *hizzan* and *nâtan* illustrate “purification,” takes place and they (*hizzan* and *nâtan*) symbolize the existence of the two modes of blood manipulation. The two rites are practically different from one another in the way the blood is applied: sprinkling versus daubing. The blood applied on the *kapporet* is not the same as the one placed on the altar. Although the two traditions of blood manipulation are different, they have the same function: to purify the inner-sanctum and the altar. It could be argued that the blood, as means of the purification for the sanctuary, corresponds to the symbolic meaning and function of the fine mat used in the *ifoga* ritual. YHWH’s residential place in the tent of meeting has to be purified from pollution caused by the sins and crimes of the Israelites. It is through this blood manipulation that the purification process restores the purity of things from pollution.

5.9.4 Ifoga and the Azazel rite

The *ifoga* ritual has remarkable relations to the Azazel goat although the discussion about the meaning of the rite in Lev 16 is still a dispute among scholars.⁹⁰ It has been discussed, whether Azazel is the name of a demon, the name of a place, or the deity’s wrath.⁹¹

The symbolic disposal of the sins upon the head of the goat for Azazel parallels the same implication of the *ifoga* ritual. In this sense, the goat represents the people of Israel. In the *ifoga* ritual, a similar practice is present: the high chief of the perpetrator’s family is the scapegoat because the sin is loaded upon his head and not on the one who committed the crime. This is a normal practice in the Samoan culture (as discussed in chapter 3) based on the

⁹⁰ See Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 353-356.

⁹¹ Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 353.

Samoan principle: “*Ole sala ole mea a le Tamalii*” meaning ‘Atonement is the sole responsibility of the high chief.’ When the high chief decides to perform the *ifoga* ritual to prevent more bloodshed and violence, he accepts to carry the burden on behalf of the whole extended family and village. He would kneel down on the ground in front of the victim’s sacred place and cover himself with the fine mat (in the eyes of the Samoan people, he is animal, because culturally, only animals already slaughtered are covered like that in the field). It could be argued that he is sent there to die because nobody knows whether he will survive the procedure or not. This is because no one knows whether the *ifoga* will be accepted (or not); or the victim’s family and village will retaliate and want to rage war. Whatever crime committed by a family member in the Samoan community, it is always the high chief, who will take the responsibility to restore peace and order. Thus, the high chief is the sin-carrier for the perpetrator’s family. The same applies to the disposal of sin upon the head of the goat in Lev 16. Later, it will be sent away from its community into the wilderness with its future – to live or to prematurely die – uncertain.

In addition, the meaning of the term Azazel as referring to the wilderness is supported by the *ifoga* ritual. When the dispute is settled and reconciliation has been achieved between the two parties during the *ifoga* ritual, the chiefs of the victim’s family and the perpetrator’s family declare the sending away of the sins, the crimes, the hurt feelings, revenge etc. to the wilderness. The Samoan phrase commonly used during this time goes: *O a ni mea na tutupu, ni leaga ma ni leaga – ia tatou lafo i nuu le aiga*. The phrase literally means, what has happened that causes impurity, pollution, and sins; let us throw or dispose into the wilderness, the place where nobody lives. The idea of disposing those crimes and impurities that causes two parties to rage war against each other as enemies has two functions. First, it functions that no member of the two families will remember or recall what has happened from this day onwards. This implies that the two parties are bound to a new

friendship and union. Second, the crime that has happened and its consequences must not remain in both lands referring to the victim and the perpetrators dwelling place. Both parties are to be free and maintain peace with one another.

How does the disposal of these bad crimes works in the *ifoga* ritual practically? The Samoan practice is affirmed by the words and the phrase mentioned. However, Maulio argues that it is the responsibility of the ancestral gods of the two families involved to take these bad crimes and omens to the wilderness.⁹² In addition, this declaration symbolises the reinstatement of the normal order and the removal of pollution from both parties. It could be argued that Azazel is neither a demon nor a god, but the name given to the wilderness. It is a place where survival will be difficult.

5.10 Conclusion

The prescribed ritual in Lev 16 has significant elements parallel to the *ifoga* ritual. For instance, the narrative schema highlights that the narrative in Lev 16 presupposes a similar condition that causes the creation of the initial circumstance. The conditions that bring about an initial “Lack” is divine punishment due to inappropriate behaviours and crimes. Both rituals concern the survival within the sanctuaries in order to reverse the “Lack.” This is evident in the roles played by both Aaron and the high chief from the perpetrators family in determining their survival. In fact their performance are part of the preparedness to enable both YHWH and the chief of the victim’s family to change their cause of action by receiving them. Moreover, the parallel in their theological themes such as purification, reconciliation and atonement are unique in the relationship between the two rituals. These parallels could help to inform a transformative understanding of the *ifoga* ritual, as will be explored in the following chapter.

⁹² Maulio Oso (informant), discussion with the author September 8, 2012.

CHAPTER 6 ROMANS 3, 21-31

6.1 Introduction

Romans 3, 21-31 is one of the most comprehensive and significant portions of the New Testament that circumscribes the possible meaning of the gospel message, in terms of an actualization of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (the justice of God). This passage is considered by some scholars as conveying the central message, or the main thrust of the Epistle to the Romans, while Martin Luther holds it as the center of the whole New Testament.¹ In this chapter, the author explores the question of how the Christ-event in Romans 3,21-31 is interpreted by Paul with respect to reconciliation. Furthermore, it will be explored how the idea of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ relates to the Samoan ritual *ifoga*, and what could be learnt of it for a re-interpretation of the *ifoga* ritual in the context of present day Samoa.

¹ Martin Luther, *Der Römerbrief* (München: Raifer Verlag, 1965). See also Jacob Thiessen, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit und Evangelium im Römerbrief* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang GmbH, 2014), 54-58; Cilliers Breytenbach, “Einführung,” in: Cilliers Breytenbach (ed.), *Der Römerbrief als Vermächtnis an die Kirche: Rezeptionsgeschichten aus zwei Jahrtausenden* (Stuttgart: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2012), 1-14; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 218. Leon Morris for instance, considered this passage as “possibly the single most important paragraph ever written,” while William Campbell alludes to it as “the Centre of Paul’s Theology in Romans” concerning his argument in relation to the ‘justification by faith.’ See Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 121; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross: A Study of the Significance of some New Testament Terms* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); William S. Campbell, “Romans 3 as the Key to the Structure and Thought of the Letter,” in: Karl P. Donfried (ed.), *The Romans Debate: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 251-264; James D. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*. WBC 38A (Dallas: Word, 1988), 169; *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An illustrated walk through Biblical History and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 23-31; Kim Seyoon, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second thoughts on the origin of Paul’s gospel* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 17-21.

6.2 Excursus: The new perspective on Paul (NPP)

For many years, the Reformation perspective on Pauline theology has dominated Protestant theologies and scholarship.² One of the long standing traditions of the Reformation, as Werner Kahl notes, is the “individualistic understanding of the doctrine of Righteousness” in constructions of Pauline theology.³ He observes that New Testament scholars in the sixties began to raise questions about the political dimension of Pauline texts whose interpretation had been dominated by an individualistic perspective.⁴ Studies focussing on the social-integrative dimension of the Pauline concept and usage of “justice of God”, with respect to the relationship of Jews and gentiles, have been labelled as representing the New Perspective on Paul (NPP). In what follows, I give an overview on major positions in the development of the NPP.⁵

6.2.1 Major positions in the development of the NPP

Krister Stendahl, himself a Lutheran theologian, in his article from 1963, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West,” argues that the dominant understanding of Paul since the Reformation is incorrect.⁶ Stendahl traces the problem beyond Luther to Augustine, who both hold that the gospel is the solution for the plight of the individual to the bondage of sin. For Stendahl, once this understanding is put aside, one can recognize clearly the meaning of Paul’s teaching concerning justification by

² Thomas Schreiner states that the Reformation perspective holds on two significant paradigms: first, the justification of the individual and God’s righteousness as central to Pauline theology; and second, the identification of Paul’s opponents as legalistic Jews, cf. Thomas Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfilment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 15-16.

³ Werner Kahl, “Gottesgerechtigkeit und politische Kritik: Neutestamentliche Exegese angesichts der gesellschaftlichen Relevanz des Evangeliums,” *ZNT* 31/16 (2013), 2-10.

⁴ Kahl, “Gottesgerechtigkeit und politische Kritik,” 2.

⁵ Cf. the overviews of Christian Strecker, “Paulus aus einer “neuen Perspektive”. Der Paradigmenwechsel in der jüngeren Paulusforschung,” *Kirche und Israel* 11 (1996), 3-18; Christine Gerber, “Blicke auf Paulus. Die New Perspective on Paul in der jüngeren Diskussion,” *Verkündigung und Forschung*, VF 55/1 (2010), 45-60.

⁶ *HTR* 56/3 (1963), 199-215. This article is reprinted in Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), 78-86.

faith. He maintains that justification is a social doctrine focussing on the inclusion of the gentiles through faith into the people of God.⁷

With respect to the subject matter of this thesis, Stendahl's suggestion about the inclusion and acceptance of the gentiles as the main thrust of Paul's argument, is relevant. Paul's concern finds an analogy in the main function of *ifoga*, i.e. maintaining order and community life by reconciling and integrating opposing parties – a ritual that is theologically grounded.

A few years later, in 1968 Markus Barth published an article entitled, "Jews and gentiles: The social character of Justification in Paul," in which he points out the danger of an individualistic restriction of 'justification by faith.'⁸ He holds that such an understanding motivates individuals to find peace with God at the expense of a concern for their fellow human beings. Contrary to the traditional individualistic readings of Paul in Protestant theology and exegesis, Barth argues that "there is no personal justification by God without justification of fellow-men by God."⁹ Accordingly, Paul's argument in Romans 3,21-31 concerns the relationship of Jews and gentiles on the basis of the acceptance of both peoples by God. For Barth, "the two themes, justification by faith and [the] unity of Jews and gentiles in Christ are obviously not only inseparable but in the last analysis identical."¹⁰ Thus, justification has a strong sense of community values, sharing and caring for one another. Barth's argument about the acceptance of both Jews and gentiles has a strong

⁷ Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles*, 40.

⁸ Markus Barth, "The Social Character of Justification in Paul," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 5 (1968), 241-267. See also Markus Barth, *Justification*, trans. A. M Woodruff (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishing, 2006). Translated from the German *Rechtfertigung (Theologische Studien)*, copyright 1969 by EVZ Verlag, Zürich, Switzerland.

⁹ Barth, "The Social Character of Justification in Paul," 245. Markus Barth's interpretation of Paul is theologically informed by Karl Barth's linkage of justification and justice, cf. G. Hungsinger, "Justification and Justice. Toward an Evangelical Social Ethic," in *Karl Barth im europäischen Zeitgeschehen*, M. Beintker et.al. (eds.), (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2010), 457-470.

¹⁰ Barth, "The Social Character of Justification in Paul," 258. Cf. Tamez, *Amnesty of Grace*, 19-20.

connection to the Samoan atonement ritual. The *ifoga* ritual expresses the idea of acceptance, as the enemy (perpetrator's family) is welcomed and accepted as a guest of honour and as a friend by the victim's family.

E. P. Sanders takes on the issue of justification in his book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, from 1977. He argues convincingly that Judaism of Paul's day has been misconstrued in theology and particularly in exegesis by portraying the Jewish faith as a religion of legalism and of 'work-righteousness.'¹¹ This holds true also for Bultmann's and Käsemann's analyses of Paul, and for much of Protestant exegesis, esp. in Germany well into the 1980s. Sanders maintains that 'covenantal nomism' is the pattern of religion found in the Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism. He defines the term 'covenantal nomism' as follows:

Briefly put, covenantal nomism is the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that the covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression.¹²

Sanders definition of 'covenantal nomism' implies a transfer of terminology. This means that to be justified is to enter into the covenant. The distinction between 'getting in' and 'staying in' is important in this regard. He notes that the debate between 'faith' and 'law,' is a debate about entry requirements, not about life subsequent to conversion.¹³ In Paul, the law is excluded as an entry requirement into the body of those who will be saved; entrance must be by faith in Christ, because man's inclusion in God's faithful community is not something earned, but by God's grace.¹⁴ Once gentiles are 'in,' then, they must behave appropriately and fulfill the law in order to retain their status. Elements of the law which create social distinctions between Jews and gentiles such as circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, food laws are to be

¹¹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM Press, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), xiii.

¹² Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 75.

¹³ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 79.

¹⁴ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 140.

discarded. For Sanders, “one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant” and therefore, as long as Jews keep their covenant with God, they remain part of God's people.¹⁵

James D. G. Dunn, who coined the term “New Perspective on Paul” fully endorses Sanders reconstruction of Palestinian Judaism.¹⁶ He proposes a coherent framework for Paul's application and use of the law. He holds that Paul did not criticize the law itself, but rather its misuse as a barrier. According to Dunn, the misuse of the law is what Paul calls ‘the works of the law.’¹⁷ He further explains about the works of the law:

They are rather seen as badges: they are simply what membership of the covenant people involves, what mark out the Jews as God's people;...in other words, Paul has in view precisely what Sanders calls ‘covenantal nomism.’ And what he denies is that God's justification depends on ‘covenantal nomism,’ that God's grace extends only to those who wear the badge of the covenant.¹⁸

Thus, for Dunn, the expression ‘the works of the law’ does not refer to any good works in general or to any ‘Jewish legalism,’ but should be limited to Jewish ethnic-identity boundary markers that signify an exclusion of gentiles from salvation. These identity markers include circumcision, Sabbath and food restrictions, which Dunn refers to as “social functions of the law.”¹⁹ He maintains that these social functions of the law are consistent with the covenant nomism. These works of the law according to Dunn are the subject matter in Galatians 2,16; 3,10-14 and Romans 3,20-22; they refer to circumcision and food laws.

Like Käsemann, Dunn in his article, “New Perspective on Paul,” from 1983 develops his approach to justification not as an individualistic soteriological doctrine, but as a sociological doctrine, which consists of the

¹⁵ Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 77.

¹⁶ See Chapter 7 of James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990).

¹⁷ Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 190. Cf. Klaus Haacker, *Der Brief des Paulus an die Römer* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1999), 94.

¹⁸ Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 194.

¹⁹ Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law*, 11.

inclusion of the gentiles among the people of God.²⁰ This means that the gentiles get in by faith, and stay in by obedience (covenant nomism). Thus, the gentiles are justified by the grace of God through the work of Christ and their works keep them in the community of God under the rubric of covenant nomism.

N. T. Wright agrees with Sanders and Dunn that Judaism in Paul's time was not a religion of self-righteousness focussing on the works of the law.²¹ He maintains that this is a misrepresentation of ancient Judaism due to the anachronistic projections of modern perspectives into Pauline writings.²² Wright suggests that Paul was strongly against Jewish nationalism:

If we ask how it is that Israel has missed her vocation, Paul's answer is that she is not guilty of legalism and work-righteousness, but of what I call national righteousness, the belief that fleshly Jewish descent guarantees membership in God's covenant people.....Over against this abuse of Israel's undoubted privileged status, Paul establishes, in his theology and in his missionary work, the true children of Abraham, the world-wide community of faith.²³

For Wright, Paul did not criticize the Jews for legalism but he disagrees with them concerning : (1) boasting about being the exclusive chosen people of God, (2) breaking of the law or sin, (3) their claim on national righteousness, (4) trust in the law and circumcision as badges of national privileges.²⁴

²⁰ James D. G Dunn, "New Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library*, *BJRL* 65 (1983): 95-122. See also James D. G Dunn, "The Justice of God," *Journal of Theological Studies*, *JTS* 43 (April 1992): 1-2; James D. G Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2005). Cf. Tamez, *The Amnesty of Grace*, 19-20.

²¹ See N. T. Wright, "A Fresh Perspective on Paul," *BJRL* 83 (Spring 2001), 21-39; N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 20; N. T. Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978), 79-80; N. T. Wright, "The Shape of Justification," *BR* 17 (April 2001), 50. This does not mean that there are no disagreements among their views in some of the issues relating to the new perspective on Paul.

²² Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," 78.

²³ Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," 65.

²⁴ Wright, "The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith," 82.

In addition, Wright also stresses that the doctrine of justification is corporate rather than individual.²⁵ In his analysis of Galatians, he indicates that “what Paul means by justification... is not ‘how one becomes a Christian,’ so much as, ‘how you can tell who is a member of the covenant family.’”²⁶ Thus, justification for him is not about how one enters into the covenant family, the family of Abraham, but it is a declaration that one is indeed a member.

6.2.2 Assessing the new perspective

The changing paradigm in reading Pauline letters as it is now called the ‘The New Perspective on Paul’ opens up new dimensions for understanding what Paul in his historical context meant in relation to expressions like ‘righteousness of God,’ ‘the works of the law,’ ‘justification by faith,’ and so forth. These new perspectives on Paul have been increasingly accepted also in the recent German exegetical discourse on Paul.²⁷ Michael Wolter reminds us of the dangers of anachronism when we deal with the doctrine of justification and its reception by Martin Luther, in relation to the Pauline epistles:

Aufs Ganze gesehen sind die theologischen Unterschiede zwischen der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre und ihrer Rezeption durch Martin Luther nicht zu übersehen. Ihre Ursache haben sie zweifellos in den veränderten christentumsgeschichtlichen Kontexten. Daraus kann man zwei hermeneutische Schlussfolgerungen ableiten: Die Interpretation der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre darf man in der Tat nicht am theologischen Paradigma ihrer Rezeption durch Martin Luther ausrichten. Das wäre anachronistisch. Aus der umgekehrten Richtung betrachtet, wird man aber der Theologie Martin Luthers nicht gerecht, wenn man ihr eine Verfälschung der paulinischen Rechtfertigungslehre vorwirft. Luther geht mir ihr vielmehr so um, dass er sie in einen veränderten historischen und kulturellen Kontext hinein fortschreibt und dabei westliche Bestandteile ihres Begründungszusammenhangs bewahrt.²⁸

²⁵ Wright, “The Shape of Justification,” 8.

²⁶ Wright, *What Saint Paul Said*, 45-46.

²⁷ Cf. e.g., Michael Wolter, *Paulus. Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie* (Göttingen: Neukirchener Verlagsgesellschaft, 2011), 339-411; M. Wolter, “3.7.1. Der missionstheologische Hintergrund,” in Friedrich W. Horn (ed.), *Paulus Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 347-350; Michael Bachmann, “The New Perspective on Paul” und “The New View of Paul,” in Horn, *Paulus Handbuch*, 30-38.

²⁸ Wolter, *Paulus*, 411.

According to Wolter's well balanced statement, Luther's interpretation of justification is to be appreciated with respect to the social, ecclesial and theological challenges of his time. Even though it can no longer be accepted as a valid interpretation of what Paul meant with "justification" in his first century context, Luther's doctrine can be regarded as an appropriate actualization of the Pauline understanding of gospel, under the circumstances of the 16th century.

This brief overview of the new dimension of Pauline studies offers some positive connections to the Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga*. Stendahl's and Barth's emphasis on justification as having social integrative implications impacts the Samoan ritual positively. Both the Pauline conception of justification and *ifoga* express a strong sense of community values. In Samoa, the reconciliation ritual *ifoga* is a community event. Just as Luther actualized the Pauline concept of "justice of God", it is appropriate to investigate how the Pauline understanding of justification could be re-read productively in the Samoan context of the *ifoga* ritual.

6.3 Romans 3, 21-31 in its literary context

Romans 3,21-31 provides Paul's fundamental argument about the function, and meaning of the Christ-event, i.e. the death and resurrection of Christ.²⁹ In Rom 1,16 Paul maintains that the power of the gospel brings salvation to everyone who believes in Christ, Jews and gentiles alike. The power of the gospel reveals the justice of God that enables the people of faith to restore their relationship with God and live through faith (1,17). And in chapters 1,18-3,20, Paul demonstrates the sinfulness of all of humanity, something the power of the gospel can change, reconciling sinners with God by declaring them just before him.

²⁹ Dieter Zeller, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 1985), 84-85. Cf. Haacker, *Römer*, 86.

According to Paul's description in Rom 1,18-32, humanity needs such salvation, because everyone is guilty before God. In addition, the wrath of God threatens the sinners, and therefore, everyone will be punished according to his/her unfaithful behaviours (1,19). In Paul's view, God has revealed his justice but humankind has rejected it and finds itself enslaved to sin. Thus, the sinful nature of human beings makes them subject to God's punishment and wrath, for all are condemnable and separated from God.

In Rom 2, Paul declares that even the Jews are without exception. Haacker argues that Rom 2 stands again under the theme of 1,18 highlighting the use of the term ὀργή (wrath) and the lexeme κρίνω (to judge, etc).³⁰ They judge those who neglect the law, but they, themselves have failed to uphold it (vv. 2-5). Daniel Boyarin in his book, *A Radical Jew*, argues that "The Jew who is addressed by Paul here is not a Jew who has confidence in her achievement in keeping the law and thereby denies God's grace, but exactly the opposite. The Jew whom Paul is addressing and attacking here is a Jew who does not successfully keep the law and relies on God's grace to the Jews to save him/her at the last judgement."³¹ For Paul, God judges everyone according to the same standard. Therefore, God is a just judge, not showing any favouritism (Rom 2,11: οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν προσωποληψία παρὰ τῷ θεῷ).³² He punishes those who do evil and gives glory, honour, and peace to the ones who do good (vv. 6-11). The gentiles are also punished even though they do not have the law, because their sins separate them from the law. The Jews, who have received the law are placed under it, for they failed to live with it and their conduct shows the type of law written in their hearts (vv. 12-16). Paul even shatters any boastful appeal of Jews to the law of Moses (vv. 17-24). He then expresses the true understanding of circumcision in his perspective: The

³⁰ Haacker, *Römer*, 59.

³¹ Daniel Boyarin, *A Radical Jew: Paul and the politics of identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 61.

³² Cf. Haacker, *Römer*, 86; and Zeller, *Römer*, 65.

real Jew is not the one who is physically circumcised on the outside and lives contrary to the covenant; rather, the one who is truly circumcised on the inside, whose heart has been circumcised spiritually (25-29).³³ True circumcision of the heart is the work of the Holy Spirit, which creates the inward change, demonstrating the one who is truly a Jew. Accordingly, this inward change reflects the work of God, and not man.

In Rom 3 Paul deals with the issue regarding the Jews having advantages because they are Jews by blood, and are physically circumcised. He addressed this issue already in 1,17, declaring that God's justice is actualized by faith and – by implication – not by birth. This means that salvation has nothing to do with one's identity as a Jew by birth and circumcision. Still, the Jews have an advantage before God, because God had turned immediately to them and revealed his words to them, keeping his covenant promises. Paul then highlights God's faithfulness *vis-a-vi* the unfaithfulness of "some" (τινες) of his chosen people, and his justice over against the injustice of "us" (v.5 ἡ ἀδικία ἡμῶν) (vv.3-8).

In verses 9-20, Paul points out to the Romans that the Jews are in no better position than the gentiles before God when it comes to matters of justice, for all are under the power of sin.³⁴ He alludes to Old Testament texts to support his argument by referring especially to Psalms 14,1-3 (LXX), claiming that no one is righteous. Everyone has turned away from God; they are wicked, deceptive, liars, and have not learnt to fear God. Paul concludes by stating that the purpose of the law is to stop human excuses and pleas of guiltlessness; and to bring everyone under God's judgement (vv. 19-20). For Paul, the claims of following the law of Moses have not produced justice; rather the function of the law is to demonstrate that man has sinned.³⁵ Thus, Paul has attempted to

³³ See Zeller, *Römer*, 74-75.

³⁴ Haacker, *Römer*, 61.

³⁵ Cf. Haacker, *Römer*, 68-69 and Zeller, *Römer*, 77-83.

prove that all human beings are guilty before God, that their relationship to God is ruined because of sin, and therefore, subject to condemnation.

In chapter 3,21-31, then Paul tries to communicate the message to Jews and gentiles that they are justified in Christ through faith, and that they have become a new reconciled community of faith.

The same message is also actualized in the Samoan *ifoga* ritual, in as far as it tries to bring opposing parties together that had been separated by an act of violence, in order to become a peaceful and reconciled community.

The rest of the chapters in the letter to the Romans demonstrates how Paul defends and deepens his message of salvation for both Jews and gentiles.

6.4 Translation

| | Greek | English | Samoan |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| 21 | Νυνὶ δέ ³⁶ χωρὶς νόμου ³⁷ | But now, apart from the law, | O lenei, e aunoa ma le tulafono, |
| | δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανερωται | the justice of God has been revealed | ua faaaliala mai le amiotonu a le Atua |
| | μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου | witnessed by the law | i le molimau a le tulafono |
| | καὶ τῶν προφητῶν, | and the prophets. | ma perofeta, |
| 22 | δικαιοσύνη δέ ³⁸ θεοῦ | That is the justice of God | O le amiotonu lea a le Atua |
| | διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ³⁹ | through faith in Jesus Christ, | e ala i le faatuatua ia Iesu Keriso, |
| | εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας. | to all who believe. | mo i latou uma ua talitonu. |
| | οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν διαστολή, | Because there is no difference, | Aua e leai se eseesea, |
| 23 | πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον ⁴⁰ | for all sinned, | aua ua agasala tagata uma, |

³⁶ The term Νυνὶ δέ (But now) is also used in Ephesians 2,12-13 and Colossians 1,21-22.

³⁷ The meaning of the phrase χωρὶς νόμου (without the law) does not mean apart from the Torah, rather, apart from the works of the law.

³⁸ The conjunction δέ is a weak adversative particle and generally placed second in a clause. It stands between a nominative feminine singular noun and a genitive masculine singular noun. This means that the phrase can be read as “That is the justice of God” or “The justice of God that is.”

³⁹ The expression πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ appears at first glance as a subjective genitive, which makes Christ the subject of the verb. The debate surrounding this phrase is whether to translate it as: “the faithfulness of Christs” (subject-genitive) or “faith in Christ” (objective-genitive). However, the author prefers to translate it as an objective-genitive based on the context of the verse. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, Enlarge Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 113.

⁴⁰ The verb ἥμαρτον is aorist active indicative third person plural from ἁμαρτάνω meaning to sin. It can be translated as “all have sinned” or “all sinned”.

| | | | |
|----|--|---|--|
| | καὶ ὑστεροῦνται ⁴¹ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ | and they lack the glory of God. | ma ua leai se mamalu o le Atua. |
| 24 | δικαιούμενοι δωρεὰν ⁴² τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι | Being justified without cost with his grace, | Ua tau amiotonuina i latou e aunoa ma se tau i lona alofa-tunoa, |
| | διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. | through the redemption in Christ Jesus, | e ala i le togiola ia Keriso Iesu, |
| 25 | ὃν πρόθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον ⁴³ | whom God put forth as a sacrifice of atonement | o le na foai mai e le Atua e fai ma tualaga o le togiola |
| | διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι | through faith in his blood | e ala i le faatuatau i lona toto. |
| | εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ | to prove his justice, | e faamautinoa ai lana amiotonu, |
| | διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων | through the forgiveness of the sins previously committed, | e ala i le faamagaloina o agasala ua mavae |
| 26 | ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, | in the patience of God, | i le onosai o le Atua, |
| | πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν ⁴⁴ τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, | in order to prove his justice in this present time, | ina ia faamautinoa lana amiotonu i le taimi nei |
| | εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον | that he himself is just | o ia lava o le amiotonu |
| | καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἕκ ⁴⁵ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ. | and justifies the one by faith in Jesus. | ma ua tauamiotonuina e ia le tagata faatuatua ia Iesu. |
| 27 | Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη. | Therefore, where is the boasting? It has been excluded! | O lenei, o fea o iai le mitamita? Ua lē faitauina! |

⁴¹ The verb ὑστερέω means “to lack, to come short,” and it is also used in Luke 15,14 to describe the Prodigal Son, who “began to come in need,” and in Philippians 4,12 it describes Paul’s “suffering need.” Most of the English Bible versions prefer the translation of the verb ὑστεροῦνται as “fall short.” Cf. Haacker, *Römer*, 85.

⁴² Cf. John 15,25 where this word is used; they hated Christ “without a cause,” that is “freely,” that is without any reason found in Christ himself.

⁴³ The term is interpreted differently by scholars. For instance, Bauer refers to it as “that which expiates or propitiates, that is the means of expiation. Liddell and Scott consider it as referring to the “Mercy Seat” as in Exodus 25,16. Louw and Nida suggest it to refer to the “Place where sins are forgiven.” In addition, they refer to it as propitiation, i.e. “a process where one does a favour to a person in order to make him/her favourably disposed.” Based on these definitions expiation involves the removal of sins. Propitiation involves the appeasing of God’s wrath. In fact, both terms are accomplished in Christ’s suffering and death. The place where sins are forgiven, “mercy seat” would be better designated as the cross. See Henry G. Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon* 9th Edition (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940); Johannes Louw and Eugene Nida (ed.) *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* 2nd Edition. (New York: United Bible Society, 1988).

⁴⁴ This expression ἐνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ is employed here as in verse 25 to emphasize God’s justice in his judgement of the sinners.

⁴⁵ In verse 22, it reads διὰ πίστεως – through faith, in this verse: ἐκ πίστεως – by faith. Although πίστις is the noun in both cases, the two prepositions make the difference in its meaning. While διὰ plus genitive denotes the medium through which one is justified, ἐκ expresses the principle of justification. This difference is expressed clearly by Paul in verse 30.

| | | | |
|----|--|--|--|
| | διὰ ποίου νόμου; ⁴⁶ τῶν ἔργων; | By what law? By works? | Mai le tulafono o le a? Mai galuega? |
| | οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως. | No, but through the law of faith. | E leai, mai le tulafono o le faatuatua. |
| 28 | λογιζόμεθα γὰρ | For we hold that | Aua ua matou taofi |
| | δικαιούσθαι πίστει ⁴⁷ ἄνθρωπον | a person is justified through faith | e tauamiotonuina le tagata |
| | χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου. | apart from the works of the law. | e aunoa ma galuega o le tulafono. |
| 29 | ἢ Ἰουδαίων ὁ θεὸς μόνον; | Or is God (the God) of the Jews only? | Poo le Atua ea, o le Atua na o Iutaia? |
| | οὐχὶ καὶ ἔθνῶν; | Is he not (God) of the Gentiles also? | E le o le Atua foi o Ia mo tagata o nuu ese? |
| | ναὶ καὶ ἔθνῶν, | Yes, also the Gentiles. | Ioe, e aofia ai ma nuu ese. |
| 30 | εἴπερ εἷς ὁ θεός | Indeed, God is one, | E moni lava, o le Atua e tasi, |
| | ὃς δικαιώσει περιτομὴν ἐκ πίστεως | who will justify the circumcision by faith | o Lē ua tauamiotonuina le peritome i le faatuatua |
| | καὶ ἀκροβυστίαν διὰ τῆς πίστεως. ⁴⁸ | and the uncircumcision through faith. | ma le lē peritome i le faatuatua. |
| 31 | νόμον οὖν καταργοῦμεν διὰ τῆς πίστεως; | Do we then make the law invalid through faith? | O le mea ea, ua tatou faaleaogaina le tulafono ona o le faatuatua? |
| | μὴ γένοιτο ⁴⁹ . | Far from it, | Ia mamao lava, |
| | ἀλλὰ νόμον ἱστάνομεν. | but we uphold the law. | ae ia tatou taofimauiua iumaea o le tulafono. |

6.5 Structure

6.5.1 Gods' justice is revealed (3,21-23)

6.5.1.1 Without the Law (21a)

6.5.1.2 Witnessed by the Law and Prophets (21b)

6.5.1.3 Means of justification (3,22a)

⁴⁶ The meaning of the term νόμος could be rerederred as 'principles', 'basis' or 'rule.' Cf. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 189.

⁴⁷ The term πίστει as in the phrase λογιζόμεθα γὰρ δικαιούσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον is dative and is referenced here as the means or instrument by which one is justified. God is the agent who justifies one with the instrument of faith. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar beyond the Basics*, 221. Martin Luther's German translation reads: *allein durch den Galuben*, "through faith alone." Luther adds the adjective "alone" to indicate that faith is confined to justification alone and nothing else.

⁴⁸ The term ἐκ πίστεως refers to the circumcised or the Jews, while διὰ τῆς πίστεως concerns the non-Jews or the uncircumcised. The Jews were already in a position for justification through the Law up to Christ. They had only to accept it as of faith and not as of works of law. The Gentiles on the other hand, who are new to the community of faith must attain it through faith i.e. their faith in the gospel now revealed to them. See *BibleWorks 7: Software for Biblical Exegesis and Research*.

⁴⁹ γένοιτο is optative aorist, therefore the sentence is in the optative mood, stating an action that should never take place, emphasizing that one aspect of God's righteousness does not deny the existence of another.

6.5.1.4 Universalism of Justification (3,22b-23)

6.5.2 Provision for Justification (3,24-26)

6.5.2.1 Function of Christ's death (3,24-26)

6.5.3 The Role of Faith in the justified Community (3,27-31)

6.5.3.1 Faith excludes boasting (3,27-28)

6.5.3.2 Faith eliminates walls of separation (3,29-30)

6.5.3.3 Faith upholds the Law (3,31)

6.6 The narrative schema as a means of analysing Rom 3, 21-31

The statement of Paul's argument concerning the justification of the sinners presupposes a narrative which can be analysed in terms of the Narrative Schema, which helps to identify on the syntagmatic level the functions and the interconnectedness of actions, i.e. transformations of situations by particular active subjects for, or against, particular subjects of circumstance.⁵⁰ This enables us to reconstruct the narrative and formulate the story behind Paul's argument, in preparation of a critical comparison of the foundational Pauline narrative with the *ifoga* ritual.

The presupposed narrative in Romans 3,21-31 describes the manifestation of God's justice in connection to the death of Jesus Christ. In Paul's argument, the death of Christ has the effect of demonstrating God's justice. God's activity in this scenario translates into a change of the status of former unjust people - including Jews - into just people, thus bridging the gap between Jews and gentiles, and providing a common basis for the intergration of Jews and gentiles as one people of God, according to insights gathered by proponents of the New Perspective on Paul.

6.6.1 The Lack

The analysis of the text under scrutiny in terms of the Narrative Schema highlights the lack that needs to be liquidated. The lack is referred to explicitly

⁵⁰ See above 4.8 and 5.2, where the Narrative Schema is introduced as a means to analyse the structure of the narratives of the *Ifoga* ritual on the one hand and of both Lev 16 and Rom 3 on the other hand.

in verse 21b, i.e. the δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (“justice of God”): “The justice of God has been revealed.” Although the term δικαιοσύνη is the grammatical subject of the sentence, it is in actual fact, the object of what has been revealed. The verb πεφανεύεται in the indicative serves to denote the truth that the δικαιοσύνη was revealed. The passive voice most likely implies that God is presupposed here as the active subject of this performance. Paul states clearly that this justice is not the law, nor comes from the law, regardless of his referring to the law and the prophets which gave witness to it.⁵¹ It is implied that the revealed δικαιοσύνη is lacking and not present among the people.

In verses 22c – 23, Paul introduces another lack: “Because there is no difference, for all have sinned and they lack the glory of God.”⁵² Paul tells us not only that there is no distinction between Jews and gentiles, but he also gives a reason: all have sinned. Sin is a true indication of the peoples’ rejection of God. Thus, sin controls the hearts of the mankind, and for that reason Paul defines both Jews and gentiles equally under the same category, sin.

The lack of glory suggests the absence of δικαιοσύνη. People turn away from God and participate in sin, which results in the lack of God’s glory. Haacker offers another interpretation of ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ suggesting that the people did not give God the glory – “[Sie] geben Gott nicht die Ehre.”⁵³ If people fail to give God the proper glory as Haacker suggests,

⁵¹ Walter C. Kaiser (ed.), *NIV Archaeological Biblestudy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervon, 2005), 1967.

⁵² It can also be read using the active mood: “and lack or fall short of the glory of God.” However, the preference is to use the term ‘lack’ for it stresses the point that humanity is lacking something, which needs to be restored or liquidated.

⁵³ Haacker, *Römer*, 88. “Vorrangig sollte jedoch ein Verständnis gesucht werden, das der normalen Wortbedeutung von ὑστεροῦνται c. Gen., also “Mangel an etwas haben” und dem von Paulus gebrauchten Präsens näher steht. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt hat die früher z. St. vorherrschende Übersetzung von δόξα mit Ehre, “Anerkennung” einiges für sich, wobei θεοῦ sowohl als Gen. subj (“Anerkennung durch Gott” als Synonym zu Rechtfertigung), als auch als Gen. obj. (Ehrung Gottes) verstanden werden kann. Da Paulus den Sündenfall der Menschheit nach 1,21 darin sieht, dass die Menschen Gott nicht die gebührende Ehre gaben, und auch im vorangehenden Text (v. 11, 18) von mangelnder Ausrichtung auf Gott die Rede war, fügt sich letzteres m. E. am besten in den vorliegenden Satzzusammenhang. Die

then this also refers to the lack of justice, because sin takes the place of δικαιοσύνη in their hearts.⁵⁴ Paul does not give any details about the nature of their inequities, and in what ways they have been sinned. He simply states a general human condition of a transgression of divine orders ('sinning') and the lack of God's glory that somehow corresponds to the lack of δικαιοσύνη.

The second statement which also refers to the lack of δικαιοσύνη in the analysis is expressed in verse 27: Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχησις; ἐξεκλείσθη. ("Where is boasting? It has been excluded."). Paul raises a question about boasting. He does not give any details about what the Jews are boasting about. However, one can argue that Paul may refer here to a behavior and an attitude of Jews celebrating their identity as people of the covenant as Boyarin suggests.⁵⁵ Simon Gathercole in his book, *Where is Boasting*, deals explicitly with the theme of 'boasting' in Romans 1-5.⁵⁶ He argues that the Jews' boasts about their "obedience as well as election, is the basis of Israel's confidence before God."⁵⁷ This means that in the perspective of Paul's representation, the law was at the heart of Jewish boasting. Thiessen notes that there is a connection between 3,27ff and 2,17ff and he suggests that more is involved merely than "ethnic pride" and the so called "border markers."⁵⁸ Whatever καύχησις is referred to here by Paul, this attitude expresses the lack of δικαιοσύνη, which has a negative affect on the social life of Jews and gentiles. This is the problem addressed by Markus Barth and others who drew attention to the social

Anspielung auf eine ur- oder endzeitliche Partizipation an Gottes Herrlichkeit wäre, wenn Paulus sie intendiert hätte, eine glatte Überforderung der ersten wie auch aller späteren nichtprofessionellen Leser des Briefs."

⁵⁴ Thiessen, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 183.

⁵⁵ Boyarin, *The Radical Jew*, 67.

⁵⁶ Simon Gathercole, *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 32-41.

⁵⁷ Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?* 194. Cf. Haacker, *Römer*, 94.

⁵⁸ Thiessen, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 100. Cf. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 211.

dimension of justice centered on Christ.⁵⁹ For them, God’s justice centered on Christ demands social responsibilities such as love for the neighbor. Thus, boasting relates to the lack of glory and both connect to the lack of δικαιοσύνη in community life among both Jews and gentiles.

6.6.2 Preparedness

The phase preparedness of the Narrative Schema aims at the bestowal of an active subject (AS) with motivation and ability to engage in the performance for the purpose of liquidating a lack.⁶⁰ Rom 3,21-31 presupposes God as the active subject and also the BNP (bearer of numinous power). In this sense, the preparedness phase focuses on the ability of the BNP, “its *savoir-* and *vouloir-faire*”⁶¹ and how it is involved in a narrative process. Kahl distinguishes two ways in which the BNP can involve itself in a narrative program: “the BNP either activates itself (self-activation) or it is transitively activated by a SC, its representatives, or a PNP.”⁶² Based on this, God in Rom 3,21-31 activates himself, “incorporating *savoir-* and *pouvoir-faire*, and is moved by its own *vouloir-faire*.”⁶³ God envisions the situation marked by the lack of δικαιοσύνη (vv.22-23), and initiates a narrative program without anybody imploring him for this performance. This presupposes that God is omniscient and knows about the lack on the basis of peoples’ ‘sin’ lacking the glory of God (v.23).⁶⁴ Verse 24 confirms God’s ‘self-activation’ in that his involvement was out of grace (τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι). The adverbial accusative

⁵⁹ See Käsemann, “Righteousness of God,” 168-182, Barth, “The Social Character of Justification in Paul,” 258. See also Kahl, “Gottesgerechtigkeit und politische Kritik,” 2.

⁶⁰ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 76.

⁶¹ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 77.

⁶² Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 87.

⁶³ Kahl, *Miracle Stories*, 87. Rudolf Bultmann, in the context of discussing reconciliation with particular reference to 2Cor 5:18-19, has also noticed this implied self-activation of God who did not count men’s sins against them but reconciled them “not because of any human deed or attitude, but on God’s own initiative (...); Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, Vol.1 (London: SCM Press, 1971), 286.

⁶⁴ Haacker, *Römer*, 86.

δωρεάν (freely, without cost) plus the dative means τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι (by his grace) describe the merciful nature and the unmerited character of God. Moreover, the word χάρις indicates that God was not transitively activated by any other subject to liquidate the lack of δικαιοσύνη, but he acted freely out of his grace.⁶⁵ This means that God is omniscient, transcendent, and self-activating.

6.6.3 Performance

After being activated intransitively, the BNP (God) functions as the active subject (AS) of the principle performance (24b-25). In verse 24b-25a, Paul states that God put forth Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement: διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρόσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον.⁶⁶ Although it is not a detailed narrated account, it clearly states that God is the active subject of the performance. Paul did not state that Jesus offered himself up as a sacrifice, but it is God who makes Jesus a medium of returning δικαιοσύνη to Jews and gentiles. Paul uses two significant cultic terms to describe the performance of the BNP: ἱλαστήριον and ἀπολύτρωσις. He makes use of these terms to interpret and to communicate to his implied readers, how the performance of God with respect to the Christ-event brought about the liquidation of the lack of justice. Each metaphor has its own symbolic value, significance, function, meaning, and differs from the other. Therefore, each term has to be studied in and for itself in order to understand the nuances associated with it.

⁶⁵ Cf. Haacker, *Römer*, 89 and Wengst, *Freut Euch, Ihr Völker, mit Gottes Volk*, 195.

⁶⁶ Zeller, *Römer*, 84.

6.6.3.1 ἱλαστήριον

Paul's use of ἱλαστήριον⁶⁷ places the performance of God in the context of the religious Jewish sacrificial system.⁶⁸ There has been a controversial debate in exegesis about the meaning of ἱλαστήριον.⁶⁹ The discussion is reflected, for instance, in different English Bible versions: ἱλαστήριον is referred to as 'propitiation' in the ESV and NAS, while the NRSV and the NIV translate it as 'a sacrifice of atonement.' The NET has rendered it as the 'mercy seat' connecting it to the *kapporet* or cover of the ark of covenant in the Old Testament (Ex 25, 17-22).⁷⁰

Those who favor the meaning 'propitiation,' for instance Thayer, refer to the performance of God with respect to the Christ-event as a way to appease and sooth the wrath of God.⁷¹ This means that propitiation involves an attitude in God and not a change in man. In addition, it does not focus on the lack of δικαιοσύνη that needs to be liquidated, but on God's anger or wrath. Grebe points out that "In the English term propitiation, the focus is on the deity that is

⁶⁷ See Walter Bauer, *Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament: Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1952), 680-681. He translates ἱλαστήριον as: *das Versöhnende, das Sühnende* meaning: the reconciling, the atoning, while Thayer relates it to appeasing or expiating. See Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York/Cincinnati/Chicago: American Book Company: 1889), 301. These two translations have greatly influenced the discussion on the meaning of the term. See also Wolfgang Kraus, *Der Tod Jesus als Heiligtumsweihe: Eine Untersuchung zum Umfeld der Sühnevorstellung in Römer 3,25-26a* (Düsseldorf: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991), 33-79; Gerhard Kittel (Hg.), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Zweiter Band (Stuttgart: Verlag von W. Kohlhammer, 1935), 219-233.

⁶⁸ Haacker, *Römer*, 90-91; Barth, *Justification*, 55; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 123; Dunn, *WBC: Romans 1-8*, 170-172.

⁶⁹ Cf. Morris, "Meaning of ἱλαστήριον, 34-43; Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 144-213; and Haacker, *Römer*, 90-91..

⁷⁰ The equivalent Hebrew word for the Greek term ἱλαστήριον is *kapporet* (mercy seat) referring to the cover of the ark in the tabernacle. The same also applies to its presence in Hebrews 9,5. For more discussion and bibliography, see Leon Morris, "The Meaning of ἱλαστήριον in Romans iii.25" in *New Testament Studies* 2 (1955-56), 34-43; See also Aulen, *Christus Victor*, 49-50; See also Wolfgang Huber, *Gerechtigkeit und Recht: Grundlinien christlicher Rechtsethik* (dritte, überarbeitete Auflage) (München: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2006), 190-199; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 122-123.

⁷¹ See Thayer, *GELNT*, 301.

in need of being propitiated and not on humanity.”⁷² Finlan notes that the term *kipper* and the Greek terms *hilaskomai* or *exilaskomai* also signify the idea of appeasement and soothing someone’s anger.⁷³ For instance, if sins are forgiven, this means that the wrath of God is removed from falling upon the sinners. Morris argues that sinners are under the wrath, and unless the wrath is removed, the sinners are still under it.⁷⁴ Therefore, a sacrifice is needed to satisfy God’s anger and this was achieved when God put forward Jesus as the propitiation for the justification of the sinners. This takes nothing less than the blood of Christ, and his blood defines what propitiatory sacrifice contains and means. However, Rom 3,21-31 suggests that God acts “out of his grace” and the Narrative Schema depicts ἱλαστήριον as a term which describes how the lack to be overcome in humanity was achieved through a particular performance of God.

Consequently, ἱλαστήριον is most likely to be interpreted as the ‘sacrifice of reconciliation’ or ‘sacrifice of atonement’ (NRSV and the NIV).⁷⁵ Furthermore, sacrifice of atonement seems to be more appropriate, because ἱλαστήριον is followed by αἷμα (blood) referring to the sacrificial blood of Jesus. The term αἷμα corresponds to the application of blood on the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16). It may be argued that Paul used the term ἱλαστήριον in conjunction with blood to signify the importance of Christ’s sacrifice as an atonement for the sinners so that the ‘lack of δικαιοσύνη’ (v. 23b) is overcome. This means that Paul was thinking of Christ’s death on the cross, as Dunn argues, “properly in terms of sin offerings on the Day of Atonement ritual.”⁷⁶ Thus, the performance of God in putting forth Christ as a sacrifice of atonement is not only to justify the sinners, but also to provide a

⁷² Grebe, *Election, Atonement and the Holy Spirit*, 175.

⁷³ Finlan, *Problems with Atonement*, 5.

⁷⁴ Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 180-181.

⁷⁵ See Bauer, *WNT*, 680-681, Barth, *Justification*, 50, Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 234.

⁷⁶ Dunn, *WBC: Romans 1-8*, 172.

proof of his justice. God is just and justifies both Jews and gentiles – which is to be accepted through faith in Christ.

Finally, whatever translation and meaning we apply to the term ἱλαστήριον, it is a soteriological term with sacrificial metaphorical overtones.⁷⁷ God's performance in offering up Christ is to restore δικαιοσύνη to humanity and reconcile them to one another and to himself. For Paul, Jesus' death (and resurrection) signifies God's justice, grace, and mercy for both Jews and gentiles. Thus, in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, God demonstrated his justice and restored it to both Jews and gentiles through faith in Christ.

6.6.3.2 ἀπολύτρωσις (*Togiola*⁷⁸ / Redemption)

The word ἀπολύτρωσις is a term that has been argued and referred to as a market-place concept.⁷⁹ Moreover, the term redemption highlights the sociological and economic contexts in which Paul communicates the performance of the active subject to his readers. According to Walter Bauer, ἀπολύτρωσις is associated with the freeing of slaves and the rescuing of the

⁷⁷ The sacrifice of atonement in Rom 3,25 involves four major elements. First, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus satisfies God's justice. God's glory and justice have been restored due to sin and penal requirements. Second, the laying down of Christ life for death pacifies God's anger and his wrath was removed from upon the sinners. Third, Christ atoning sacrifice satisfies God and expiates the guilt of the sinners. Fourth, God accepts Jesus substitution for the punishment of the sinners. Consequently, Paul was eager to combine these models and ideas to describe the death of Christ.

⁷⁸ The Samoan term *togiola* is comprise of two words: *togi* (to pay) and *ola* (life). It originated from times of war where daughters of paramount chiefs were offered as a form of payment to the strongest or winning war party not only to save the lives of the rest of community, but also to free them from being slaves. Thus, it means a payment using the life of someone precious to the whole community or region. It is not just any person, but the princess, daughter of the paramount chief. Some may also refer to the end of cannibalism in Samoa, when Malietoa's son offered himself to be eaten up by his father. He was wrapped up in leaves of the coconut tree and once Malietoa realised that it was his son, and all the Samoans were free from cannibalism.

⁷⁹ James D. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 169; *NIV Archaeological Study Bible: An illustrated walk through Biblical History and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1839; James D. Dunn, *The Theology of the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 227.

prisoners of war.⁸⁰ Furthermore, he points out that the word ἀπολύτρωσις comes from the word-group λυτ-, which refers back to the freeing of Israel from Egypt (Deut 6,6; Ps 111,9) and the Babylonian captivity (Isa 51,11; 52,3-9).⁸¹ This interpretation is supported by Haacker, who notes that Paul was aware of the social institution of emancipation in his time and properly well informed with the historical accounts of freeing slaves in Exodus 21,8 and Daniel 4,34 in the Septuagint.⁸²

Based on Bauer's interpretation, redemption means that there is a price to be paid and a ransom to be secured so that the slaves and the prisoners can be freed. While the nature of redemption carries a meaning of paying a ransom to someone to release a person being held, that idea is not made explicit in Romans 3,24-26. In Romans 3,21-31, for instance, no price was paid to Satan or to any other recipient of any payment. Finlan argues that "Redemption does not mean God actually paid anyone off, or paid Godself off; it just means God rescued people."⁸³ It could be suggested that Paul's use of the term ἀπολύτρωσις (redemption) does not necessarily mean God paid a price to someone, but the performance of God in liquidating the lack of δικαιοσύνη for mankind has a price - the life of Jesus. Therefore, the point here is that both Jews and gentiles are free from being slaves under the power of sin,⁸⁴ because the δικαιοσύνη which has been lacking is restored, and they are free. On the other hand, if a payment is made as required by the economic nature of redemption, then it would contradict the notion of a 'gift of God's grace' as Paul emphasizes in Romans 3, 24. Thus, Christ, whom God put forth, through his death on the cross (and resurrection) has achieved freedom, with the effect

⁸⁰ Bauer, *WNT*, 174; Thayer, *GELNT*, 384; See also, Haacker, *Römer*, 90; Dunn, *WBC: Romans 1-8*, 180.

⁸¹ Bauer, *WNT*, 174.

⁸² Haacker, *Römer*, 90. See also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 122.

⁸³ Finlan, *Problems with Atonement*, 107.

⁸⁴ Cf. Thiessen, *Gottes Gerechtigkeit*, 183.

that anyone is redeemed, and be freed from being a slave of sin through faith in Christ, and that is δικαιοσύνη being restored.

6.6.4 Sanction

The success of the main performance by God leading to the liquidation of the lack is recognised by Paul. He highlights the beneficial results of God's activity in Christ through his death (and resurrection) for the faithful believers. First, Paul assures his readers that justification in Christ is through faith, and then he confirms that both Jews and gentiles share equally the justice of God. It could be argued that Paul introduces the idea of one God, and one people to support his argument about the outcome of what Christ has done. The word δικαιούμενοι (justified, eg. vv. 24/28) sums up the positive outcome of the performance of the active subject. The questions are: What does it mean to be justified and be saved in Christ? What does it mean to participate in God's justice? Haacker summaries the answers to these questions by maintaining that being justified involves not only a divine – human relationship, but the triangular on-going relationship between God, Jews and gentiles.⁸⁵ This is the character of the new community that Paul introduces in verses 27-30, founded on faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

6.6.4.1 Faith excludes boasting

The success of Christ's performance results in faith excluding boasting (v. 27). The boasting of which Paul speaks about here refers back to the boasting in 2,17.23. He means a Jewish pride in status and superiority over against gentiles (2,17-20). For Paul, faith eliminates boasting as it looks upon what God has done through Christ.⁸⁶ Therefore, a person is justified by faith in

⁸⁵ Haacker, *Römer*, 86.

⁸⁶ See Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul* (2005), 9-10; see also Daniel J-S Chae, *Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles: His Apostolic Self-Awareness and its influence on the Soteriological Arrangement in Romans* (Cumbria: Paternoster Publishing, 1997), 155; 164-

Christ and not the works of the law. Thus, faith excludes boasting, for it ruins the value of equality in the new community of faith comprised of both Jews and gentiles.

6.6.4.2 Faith as proper reaction to, and as actualization of justification for both Jews and gentiles

For Paul, faith is the proper reaction to justification and the means by which both Jews and gentiles can equally actualize justification in Jesus Christ, an idea he already introduced in 1,17, where “the justice of God has been revealed from faith to faith.” Such faith connects people to one another and to God through what he has done by offering Christ.

In fact, faith was something very much bound up with the Jewish idea of covenant, and was the totality of the responses to a faithful, loving God who chose Israel to be his people.⁸⁷ Accordingly, faith defined Israel’s exclusive relationship with God. This faith entails Israel to behave in a certain way in order to fulfill the obligations of the covenant and it informs their collective identity as the chosen people of God. Israel’s faithfulness to God means keeping the law and its requirement. Keeping the law was a way of expressing faithfulness to God. As Sanders argues, law-keeping did not imply gaining a favor from God, but it was simply to express Israel’s faithful response to the one true God.⁸⁸ For Paul, faith is the proper reaction to, and the actualization of divine justification. It is the channel by which justice is received and appropriated. Therefore, the action required by both Jews and gentiles to receive this gift of God is to believe and have faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, faith is the divinely appointed means of justification for any one as well as the instrument for building up faithful communities.

180; James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul, and the Law: Studies in Mark and Galatians* (Louisville/Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 207.

⁸⁷ Gary W. Burnett, *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2001), 153.

⁸⁸ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 121-123.

Hendrikus Boers notes that the success of the ‘Performance’ or the Christ-event liberates the Jews from their privilege and subjection to the law.⁸⁹ Participation in the justice of God is now available for all who believe in Christ’s atoning blood. Furthermore, he highlights that the freedom of the Jews from the law makes justification for the gentiles possible. Or in other words “the justification of the gentiles leads to the negation of religious privilege.”⁹⁰ For Boers, the point that must be emphasized is that “Paul’s purpose is not to oppose the works of the law and faith, but to show that it is only through faith that the Jews and gentiles can find salvation.”⁹¹ This means that faith makes salvation available to all who believe in Christ, Jews or gentiles, regardless of circumcision and the prescripts of the law, which limit salvation to Jews only. This is not a new revelation according to Paul, since it has already been witnessed to by the law and the prophets (v. 21b).

6.6.4.3 Redefining Relationship: One God, one Mankind

In verses 29-30, Paul evokes another successful outcome of the Christ-event by asking the questions: “Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of gentiles also? Yes, of gentiles also” (3,29 NRSV). God is one and he justifies all people (circumcised or uncircumcised) equally through faith, regardless of ethnic background and nationality. Haacker and Dunn argue that Paul rejects here any claim of Jewish privilege of taking the law as an identity and boundary marker to circumscribe the people of God.⁹² For Paul, God deals with both groups (Jews and gentiles) on precisely the same principles. He pursues the same proposed program for them and offers justification to both on exactly the same terms.

Within ancient Israel, before the influence of the Hellenistic cultures and thinking, it was the uncontested rule that Jews considered themselves as having

⁸⁹ Hendrikus Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles: Paul’s Letters to the Galatians and Romans* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson publisher. Inc., 1995), 212-213.

⁹⁰ Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles*, 221.

⁹¹ Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles*, 91.

⁹² Haacker, *Römer*, 94; Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, 211.

an exclusive privilege to God based on their covenant relationship with him.⁹³ Moreover, the Jews called God as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which virtually excluded the gentiles to participate in a fellowship with him. However, Paul declares that this is not the case in the new era: This same God is also the God of the gentiles, i.e. there is one God and one mankind as has been achieved by God in Christ, a universal sacrifice of atonement. Haacker notes that this new form of relation does not only involve relations between god and humanity in general, but the triangle relationship between God, the Jews and gentiles.⁹⁴ He contends that before one God, there can be only one humanity; if God is facing all, then all belong together.⁹⁵ The uniqueness of God translates into a universal value of God's impartial justice.

6.6.4.4 Faith upholds the Law

Paul in verse 31 challenges any objection that the law is nullified because of faith, but instead, he argues that faith develops and maintains the law. Paul does not clarify how this would happen and he appears to take up this issue again in chapter 6. However, what is outstanding in verse 31 is that he denies any ethical essence of the Mosaic law from being disqualified or voided. For Paul, justification by faith does support what the law has already established. For instance, the law revealed sin (3,20) and the inability of human justification before God (3,10ff.). In addition, Paul's fundamental purpose is not to oppose the works of the law and faith, but as Boers states, "to show that it is only through faith that both Jews and gentiles can find salvation."⁹⁶ Moreover, the law continues to reveal sins and the need for God's forgiveness.

⁹³ Haacker, *Römer*, 95.

⁹⁴ Haacker, *Römer*, 86.

⁹⁵ Haacker, *Römer*, 86.

⁹⁶ Boers, *The Justification of the Gentiles*, 91.

6.6.4.5 God's Justice is Universal

There is no question that Paul's understanding about God's justice concerns the whole of humanity. This is revealed in verse 29-30 stating that there is only one God, for both the Jews and the gentiles. Haacker suggests that this is a universal phenomenon irrespective of ethnic background and it relies on the basis of faith on the uniqueness of God.⁹⁷ The idea of universalism is also present in 1,16-17, where Paul states the possibility of salvation for the Jews as well as the gentiles through the power of God.⁹⁸ Paul's narrative subjects both Jews and gentiles to the same performance of God.

The inability to be obedient to God is shared universally by humanity and therefore, the same applies to salvation and the work of Christ. The fact that no single person has ever or will ever be able to live up to God's standard and be accepted by God in his/her own merit necessitated a universal act of God. In verses 29-30a, Paul reminds the readers again of the correspondence of the one God and the one faith. This denies any person of any claim to ethnic advantages over another. The God who has chosen the Jews as his covenant people is the same God who offers this justice also to the gentiles. By so doing, according to Paul's narrative, there is one God, one family, one people, and one faith in Jesus Christ as preconditions for the attainment of universal peace and the application of justice in concrete situations.

6.6.5 Summary of Paul's narrative in Rom 3,21-31

In conclusion, one could observe that the 'Performance' and 'Sanction,' appear to be the main emphasis of Paul's narrative in Rom 3,21-31. He presents his argument in such a way that the implied readers might understand the function of Christ's death and its salvific significance for both Jews and the gentiles. The analysis of Rom 3,21-31 according to the Narrative Schema

⁹⁷ Haacker, *Römer*, 94-95.

⁹⁸ Burnett, *Paul and the Salvation of the Individual*, 148.

demonstrates that God, the BNP, without being invoked, activates himself intransitively, and engages in a narrative program. In this sense, the BNP is the AS of the main performance which leads to the liquidation of the lack of δικαιοσύνη (LL). The sanctioning of the performance of the BNP leads to the bringing together of both Jews and gentiles into a community of faith, which correspond to the main emphasis of the narrative, as has been observed by the proponents of the NPP.

6.7 Commonalities and differences of the narratives in Rom 3,21-31 to the *ifoga* ritual

6.7.1 Commonalities

Both Romans 3,21-31 and the *ifoga* share the motif of offering. Paul in Romans states that God offered Christ in order for the lack of justice to be liquidated on behalf of humanity. God, even though he has been sinned against, offers freely an invaluable gift to the perpetrators (sinners, v.23), effecting salvation. The victims in the *ifoga* process also offer gifts to the perpetrator's party as symbolic elements to seal the restoration of peace among the parties. However, the quality of the gifts offered are different. What God has offered for Jews and gentiles is invaluable and it is once and forever.

Moreover, the notion of reconciliation is at the heart of both, the depiction of the Christ-event in Rom 3,21-31 and the Samoan ritual. Although the terminology of justification occupies Paul's teachings in Rom 3,21-31, it evokes the idea of reconciliation. This is clearly expressed in the recommended reaction to the performance of the active subject (God), i.e. the new relationship of the Jews, the gentiles and God. The acceptance of Jews and gentiles, and their unity in the community of faith in Christ can be seen as a sign of being liberated: they are liberated from being slaves of sin to the freedom of faith in Christ, from separation to intergration. Performing the *ifoga* ritual is also for the purpose of reconciliation. The performance of the

perpetrators family restores the victims' rights and interests by acknowledging the wrong action, showing remorse and guilt. Such restoration leads to reconciliation as Ludger Weckel notes that there is no reconciliation without the restoration of the victim's rights and interest.⁹⁹ However, reconciliation in Romans is in a universal scale, while the *ifoga* deals with it in the local level.

In addition, the justification of Jews and gentiles by God through faith in Jesus Christ links also to the biblical and theological ideas of forgiveness, acceptance, and sanctification. The performance of God on proving his justice means that he forgives the sinners and accepts them as full members of his family. Forgiveness and acceptance are also significant functions in the process of the *ifoga*. They are implied in the main performance of the ritual, when the victim's family high chief receives and accepts the perpetrator's family.¹⁰⁰ This also relates to Käsemann's suggestion about justification that it carries with it social implications, responsibilities, and communal holiness.¹⁰¹ These social responsibilities towards other members of the community derive from their shared common faith in Christ. The functions of forgiveness and acceptance in the *ifoga* ritual can be strengthened in light of Paul's understanding of justification.

6.7.2 Differences

The performance of the BNP (God) and his divine intervention in Rom 3,21-31 as Haacker notes, is an event with universal significance.¹⁰² God reveals his justice through Jesus Christ for the sake of Jews and gentiles and therefore it is applied to the whole of humanity. The performance of the

⁹⁹ Ludger Weckel, "Meschenrechtsverbrechen und Versöhnung. Zum Gebrauch des Versöhnungsbegriffs in Kirche und Theologie," *Zeitschrift für Mission und Religion (ZMR)*, 79/4 (1995): 305-312.

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 3 where the process of the *ifoga* ritual is described.

¹⁰¹ Käsemann, "The Righteousness of God," 173.

¹⁰² Haacker, *Römer*, 94.

Samoan high chief in the *ifoga* ritual on the other hand deals with concrete issues on the community level.

Furthermore, in the process of *ifoga*, the high chief of the perpetrator's family asks for forgiveness and reconciliation to the victim's family. This is evident in his bowing down covered with a fine mat, which symbolically means that he/she is seeking peace and forgiveness. In this sense, it is directed to the victims to change their hearts and accept them. Romans 3, 21-31 on the other hand demonstrates the opposite. The sinners (Jews and gentiles) did not ask for justification. God gives it for free out of his grace - δωρεάν τῆ αὐτοῦ χάριτι. He justifies both Jews and gentiles out of his grace and mercy. He goes to them and offers them justification through faith in Jesus Christ.

Finally, it could be argued that reconciliation (Rom 3,21-31) finds its strongest analogy in everyday life of the reconciled faithful community in the advise to love the enemies (Rom 12,14-21).¹⁰³ This aspect is relevant for Samoans and their commitment to the *ifoga* ritual for the sake of the community. Thus, the *ifoga* ritual in its traditional use as strategy of bringing things back to order is an emulation on the community scale of what is central to Paul in his representation and interpretation of the Christ-event in Rom 3,21-31.

6.8 Theological analysis

The Christ-event is at the heart of Christian theology and the core content of the Gospel, whereby all doctrines are ramified. The Christ-event is complex as different schools and councils have developed their own Christology in different times and locations. It is not the aim of the author to investigate those schools of Christology here. The major concern here is to

¹⁰³ Cf. Luke 22,50-51. When the right ear of one of the high priests slave was cut off, Jesus intervened immediately and placed his ear back to its place. Jesus was not asked by the slave to help him, but he acted out of mercy to heal the Roman slave. Indeed, what Jesus did also forshadows the love of enemies.

contextualise the Christ-event or gospel message in view of to the Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga*. The study of the Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga* entails the rethinking of the function and significant role of Jesus Christ for the Samoan Christian communities who still value and practise their traditional rituals. Some observations should be made here on the analogy of Jesus Christ as a figure in the *ifoga* ritual.

6.8.1 Jesus Christ: The Ritual Figure

In the quest for a model of contextualizing the Christ-event in Samoa, I will draw on two figures of the Samoan traditional culture that show analogies to functions attributed to the Christ-event in New Testament writings.

6.8.1.1 Jesus Christ: *Alii* (high chief)

The term *Alii* (sometimes called *tamalii*) as being discussed in chapter 2 refers to the high chiefs who hold the paramount chiefly titles in the Samoan community.¹⁰⁴ They are chosen by their extended families through a consensus agreement based on the spirit of the ancestors, family genealogy, and especially his/her service while he/she was a *taulealea* (untitled man) or *tamaitai* (untitled woman). The high chiefs are considered as gods, leaders, decision makers, and visionaries on whom families, villages, and districts rely for guidance and protection. This echoes constellations in other traditional societies like among in West Africa, as Ekem notes: “The overall head of an *oman* (state) is the *omanhen* (paramount chief) to whom regular allegiance is paid by other chiefs (*ahemfo*) within the state.”¹⁰⁵ Traditionally, recipients of the chiefly titles are those who shed their blood in protecting his/her people and defending the community land and resources. This means that the chiefs were *tautua* (servants). In the Samoan worldview, the *Aliis* are honoured as

¹⁰⁴ See Chapter 2 above.

¹⁰⁵ Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 23.

father figures in their respective families and villages. And one of the most fundamental responsibilities of the high chief is spelled out in the Samoan proverb: *Ole sala o le mea a le tamalii* meaning, atonement is the responsibility of the high chief. This proverb is clearly demonstrated in the Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga* as discussed above (chapter 3). It is this role of the Samoan high chief that corresponds to what was achieved through Christ on behalf of for the whole human race.

From a Samoan perspective, Jesus Christ is the *Alii* (high chief) *par excellence* through his divinity and humanity. Jesus as the high chief for the Samoan community means he is both God and man. He is qualified to be called the *Alii* (High Chief) by his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension. By his incarnation and by identifying himself with human beings, we share a common Father-God. Jesus *kenotic* nature of taking upon himself our sinful nature can be regarded as inauguration of his Chieftainship or *Tamalihood*, for atonement is the sole responsibility of the high chief. In the eyes of the Samoans, this is called *Aga-Faatamalii*, meaning the spirituality or the nature of the High Chief. It is his being and function as a High Chief who does things out of love and care for his extended family. Thus, the concept of incarnation makes sense for the Samoans, as God in Christ has taken the form of a human being in order to become the *Alii* for humanity, even creating a new extended family under his tutelage.

The *Alii* (high chief) is supposed to achieve the trust and the confidence of his *aiga-potopoto* (extended family) for his leadership, wisdom, guidance and protection. He would be the person to whom family members resort in times of crisis and need, and he would also be a peace-maker within the community. Peace is the sign of having good mutual relations with God, with one another and with the environment. He promotes peace and security for members of the community. Jesus meets these requirements of chieftainship as he is depicted in the Gospel of John as the good Shepherd (John 10, 11-18), a

Way to the father (John 14,6), and a peace-giver (John 16,33). These are some of the requirements for *tamalihood* which Jesus perfectly met and went beyond, during his life time. To sum up, the incarnation and the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ were the process whereby Jesus became the high chief for the new community he would create – the church. All virtues and more of the high chief in the Samoan *Tapuaiga* or worship, are fully embedded in Jesus Christ and therefore he is regarded as the *Alii*.

The process of Christ's *tamalihood* is most clearly seen in the Cross and the post Cross events. Jürgen Moltmann in his work, *The Crucified God*, has inseparably related Jesus' earthly ministry to the Cross.¹⁰⁶ For Moltmann, the cross is the culmination of the earthly ministry whereby God himself was involved in suffering for the sake of justice. From this perspective, the death of Jesus on the Cross has a socio-political dimension. This is evident and integrated in the *tamalihood* of Jesus Christ. It is by the cross and resurrection that Jesus created a new family and thus became the true *tamalii* (high chief) for the new family which will be under a new order of life. In other words, the cross became an instrument and even a catalyst for the promotion of Jesus Christ to be the true heir of the family title for the new family. The gospels confirmed Jesus' divine elevation already during his baptism: And a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" Mt 3,17; Mk 1,11; Lk 3,21 NRSV). Thus Jesus Christ has become a new *tamalii*, high chief of all members of the new *aiga*, extended family. The Cross has a specific, significant role for it made consanguineous ties between Jesus and the members of the new family, just as the *tamalii* and his family in the *tapuaiga* worship were also consanguineous. This consanguineous tie between Jesus and members of his new family is always renewed in participation in the Holy Communion.

¹⁰⁶ See Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (London: SCM Press, 1976), 112ff.

The Ascension of Jesus Christ was - in theological perspective - the fulfilment and the glorification of his earthly ministry. By this act, he entered Chieftainship or *tamalihood* which was not confined to only one particular family but extended to the whole cosmos. He was promoted as the cosmic and universal high chief, *tamalii*. By His ascension, Jesus surpassed all the human chiefs, *tamalii*, and thus became the *proto-taamalii* (*proto-high chief*), the unique high chief, and the source of life and Lord of all other families. This belief has a vital significance for the lives of the Samoans, for it is believed that he subdued all the diabolical powers, which threaten their daily lives. The lordship of Jesus Christ after he attained *tamalihood* was also extended to the deceased who live in the abode of the dead (1 Peter 3, 18-19). He became the lord over the universe and all creatures, visible and invisible. As a *proto-tamalii* (*high chief*), Christ has the prerogative to give the desired blessings to the new family, such as health and prosperity and also spiritual security. The new family members expect care and protection from Jesus and turn to him to procure favourable results, as the family members did to the old *tamalii*, high chief. At his death, Jesus Christ is not conceived as having vanished, but there is a constant relationship between Him and the new family members who remember him and feel his presence within them. This presence, however, can only be understood in a pneumatological approach, as the Holy Spirit is the one who relates the *tamalii* and the family members (1Cor 12,3). As the traditional high chiefs lead, take care, and watch over the lives of their descendants and continuously strengthen them, Jesus Christ as the proto high chief, *tamalii*, continuously nourishes and vitalizes the lives of the new family member, by his pneumatic presence. Thus, the theology of high chiefs can be seen not only as a starting point for Christology, but also a point of departure for a new ecclesiology.

6.8.1.2 Significance of Christ as a *Tuaa* (Ancestor) for the Samoans

The term *Tuaa* or ancestor in the Samoan worldview refers to dead ones who have contributed a lot and impacted the life of the community. Although they are dead, they are still remembered, honoured, and the people feel their spirits' presence in the family and the community. However not every dead is classified under this category of *Tuaa* as Ekem notes also of the Akan *nananom nsamanfo* (ancestors): "...not all dead people are accorded the same honour and significance in society."¹⁰⁷ According to Ekem, the dead ones are termed ancestors based on their impact in the society during their life time. The attempt to portray Jesus Christ as a *Tuaa* (ancestor) has some significance for the Christians in Samoa. Three aspects should be mentioned here:

First, the portrayal of Jesus Christ as an ancestor has a *soteriological* significance. To place the Christ-event within the scope of understanding and experience that is in the "ancestor-family relationship," it offers the people an authentic "experience" that Jesus saves them from the terrors and fears they experienced in their traditional conceptualization of the world. Unless this is done, *soteriology* will be superficial and pseudonymous. Presenting Christ as the *Tuaa* (ancestor) shows that he is still part of the human family and does not live in a far distant heaven unrelated to the family members. He protects, guards, and guides the family members. It is from this proto-ancestor, *Tuaa* Christ, that the new family, the whole tribe of God has taken their name – Christians. Thus, the family members can have an inward soteriological experience.

Secondly, the contextualization of the Christ-event has a dialogical significance for the people to whom ancestor-family relationship forms the basic socio-religious structure. How could the family members relate to Jesus Christ genuinely if they could not accept him as proto-ancestor of their family? The same issue was faced by African theologians, as Kwame Bediako

¹⁰⁷ Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 32.

expressed, “Why should an Akim relate to Jesus of Nazareth who does not belong to the clan, family, tribe, and nation?”¹⁰⁸ When some Samoans convert to Christianity, they began to eat some of the fish which they held fast as the incarnation of their family gods. This means that they changed their ancestor from that of the ancestral *Tuaa* to the proto-ancestor, Jesus Christ. Changing the *Tuaa* (ancestor) has a great advantage for it removes the strangeness of Christianity which otherwise might remain an alien religion. This is evident in the mass conversion of the Samoans to Christianity. People could readily accept and understand the change of the traditional ancestor figure to proto-ancestor, as this was within the realm of their everyday experience. The usage implies that a reconstruction of Christology could be achieved to inculturate the gospel, and Christ could be conceived as the *Tuaa*, proto-ancestor.

Thirdly, the portrayal of Jesus Christ as a *Tuaa* (ancestor) has an ethical significance for the church. The ancestors were the people who during their life time achieved credibility among all the family members by their exemplary conduct, selfless concern, and leadership in a particular family. They were not forgotten after they died, but remembered and venerated or even worshipped by the family members for generations. Besides, the ancestors were regarded as the custodians of morality of the family or the village, and they could become infuriated when the family members violated a taboo. The people had to placate the ancestors if they offended them, or otherwise they would bear punishment by the ancestors. To sum up, the deceased ancestors were generally regarded as archetypes of conduct to whom the family members needed to look up to. As a proto-ancestor, *Tuaa*, Jesus Christ accentuated his guardianship of morality to demanding a deeper and a more serious response from the new family members. The need to pay the

¹⁰⁸ Kwame Bediako, “Biblical Christologies in the Context of African Religions,” in Vinay Samuel and Chris Sudgen (eds.), *Sharing Jesus Christ in the Two Third Worlds* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Company, 1984), 81-113. See also Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology: Inculturation and Liberation* (Marknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 85.

price for becoming the disciples of Jesus Christ as reflected in Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, where he mentioned the price for the costly grace one has to pay.¹⁰⁹ Paul in Rom 3,21-31, in a Samoan re-reading for instance, highlights how new family members follow the proto-ancestor and live a worthy life. What Charles Nyamiti said in his book, *Christ as our Ancestor*, may be applicable in Samoa due to a similar context:

In Africa an ancestor is generally considered as an archetype of behaviour. On account of His theandric constitution, Christ is – as said before – the Model of both nature and conduct. It follows from that life of His descendants has to be in the strict sense of terms.¹¹⁰

Having Jesus Christ as a *Tuaa* (ancestor) implies imitating him and therefore demands a life which is profoundly religious. Jesus Christ is the one who first arrived at the terminus of the journey to give us hope and certainty that followers are destined to be what he has become. The imitation of Christ, therefore, demands that new family members can follow Christ in the rituals, spiritual order, and micro-ethics. In addition, they can also follow him in the religio-political order to reflect the Kingdom of God, for Jesus was put to death as he challenged the status quo of the religio-political and socio-economic order. Jon Sobrino notes Jesus did not advocate a depoliticized, dehistoricized, destructed love; rather He advocated a political love, a love situated in a given context and having visible repercussions for human beings.¹¹¹

Accordingly, when we place the Christ-event in the context of the Samoan proverb (*o le sala o le mea a le tamalii* – atonement is the responsibility of the high chief), it could be argued that it is the responsibility of YHWH to make atonement for his family, the whole creation. Whatever

¹⁰⁹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: SCM Press, 1959), 35-41. The book is Bonhoeffer's exposition on the Sermon on the Mount. He attempted to answer the question whether the Sermon on the Mount can be a guide for Christian living. See, pp. 77ff and 97-103.

¹¹⁰ Charles Nyamiti, *Christ as our Ancestor: Christology from an African Perspective* (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984), 88.

¹¹¹ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America* (New York: Maryknoll, 1987), 297.

happens in the global family, people approach YHWH to take action, and the same applies to the Samoan culture in relation to the high chief's roles in the families.

6.8.1.3 Jesus Christ: A *Tulafale* (Priesthood)

The second analogy to portray Jesus Christ with reference to traditional ritual figures is the family high priest, *tulafale*, as discussed in chapter 2. The concept of priesthood in the Samoan indigenous religion is basically connected to the worship of the deities similar to the role of the *abosom* (priesthood) discussed by Ekem in the Akan traditional community in Ghana.¹¹² Like the Akan tradition, the *tulafale* can be a male or a female. There is another group which is called *Taulasea* who also have the ability to approach the spirit world, but they will not be classified in the same way as the *tulafale*. The majority of the people belonging to the *Taulasea* priesthood are women and they are able to communicate with the spirits on behalf of the people seeking help. People do not become priests or priestesses on their own choice in Samoa, but it is a decision of the deities, ancestors and family members, which is quite similar to the Akan tradition.¹¹³

Every Samoan family has its own *tulafale* (priest), who is responsible for the spiritual welfare of family members and who stands as a mediator between the family and the high chief.¹¹⁴ Among the various practitioners in the *Tapuaiga* or family worship, *tulafale* is the highest order as he/she has the blessing of the high chief to represent the family. He is the person to whom the high chief and family members also resort for advice in times of crisis. The relationship between the *tulafale* (priest) and the family members is more personal than professional, as they belong to the same family.

¹¹² Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 37

¹¹³ Ekem, *Priesthood in Context*, 41.

¹¹⁴ This should not be mixed up with the role of women as Priestess in the traditional Samoan community. In the absence of the *tulafale* (high priest) and the *alii* (high chief), the *feagaiga* (sister) can perform the *tapuaiga* or family worship.

In doing contextual Christology, the theological task is how to portray Jesus Christ in terms of the family priest *tulafale*. One striking feature of the High Priesthood of Jesus is that he became the High Priest and the sacrificial victim synchronously and thereby surpassed all other earthly priests and victims. John Macquarrie in his book, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* states:

The priestly sacrifice of Jesus was unique, as is also his continuing high priesthood. Despite the fact that in the New Testament ministers are never called ‘priests.’ Christians came to see the priestly role of Christ reflected in these ministers and used priestly terms in describing them. Because the Eucharist is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ, the action of the presiding minister in reciting the words of Christ at the last supper and distributing to the assembly the holy gifts is seen to stand in a sacramental relation to what Christ himself did in offering his own sacrifice.¹¹⁵

The Epistle to the Hebrews mentions the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ, after the order of the enigmatic non-Hebrew Melchizedek and describes the superiority of Jesus’ Priesthood over the order of Aaron (Heb 5, 1,4 5, 7). This superiority of Jesus’ priestly order has entailed a shift of Jesus’ priesthood from particularity to universality. In this function Jesus is portrayed as a pioneer who has opened up the way to God for all others (Heb 10, 19-22). The universal High priesthood of Jesus Christ has explicated what Jesus proclaimed according to the Johannine Gospel, “I am the Way” (John 14,6), for through his universal priesthood people can come to the Father. The challenge for the Christians in Samoa is to universalize the High priesthood of Jesus, the *tulafale*, from the traditional scope of one particular family only.

To present Jesus Christ as the universal *tulafale* (high priest) can affect the Samoan Christians in two ways, inwardly and outwardly. Inwardly, the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the *tulafale* can deepen the relationship between Jesus and the believer, for such a relationship was more personal than professional, as already noted. Owing to the consanguineous affinity between the traditional family priest *tulafale* and the family members, the relationship is more personal and profound, than a simple structural relationship. In the same

¹¹⁵ John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London/Philadelphia: SCM Press/Trinity Press International, 1990), 35.

way, the mystical consciousness of Jesus Christ as the *tulafale* is an inward security and comfort for the new family members, forming a profound foundation for religiosity and spirituality of the Christians. Jesus Christ can be conceived of as the Person with whom people can seek guidance and assistance in times of crisis in the same as the advice of the *tulafale*, the family high priest is resorted to in by family members.

6.9 Conclusion

The analysis of Romans 3,21-31 in relation to how Paul interpreted the Christ-event in terms of reconciliation demonstrates significant elements in which the Samoan reconciliation ritual *ifoga* can be strengthened. Utilizing Paul's presentation of the Christ-event illustrates the ways in which the *ifoga* ritual can be redefined from a particular Early Christian perspective, informed by a re-reading of Paul drawing on the insights of the NPP. The analysis illustrates commonalities and differences between Rom 3,21-31 and the *ifoga* ritual. The findings suggests that the *ifoga* ritual can bring to expression in the Samoan context the gospel message of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation among the Samoans. Moreover, the nature of *ifoga* in "bringing things back to order" can be understood as emulation on a community scale of what Paul communicates in Rom 3,21-31. In this respect, the *ifoga* as a ritual brings out these Christian principles rooted in the Pauline interpretation of the Christ-event for the Samoan communities. For Paul, the revelation of God's justice in Christ results in both Jews and gentiles having equal membership in the community of faith in Christ. In a wider theological perspective of a Samoan context, Jesus, as a "high chief" of the whole human race and the creation, was put forth by God to give justice back to humanity and to reconcile all members of his extended family to himself. All these aspects will help to actualize and transform the *ifoga* ritual as well as its function and meaning for the Samoan

community. The actualisation of the *ifoga* ritual will be the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

A COOPERATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IFOGA RITUAL IN SAMOA AND A CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE WIDER ECUMENICAL DEBATE ON RECONCILIATION

7.1 Introduction

The chapter is divided in two parts: The first part explores the possibilities of strengthening a cooperate action by the church, state and the village council to promote the values and the practise of the *ifoga* ritual. In addition, it demonstrates how the ritual can be transformed and suggests how the church can contribute to strengthen its religious aspect during the process of healing the wounds and repairing the souls of the people involved. This will help to explain the form and the significance of the ritual, as well as realising its full potential, its quest for reconciliation, its pursuit for peace, and its function to restore order in the community. The second part presents a contextual theological contribution from the *ifoga* perspective to the wider ecumenical debate on reconciliation. What could be the message of the *ifoga* ritual for other contexts? Before examining its social implementation and theological significance, I redefine the practice that underlies the atonement ritual *ifoga*.

PART ONE

7.2 Redefining the *ifoga* ritual

The Church plays a vital role in shaping Samoan communities and culture. The *anavatau* (motto) of Samoa, “Samoa is founded on God,” highlights that Christianity becomes an essential part of the Samoan way of life and culture. Samoa’s adherence to the Christian faith is based on a number of reasons. For instance, the notion of a creator God was also present in Tagaloa, the indigenous god of the Samoans. Furthermore, the Christian moral sanctions

outlined by the Ten Commandments were present in the notion of *Tapus* (taboos) that were supported by the *va-tapuia* (sacred relations). Moreover, the *ifoga* ritual that obligates the *matai* (high chief) to take responsibility for the actions of his family parallels Christ's death that atones for the sins of others. In addition, the *ifoga* ritual also connects to the notion of atonement, purification, and reconciliation in Leviticus 16. Therefore, it is necessary and meaningful to redefine the *ifoga* ritual from a Christian perspective. In fact, one of the church functions is to strengthen rituals that help to restore order and peace in the communities. This is essential for Samoa; not only its a Christian country, but also the church is very important for the Samoans. In redefining *ifoga*, the church can transform and strengthen the religious and the social aspect of the ritual by drawing on the Bible. It could be argued that the *ifoga* ritual is a contextual expression of what the Bible already means. Thus, the *ifoga* ritual brings to expression an essential aspect of what is meant in Leviticus 16 and by the Christ-event, in the Samoan context. Finally, redefining the *ifoga* ritual from a Christian perspective should be meaningful for the Samoans to counter new ideals of secularism and modernity.

7.2.1 Ifoga: A Ritual of Reconciliation

Ifoga as an reconciliation ritual is rooted in recognizing that the indigenous Samoan god Tagaloa shares the suffering of his people, and offers his daughter Amoa as a *togiola* (living sacrifice). This is related to the Christian notion of Incarnation, whereby God shares the human suffering and that Christ endures the measure of a painful human existence. In fact, without the involvement of Tagaloa and Amoa, there is no *ifoga* ritual. However, the *ifoga* ritual does not require any notion of the high chief as a sacrificial victim, as making any payment to a god, or as taking on human's death sentence. The notion of *ifoga* as an atonement and a reconciliation ritual could be discussed using the metaphors of propitiation, purification, and restoration.

The Samoan term *faamalieina ole toatamai* (propitiation) suggests reconciliation and making peace with someone who becomes a victim as a result of misbehaviour and crime. This is achieved through the scapegoat (perpetrator's high chief), who symbolically empties him/herself up by bowing down on the ground like an animal and covered with a fine mat. Such performance is the last and the lowest inhuman act a person can resort to in a difficult situation and it has a powerful message in the Samoan cultural context, especially it is done by the chiefs. Although this may be different from the "pleasing odor" that symbolised a sacrifice being accepted by YHWH as in the Hebrew Bible, it does have a persuasive effect on the victim's family during the *ifoga* ritual. While the aroma of a sacrifice pacifies God's anger as stated in Genesis 8,21, where Noah's sacrifices pleased God's wrath, the performance of the perpetrator's high chief lowering him/herself in the form of an animal appeases and placates the anger of the victim's party.

Moreover, in Samoa, the notion of pollution and impurity, caused by the violation of taboos, covenants, and relational boundaries, dominated the religious ritual *ifoga*. Mary Douglas notes that impurity stands for disorder, a kind of spiritual chaos in the community.¹ The belief is that the impurity that corrupted the *maota, laoa, ma malaefono* (sacred places) had to be cleansed, or the ancestors and divinities would curse the family and the whole community. In this regard, the *ifoga* ritual has a spiritual detergent which cleanses that stain and contamination from sacred places, so that their sacredness could be restored. This cleansing also releases the individual who caused the pollution, as well as his family and village members. Accordingly, the Samoa's indigenous religion does not differ from that of the Israel as evident in purpose of the You Kippur in Leviticus 16. For instance, impurity in Samoa is cleansed by the *ifoga* ritual through removing of the *ietoga* (fine mat) by the high chief

¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London/New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 9-11.

of the victim's family; while impurity in Israel is cleansed through the sacrificial cult and the expulsion rituals like the scapegoat rite.² This means that the *ifoga* is a means of obtaining a cleaning substance for purification. Along with the purifying function goes forgiveness, because the ritual is offered on behalf of the perpetrator's family and village, begging for forgiveness. The ritual was also the means by which forgiveness was attained. No *ifoga*, no forgiveness.

Consequently, Finlan argues that we cannot escape from the conception of atonement as a payment (Numbers 3,50) or ransom (Exodus 30,16).³ He argues that the Hebrew term *kipper* concerns a letal meaning of sacrifice as a payment.⁴ The *ifoga* ritual is not a method of compensation nor a ransom paid to the family of a murdered person for turning away potential retaliation.⁵ Its main function is propitiation and purification, both of the sacred places and the individual who caused pollution. One can argue that there is an element of compensation present in the ritual. For instance, we can consider the giving of the *ietoga* (fine mat) by the perpetrator's family in *ifoga* for the loss of life due to murder as compensation. However, the symbolic use of the fine mat is for the purification of the violated taboos and the land, not to compensate for the loss of life. Moreover, *ifoga* provides the platform from where we can understand violence from the victim's perspective. In fact, the victim's family plays a major role in the process and the protocols of the ritual. For example, the acceptance of the performance of the perpetrator's high chief under the fine-mat leading towards achieving peace and reconciliation depend on the victim's family.

In addition, the feast and the presentation of gifts at the end of the ritual (as discussed) are done by the victim's family. This is the reason why

² See chapter 5.

³ Finlan, *Problems with Atonement*, 17.

⁴ Finlan, *Problems with Atonement*, 13.

⁵ Gilson, *Samoa 1830-1900*, 48.

compensation is not the emphasis of the ritual as some have suggested. Some scholars as mentioned by the Macphersons have raised the issue of the ritual being expensive and costly for the perpetrator's party.⁶ This is the challenge when people take the ritual as a means of compensation, and thus undermine the religious aspect of the ritual. As Freeman claims, the *ifoga* ritual is usually made with fine-mats alone⁷, and this is because its a religious ritual. This means that money was not involved nor cartons of tin fish, but what was available at hand such as fine-mats were used. As discussed, in Samoa every high chief must have fine-mats under his bed as security for his family during cultural occasions such as *ifoga*, weddings and funerals. Providing money and boxes of tin-fish may be difficult among families especially those who live in Samoa and deal with such issues in the communities because of poverty. However, people have to be taught through seminars and workshops that the *ifoga* ritual is a religious process for purifying the land, restoring covenants, and negotiating relational boundaries, which relate to the restoration of the peace and harmony in the community.

Ifoga as an atonement and reconciliation ritual is a complex process comprised of various cultural rites and protocols coordinated by both parties involved to change the psychological feelings of negativity towards one another. The significance of the *ifoga* ritual depends first and foremost on the act of the Samoan creator Tagaloa, who then delegated the chiefs to take responsibility when violated taboos create tensions among the people. Second, the ritual motivates the high chief of the perpetrator's family to take responsibility of his family members' misbehaviour or unjust action. Third, the perpetrator's family takes the initiative to make an apology and ask for forgiveness from the victim's family. Fourth, the victim's family is expected to receive and accept the *ifoga* party, and they should forgive the perpetrators

⁶ See Macphersons, "The Ifoga," 109-133

⁷ Freeman, *Margret Meed and Samoa*, 189.

family when they confess their shameful action and practices. Finally, both parties involved seal their new friendship, declare the purification of both parties from pollution caused by the crime, and establish a peaceful relationship. The ritual is more than just bringing the parties involved to reconcile with one another, it is also about redeeming the past and shaping the future.

7.2.2 *Ifoga*: A process of Soul-Repair

The inclusion of the *ifoga* ritual in the liturgy of the Catholic Church in Samoa highlights another deep implication of the ritual as shown in chapter four. It demonstrates that the *ifoga* is not just about restoring order and peace in the community, or ending violence, but also repairing the souls of the people involved. This is explicitly recognized through the people (high chiefs) who take full responsibility for what happens in the community and its daily activities. When the taboos are broken, they take the initiative in making the decision to conduct the *ifoga* ritual. The performance of the perpetrator's high chief of kneeling down on the ground, covered with a fine-mat during the *ifoga* ritual corresponds to what Michael Lapsley argues: that "we are to recognise and acknowledge the terrible things we have done to one another, then we are not called to be crucifiers."⁸ The performance of the perpetrator's high chief under the fine-mat from a social aspect is acknowledging the wrong done and taking full responsibility for it. However, from a religious point of view, it is the confession of sin, not only to the victim but also to God. Such acknowledgement of wrong done and confession is deeply rooted in feelings of guilt and shame. This means, as discussed, the high chief (perpetrator's family) sacrifices his dignity and honour for the sake of making life whole again for

⁸ Michael Lapsley, "Redeeming the Past" (paper presented in the Academy of Mission at the University of Hamburg, November, 21 2015. See also Michael Lapsley, *Redeeming the Past: My journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books: 2012), 168.

the community. Kneeling down on the ground covered with a fine-mat means that his life is symbolically offered up out of love and compassion not only for the victim's family, but also his own community for the sake of peace and reconciliation.

Consequently, the performance of the chief under the fine-mat is more than acknowledging feelings of guilt, as Lapsley suggests.⁹ Another symbolic meaning is that he is the mediator between the family and the divinities, and like a god in his family, but in front of the victim's family, he is no longer worthy to be considered as a chief and even a human being, but only an animal. He is like a lamb ready to be slaughtered for a sacrifice. This is the point that is powerful in the eyes of the Samoans, people who value Christian principles and doctrines. As discussed in chapter 3, in the Samoan culture, the only things laying on the field covered with coconut leaves are animals (pigs and cows) presented as a token of respect for people of honour and guests. They are ready to be distributed, cooked, and eaten. Although the high chief in the *ifoga* will not be slaughtered, his total commitment is the essence of the ritual. Accordingly, that is the meaning and the message conveyed by the performance of the perpetrator's high chief under the fine-mat. This is definitely a very powerful, touching moment for the hearts and the souls not only of the victim's family, but also the perpetrator's family. The Samoans know that this is a shameful event and no Samoans would like their high chief to be seen in such a situation. However, the high chief's involvement in the ritual is the essence of the sacrifice, as Gese states: "any sacrifice of life is an incorporation into the holy."¹⁰ Consequently, this is the case with the *ifoga* ritual, because it has been informed by the moral force of forgiveness under the regime of reconciliation and therefore functions in a particular way to repair the souls of the people and families involved.

⁹ Lapsley, *Redeeming the Past*, 167-168.

¹⁰ Gese, *Essays on Biblical Theology*, 107.

The process of healing the souls of both parties involved is clearly expressed by protocol of the ritual. After acknowledging the wrong done or the confession of sin that took place in the field, it continues in the house with a traditional welcome ceremony (Ava Ceremony) once the victim's family accepts the performance of the perpetrator's family. This is followed by traditional speeches of apology presented by the perpetrator's party and the acknowledgement of their wrong committed. The victim's family who are definitely the receiving party declares forgiveness and affirms the reconciliation process. Achieved reconciliation is a symbolic expression of peace being restored and wounds being healed. This also means that the status of both parties has changed: the perpetrators – from enemies to honoured guests, and the victims – from victims to be hosts for the guests (i.e. the perpetrator's family). Upon completion of the Soul-repair process the two parties involved celebrate with a feast prepared by the host (victim's family) followed by the presentation and the exchange of gifts. The perpetrator's family depart the victim's family knowing that they are forgiven, no longer enemies, and move forward to the future with peace.

The sign and the significance of the *ifoga* ritual remains the same despite the changing social, political and economic contexts of the present time. The mutual relationship rooted in respect stabilizes the *ifoga* and this means that whenever taboos are broken, the ritual will be invoked to repair the brokenness, and it will be conducted. Where there is violence, the souls of the people and the families involved are ruptured, and in need of repair. *Ifoga* functions as a method of repairing the past in order for the future to look different, and better. In addition, one can look at *ifoga* as a method which brings together the broken parts of the community and make them whole again by repairing the broken souls in the community.

7.2.3 *Ifoga* as the re-enactment of Christ's suffering

The history and the development of the ritual is one of a constant reference to spiritual matters. First, through the idea of substitution. The high chief under the fine mat is called the *alii*, the same term used to translate YHWH and Lord in the Samoan Bible. The Samoan *alii* (high chief) is also seen as a god in the Samoan worldview and culture. He illustrates the same function as that of Jesus, who is not a sinner but yet, he takes the place of the sinful world. A similar role is played by the high chief during the *ifoga* on behalf of his family.

Second, the transition from the traditional *tapuaiga* (family worship or religion) to Christianity, changed the belief of the people in family gods and Tagaloa to faith in YHWH. For the Samoans, God is present during the *soalaupule* (deliberation, dialog, consultation), whether to conduct the ritual or not. The deliberation is the initiative from the high chief of the perpetrator's family, when taboos are violated and peaceful co-existence in the community is in chaos. Whenever the outcome is to perform the ritual, the Samoans always believed that God reveals his will to their high chiefs to conduct the *ifoga*. This is because the chiefs are priests and mediators between the ancestral gods and the families. As discussed in chapter six with reference to Romans 3,21-31, Paul clearly explained that the justice of God is revealed in Jesus Christ, taking the initiative for restoring the lost glory in humanity by declaring them righteous before God. In the context of the *ifoga* ritual, God plays a vital role in the whole process and its successful achievement of restoring peace and mutual relationship among the people.

Third, the commitment of the high chief during the *ifoga* brings to life the self-giving sacrifice of Jesus for the Samoans. *Ifoga* appears like the re-enactment of the suffering of Christ. Through the *ifoga* ritual, the Samoans understand the Christ-event as the *tofa-faaleatua* meaning the compassionate love of God for the fallen human race because of sin. What Jesus did is the

highest human selfless dedication to restore the mutual relationship between God and his family and between people themselves. Thus, the message of the Christ-event is brought to life whenever, the Samoans engage with the performance of the *ifoga* ritual and that is why it is considered powerful today in modern communities in Samoa and in Samoan communities abroad. Thus, the *ifoga* ritual has been Christianized since the arrival of Christianity in Samoa.

7.2.4 Ifoga as the Gospel of Peace (Pacifist Gospel)

The word peace in the Samoan language is translated as *filemu*. *Filemu* means living an enjoyable life and having good relations with self, others, divinities, and the cosmos. This is achieved through respect, tolerance, sharing, love, and reciprocity. When a person balances all these elements in life, then he/she is considered as having a peaceful way of life. However, there are times that this peace has been breached, diminished, and less valued when people lose control of their lives. It is for this reason that when the order of peaceful life is shaken and in chaos because of violence, then it has to be restored. People find ways to bring things back to order. And this is where the *ifoga* ritual comes into play to restore peace and allow people to enjoy a normal life. As discussed in the previous chapter, it is another way of preaching the gospel of peace. Its message is to make whole our brokenness and restore relationship through love, respect, and forgiveness.

The Samoans understand the term ‘pacific’ as referring to the ocean or the sea surrounding the islands as a peaceful liquid continent. While the pacific region has a common term ‘*moana*’ for the ocean, the Samoans have their own unique word ‘*vasa*’ meaning sacred space. Most of the Samoan philosophy and proverbs about peace and nonviolence originated from the nature of the sea or the sacred space. For instance, “*Ia toa le tai,*” meaning may your hearts be calm like the ocean, i.e. the sea is peaceful, no current or wind and it looks like oil. Once the sea reaches that stage like oil, the fishermen witness its beauty

and experience its cool and calm atmosphere. The Samoans use these pacifist proverbs and sayings in face to face encounter between the perpetrators and the victims during the *ifoga* ritual process. This is the chiefly language and it deemed very powerful and meaningful for the people because the sea and the land are part of their families and the communities. Thus, *ifoga* conveys the message from the perpetrators families to the victims saying, “We confess that we are sinners, we apologise for the crimes and we take full responsibility for the wrong we have done, please forgive us, we have come in peace.” As discussed in chapter 4, kneeling down on the ground under the fine-mat motivates the victims to change their hatred feelings towards the perpetrators.

7.2.5 Ifoga: A Non-Violent Response to Violence

The atonement ritual *ifoga* is Samoa’s traditional peaceful nonviolent response to violence such as murder, rape, body-harm, and discrimination. As discussed, the *ifoga* ritual plays a major role when violence damages or threatens peaceful coexistence. In his book, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, J. Denny Weaver proposes a new understanding of atonement rooted in what he calls “Narrative Christus Victor” model.¹¹ He argues that the “Narrative Christus Victor” is an atonement from a nonviolent perspective and suggests that the nonviolence of Jesus should be fundamental for the theology of atonement.¹² For Weaver, Jesus commits himself in his teachings and actions and challenges in a non-violent way the structures that oppress and dehumanize people. For example, the story of the woman who had been suffering from bleeding for twelve years (Mark 5,25-34). After spending all her money paying many doctors, her situation became worse. However, having heard of Jesus, she believed that she will be healed just by touching his clothes.

¹¹ J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), 72.

¹² Weaver, *Nonviolent Atonement*, 74.

At the end of the story, Jesus said to her, “My daughter, your faith has made you whole. Go in peace, and be healed of your trouble” (Mark 5, 34).¹³

Accordingly, the nonviolent approach of the *ifoga* ritual classifies its concern for peace based on the cultural mutual relationship among the people rooted in respect and love. *Ifoga* is Samoa’s gospel of peace that reflects the teachings of Jesus about nonviolence and the use of the sword (Matthew 26,52) according to the New Testament. The *ifoga* ritual conveys a message whenever it is performed such as: “I have come in peace and I pray for your forgiveness.” This is the message expressed by the ritual and therefore, what it delivers, qualifies it as a means of preaching the Gospel of Peace. *Filemu* (Peace) in Samoan means the mutual relationship is in order, and that contacts and communications function smoothly among the people. This also means that the cultural norms of law and order are respected, people are content, and daily activities are following well. The Samoans believe that where there is peace, there is life, and where there is life, there is God. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the high chiefs to bring back order for peace to reign, and that is why the *ifoga* ritual plays a vital role in the restoration of peace during violence and severe crimes in the community.

When we recall again the *ifoga* ritual, there are vital points we can draw on because they do demonstrate the message of peace in a powerful way beyond our imaginations. First the high chief of the perpetrator’s family admits in his performance that his party are wrong. In fact, it contains something that goes deeper as, A. J. Muste states: “What a healing coolness and sweetness comes into a situation when people quit indulging in the so-pleasant pastime of confessing other people’s sin and begin to confess their own.”¹⁴ The high chief of the perpetrator’s family in his performance is not trying to justify

¹³ This is the author’s own translation from the Greek text.

¹⁴ A. J. Muste, “The Pacific Way of Life,” in *Peace is the Way: Writing on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation*, ed. Walter Wink (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 30-36.

themselves, and the crime that provokes the ritual. He is saying, “Have mercy on me and my family, I am a sinner and my family have sinned.” This is one of the reasons why the *ifoga* ritual is so powerful, highly valued, honoured and respected in the Samoan communities.

Second, the perpetrator’s high chief is supposed to tell the truth. The notion is that the whole truth is told and uncovered during the process of the ritual. Bonhoeffer notes that telling the truth “means something different according to the particular situation in which one stands.”¹⁵ This is picked up and supported by De Gruchy stressing that telling the truth can be used as a destructive weapon or tool and then the truth becomes a lie.¹⁶ Sometimes telling the truth leads to acts of violence and vengeance as evident in those days in Samoa where the *ifoga* party was attacked by the victim’s party. Furthermore, although telling the truth can be abused, depending on different situations and the people involved, in the context of the *ifoga* ritual and its process, there is no place for a lie and abuse, because it is about the reality of what happens in society. In addition, the perpetrator’s family will also hear the truth about the victim’s feelings and their willingness to revenge and retaliate. Vengeance or retribution are natural inclinations for those who have been grievously hurt and whose rights as human beings have been violated. Telling the truth is something that will never happen in the state legal court, because most perpetrators plead not guilty and the lawyers by all means will defend their course.

Truth in the *ifoga* ritual is not something heretical. It happens during the face to face encounter between the parties involved. It emerges in the process as they interact, during the exchange of cultural speeches and it motivates and forces them to change their course of action. Thus, telling the truth liberates both parties involved and sets them free from the feelings of hatred and

¹⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (New York: Macmillan Pub Co., 1965), 363-372.

¹⁶ John de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice and Peace* (Minneapolis: Fortress Books, 2003), 161.

animosity. Hearing the truth from one another leads to healing of wounds and the restoration of their mutual relationship. Truth serves the cause of reconciliation being achieved, done, lived and moved on to the future. According to De Gruchy, truth becomes the truth for us when it impacts our lives, changes our perspectives, and also our relationship to the other.¹⁷ Telling the truth might lead to forgiveness and building new friendship.

7.3 A cooperate implementation of the *ifoga* ritual

The changes in ‘rituals’ as Bell argues, depend on changing cultural contexts and vary definitely from generation to generation subject to particular interests.¹⁸ This means that there is space for improvement and transformation. Such is the case for the *ifoga* ritual, a religious historical process in which past patterns are reproduced, reinterpreted and transformed.¹⁹ As has been discussed in chapter three, *ifoga* is a cultural religious atonement ritual, which is acknowledged by the state legal court for its role in overcoming violence in the communities. It has also been mentioned of what could be the prophetic role of the church in the process of the ritual. In the Old Testament, prophets such as Isaiah, told the people of Israel what is wrong, and how to solve problems. In fact, the time is long due for the church in Samoa (those denominations present in the villages) to work together with the village council and the state to strengthen the *ifoga* ritual from a Christian perspective. Thus, the sustainable practice of the *ifoga* ritual for reconciliation suggests a shared cooperate responsibility of the three major institutions in Samoa: the church, the traditional culture (chiefs) and the state. All three need to work together to develop its form, usage, practice, and strengthen the religious aspect of the ritual. The next question then is how can these institutions contribute, and strengthen the ritual and its value in Samoan communities.

¹⁷ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 163.

¹⁸ Bell, *Rituals*, 67-68.

¹⁹ See chapter 4.

7.3.1 The role of *Pulega Alii ma Faipule* (Village Council)

The Samoans hold strongly to the belief that “Samoa was chosen by God to be led by chiefs.”²⁰ Although it refers originally to the goddess Nafanua and her distribution of the Samoan regions to various chiefs, the belief is now directed to YHWH as the sole ruler of the universe. Case in point is the *ifoga* ritual, which according to Samoans and their own Holy Scripture (oral traditions) was first and foremost the work of Tagaloa through his daughter Amoa, who then delegated it to the *matais* (chiefs) to take responsibilities for the actions of their families when taboos are violated in the community.²¹ Thus, the *ifoga* ritual exists as part of the Samoan indigenous religious practice when taboos and covenants are breached by violence and misbehaviour. As Jean Comaroff notes, “rituals provides an appropriate medium through which the values and structures of a contradictory world may be addressed and manipulated.”²² The *ifoga* ritual is a symbolic action that is being conducted when the *va-fealoai* (mutual relationship) and respect for one another in the communities in out of order. Therefore, the chiefs who sustain and officiate the practice of the ritual shall find ways to improve its implications and strengthen its values in the community.

7.3.1.1 Transforming Traditional Laws and Punishments

First, the chiefs should have to review their laws and punishments allocated to various cases they deal with in their respective villages. For instance, the *salas* (punishments) of *Ati male Lau*, (harvesting the crops with leaves/plug with leaves), *Faasavali ile Ala*, (having no right as a human being

²⁰ The Samoans saying goes: *Na tofia ele Atua Samoa ina ia pulea e matai, aua o lona suafa ua vaelua iai*. It means, Samoa was chose by God to be led by chiefs, for he had given them the power and wisdom.

²¹ John 3,16a reads: For God so loved the world he gave his only son parallels Tagaloa giving his daughter to save his people. The only difference for the Samoans is that God gave his son while Tagaloa offered his daughter, but for the same purpose of saving the people.

²² Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power: Spirit of Resistance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), 1.

to his properties/forbidden to remain in the village), and *Mu le Foaga* (burning the residence) must be abandoned and find other means to replace them. The chiefs need to reflect deeply on these traditional punishments and their usage in the modern world. This is evident in the case studies presented in chapter 4 where these punishments were conducted by the village, which resulted in those who performed them in being prisoned.²³ Moreover, these punishments do not comply with the Christian teachings and the universal legal system. Furthermore, they create tensions between the two systems of law (state legal system and the village council) respected and obeyed by the people. As discussed, most of the severe violence in Samoa was the result of collective interest verses individual rights. Thus, the council of chiefs has to balance their rules, punishments, and decisions with that of the legal system to avoid misunderstanding and contradiction.

7.3.1.2 Respecting Individual Rights

Second, the criticism of the value of the communal way of living life like the Samoan culture, often relates to the issue of individual rights. The rights of the individual are not neglected nor abandoned in the Samoans societies; however, the chiefs sometimes neglect it. When this happens, it contradicts the universal idea of honouring human rights and dignity. Accordingly, the *Fono Alii ma Faipule* (council of chiefs) must be warned and be aware that whenever they override the rights of individual members in the village, they will be punished by the state legal system. Therefore, the chiefs' roles in maintaining peace and order in the community should not overrule the rights of its individuals in the community. The Macphersons raise the same issue in relation to the *ifoga* when it is accepted without the consent of the victims.²⁴ Accordingly, forgiveness is a long process and it takes time, and the

²³ See Case Studies in chapter 4.

²⁴ Macpherson, "The Ifoga," 109-134.

victims have to be counselled by the family members and especially the pastors.

7.3.1.3 Promoting Dialogue and Communication with the Legal System

Third, sometimes silence rules in the village council and the chiefs fail to address the legal system regarding some of the severe cases occurring in the villages. This definitely leads to the denial of justice and truth. The village council needs to strengthen the chiefs' commitment in solidarity with the police force in cases that are beyond the knowledge of the legal system. Examples are cases such as rape and assault, which are sometimes "buried under the mat" in the village because of shame and honour issues among families. As mentioned, the chiefs control the events and affairs in the village and in most places the police are not present. Therefore, the village council must report and inform the police department whenever possible for cases that definitely need to be handled and dealt with by the legal system. Such communication needs to be strengthened because it signifies that the chiefs are standing for the victims and showing their support for them.

Finally, the village council should be encourage to seek the advice of their *faafeagaiga* (pastors) when facing serious cases. This will avoid some of the problems and issues mentioned above from happening. Restoring peace and harmony in the communities is a shared task and the pastors who play promising leadership roles in the village, must be informed by the village council when necessary. A good example is when there is an *ifoga* ritual in the village. The pastors can be asked to participate and conduct a service when the reconciliation process comes to an end between the parties involved.

7.3.2 The Role of the State Legal Court

Tuala in her studies about the ritual *ifoga* notes that the state legal system appreciates and respects the performance of the ritual in the

communities.²⁵ This is a symbolic act of solidarity showing a common interest of maintaining peace and harmony in Samoa. In fact, the state considers the religious aspect of the ritual as a means or way of showing remorse and expressing apologies to the victims. In addition (as Tuala notes), the performance of the ritual *ifoga* does reduce the verdict and the punishment given to the perpetrator or his/her time in prison. In fact, the ritual constructs and establishes power relationships between the state and legal system. According to Steven Lukes, the ritual helps “to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society: it serves to specify what in society is of special significance and it draws people’s attention to certain forms of relationships and activity.”²⁶ As described, the *ifoga* ritual does exercise a real form of social control and it draws people’s attention for the *matais* (chiefs) who perform the ritual on behalf of the families and communities.

7.3.2.1 Awareness of Violence as enriching Family and Village Ties

The police force who represents the state are not present during the ritual, but there are certain ways in which they can work with the village council. For instance, the legal system has to be aware that every crime committed in Samoa affects the whole community, not just the perpetrators and the victims. This means that there is possible retaliation and revenge from the victim’s community, especially severe cases like murder and bodily harm. For example, the case in Ulutogia village, where two men were murdered by one person as a result of land dispute. One of the victims who was married to the cousin of the other victim is from the village of Falelatai. As a result, people of Falelatai have searched for anyone from the village of Ulutogia for revenge in the capital city of Apia. It does not matter whether he was related to the perpetrator or not, anybody from the village could be apprehended. This

²⁵ Tuala, *A Study in Ifoga*, 1-22.

²⁶ Steven Luke, “Political Ritual and Social Integration,” *Sociology: Journal of the British Sociological Association* 9/2 (1975): 289-308.

affects the whole community, and such cases can only be settled and controlled by the chiefs of both villages through the *ifoga* ritual.

In addition, any court cases between an individual and the village council must be advised to be solved first in the traditional way before the court. The two systems are completely different from one another in the way they operate and function. The village system as discussed is a communal system in which decisions are based on the taboos and laws of the village council. The state legal system focuses on what has happened and on the offenders without any reference to community ties.²⁷ As evident in the case study between Leota and his village, the decision of the court was based on the rights of the individual, but it did create more violence because it was against the decision of the village.²⁸ Such violence can be prevented and overcome if the village council received pastoral counselling before the court case. For this reason, it is important for the state legal system to be aware of the villages and families ties when dealing with issues that might lead to more tension of violence.

7.3.2.2 Promotion of the use of Mediators

Moreover, the role of the mediators is vital in such circumstances to avoid tension and avoid the village council from turning into a mob as has occurred in the past. The Mediation Rules were formally endorsed in Samoa in 2013 and the Chief Justice Tiavaasue F. S. Patu stated:

Mediation is something very new but very old in Samoa. Mediation has many similarities with the traditional Samoan way of settling disputes through the village council or the matai of a family. However, unlike our traditional dispute resolution system, professional mediation is a facilitated pro-active process; it is neither advisory nor determinative in nature.²⁹

²⁷ Cf. Ahrens, "Interrupting Violence in Postcolonial Society," 180-197.

²⁸ See, chapter four, case study 1.

²⁹ Lagi Keresoma, "Mediation as an option to resolving disputes," *Talamua Online News*, August 27, 2013, accessed September 20, 2014, <http://www.talamua.com/2014/8/20/mediation-launched.html>.

The Samoan Mediation Rules 2013 helps identify issues disputed by parties and encourages them to look at other options for resolutions rather than taking the matters to court. In a country with a strong cultural heritage like Samoa and also founded on Christian principles, the use of mediators as a conflict-resolution strategy promises to be effective and fruitful. It is helpful to solve most of the cases between Samoans, which are rooted in misunderstanding, and some are categorized as individual rights verses the collective interest. These tensions can be solved and overcome, as mediation gives both parties involved the opportunity to discuss their issues and misunderstanding and settle any disputes. Accordingly, there are benefits of encouraging the mediation for parties involved, and these include: confidentiality, time, costless, party autonomy, and the restoration of mutual relationships into the future. As Tiavaasue said, it is an old tradition in Samoa, and the presence of the legal system diminishes the values of *soalaupule* (mediation, dialog, deliberation) in Samoa.

7.3.3 The Role of the church

Christianity in Samoa as Katja Göbel states, is an important part of the Samoan culture and way of life.³⁰ The church plays an important part in the life of the community. In fact, the church provides a platform or a safe space for the village council (culture) and the state to discuss sensitive issues between them. Moreover, the church is the common reference that acts as a bridge connecting the village council and the state. For instance, today all the chiefs are blessed by the pastors during the installation of the chiefly titles, and the members of the Parliament are chiefs. As discussed, when it comes to violence

³⁰ Katja Göbel, “Kirchliche Vielfalt und kirchlicher Einfluss auf das Leben,” in *Pazifik: Galube, Kultur, Gesellschaft* (Hamburg: Missionshilfe Verlag, 2008), 193-197. She wrote that “Der christliche Glauben ist heute ein wichtiger Teil des faa-Samoa wodurch die Vermutung nahe liegt, dass Samoa ebenso christianisiert wie das Christentum samoanisiert wurde.” Samoa was Christianized as and Christianity became part of the Faa-Samoa (Samoan culture and way of life).

and the violation of taboos in the community, it is always managed and done by the village council, and the legal system. Sometimes (as mentioned) tensions and violence resulted from the clash between the two systems. When this happens, people ask: Where is the church? What is the role of the church? What is its mission for the people? Consequently, the church in Samoa can contribute in severe cases through taking part in the performance of the traditional ritual *ifoga*.

7.3.3.1 Pastoral Counselling: Victims and Perpetrators

The pastors have to give pastoral counselling to the victims, families, and those who are struggling with forgiveness. Both the victims and the perpetrators, and their respective families need healing and counselling during these periods of time. For instance, those who have experienced abuse, trauma, or loss need time to sort things out. The people need to be reminded that the act of forgiving others is between them and God. The *ifoga* ritual provides a precious time for the victims' need to forgive a person face-to-face encounter. During that moment the victim's family is asked by the perpetrator's family to forgive them for the hurt and damage they have caused. These are the important times that the church through the pastors can do pastoral counselling to help those struggling with the forgiveness of others. Pastors can support them with encouraging words and by listening to them. Taking time and being gentle with them will allow them to progress through the steps of grief to prepare for forgiveness. By doing this, the church might create opportunities for both parties to accepting one another in Christ.

7.3.3.2 Devotion as part of the *ifoga* ritual

Furthermore, the pastors should have a chance to lead a devotion after the two parties (victim's family and the perpetrator's family) have reconciled with each other. This is important to conclude the process of pastoral counselling done by pastors of both sides before the ritual process. How this

happened depends on close consultation between pastor and the chief of the victim's family. The suggestion is that during the pastoral visitations, the pastor must inform the victim's family that he will come to conduct a devotion when the two parties have settled their dispute during the *ifoga* process. The chiefs will not deny nor oppose the will of the pastors. As discussed, the pastors are highly respected and honoured in the Samoan culture and they play a vital role in shaping the community life and culture based on Christian doctrines and principles.

Accordingly, the pastor should lead the devotion before the feast. The point is that the people have to be informed and encouraged that the church's role in reconciliation is fundamental. The message is that it is God who is the source of reconciliation, not the Samoan god Tagaloa. He reconciles the whole creation to himself through Jesus Christ and brings peace to humanity. It is the person of Christ that the reconciling love of God becomes flesh and is offered as a gift to humanity "so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5, 21 NRSV). Consequently, the new creation established after the resurrection of Christ becomes the source of reconciliation for humanity. This means that while the pastors of the perpetrators parties participate in the 'confession performance' (kneeling down and covered with the fine-mat as the scapegoats), the pastors of the victim's party conduct the devotions. This will be a more profound atonement ritual, healing the past and the present, and shaping also the future. In addition, the process will also be a more spiritual process instead of a compensational event. People have to experience the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection during the *ifoga* ritual process and this could be strengthened through the participation of the pastors through their pastoral counselling and connecting the feast to the Lord's Supper as the ultimate meaning behind the *ifoga* ritual.

7.3.3.3 Creating Platforms for cross-cultural Reconciliation

The practice can also be conducted cross-culturally. This means when violence occurs between Samoans and other nationals, the pastors would be very important in the reconciliation process. An example is what has happened after years back in Hawaii. A Samoan youth was murdered by a Melanesian youth.³¹ The Samoan pastors in Hawaii applying their “Samoan way of life” in such cases, reacted quickly and stood in solidarity with the Melanesians. This is because they knew that the Samoans would revenge their honour and this could lead to more blood-shed. They went to the Melanesian pastors and discussed about a possible solution to prevent more violence. As a result, their Melanesian brothers and sisters obliged to their request and the reconciliation process began. They performed the Samoan ritual and it was accepted by the victim’s family and the whole Samoan community in Hawaii. The reconciliation between the two communities (Samoans and Melanesians) was appreciated by the state of Hawaii and its police force, who maintain peace and order in the society. This is at the heart of the mission of the church according to the WCC document “Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation.”³² The church has been called to mend the broken hearts, teach forgiveness and accompany people when crisis and tensions exist in the community.

PART TWO

A CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE WIDER ECUMENICAL DEBATE ON RECONCILIATION

The Samoan atonement ritual *ifoga* is a life changing experience for the people and the communities involved in the reconciliation process. In fact, the relevance of any contextual theology should not be limited to any particular

³¹ Lee Cataluna, “Hawaii Death unites Pacific Island Groups,” in *Forgiveness Stories* (Hawaii: Hawaii Forgiveness Project, 2008), 8-10.

³² See “Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation” and “The Healing Mission of the Church” in *You Are the Light of the World: Statements on Missiology by the World Council of Churches (WCC) 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 32-33.

context. According to Fernando Enns, this should be the case if the contextual theology itself comes to life by the reception of a suffering people.³³ Such a contextual theology can be a messenger of peace and reconciliation in other contexts, and this applies in particular to the Samoan *ifoga* ritual. In this final part of the chapter, the author aims at harvesting some insights from the *ifoga* ritual theology for the wider ecumenical debated on ‘reconciliation.’ Accordingly, each context has different factors that need to be taken into account. For instance, injustice and violence seldom have one single root-cause, and it is the combination of economic, political, cultural, religious dimensions that lead to suffering. And from an ecumenical perspective, the experience of sharing different contextual perspective needs to address and confront those realities collectively.

7.4 Overview: What is reconciliation?

Reconciliation is a complex term, and it is understood differently in various contexts. The meaning and the value of the term are contentious. For instance, in South Africa, De Gruchy observes ambiguity in the way people understand reconciliation.³⁴ Some would believe that reconciliation is an agreement, while others generally consider it as the solution to a problem.³⁵ Moreover, there are people who hold that reconciliation is overcoming animosity or the ending of violence. He notes that reconciliation works on four levels: the theological, between God and humans; the interpersonal, between individual people; the social, between local, alienated communities; and the political, across an entire nation or region.³⁶ Each level carries its unique complexities, yet all are sequential processes with different goals for each

³³ Fernando Enns, “Space for Theological Reflection on Being (Peace-) Church,” in *Seeking Cultures of Peace*, (eds.) Fernando Enns, Scott Holland, Ann K. Riggs (Pennsylvania/Geneca: Cascadia Pub. House, WCC Publications, Hreald Press, 2005), 29-44.

³⁴ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 10-43.

³⁵ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 20.

³⁶ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 26.

sequence. Consequently, in contexts like South Africa with strong political fronts, if the word reconciliation cannot really mean healing memories and restoring justice, then it might become meaningful as signifying the regaining of political legal capacity.

De Gruchy reports that in the environment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, the word reconciliation became a code word for an amnesty. Still as Ahrens states, the theological meaning of the word reconciliation tends to become irrelevant in everyday speech.³⁷ In such background experience, De Gruchy underlines that there is no reconciliation without justice.³⁸ He tries to distinguish reconciliation as a religious statement and reconciliation as the restoration of justice in the political realm.

From the perspective of the *ifoga* ritual, reconciliation is a holistic healing process for the sake of restoring mutual relationship as evident in the Samoan concept *Leleiga*. *Leleiga* (reconciliation) functions in four levels of relationship: vertical (god and humanity), horizontal (between individuals and between societies), circle (humanity and the environment), and a dot (individual person). This means that there is no reconciliation without the restoration of the spiritual, social, political and cultural relationships. The perpetrators are always the ones who begin the *Leleiga* process. Such motivation is rooted in the motifs of ‘guilt-shame-honour’ based on strong cultural values, interdependent, and recognition of the divinities in the midst of the process. The offenders take the initiative through humble acceptance of guilt as they fully recognise the wrong done and take full responsibility for it. Experiencing guilt enables the individual (or community) to reconcile him/herself, which also leads to *faalumaina* (shame) of the wrong done. Shame as embodied in the *ifoga* ritual by bowing down on the ground covered with a

³⁷ See Ahrens, “Versöhnung in der ökumenischen Diskussion,” *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 3 (2005): 162-173.

³⁸ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 187.

fine mat, has a strong symbolic meaning.³⁹ From a religious point of view it is the confession of sin or the wrong done. From a social perspective, it is the offenders' preparedness of shaming themselves in order to give honour and dignity to the victims. This reflects the argument of Ludger Weckel that there is no reconciliation without restoring the dignity and rights of the victims.⁴⁰ As discussed, this performance by the perpetrators is directed to the victim's family.

The reconciliation process continues in the victim's family when recognising the perpetrator performance. Three important motifs are significant in the response of the victim's party: 'acceptance-forgiveness-new beginning.' Within these last stages of the process, there is healing, negotiations, and the restoration of mutual relationships, thus completing the process of *Leleiga* (reconciliation). This means that all the four dimensions of relationships are restored. Thus, despite the different meanings of the term in various contexts, the fundamental structure and logic remain identical: reconciliation is the point where the values, beliefs, practises of truth, mercy, healing, justice, repentance, forgiveness, and hope meet.

7.5 Reconciliation as ecumenism

The formation and the establishment of the ecumenical movement is a visible expression of the church's commitment to share the reconciling message of Christ and to respond to the theological and social responsibility in the world through Christian witness.⁴¹ The progress of the movement is rooted in the yearning of all churches for the restoration of Christian unity. This restoration signifies the end of ruptured relationships and establishes

³⁹ Cf. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 28-29, 50-55.

⁴⁰ Ludger Weckel, "Menschenrechtsverbrechen und Versöhnung. Zum Gerauch des Versöhnungsbegriffs in Kirche und Theologie," in *ZMR* 89, 4/1995, 305-312.

⁴¹ Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (eds.) *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1997), 21-34.

reconciliation both with God and the whole creation.⁴² In this sense any effort made with the intention of restoring unity is ultimately a reconciling effort. Reconciliation has been a vital paradigm of mission in the World Council of churches (WCC) for decades.⁴³ In his book, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Context*, Robert Schreiter notes that the emergence of reconciliation as a model for mission surfaces as a response to violence and division among the people, tribes, and nations around the world.⁴⁴ This is also indicated in the WCC document called “Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation (MMR)” prepared by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) for the mission conference in Athens 2005. Reconciliation as a paradigm for mission is rooted in the Bible and has great theological significance for the world today.⁴⁵ The WCC document (MMR) highlights the changing paradigm for mission in the contemporary society and her commitment to the ministry of reconciliation.⁴⁶ Furthermore, it highlights

⁴² Kinnamon and Cope, *The Ecumenical Movement*, 41.

⁴³ This change emerged as the result of many reflections on Mission as well as the challenging situations in the world such as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the conflicts in the Global South and part of the North, the Rwanda genocide, and the end of Apartheid in South Africa. The church found itself in the midst of these incidents and violence, and this put the church on a spot light to lead peace processes as efforts to rebuilding society. See Kinnamon and Cope (eds.) *The Ecumenical Movement*, 35; Marc Reuver, Friedhelm Solms, Gerrit Huizer (eds.), *The Ecumenical Movement Tomorrow: Suggestions for Approaches and Alternative* (Geneva/Kampen: WCC Publication/Kok Publication House, 1993).

⁴⁴ Robert Schreiter, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1992), 45-47; See also “Reconciliation and Healing as a Paradigm of Mission” in *International Review of Mission* 94 (2005); John de Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 35-40. Cf. Theodor Ahrens, “Versöhnung als Leitmotiv christlicher Mission” in *Vom Charme der Gabe: Theologie Interkulturell* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Otto Lembeck, 2008), 263-282.

⁴⁵ The word reconciliation does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures, but there are powerful stories of reconciliation, such as the Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16), the story about Jacob and Esau (Genesis 33), and Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 45). In the New Testament, the language of reconciliation is dominated by Paul in his letters. In fact Paul’s message is a gospel of reconciliation rooted in the Christ-event where God’s justice has been fully revealed to humanity.

⁴⁶ For the idea of transforming mission, see David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in Transforming Mission* (New York: Orbis, 1991), 368ff.

God as the source of reconciliation who has given it as a gift to humanity. It reads:

Mission as ministry of reconciliation involves the obligation to share the gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness, the good news of him who through his incarnation, death and resurrection has once for all provided the basis for the reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins and new life in the power of the Holy Spirit. This ministry invites people to accept God's offer of reconciliation in Christ, and to become his disciples in the communion of his Church. It promises the hope of fullness of life in God, both in this age and in God's future, eternal kingdom.

The ministry of reconciliation also involves the work of reconciliation among the persons and societies. In order to understand what this participation in God's mission for reconciliation may mean, we will focus upon the goals and processes of reconciliation and healing. This involves both some general thoughts and reflections upon the dynamic of how reconciliation and healing come out.⁴⁷

The document (MMR) suggests that reconciliation is rooted in the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection. Our reconciliation with God is the basis of our invitation to participate in the ministry of reconciliation. This means our work for reconciliation is dependent upon God's action and occurs through cooperating with the grace of God. Reconciliation from an ecumenical point of view brings together different institutions, religions, and nations to work together for a peaceful co-existence among the victims and perpetrators in various contexts of life. It is an ecumenical calling to promote unity and peace among those affected by violence, war and hatred.

7.6 Reconciliation: A way of life

The *ifoga* ritual is a crucial part of the Samoan way of life to maintain her relational culture. Havea states that "reconciliation is one of the strands woven into the oceanic way of life."⁴⁸ This does not mean that the oceanic people are prone to violence, strife, and cannot deal with their tensions, but it is their way of life and they deal with issues that violate peace and harmony in the community. Reconciliation can therefore be called a way of life for the Samoans (and the oceanic people). It is lived and experienced by the people

⁴⁷ "Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation," 32-33.

⁴⁸ Havea, "From Reconciliation to Adoption," 295.

when taboos are violated. This means that reconciliation is not about theories and protocols to resolve conflicts and tensions, but it constitutes their identity, who they are, and part of the way they live as a community.⁴⁹ This implies that reconciliation is the *gafa-tausi* (responsibility) of every member of the community. Paul talks about this invitation to experience a new creation in 2 Corinthians 5, 16-20:

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (NRSV).

Although Paul talks about the new creation here, reconciliation is the way through which God has made this new creation possible, and it is a gift. Whoever is in Christ belongs to the new creation of restored relationships. Reconciliation therefore does not relate, in the first place to mission (it is what God does through and with us), but to gift (all is from God). It is first and foremost the work of God, who gives it as a *mea-alofa* (gift) to humanity and calls them to participate and cooperate.⁵⁰ If reconciliation, then, is a gift and an invitation into a new identity, it might become a part of our life in a Samoan perspective. It is not simply a programme, but a way of life. For those who have experienced various traumas and conflicts, for example in South Africa, reconciliation is a gift.⁵¹ The painful memories of conflicts, pollution, colonisation and tensions create a platform for reconciliation to experience it as a gift. The gift was given to everyone and does not necessarily mean that it

⁴⁹ Havea, "From Reconciliation to Adoption," 296.

⁵⁰ See Robert Schreiter, "The Emergence of Reconciliation as a Paradigm of Mission: Dimensions, Levels, and Characters," in Robert Schreiter and Knud Jörgensen (eds.), *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, 2013), 9-30.

⁵¹ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 44-46.

is the task for the church only. It has to be taken up by the state, the social institutions, the tribes, the communities and nations as a whole.

For the basic communities, then, reconciliation must become a way of life and has to be woven into the life of the community that everyone takes full responsibility of it. As Havea suggests, it has to be adopted and by doing this we can then utilize reconciliation as a gift and a calling for all of us. As agents of reconciliation the people are to bring the power of the gospel of peace to bear upon their social life and of the culture that animates it. In practice, reconciliation is not easy to realise, especially for those who experienced brutal violence. The primary question is: how can people receive, enter, and operate within this experience of new creation so as truly to live up their new identity and calling? In fact, every move demands changes in attitudes (forgiveness instead of revenge), and the conducts of people and communities. Whatever approach individuals and different communities take when they deal with reconciliation, we must not forget that every step counts, that every possible effort has value, and that in a delicate action even a small improvement is a significant progress. Thus, reconciliation will be fully realised when we experience it as a gift, an invitation, and adopt it as part of our everyday life.

7.7 Reconciliation as restoring dignity and rights of the victims

The *ifoga* ritual refers to reconciliation as the restoration of mutual relationships in four dimensions: vertical dimension (referring to the relationship between God and humanity), the horizontal (between human beings), the circle (referring to the whole creation), and the centre symbolized by a dot (referring to the individual self).⁵² Thus, it is a holistic approach from a religious perspective. In one of the documents drafted by the Council of World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), reconciliation is placed in relation

⁵² Cf. Jacques Matthey, "Athens 2005: Reconciliation and Healing as an Imperative for Mission," in *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, ed. Robert Schreiter and Knud Jörgensen (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2013), 37-51.

with “repairing the broken relations” and healing with “health, balance, wholeness of life.”⁵³ This is confirmed by the document, “Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation:”

The very notion of reconciliation presupposes the experience of broken communion. This may be in the form of estrangement, separation, enmity, hatred, exclusion, fragmentation, distorted relationships. Reconciliation, in biblical as well as secular language, is understood as the effort towards and engagement for mending the broken and distorted relationship and building up community and relationship afresh.⁵⁴

The process of restoring mutual relationship has to be experienced by the individual rooted in what God has done through Jesus Christ and then proceeds on to the next stage. After experiencing God’s forgiveness through repentance and faith, the individual is prepared to reconcile to him/herself. This might enable him/her to fulfil the horizontal dimension by reconciling with the fellow neighbour. There are distinct steps towards the restoration of relationship with the self, with God, with one another, and the whole creation.

The first step to the process of reconciliation as suggested by the *ifoga* ritual relies strongly on the perpetrators to recognise the wrong being done to the victim. This tells a lot about our invitation to be ambassadors of reconciliation as Fr Lapsley states, “we are called to recognise and acknowledge the terrible things that we have done to one another, but then we are called to stop being crucifiers.”⁵⁵ This is not an easy step for it originates from a guilty experience and repentance that leads to having remorse feelings for the victims. As evident in the *ifoga* ritual, recognising the wrong action leads to taking full responsibility for the crime committed to his/her victims. In fact, it is a moving experience as the perpetrators acknowledge their wrong done to the victims. The acknowledgement of the violent action or the confession of sin in the Samoan ritual is symbolized by kneeling on the ground

⁵³ CWME document, “Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities,” (2001), in Jacques Matthey (ed.), *Conference Report*, 13.

⁵⁴ “Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation,” 13.

⁵⁵ Lapsley, *Redeeming the Past*, 168.

covered with a fine-mat. This is where the process of telling the truth begins – acknowledging the wrong done. In the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, telling the truth was a moving experience for the victims and the parties involved during the process of reconciliation.⁵⁶ Fr Lapsley, a victim of apartheid in South Africa shares a powerful story of experiencing and hearing the truth during the encounter between victims and wrongdoers.⁵⁷ He holds that this is the first step towards achieving reconciliation.

The analytical framework of the *ifoga* ritual suggests that restoring honour and rights of the victims is an essential element in any reconciliation process. It implies a reversal of power relations: The victim's party attains a position of power in deciding to accept or not to accept the offer of the chief of the perpetrator's party who has stripped him/herself of all power and who is at the mercy of the victim's party. This is a significant aspect of the *ifoga* ritual process, because once the victims experienced such an honour during the process, the acceptance of the perpetrators as guests becomes possible. Ludger Weckel strongly supports the idea and argues that there is no reconciliation without restoring the dignity and rights of the victims.⁵⁸ This means that restoring relationships will not be possible if the victims have not experienced that their rights and dignities have not been restored.

7.8 Reconciliation is healing

7.8.1 Healing of Memories

In oral societies like Samoa, memories play a vital role in restoring the identity and uniqueness of families, communities, and nations. These memories are based on story-telling, songs, poems, rituals, and dances. This is also true for many traditional cultures. In the global south, memory is the mental process which expresses the events and experiences of the past.

⁵⁶ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 181.

⁵⁷ Lapsley, "Redeeming the Past." See also Lapsley, *Redeeming the Past*, 167-168.

⁵⁸ Weckel, "Menschenrechtsverbrechen und Versöhnung," 305-312.

Schreiter notes that “The healing of memories involves coming to terms with the traumatic memories of the past in such a way that they are no longer toxic to the present and the future.”⁵⁹ Individuals, communities, and even nations have past memories. These memories shape the way in which we respond and behave, and the strategy we choose in shaping our lives. So they remind us who we are, and where we have come from. Therefore, the reconciliation process will not succeed without some understanding of the past and the future prospects of the society accepted by both parties involves.

Telling stories is a powerful approach towards the healing of memories. An important element for this sharing and healing is the provision of a safe space or platform for both the victims and the perpetrators to engage in such encounter. Matthey argues that “A process towards healing of memories cannot succeed unless victims – all those considering themselves victims – but also perpetrators, find space where they can tell their story.”⁶⁰ Such space could be provided by the church, the state, and an institution like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and communities as well. In Samoa, the *ifoga* ritual provides such space for the perpetrators and victims to tell their stories, and such space is sacred, which means a religious one where the participants feel the presence of the divine.

The process of healing memories is vital to all parties involved reflecting the qualities of respect and honesty. It requires a sensitivity and empathy for story-telling as precondition for the creation of trust, tolerance, justice and peace. This empowers people to write new stories, new parables and new versions of old traditions. The healing of memories and the stories both oral and written from within the passion of lived experience function very powerfully in shaping self-identity and self-understanding. The Samoan proverb: *E pala le maa ae le pala le tala* (Rocks and stones decay, but

⁵⁹ Schreiter, “The Emergence of Reconciliation as a Paradigm for Mission,” 19.

⁶⁰ Matthew, “Athens 2005,” 48.

memories and stories will not) suggests that memories remain forever from generations to generations and cannot be erased from the collective memory. James Cone proposes that sharing our stories with one another helps us to transcend the boundaries of our past and reach toward the future:

Every people has a story to tell, something to say to themselves, their children, and to the world about how they think and live, as they determine their reason for being.... When people can no longer listen to the other people's stories, they become enclosed within their own social context....And then they feel that they must destroy other people's stories.⁶¹

We need to tell our stories for the purpose of recognising and transcending our differences. It is through healing of memories and telling our stories that we can understand ourselves. For example, Fr Lapsley shares his story of being a victim of apartheid, and how he became a healer and involved in Healing Memories workshops not only in South Africa, but also in other countries like Rwanda.⁶² Such workshops create spaces for victims, survivors of tragic trauma, and relatives to tell their stories and share their experiences. Thus, how we narrate the past shapes how we relate to the past and live in the present.

7.8.2 Healing of Victims and Perpetrators

Healing both the victims and the perpetrators is crucial for the process of forgiveness leading towards reconciliation. The healing of the victims, as already noted, is about restoring their humanity, theologically understood; that is their dignity and violated rights. This means that their own narratives about the past will need to be reconstructed so that voices can be heard. According to Emmanuel Katongole, this entails acknowledging loss. Lamenting what has been lost, and finding new sources of meaning and hope.⁶³

⁶¹ James Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 102-103.

⁶² Lapsley, "Redeeming the Past." See also Lapsley, *Redeeming the Past*, 169-178.

⁶³ Emmanuel Katongole, *Reconciling All Things: A Christian Vision of Justice, Peace, and Healing* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008), 45-46.

Healing the perpetrators is important for the process of acknowledging the wrong done and the crime committed to the victims. These includes the process of seeking forgiveness, having remorse feelings for the victims, and preparing to accept any form of punishment. In the context of the *ifoga* ritual, this is the task of pastors and chiefs in the communities. There are cases where the perpetrators are forbidden to participate in the village activities until the *ifoga* ritual is conducted with the perpetrators being restored again in the community.

Katongole reminds us that there are cases in which both victims and perpetrators may have different views and are prone to interpret the same events differently.⁶⁴ This implies that both are biased and can twist the truth to suit their interests. Everett Worthington notes the difference: “victims exaggerate the severity of transgression, while perpetrators tend to minimize and downplay it.”⁶⁵ This means that victims tend to see the crime as possessing severe consequences, as part of an ongoing pattern of misbehaviour, which is inexcusable and unacceptable. In contrast, perpetrators tend to downplay the consequences, blame others instead, and describe their actions as arising from motives that were understandable and legitimate.⁶⁶ These differences must be dealt with with great care because they are likely to complicate the process of forgiveness. Consequently, this is where telling the truth comes into place in the process of healing.

7.9. Reconciliation as a pursuit for justice

Reconciliation in its process is a pursuit for justice and the issue of justice comes into play whether it has been served or not. This is where the telling the truth is significant in the pursuit of justice. Schreiter states that there

⁶⁴ Katongole, *Reconciling All Things*, 67.

⁶⁵ Everett L. Worthington (ed.), *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Perspectives* (Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998), 83.

⁶⁶ Worthington, *Dimensions of Forgiveness*, 84.

are three forms of justice involved in relation to reconciliation: ‘punitive justice,’ ‘restorative justice,’ and ‘structural justice.’⁶⁷ For ‘punitive justice,’ he refers to the punishment of the perpetrators as giving them an impression that what they have done is wrong. In addition, they have to acknowledge or say publicly that such wrong doing will not be tolerated in the future.⁶⁸ In the *ifoga* ritual, Samoans understand that the performance of the perpetrator’s high chief under the fine mat is more than a public apology. From a Christian perspective, it is the confession of sin and a testimony that the wrong done should not happen again.

The ‘restorative justice’ is generally considered as a process where parties involved in a dispute, collectively resolve their problem and focuss to the future. In its broadest sense, restorative justice is concerned with restoring social relationships while establishing or re-establishing social equity in relationships in which each person’s rights to equal dignity, concern and respect are satisfied.⁶⁹ Thus, it is about engagement and empowerment as Schreiter notes that it is directed to “the healing of the victims”⁷⁰ and the perpetrators. One can argue that restorative justice is vital in the reconciliation process and it involves the ideas of reparation, healing, and the restoration of the victim’s dignity and rights, which have been violated by the perpetrators. Tuala states that the term ‘Restorative Justice’ is not used in Samoa as in other countries.⁷¹ She argues that what has been given the name Restorative Justice in the common law and countries like New Zealand, “has long been part of the Samoan social structure,”⁷² as evident in the *ifoga* ritual. In the *ifoga* ritual, the restoration of mutual relationship concerns the reinstatement of the victims’

⁶⁷ Schreiter, “The Emergence of Reconciliation as a Paradigm for Mission,” 20.

⁶⁸ Schreiter, “The Emergence of Reconciliation as a Paradigm for Mission,” 20.

⁶⁹ Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Wan Ness, “The Meaning of Restorative Justice,” in Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Wan Ness (eds.) *Handbook of Restorative Justice* (Devon, Oregon: Willan Publishing, 2007), 6.

⁷⁰ Schreiter, “The Emergence of Reconciliation as a Paradigm for Mission,” 20.

⁷¹ Tuala, *The study of Ifoga*, 28.

⁷² Tuala, *The study of Ifoga*, 30.

dignity and rights. This is also the general focus and aim of restorative justice, for it does not focus on vengeance and punishment, but seeks to heal both the community and the individual involved.

‘Structural justice’ on the other hand involves a change of social, economic, and political structures through deliberations for the purpose of reducing injustice in the community.⁷³ For instance, people should be involved in decision making and the distribution of benefits or the economy should be shared equally among everyone. Thus, justice is deeply connected to reconciliation as in the words of De Gruchy “there is no reconciliation without justice.”⁷⁴ The achievement of justice is a significant contribution to the process of forgiveness.

7.10 Reconciliation: An art of *faamagalo*

The Samoan term *faamagalo* has always been translated as forgiveness, but its English translation does not fully capture its complexity. *Faamagalo* concerns with shame and disgraceful and that means ‘let my shame and disgrace be buried.’ *Faamagalo* is the outcome of the painful *ifoga* process and cannot be manipulated in the sense De Gruchy speaks of, i.e., that forgiveness can be manipulated by the dominant in such a way to strengthen their position and weaken that of the victim.⁷⁵ As discussed, it takes one whole day or two for some *ifoga* parties to be accepted by the victim’s family, which shows how difficult it is to achieve *faamagalo* or forgiveness. *Faamagalo* involves inner-personal and inter-personal dimensions.

Faamagalo is a two way process in which both parties involved (perpetrators and the victims) are able to show respect for one another and experience it. It has to occur and be experienced by the victims themselves,

⁷³ Schreiter, “The Emergence of Reconciliation as a Paradigm for Mission,” 20.

⁷⁴ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 189.

⁷⁵ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 171.

then they are able to forgive the perpetrators.⁷⁶ There will be shared emotional experiences, the perpetrator showing empathy with the victim's suffering, and the victim recognizing the pain of the perpetrator. Through remorse, the perpetrators identify themselves with the victims, enabling the latter to forgive and become part of a re-humanizing process. Both are bound together. To forgive someone mean: victims themselves are relieved of the burden of anger, hatred and uncertainty evoked by the memory of the trauma, and are symbolically brought back to life. De Gruchy argues that "Genuine forgiveness, then, does not mean brushing the past aside and regarding injustice lightly, but on knowing how to remember rightly."⁷⁷ From the perspective of the cross, forgiveness transforms the victim into the victor who embraces the other in love, and therefore they have the key to reconciliation as Emilo Castro reminds us because "it is in the victim that Jesus Christ is present."⁷⁸ In the process of forgiveness, the victims shall experience the presence of Christ and transcends it towards their enemies. It's a step towards the restoration of their relationship before the transgression. As in the words of Desmond Tutu: "Without forgiveness there is no future."⁷⁹ Thus, forgiveness is at the heart of reconciliation.

7.11 Reconciliation through interfaith dialogue

In the *ifoga* ritual, *soalaupule* (dialogue) methodology is very important to achieve its purpose and function.⁸⁰ For example, the dialogue among the perpetrator's families, between the victims and their families, the communities, and even the pastors and the people involved and affected by violence and

⁷⁶ Cf. Worthington, *Dimensions of Forgiveness*, 85.

⁷⁷ De Gruchy, *Reconciliation*, 178.

⁷⁸ Emilio Castro, "Reconciliation," in Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (eds.), *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1997), 67.

⁷⁹ Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (London: Doubleday, 1999), 206.

⁸⁰ See chapter 3.

misbehaviour. Reconciliation is also a dialogue with time: the past, the present, and how to create a different type of future. Sebastian Kim defines dialogue as “commitment to one’s faith and openness to that of others with genuine respect.”⁸¹ Stanley Samartha, who was leading the sub-unit on dialogue in the World Council of Churches stresses that dialogue is not only an attempt to understand who we are and our own particularities in terms of our heritage, but also in relation to the spirituality of people from other faiths.⁸² The basis of his theology is rooted in God’s covenant with his people and Christ’s incarnation, with both demonstrating a dialogical relationship between God and his people. This is evident in the analysis of Lev 16, where God told Moses what Aaron shall do on the Day of Atonement; and in Romans 3 with the Christ-event being introduced by Paul as reconciliation of humanity to God, and a new community of faith. These texts, although different in content and emphasis, share the idea of God having a dialogical relationship with the human race estranged from God. It is this dialogue that God initiated with the fallen creation that informs all efforts at dialogue with people of other faiths.

Accordingly, living in multi-religious societies with so many different faith traditions, necessitates the need of having dialogue with people of other faiths. In addition, we all encounter the same challenges and face the common problems in contemporary societies such as conflicts, violence, injustice, ecological crisis and so forth. Through dialogue, people of different faiths can deal with these difficulties. They can cooperate, searching for answers, and at the same time acknowledge that each tradition has its own unique approach to questions in life and provides different solutions. There is no single theology of dialogue among the Christian churches and theologians. For example, the

⁸¹ Sebastian Kim, “The Ministry of Reconciliation from an Interfaith Perspective,” in *Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, ed. Robert Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2013), 160-172.

⁸² Stanley, J. Samartha, *Courage for Dialogue: Ecumenical Issues in Inter-religious Relationships* (Geneva: WCC Publication, 1981), 31.

Roman Catholic model of dialogue consists of four conceptions: the dialogue of life, the dialogue of social action, the dialogue of theological exchange, and the dialogue of shared spiritual experiences.⁸³ These form of dialogue represents different modes of communication and procedures. It is not for the purpose of imposing one's doctrines and dogmas upon the other, but for sharing ideas and values about certain issues. Such dialogues should not take place only in the academic level, but more on the grass-root level where ordinary people of faith can take part and participate. This can only take place when people of different faiths are willing to cooperate. Lesslie Newbigin holds that Christians should be willing to engage in projects development for the benefit of the community based on a Christian understanding of God's purpose for the world, and in such context, dialogue occurs in this "shared commitment," to the society.⁸⁴ Dialogue in this way is more constructive as people participate in social struggles, when conversation is not limited to religious issues.

Reconciliation in the context of interfaith dialogue can also be in the means of inculturation. For example, rituals like that of *ifoga*, the visual arts, music and dance are powerful local tools, which can be used by religious traditions if they are their means of reconciliation.

7.12 Conclusion

The chapter demonstrates the connection between the church and the *ifoga* ritual and why it is important and necessary for the church in Samoa to redefine the *ifoga* ritual from a biblical perspective. In redefining *ifoga*, the study proposes: First, *ifoga* is an atonement ritual, which constitutes the purification of the sacred places and propitiation for the purpose of appeasing the anger of the victims. In addition, compensation is not the main purpose and

⁸³ Francesco Gioia (ed.), *Interreligious Dialogue: The Official Teachings of the Catholic Church 1963-1995* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 1994), 566-579.

⁸⁴ Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK, 1989), 173-191.

function of the ritual. Secondly, *ifoga* is about restoring mutual relationships in four dimension: with God, with neighbours, the cosmos, and the individual self. Redefining the *ifoga* ritual suggests the need of a cooperate action from the three main institutions that govern the Samoan communities: the state, the church and the village council. Such action in solidarity strengthens the *ifoga*'s religious aspect and social function in a transformative way so that the ritual might regain significance and relevance to the people today. Moreover, the chapter proposes an opportunity for the church to take part in the *ifoga* ritual process through conducting a devotion to conclude the reconciliation process among the families and villages involved. The purpose is for local communities to develop skills in order to improve their reconciling and healing process within their surroundings.

It has been discussed that reconciliation is a way of life, biblically and theologically based on the act of God, who gives it as a gift to us, and invites us to share the responsibility. Finally, the chapter illustrates how *ifoga* could contextually contribute to the wider ecumenical debate on reconciliation.

Conclusion

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to analyse the Samoan *ifoga* as a reconciliation ritual in anthropological and in biblical perspectives. The study sought to answer two fundamental questions. First: What is the function of the *ifoga* ritual in Samoan communities? Second: What has been and what should be the connection between *ifoga* and the church, and why is it possible and necessary for the Samoans to bring in the church perspective in redefining the *ifoga* ritual? In order to find answers to these questions, I first conducted an empirical research about *ifoga* by consulting the wisdom of the Samoan chiefs using an indigenous methodology called *soalaupule* (dialogue or deliberation) and I consulted the available literature about the ritual. The research method (*soalaupule*) made possible a fresh view about the origin, nature, function, process, and the reasons behind the changing face of the ritual that lead to neglecting its religious aspect in modern Samoan society.

The first task was to present the Samoan indigenous worldview and cosmogony for the purpose of locating the *ifoga* ritual in its epistemic context. Clearly, one needs to understand the operating principles in the Samoan community in order to comprehend the function of the *ifoga* ritual in the *faasinomaga* (space of identity and designation). The *faasinomaga* is a space filled with ordinary people led by the chiefs and believed to be created in Samoa land by their god Tagaloa. From out of the *faasinomaga*, people genealogically connected to their origins, and chiefs to the gods and ancestors from which their *mana* (power) is believed to have originated. The fundamental principle in the structure and social organisation of the *faasinomaga* is the chiefly system rooted in the *va-fealoaloai* (social relationship) and *va-tapuia* (sacred relation) that must be respected in order to maintain harmony and peace.

Conclusion

The Samoan encyclopaedia reveals that the *ifoga* ritual is part of the Samoan indigenous religion and relates to Tagaloa, the indigenous Samoan god. The introduction of the *ifoga* ritual proves that Samoa was never a paradise and never without violence. There have always been tensions and competitions. Lust for power and pre-eminence could dominate the minds of the chiefs. This leads to polluting the *faasinomaga*, breaching the *Va* (relational space), violating all the relational entities such as *feagaiga* (covenants), *tuaoi* (boundaries), *tapu* (taboos), and affecting the ancestors, gods and members of the community. In this context, *ifoga* functions as an important religious ritual for cleansing the sacred spaces, repairing covenants and restoring relationships among the people.

The analysis of the *ifoga* ritual confirms its underlying principles and logic:

First, Tagaloa (indigenous god) gives responsibility to the chiefs to perform the *ifoga* ritual when their family members commit crimes that violate taboos, covenants, and boundaries. In light of this, the *ifoga* ritual becomes a communal event, and it is the sole responsibility of the chiefs as illustrated by the Samoan proverb: *O le sala, o le mea a le Tamalii*, meaning, atonement is the sole responsibility of the high chiefs.

Secondly, the only symbolic element required by the perpetrator's party for the ritual is the *ietoga* (Samoan treasure, fine mat). This Samoa treasure belongs to the high chief of the extended family, and it is a unique mat that has a special name. Thus, there is only one *ietoga* (fine mat) used by the perpetrator's family during the *ifoga* ritual and nothing else.

Thirdly, the ritual process consists of three stages. The first stage, *Toia le Va*, (shame, separation) expresses the violation of taboos, covenants, and boundaries; as a result, the perpetrator and his/her family have abandoned social relationships and community gatherings. The second stage, *Pupulu le Va*, (purifying, healing, restoring) concerns the healing process, and this begins

when the perpetrator's family acknowledging their guilt and the crime committed by asking for forgiveness from the victim's family. The last stage, *Teu le Va*, refers to the restoration of *va-fealoaloi* (mutual relationship) and *va-tapuia* (sacred relations). In this sense, both parties have changed their status: the perpetrator's family become 'honoured guests,' and the victim's family is considered as 'host.'

It was also found that the *ifoga* ritual has undergone transformations, due to the influence of the West. It has been secularized, changing its theoretical basis, meaning, and symbolic elements. It is no longer limited to purifying sacred places, negotiating social and sacred boundaries, and reconciliation, but it is more about compensation. This is evident in the symbolic elements, which are now part of the preparations of the perpetrator's family. The introduction of the cash economy, boxes of tin-fish, and the increase in numbers of *ietoga* (fine mats) used are all part of *ifoga*'s changing face. These changes negatively affect the social, political, and economical life of the Samoan people. Financially, the boxes of tin-fish are expensive in Samoa and families cannot afford to buy them, especially those who are subsistence farmers, i.e. the vast majority of Samoans. Politically, the offender's family will strive to provide these symbolic elements because they know that the legal court system now takes into consideration the performance of the ritual, and reduces the punishment given to the offender as a consequence.

The underlying structure of the *ifoga* ritual was used to establish a morphology from the realization of its narrative elements. This morphology can be represented by the four phases of the Narrative Schema (lack, preparedness, performance, and sanction). The morphology concerns a move from a lack (peace and harmony) to its liquidation through a performance (accepting the *ifoga* party) by an active subject specifically prepared for the task. Through this research, it became evident that the real performance of the

Conclusion

ritual is played by the high chief of the victim's family, who removes the fine mat as a symbolic action of accepting the perpetrator's high chiefs plead for reconciliation. Therefore, the performance of the high chief of the perpetrator's family under the *ietoga* (fine mat) is part of the preparedness phase. His/her activity addresses the victim's family as an appeal to their *voulour-faire* to forgive the wrong done. It is a significant insight gained by the analytical application of the Narrative Schema that the representative of the victim's family becomes the active subject of the main performance, on which the success of the reconciliation-process depends. This signifies a symbolic and also dramatic reversal of the power roles as a pre-condition for reconciliation. In addition, the analysis by means of the Narrative Schema indicates that the real function of *ifoga* is to restore peace and harmony in the communities, and it suggests that its structure is cross-culturally applicable.

It was also argued that the church plays a vital role in shaping Samoan society and culture. In this context, the research proposes that the church has a role to play in balancing the recent secularizing tendencies with respect to the *ifoga* ritual, by means of redefining it in light of biblical perspectives. In redefining the *ifoga* ritual at the interface of tradition and modernity, the study demonstrates how the church can draw not only on the traditional understanding of the *ifoga* ritual, but also critically on the Bible. The analysis of Leviticus 16 proposes significant parallels between the *ifoga* ritual and the Yom Kippur ritual, which could inform a transformative understanding of the *ifoga* ritual. Another essential parallel is the interpretation of the Christ-event according to Romans 3,21-31, which Paul represents as atonement, and as a free gift of God to re-establish relationships between God and humanity and amongst the people. Thus, the meaning of the *ifoga* ritual in its traditional context can also serve as a fine example of a commonality between an essential feature of Samoan culture and Early Christian traditions.

It was discovered that the prescribed ritual in Lev 16 has significant elements parallel to the *ifoga* ritual. The structural analysis revealed that the narrative in Lev 16 presupposes a similar condition that causes the creation of the initial circumstance. The condition that brings about an initial “Lack” is divine punishment due to inappropriate behaviours and crimes. Both rituals concern the survival within the sanctuaries in order to reverse the “Lack.” This is evident in the roles played by both Aaron and the high chief from the perpetrator’s family in determining their survival. Their respective performances are part of the preparedness to enable both YHWH and the chief of the victim’s family respectively to change their cause of action. Moreover, the parallel in their theological themes such as purification, reconciliation and atonement are unique in the relationship between the two rituals. These parallels are helpful to inform a transformative understanding of the *ifoga* ritual.

The analysis of Romans 3,21-31 in relation to how Paul interpreted the Christ-event in terms of reconciliation suggests significant aspects according to which the Samoan *ifoga* ritual could be strengthened. It was acknowledged that the *ifoga* ritual is another way of preaching the gospel message of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation among Samoans. In this respect, the *ifoga* as a ritual brings out these Christian principles rooted in the Christ-event for the Samoan communities. For Paul, Jesus’ death and resurrection reveal God’s justice, with the effect of both Jews and Gentiles having equal access and membership in the community of faith in Christ. According to the New Perspective on Paul, the joining together of Jews and Gentiles, i.e. universal and social reconciliation, was central to Paul’s interpretation of the Christ-event. Also from a Samoan perspective, Jesus as a high chief of the whole human race died as part of his commitment and self-emptiness to protect, save, and reconcile all members of his universal extended family to himself.

Conclusion

This study proposes how the church could contribute to counter-balance the secularization of the *ifoga* ritual. It has also been suggested for the church to take part in the *ifoga* ritual process through conducting a devotion before the feast. In addition, the church could also create platforms for dialogue with the chiefly system, and the state. Redefining the *ifoga* ritual was achieved by means of drawing on the traditional understanding of the ritual and also critically on the Bible. To that end, the following theses are proposed.

Thesis 1: *Ifoga* is an atonement ritual that concerns propitiation, purification and reconciliation for the purpose of restoring the peace and harmony in Samoan communities.

Thesis 2: The *ifoga* ritual can serve as a contextual Samoan way of preaching the gospel of peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, which includes peace with ones self, with one another, with God and with the cosmos.

Thesis 3: *Ifoga* is a process of soul-repair, healing the wounds and a pursuit for justice.

Thesis 4: *Ifoga* concerns with the restoration of dignity, honour, and rights of parties involved.

Thesis 5: *Ifoga* is a way of life, and it could become a platform for interfaith dialogue.

The study has offered an evaluative perspective on the *ifoga* ritual and demonstrated why it is plausible and relevant for the church to contribute from a biblical perspective to a transformative re-reading of the ritual in Samoa.

APPENDICES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| AS | Active Subject |
| BJRL | Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library |
| BNP | Bearer of Numinous Power |
| BR | Bible Review |
| CBQ | Catholic Biblical Quarterly |
| CCCS | Congregation Christian Church of Samoa |
| DOV | Decade to Overcome Violence |
| GELNT | Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament |
| JAS | Journal of Anthropology Research |
| JBL | Journal of Biblical Literature |
| JCS | Journal of Coneiform Studies |
| JPS | Journal of Polynesian Society |
| JTS | Journal of Theological Studies |
| KJV | King James Version |
| L | Lack |
| MDEZW | Materialdienst der Evangelische Zentalstelle für Weltanschauungsfragen |
| MNP | Mediators of numinous Power |
| NAS | New American Standard Bible with Code |
| NIV | New International Bible |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version |
| P | Performance |
| PNP | Petitioner of numinous Power |
| Pp | Preparedness |
| S | Sanction |
| SC | Subject of Circumstance |
| TWNT | Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament |
| VF | Verkündigung und Forschung |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| WCC | World Council of Churches |
| WHO | World Health Organisation |
| WMANT | Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament |
| WNT | Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament |
| ZMR | Zeitschrift für Mission und Religion |
| ZNT | Zeitschrift für Neues Testament |
| ZTK | Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche |

GLOSSARY OF SAMOAN TERMS

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| <i>agaga</i> | Spirit | <i>faamaligi-toto</i> | An act which result in bloodshed |
| <i>aganuu</i> | Tradition, culture | | An apology |
| <i>aiga</i> | Extended family | <i>faamaualalo</i> | Samoan spirituality, custom, and culture |
| <i>aitu</i> | Spirit, ghost | <i>faa-Samoa</i> | home and designation, place of belonging |
| <i>alii ma faipule</i> | Council of chiefs | | A ritual of choosing someone to do the <i>lauga</i> or speech during a traditional cultural ceremony |
| <i>amanaia</i> | Pay respect, honour | <i>faasinomaga</i> | Acceptance, or welcome someone in the house |
| <i>amiopulea</i> | Polite | | A term referring to knowledge, or opinion |
| <i>ao-o-faalupega</i> | The head of ceremonial body of recognition, another title for pastors | <i>faatau</i> | Genealogical connection |
| <i>asamo</i> | Request for food | | fine mat |
| <i>aualuma</i> | Daughters of the village; ladies and women born in the village | <i>faaulufale</i> | High chief's wife |
| <i>aumaga</i> | Sons of the village; untitled boys and men in a village | <i>faautaga</i> | A collective term for orators |
| <i>ava o le feiloaiga</i> | A welcome ceremony, or a thanksgiving ceremony | <i>fai'a</i> | Murder |
| <i>ava-fatafata</i> | Mutual respect | <i>falalilii</i> | A covenant such as brother-sister covenant, family and their chief, pastor and a congregation |
| <i>eleele</i> | Earth | <i>faletua</i> | Exchange of experiences, ideas and information |
| <i>faaaloalo</i> | Polite, respect | <i>faleupolu</i> | Reciprocity |
| <i>faaaloaloga</i> | Presentation of gifts | <i>fasioti-tagata</i> | Village meeting |
| <i>faa-feagaiga</i> | Pastor, minister | <i>feagaiga</i> | Genealogy |
| <i>faafesagaiga</i> | Face-to-face encounter | | Bow down |
| <i>faafotu-alii</i> | A ceremony for enthronement of a family's high chief title | <i>fe-faasoaiga</i> | Samoan treasure, valuable, fine mat |
| <i>faafotu-ulu</i> | A ceremony for bestowing a matai (orators) title | <i>fetausiai</i> | Cloud heaven |
| <i>faalupega</i> | A constitutional set of village greeting which demonstrate the order of rank among the chiefs in a village | <i>fono a le nuu</i> | Spread out heaven |
| | | <i>gafa</i> | Time |
| | | <i>ifo</i> | |
| | | <i>ietoga</i> | |
| | | <i>lagi manino</i> | |
| | | <i>lagi salalau</i> | |
| | | <i>laolao</i> | |

Appendices

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|--|
| <i>lauga</i> | Samoan ritual speech | <i>tatau</i> | Tattoo |
| <i>leai</i> | Nothing | <i>taulealea</i> | Sons of the village, untitled young men, not chiefs |
| <i>leleiga</i> | Reconciliation; | | |
| <i>maataanoa</i> | Small rocks | | |
| <i>malaefono</i> | Meeting place, sanctuary | <i>taumafataga</i> | Feast |
| <i>malelega</i> | A speech or spoken words of a high chief | <i>taupou</i> | Daughter of a high chief (social roles) |
| <i>mana</i> | Divine power, or grace | <i>tausala</i> | Daughter of a high chief (ritualistic roles) |
| <i>matai</i> | A chief, a person holding a family title | <i>tausai</i> | orator's wife |
| | | <i>tautua</i> | Service, serve |
| <i>matua i le tuu</i> | Wise man | <i>teu le va</i> | Caring, nurturing, and respecting mutual relationship |
| <i>momoli le tofa</i> | Presenting a resolution, wisdom of the chiefs to members of the family or village | <i>tofa</i> | Sacred wisdom or knowledge |
| | | <i>tofa fetuutuunai</i> | Analyzed wisdom |
| <i>nanamu</i> | Fragrance | <i>tofa saili</i> | Searching and evaluating wisdom |
| <i>nuu</i> | A place of settlement, village | <i>tofa tatala</i> | sharing wisdom |
| <i>nuu o alii</i> | Village of men | <i>toia le va</i> | Breaching relational space |
| <i>nuu o tamaitai</i> | Village of ladies | <i>totoma</i> | An act of requesting something (eg. fine mats) from your neighbours |
| <i>osi taulaga</i> | Priest, scapegoat | | |
| <i>paia</i> | Sacred, sacredness | | |
| <i>papa</i> | Rock | <i>tuaa</i> | Ancestors |
| <i>papaele</i> | Earth rock | <i>tuaoi</i> | Boundaries |
| <i>papatu</i> | Standing rock | <i>tuiga</i> | A honorific crown worn by the <i>tausala</i> or a high chief during ceremonial rituals |
| <i>pule</i> | Authority | | |
| <i>pupulu le va</i> | Healing the relational space | | |
| <i>sala</i> | Punishment | | |
| <i>siapo</i> | Tapa cloth | <i>tulafale</i> | Orator, talking chief, traditional priest |
| <i>soalaupule</i> | Deliberation, dialogue, consult | <i>tulafono</i> | laws and taboos |
| <i>sua faatamalii</i> | A cultural gesture of honouring a chief or guests | | rules and regulations |
| | | <i>tuualalo</i> | Advice |
| <i>mauli</i> | Psyche, spirits | <i>va-fealoai</i> | Mutual relations |
| <i>tapua-a-fanua</i> | Taboos of the land | <i>va-nonofa</i> | Social relations |
| <i>tofa ua tasi</i> | A wisdom or solution achieved by consensus | <i>vaomatua</i> | Forest |
| | | <i>va-tapuia</i> | Sacred relations |

SUMMARY
of
“The ifoga ritual in Samoa
in Anthropological and in Biblical Perspectives”
(Sanele Faasua Lavatai,
Dissertation, Hamburg University, Germany 2016)

This study analyzed the structure and the function of the Samoan atonement and reconciliation ritual *ifoga* by exploring it in both anthropological and biblical perspectives. The study aim were to develop a new understanding of the *ifoga* ritual that can serve to strengthen its deeply rooted ‘religious’ dimension and to demonstrate the responsibility of the church, which plays a major role in shaping Samoan society and culture, in balancing the conflict between tradition and modernity which has taken place by strengthening the original ‘religious’ and social function of the *ifoga* ritual in a transformative way so that the ritual might regain its significance and relevance to the Samoan people. To achieve this, the study explored the nature of the *ifoga* ritual in its traditional epistemic context and in view of its significant parallels to the atonement ritual of Israel as described in Leviticus 16, on the one side, and the interpretation of the Christ-event according to Romans 3,21-31, on the other. In redefining the *ifoga* ritual at the interface of tradition and modernity, the church will not only relate to the traditional understanding of the *ifoga* ritual, but – in order to be align with and be relevant in Samoa, - also to the Bible. The indicated parallels also illustrated that the structure, the meaning and the function of the *ifoga* ritual in its traditional context can serve as an example of a relative commonality between Samoan culture and biblical traditions, particularly Early Christian traditions. The study suggests that the *ifoga* ritual in Samoa can be understood as “a strategy to bring matters back to order.” In turn, this strategy might be considered relevant

to the current situation of Pacific populations as a means of peaceful and reconciled communities.

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

von

„Das *Ifoga* Ritual in Samoa

in anthropologischer und biblischer Perspektive“

(Sanele Faasua Lavatai,

Dissertation, Universität Hamburg, Deutschland 2016)

Diese Studie beabsichtigt, die Struktur und die Funktion des samoanischen Sühne- und Versöhnungsrituals *ifoga* zu analysieren, indem es aus anthropologischer und biblischer Perspektive untersucht wird. Die Studie hat zum Ziel, ein neues Verständnis des *ifoga* Rituals zu entwickeln, das dazu dienen kann, seine tief verwurzelte „religiöse“ Dimension und die Verantwortung der Kirche zu stärken, die bei der Gestaltung der samoanischen Gesellschaft und Kultur eine wichtige Rolle spielt, um den Konflikt zwischen Tradition und Moderne durch die ursprüngliche „religiöse“ und soziale Funktion des *ifoga* Rituals in einer transformatorischen Weise auszugleichen, so dass das Ritual seine Bedeutung und Relevanz für die samoanische Bevölkerung wieder erlangen kann. Um dies zu erreichen, untersucht die Studie die Natur des *ifoga* Rituals in seinem traditionellen epistemischen Kontext und im Hinblick auf seine bedeutenden Parallelen zum Sühneritual Israels, wie es in Levitikus 16 beschrieben wird, auf der einen Seite, und der Deutung des Christusereignisses im Römerbrief 3,21-31, auf der anderen Seite. In der Neudefinition des *ifoga* Rituals an der Schnittstelle von Tradition und Moderne wird sich die Kirche nicht nur auf das traditionelle Verständnis des *ifoga* Rituals beziehen, sondern, um in Samoa plausibel und relevant zu sein,

auch auf die Bibel. Die aufgezeigte Parallelität zeigt auch, dass die Struktur, die Bedeutung und die Funktion des *ifoga* Rituals in seinem traditionellen Kontext als Beispiel für eine relative Nähe zwischen samoanischer Kultur und biblischen, insbesondere frühchristlichen Traditionen dienen kann. Die Studie legt nahe, dass das *ifoga* Ritual in Samoa als ein religiöses und soziales „Verfahren des In-Ordnung-Bringens“ verstanden werden kann, das auch in der gegenwärtigen Situation der pazifischen Lebenswelt als relevant erachtet werden kann in der Gestaltung eines friedlichen und versöhnten Zusammenlebens.

FIELD RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(August - September, 2012)

TITLE: The *Ifoga* Ritual in Samoa in Anthropological and in Biblical Perspectives.

1. Objectives of the Research:

The content of the anthropological part of my research project relies predominantly on the author's dialogue and deliberation with the selected Participants. My objective in conducting the dialogue and deliberation is to find out:

1.1 The fundamental principles of the Samoan culture and society

1.2 The origin of the *ifoga* ritual in Samoa

1.2.1 The underlying principles of atonement in Samoa

1.2.2 The function of the *tausala* ritual in traditional and contemporary Samoan communities

1.2.3 The function of the *ifoga* ritual in traditional and contemporary Samoan communities

1.2.4 The influence of the west

1.2.5 The impact of Christianity

1.2.6 The role of the church in Samoan communities and its relation to the *ifoga* ritual

1.2 The origin of the concept *Taupou*

1.3 The origin of the concept *Tausala*

In the Samoan culture, once a guest or a person is in the house of a family, he/she will be greeted with a formal protocol and greetings. The dialogue process begins with the author's response to the formal greetings from the participants.

Paia faatafa ole maota, e afio ai lau Afioga faapea foi le mamalu ole aiga-alii.

(The sacredness of the house, the dwelling place of your highness and the extended family.)

Malo le Soifua. O lou igoa o Sanele Lavatai. O lea e sue lou faailoga ole Fomai ole Mataupusilisili ile Iunivesite o Hamburg i Siamani. E faamalulu atu ai pe afai ua solivale le maota ao fegai ma galuega ole aso. Ae ole a siu tonu le mata ole niu e tusa ma lau savali. Ua ou muamua lava ona ou faafetai atu mo le avanoa ua e tuu mai ta te talanoa ai. O le uiga ua ala ai ona ou sau ona ua ou fia maua se fesoasoani mai ia te oe e uiga i ifoga faasamoa. Ou te fia malamalama i itu uma o mea tau ifoga. E te malie ae ou fesiligia oe i lenei mataupu?

Greetings! My name is Sanele Lavatai. I am a Samoan PhD student of theology at Hamburg University in Germany. Firstly I would like to thank you for the opportunity that you have allowed for us to discuss about my research. The reason that I have come is to seek your assistance and knowledge – First, the Samoan *ifoga* and its practise; Second the Samoan Proverb *O le sala o le mea a le Tamalii*, und lastly the Concept *Taupou* and *Tausala*. Would you mind if I elaborate more about my some questions to open up our discussion in relation to *ifoga* and the concepts I mention?)

2. Ifoga Ritual

1. *E te iloa se mafuaga na alai ona faia e tagata Samoa le aganuu o le ifoga? E iai se talatuu a Samoa i lona mafuaga? (Do you know anything about the origin of the ifoga ritual? Is there any myth associated with it or not?)*
2. *O le sou taofi i se taua ma se aoga e ala ona faatino e tagata Samoa le ifoga? (In your opinion, why do Samoans conduct ifoga? What is the reason behind doing it? Why was it necessary and important to conduct an ifoga?)*
3. *Afai e talia le ifoga, o le a le mea e tupu i le sa agasala? (Once an ifoga is accepted, what happens to the offender?)*
4. *O lea le mea e tupu pea le talia se ifoga? (What happens if an ifoga is rejected?)*
5. *Ae faapefea le na aafia i le faalavelave? (How about the victim?)*
6. *Ua e maitauina ua iai ni suiga i le faatino o le ifoga? (Have you noticed any changes in ifoga over time?)*
7. *O lea sou lagona o lea le mea ua ala ai ona iai leni suiga? (Why do you think there has been this change?)*
8. *O iai ni auala faapapalagi ua tatou faaogaina i ifoga? (Have Samoans adopted any western (foreign) ways into the ifoga?) Afai e iai, oa ia auala? (What are they?)*
9. *E talafeagai aoga faakerisiano ma ifoga? (Can you reconcile Christian beliefs and ifoga?)*
10. *Faamata e iai se taua ole toe tagatagai i le ifoga mai le vaai faale mataupusilisili? O le a sona taua mo Samoa? (Is it necessary to look at ifoga from a theological perspective? Why is it important?)*

3. Proverb – O le sala o le mea a le Tamalii.

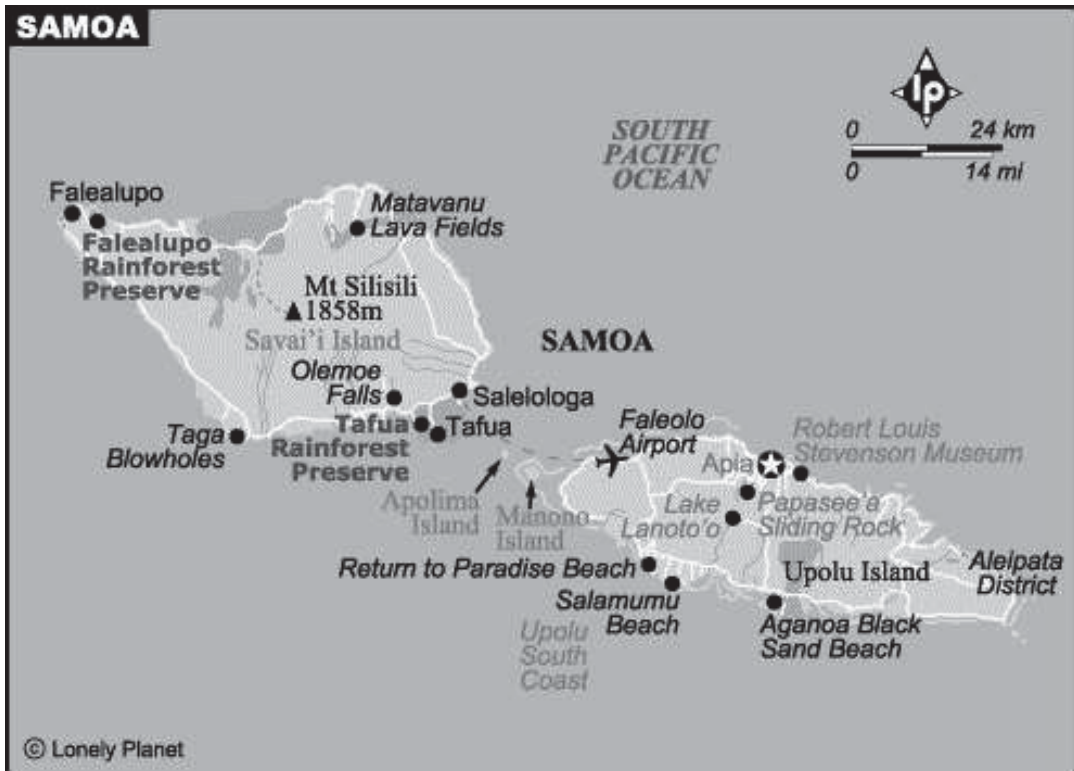
1. *O le sou silafia i le mafuaaga o le alagaupu lea “O le sala o le mea a le Tamalii? (What is your opinion about the origin of this Proverb “O le Sala o le mea a le Tamalii”?)*
2. *Ua maitauina nisi o matai ua faamoemoe i le tulafono e fofo ai faafitauli o Aiga ma Nuu. O le a se mafuaaga? (What is your view, about those chiefs who take matters to the court instead of traditional procedures of healing tensions and restoring harmony?)*
3. *Aisea e tatau ai ona faaoga le aganuu e foia ai faafitauli? (Why is it important to proceed to cultural procedures to overcome violence?)*
4. *O a ni auala e foia ai feeseeseaiga i le va o le Tulafono ma le Pulea Alii ma Faipule? (In what ways we can reconcile the decision of the state legal court and the village council?)*

4. Taupou and Tausala

1. *O le a sou finagalo i le uiga ma le mafuaaga o upu ia e lua – Taupou ma le Tausala? (What is your opinion about these two terms “Taupou and Tausala”? What is their origin?)*
2. *O ai e tatau ma onomea ona ave iai faalagiga ia? (Who shall be called Taupou and Tausala?)*

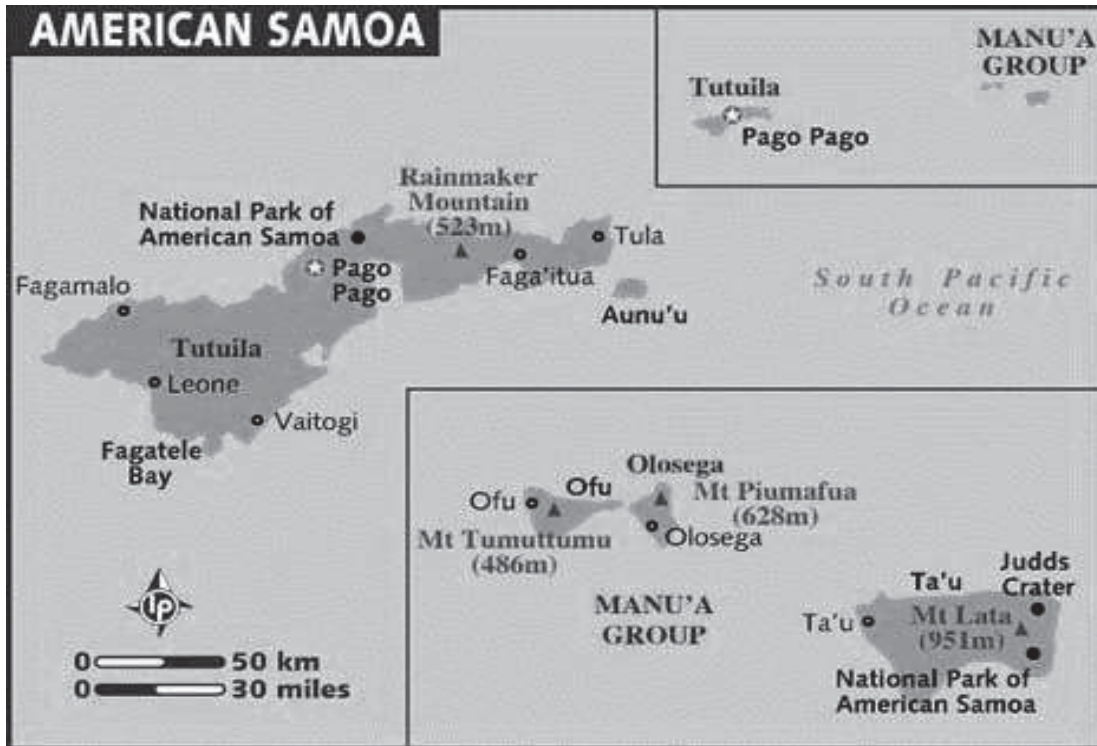
Faafetai tele mo le avanoa ua tuuina mai. Talosia i le alofa o le Atua lou soifua, maua le tofa ma le uta aua le tautuaina o le ekalesia, nuu, itumalo ma le atunuu.

MAP OF SAMOA
(Formerly known as Western Samoa)



Kristen's Samoan/Fijian Adventure;
<http://krisandjesstraveltheworld.blogspot.de/2007/11/kristens-samoanfijian-adventure.html> (March 15, 2016)

MAP OF AMERICAN SAMOA



Lonely Planet

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/pacific/american-samoa/map_of_american-samoa.jpg
(March 15, 2016)

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(March 15, 2016)

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(March 15, 2016)

Participants / Informants

Aiono Fagaafi, Le Tagaloa (f)

Faamatuainu, Tauiliili Luamanuvae (m)

Fauatea, Via Fauatea (m)

Fonoti, Vise Fatu (m)

Lotofaga Lima (m)

Maulio, Tiumalu, Taua, Faigataupuoatua, Oso (m)

Onianatai Matale (m)

Papaliitele, Moeimanono Fouvaa (m)

Reupena Asiata (m)

Salue, Teofilo Tuimaunei (m)

Tavui Lematua Malaki (m)

Tolofuaivaolelei Falemoe (m)